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CONFLICT IN PALESTINE 1917-1948:

**Palestinian Responses to Zionist Settlement in Palestine with
Particular Reference to the Attempts to Solve the Conflict**

By

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ABSTRACT

There are two themes contained in this thesis: firstly, the examination of the Palestinian attitude, concept and views towards Zionist settlement in Palestine during the period 1917-1948, secondly, the analysis of their arguments and responses to the different attempts to solve the Palestine conflict during this period.

The Palestinians viewed Zionism as a European political movement which was connected with Western colonialism, and sought to transform Palestine into an exclusively Jewish state. Therefore, they resisted this alien settlement in their country by all possible means, political as well as military.

The Palestinians, however, failed to persuade the British Government to grant them independence or to stop Zionist settlement because they, as a traditional society, did not possess the material or military power to match the combined forces of the British Empire and the Zionist movement.

However, during this period the British Government suggested certain proposals to solve the conflict, but these proposals were rejected by the Palestinians, the Zionists or by both. Therefore, in 1947 the British Government transferred the problem to the United Nations. On 29th November 1947 the U.N., under the influence of the Western powers and the approval of the Soviet Union, endorsed a partition scheme, similar to a partition plan suggested by the Royal Commission in 1937, which proposed the establishment of two independent states, Arab and Jewish. The Palestinians rejected the proposal on the grounds that it was not based on the principles of justice, equality and the right to self-determination.

This study suggests that the Palestine conflict was created as result of alien settlement in a country which was already inhabited by a people who were unwilling to compromise on what they saw as their right to independence under a national government which would represent the wishes of the majority.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction and Theoretical Framework

Introduction

When I decided to study the basic Palestinian arguments and responses to Zionist settlement in Palestine, especially their responses to the attempts to solve the conflict, I expected to be asked the following questions: What can a historical approach offer to the social scientist who is interested primarily in contemporary social conflict or to the policy-maker whose focus is on the present and on the future? What relevance for example, do historical crises have for the present conflict between the Arabs and Israel? Clearly the circumstances are different, the people, the leaders, and weapons are different. What can we learn that will be useful in facing and solving problems of the future?

Social science approaches to historical situations are based upon the fundamental assumption that there are pattern repetitions, and close analogies throughout the history of mankind. It is true that the circumstances will differ between the 1930s and the 1980s but the patterns of human fears and anxieties and perceptions of threat and war may not be dissimilar.¹ A fundamental part of the problem lies in identifying the levels of abstraction in finding likeness between problems or crises that are widely separated in time and also in space.

There is a further consideration. In fact, history may provide the sole key we have to the future. As Horst put it "The only way to judge what will happen in the future is by what has happened in the past."² Wisdom about the present and future is derived from what we have experienced or learned about in the past. It is by comparing new problems with old experiences, by looking for similarities and differences, that we move into the future. "Other things being equal, the more frequently things have happened in the past the more sure you can be they will happen in the future."³ As human beings we have no other way of assessing, judging and deciding.

Essentially, then, it is by projecting past experiences into the future that human beings make decisions, and the leaders of states in this respect, are not exceptions. Thus, foreign policy decisions, like other human decisions, imply not only an abstraction from history but also the making of a prediction, the assessment of probable outcomes. These two operations may be undertaken almost unconsciously, but they are nonetheless real and inescapable.⁴ For example, the "Marshall Plan" was based upon a prediction derived from a combination of experiences, that systematic aid to European countries would bring about certain consequences. Viewed in retrospect this prediction seems to have been sound. The basic prediction inherent in the Russian leaders' decision to establish long range missiles in Cuba was much less accurate.⁵ The Palestinian prediction that the Jews would leave Palestine when the British did was also wrong and the Zionists' prediction that the Jewish problem would be solved once the Palestinians had been uprooted from Palestine and a Jewish state had been established there was wrong too.

Prediction depends always upon knowledge and knowledge is necessarily an offspring of the past. This principle is basic, not only to science, but perhaps to all knowledge and herein lies the crucial importance of understanding the Palestinians' arguments in the first period in order to understand and predict their future responses for any lasting settlement of the Palestine conflict. It is not sufficient to know what happened, we want to know how the people concerned explained and understood the problem. As Robert Park put it: "It is not sufficient to know what happened we want to know how the transaction looked through the eyes of individuals seeing it from opposing points of view."⁶ In other words I would like to highlight the Palestinians' point of view in relation to their conflict with the Zionists and how they responded to the attempts to solve the conflict.

Probably Palestinian-Zionist conflict in fact is very complicated. No other topic of discussion in recent times has generated such polemic in academic and political circles as has commentary on the Palestinian-Zionist conflict in Palestine or later between the Palestinians, the Arabs and "Israel".⁷ From the beginning any critical assessment of Zionist policies in relation to settlement in Palestine would provoke emotional accusations, often loaded with charges of anti-semitism, even when the critics were Jews or pro-Zionists. The Zionist Movement succeeded in giving the impression that the aim of

Zionist settlement in Palestine was to find a refuge for the persecuted Jews and the relief of their hardships, and on the other hand that such settlement would not benefit the Jews only but the Palestinians as well.

The Zionists succeeded in building such a noble image of the aim of their settlement in Palestine through their advanced methods of diplomatic negotiations and propaganda, carried out by and through their offices throughout Europe and the United States and their official representatives in these countries

Indeed the Zionists succeeded in shaping World opinion into the belief that Palestine was their "promised land", that it was a country without a people and the Jews were a people without a country. They argued that their endeavours and skill would bring civilisation and prosperity to the few "nomad" Arabs living there, without any reference to the negative impact on the native population. Such misconceptions about the aim of Zionism prevailed in Europe because of the combined efforts of Britain and the Zionist Movement. Michael Adams and Christopher Mayhew argue that over the past half-century a "deliberate and generally successful attempt has been made to cover up the truth about Palestine with damaging consequences for the cause of peace and justice in the Middle East."⁸ Adams explains some of the reasons behind the lack of information about the Arab point of view, which in addition to the bias in the mass media, involved the difficulty of finding a publisher to publish books which may express the Arab view: "It was very difficult to persuade a publisher to take on a book which stated the Arab case over Palestine." He added that: "Even when an author was successful in getting a manuscript accepted by a publisher, and when nothing intervened to prevent its publication, there remained the problem of getting the book distributed and reviewed."⁹

Hadawi too, argued that his publisher did not find any bookstore to place his book in the United States.¹⁰ But Jamil Hamad looks at the problem from a different angle and rightly put some responsibility on the Arabs themselves. He observes that: "We drank coffee in the desert with T.E Lawrence while Chaim Weizmann and Nahum Sokolo lobbied in London for British support of a national homeland for the Jewish people."¹¹

I would add to these arguments that it is extremely difficult for an Arab scholar to express views which might criticize the official views

of the Arab States or their way of handling the conflict from the beginning without being subject to physical threats or being debarred from work in these countries. One of the common features of the Third World countries is that scholars are not allowed to express their views if these views are different from the official views of the governments. The Palestinians, in other words, lacking similar propaganda machinery and facilities enjoyed by the Zionists, and for the other mentioned reasons were not able to explain or to make their arguments heard outside Palestine. Moreover, they were accused by Zionists and pro-Zionist circles of being backward, traditional, oriental and even not knowing what was good for them and refusing every proposal and opportunity for peace.

The Palestinians basic demands and arguments during the Mandate did not, however, change much and included the followings:¹²

1. The ending of the British Mandate and the policy of sponsoring a Jewish home in Palestine
2. The establishment of a Palestinian democratic state representing all the inhabitants of Palestine: Muslims, Christians and Jews, according to their numbers.
3. The right of the Palestinian people to self-determination according to international law and the League of Nations or U.N. Charters and the rejection of any right for any other government or organization to suggest solutions on any bases other than justice, equality and the right for self-determination.

These demands were submitted to the British Government through four Palestinian delegations to London between 1917 and 1937 and through all the direct or indirect negotiations between the Palestinians and the Arabs on one side and the British Government on the other during the rest of the British Mandate period. However, the British Government, which was committed to the Zionist cause, was adamant in its pro-Zionist policy and therefore, rejected all Palestinian demands for self-determination.¹³

It is worth noticing here that what was to be accepted in general about the nature of the Zionist settlement in Palestine could be said about the nature of "Israel"'s policies towards the Palestinians. "Israel"'s experiments captured the imagination of some Western social

writers to the extent that Peter Worsley recommends it as a good example to be followed by developing countries: "Israel provides one set of lessons: a country which has had to fight for independence, and which has actually made the desert bloom, using "communitarian" methods of organization and living together which might well be adapted to African and Asian conditions."¹⁴

Such a good image of "Israel" made it difficult for any writer to criticize "Israel"'s policies towards the Palestinians. Any writer who dared to criticize "Israel" would simply be accused of being anti-semitic. As James Reston put it: "You can put it down as a general rule that any criticism of Israel's policies will be attacked as anti-semitism."¹⁵

In the light of this it is understandable that any academic should think carefully before uttering what might be construed as criticism of Zionist settlement in Palestine or later the policies of "Israel." Mayhew describes the methods, used by Zionists to discourage the expression of views sympathetic to the Arabs, as "damaging in every way: politically, professionally, socially."¹⁶ This situation has created unhealthy political, moral and intellectual immunity which has put Zionism, and later "Israel", beyond the limits of critical analysis. The result has been to produce a nationalistic inwardly-oriented interpretation of Zionist settlement in Palestine which reflected preoccupation with Zionist achievements, as these achievements were defined by the ideologists of Zionism and later of "Israel."

It is natural, on the other hand, to expect that under such circumstances the Palestinians would be assigned a peripheral place in Zionist and pro-Zionist writers' investigations.

The general Western view of Zionist settlement in Palestine, a view adhered to by the mass media and policy makers alike, acknowledged the pioneering of that settlement and the democratic nature of "Israel" best epitomised in the "Kibbutz"¹⁷ and the political institutions of "Israel."

This characterization augmented the basic definition of "Israel" which was to provide a refuge and solve the problem of the persecuted Jews of the World. These images of "Israel" incorporated counter images of the Palestinians, images which depicted the Palestinians as traditional, backward and later as "terrorists" determined to destroy "Israel."

Such images of the Palestinians were also common features of the relations between whites and non whites in South Africa and still remain until the present moment. Banton gives an explanation of such negative images between Whites and Blacks in South Africa: The two may interpret similar events in quite different ways. This is because: "As many Whites do not respect African culture or seek to understand it, they may fail to see that the Africans view of the situation is a reflection of a different culture and regard it simply as an indication of childishness or stupidity."¹⁸

Nobody, perhaps, would deny the pioneering nature of the Zionist settlement or the advanced methods of development in "Israel" if it took place in an empty or uninhabited area. But the fact is that settlement and later the establishment of "Israel" took place at the expense of the Palestinians. Therefore, we should look at and evaluate this settlement not only according to its material achievement but rather in its negative impact and result on the Palestinians. In other words, some notions such as the pioneering nature of Zionist settlement or its revolutionary socialist aim to solve the problems which faced world Jewry should not, in any way, distract the researcher from examining critically the latent results and consequences of that settlement and how it actually materialized.

In this line of thinking I agree with Peter Berger's notion of "Sociological consciousness." The ability to distinguish between the intended and latent functions of social processes is an essential ingredient in the "debunking" tendency in sociological thought. Berger perceives that: "The sociological frame of reference, with its built in procedure of looking for levels of reality other than those given in the official interpretations of society, carries with it a logical imperative to unmask the pretensions and the propaganda by which men cloak their actions with each other."¹⁹ In other words we must distinguish between social appearances and social reality. As Lewis Coser put it: "We must concern ourselves with latent as well as with manifest elements within a relationship if its full meaning is to be disclosed analytically."²⁰

To give a real life example, Zionist settlement in Palestine was described by some writers as a pioneering work which made the desert bloom, this is the social appearance. The social reality is that the settlement and later the establishment of "Israel", in one way or the

other, resulted in the displacement of a large number of the Palestinians from their native land and caused severe hardships for all the Palestinians. It is, at least for the Palestinians, the cause of the whole Palestinian problem.

However, it does not mean that ideas are not important but as Berger argues: "It does mean that the outcome of ideas is commonly very different from what those who had the ideas in the first place planned or hoped."²¹ To illustrate this further Berger gives this example: the manifest function of anti-gambling legislation may be to suppress gambling but the result or the latent function was the creation of an illegal gambling empire."²²

Maxime Rodinson advances a similar idea in referring to Zionism as an ideology. "As with any ideological movement, one must differentiate between ideal principles and variants that crop up in internal tendencies and with the passage of the time, the implicit or explicit motivation of the masses of followers, the strategies and tactical plans of the leaders, the fulfillment of these plans (which are always only partial and which always come about in somewhat unforeseeable circumstances) the consequences of these plans, etc."²³

This sociological approach would allow us to examine critically the Zionist settlement as it affected the Palestinian and to highlight the Palestinian arguments regarding a peaceful solution to their dispute with the Zionists and later with "Israel" which may deviate from the traditional research by Zionists or the pro-Zionist writers who concentrate on the positive side of the settlement and on the negative response of the Palestinians and the Arabs in general.

Between 1917-1948 Palestinian society was transformed from a once pre-dominantly traditional Arab society into a plural society with its two main segments, the Palestinian Arabs and the Zionist settlers, mainly Europeans. During this period the Zionist movement succeeded under British legislation, sponsorship and protection, in bringing to Palestine about half a million Zionist settlers, forming about one-third of the total population, and acquiring about 1.8 million dunums or about 7 percent of the total lands of the country. Yet the U.N. Partition Resolution of November 1947 awarded the Zionist settlers over half of the country, including almost all citrus and cereal lands and the water

resources, and put under their control about half a million Palestinians as a permanent minority.

The U.N., however, as a result of rivalries between the big powers, failed to implement the Partition Plan (See Chapter 8) and a local war brokeout in Palestine between the Palestinians and the Zionists. During the last six months of the Mandate, November 1947 to May 1948, and during the Arab-Israeli war of 1948, the majority of the Palestinian people "fled from fear of death" and as a result of Zionist terrorism which was designed "to clear the Arabs out"²⁴ and make possible the establishment of an exclusively Jewish state. Palestine was politically transformed into a Jewish state, "Israel", a Jordanian West Bank and an Egyptian Gaza Strip. The political transformation of Palestine had the apparent effect of transforming the original conflict between the Palestinians and the Zionist settlers into one between certain Arab states and "Israel." The "National" character of the conflict has been reinforced in the public mind not only by most writers on the conflict since 1948, irrespective of their source, but additionally by the periodic eruption of war, the perennial deliberations in the U.N., which address themselves to sovereign states, and by the coverage of the conflict in the mass media.

The impact of these writings and deliberations has been towards the designation of the conflict as the Arab-Israeli conflict, and projected solutions to the conflict hitherto have been decisively affected by that designation. On the other hand, the designation of the Palestinians as "refugees" had the effect in World public opinion of removing them as an original party to the conflict and projecting them as a "refugee problem" in search of a solution other than the establishment of their own state which was proposed by the Partition Resolution, such as resettlement outside Palestine.

The truth of the matter is that the Palestine conflict must be called first and foremost a dispute between the Palestinian people and the Israelis before it can be labelled as an Arab -Israeli conflict. No matter what language diplomacy uses in defining the rights of the Palestinians, the fact remains that the major portion of the territory now called "Israel" is legitimately owned by individual Palestinians who are entitled to return to it according to the United Nations Resolution

194 (111) of 1948 and to establish an Arab state according to the Partition Resolution of November 1948 on which "Israel" based its own legality.

The events since 1948 suffice to remind us that the Palestinians are determined, more than at any time before, to continue their struggle, no matter how long it will take them, until they get their legitimate rights and establish their own state. The establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization and the hostilities between the Palestinian guerrillas and "Israel" helped focus the attention of world public opinion on their deep and long standing grievance and claim and reminded all concerned that one of the two original parties to the conflict had been denied the exercise of their rights.

In this sense, the need for research that addresses itself more clearly and directly to the original conflict that has set Israel against some Arab states is overdue. Time and events have proved that a lasting settlement to the conflict cannot be achieved without an understanding of the Palestinians' views regarding the nature of conflict and their conditions for solving it. Arab views are not understood, are distorted or inhibited in the West. According to Adams: "The Arabs found themselves virtually cut off from access to Western opinion and felt frustrated over the absence of any balanced discussion of the issues at stake in the Middle East."²⁵

In this sense, the objective of this thesis is twofold: On the one hand it seeks to make an important contribution to the scholarly understanding and knowledge of the Palestinians views on Zionism and their responses to the attempts to solve the original conflict, and on the other, by clarifying those views and responses it aims at the promotion of serious efforts that seek a just and a lasting solution to the conflict.

Accordingly the major thrust of the chapters in this thesis is towards the Palestinians' views and responses from their own point of view. This is important because as Toynbee rightly put it: "What is peculiar about the Palestine conflict is that the World has listened to the party that committed the offence and turned a deaf ear to the victims."²⁶ Adams too, advances a similar view and argues that: "It was very rare to find

in the British press any coherent statement of the Arab point of view over the Palestine question or any explanation of the origins of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The same thing was true elsewhere in the West."²⁷

The underlying rationale for undertaking the study in this particular form should be evident. Hitherto, scholarship on the Palestine conflict has reflected serious shortcomings. For one thing, most writing is not done by Arabs and tends to present the conflict as a conflict between two "Nationalist movements" of which one, the Zionist, was always pragmatic and ready for peace, and the other, the Arab, was always uncompromising and refused any settlement; for another, the findings tend to confirm the assumption that the conflict is between certain Arab states and "Israel"; and for a third, that the Palestinians refused to establish their proposed state; that they voluntarily, left their homes and lands in 1948, and finally that there is no need to establish such a Palestinian state since the Arabs have many states.

This thesis seeks to answer some of the following questions: How did the Palestinians view Zionism and the conflict? How did they respond to Zionist settlement? What were their modes of action and methods of resistance? Why did they not succeed in stopping this settlement? Was it because they did not understand the Zionist danger or because they could not match the combined material and military forces of the British Government and Zionism? What was the impact of Zionist settlement on Palestinian society? Why did the Palestinians flee? Was it in response to Arab calls or for fear of death? What were their arguments and responses to the attempts to solve the conflict? Was there any genuine opportunity for settlement which was lost? What were the basic Palestinian demands and conditions for peace? What was the practical implication of the Palestinians responses to Zionism and their tactics in handling the problem?

The Plural Society Theories in Relation to Colonialism

Models of Society

In the recent history of contemporary sociology two theories have emerged to explain the puzzling process of society's cohesion: One of these, the integration theory of society, assumes that social integration is the ultimate goal of society. This can be attained on the basis of widespread identification with a representative value system. According to this school of thought this sharing of values in society is made possible through the creation of institutions whose structures are assumed to be functional in terms of maintaining the needs and goals of society at large.²⁸ The other one, the coercion theory of society, states that cohesion is imposed by force and constraint. It views social structure as a form of organization held together by force and constraint.²⁹

In fact there are social problems which could be explained by one theory or the other while there are problems for which both theories appear adequate. As Dahrendorf put it: "A decision to accept one of these theories and reject the other is neither necessary nor desirable."³⁰

However, up to the mid 1960s the consensus model, notably that of Talcott Parsons, clearly dominated sociological writings, especially in North America. What characterized this theory was the assumption of stability and integration in every society and that its functional co-ordination is based on a voluntary consensus of values among its members and the absence of coercion, be it on the level of values or of action. Such a "structural functional" model had an equally corresponding perspective in political science that is "pluralism."³¹ Pluralism conceived in this fashion depicts society as composed of different groups, none of which has an overriding influence in shaping the decisions emanating from the political sphere. These groups act to countervail and even cancel each other out, thus preventing the rise of one dominant group which would then have a monopoly over power distribution in society.³² Using such an approach, certain writers have argued that, the stability and "success" of democratic societies depend on the sharing of general political and pre-political values.³³ But others such as some Marxists attack the value consensus model and for them integration on the level of values if it took place in a capitalist society is a "False consciousness" and manipulative socialization.³⁴

It is this underestimation of the coercive factor and the assumption of integration and voluntary consensus of values in societies which gave rise to more critical objections to the pluralist consensus persuasion and led some writers to turn to what they saw as more viable outlooks in the analysis of society which take into account conflicting group interests.

The integration theory, as Banton noticed: "By its very nature..., is not well suited to the study of circumstances in which two societies interact or in which social patterns are maintained by force rather than by agreement."³⁵ Dahrendorf too argues that: "The very one sidedness of this theory gave rise to critical objections which enable us today to put this theory in its proper place."³⁶ He goes on to say that the integration model tells us little more than that there are certain "strains in the system."³⁷ Because the integration theory, according to Dahrendorf, is unable to cope with all social problems, he suggested replacing it with another theory. In his words: "We have to replace the integration theory of society by a different and, in many ways, contradictory model...what I have called the coercion theory."³⁸ The main assumptions of Dahrendorf's theory are:³⁹

1. Every society displays at every point dissensus and conflict.
2. Every society is at every point subject to processes of change
3. Every element in a society renders a contribution to its disintegration and change.
4. Every society is based on the coercion of some of its members by others.

Dahrendorf accepts the presence of conflict in society but considers this conflict to be absorbed and channelled through various organizations such as political parties, trade unions etc. He sees the major point of contention as centring around lines of authority (legitimate power) and not around class interests in the Marxian sense. In institutional terms, this means that in every social organization some positions are entrusted with a right to exercise control over other positions in order to ensure effective coercion or "there is a differential distribution of power and authority."⁴⁰

According to Dahrendorf, "This differential distribution of authority invariably becomes the determining factor of systematic social conflict of a type that is germane to class conflict in the traditional (Marxian)

sense of this term."⁴¹ The structural origin of group conflict, according to Dahrendorf, must be sought in the arrangement of social roles endowed with expectations of domination or subjection. Thus a member who is in a position of dominance in one sphere of life is not necessarily fit to occupy the same position of dominance in another. In a way, while this outlook recognizes the inevitability of conflict at the organizational level, it nevertheless sees some form of Pluralism on the societal level.

Michael Mann points out four objections to the integration theory. These are the following:⁴²

1. Most general values, norms and social beliefs usually mentioned as integrating society are extremely vague.
2. Even if a value is stated precisely, it may lead to conflict, not cohesion. Because some values unite people, others necessarily divide them.
3. The standards embodied in values are absolute ones, and it is difficult for such absolutes to co-exist without conflict.
4. Where insulation processes operate, cohesion results precisely because there is no common commitment to core values.

The last point of Mann's findings was that "value consensus does not exist to any significant extent."⁴³

The so called conflict theorists are many and I do not intend to deal with all the various strands of their respective theories in this thesis. But suffice it to say that the most influential theory of social conflict has certainly been that of Karl Marx. The Marxian theory which, rather than placing primary emphasis on common as well as integrating aspects of society, looks for class differentiation based on the relation of the classes to the means of production, which alternately give rise to opposing interests. Another theory which deals with social conflict is so-called Social Darwinism.⁴⁴ The fundamental idea of this theory is that society and groups are engaged in a struggle for existence in which the fit survive. The Social Darwinists were simply trying to prove that "there had been a process analogous to biological selection in the struggle for existence among societies."⁴⁵ For the most part they saw the units of struggle to be society and the process wars and conquests.

The first sociologist to consider conflict as a separate subject, without reference to any larger subject like the Marxian theory or evolution and survival, was Georg Simmel.⁴⁶ He was interested in both internal and external conflict, in both causes and results and in both personal and group involvement. As Robert Angell put it, "If one can summarise so diffuse a piece of work, the central idea in Simmel's essay is that conflict is constructive. It is his belief not only that it gives rise to social change, as Marx would have it, but also that in many ways it is immediately integrative."⁴⁷ Such a function becomes apparent when there is an external danger threatening the society. A good example for this is the Israeli society. It consists of individuals who immigrated to Palestine from almost every country in Asia, Europe and America. They had great differences in race, culture, and language but their common fear of the Arabs had the effect of uniting them. In Simmel's words: "Conflict is thus designed to resolve divergent dualisms. It is a way of achieving some kind of unity....This is roughly parallel to the fact that it is the most violent symptom of a disease which represents the efforts of the organism to free itself of disturbances and damages caused by them... Conflict itself resolves the tension between contrasts. The fact that it aims at peace is only one, an especially obvious expression of its nature: the synthesis of elements that work both against and for one another."⁴⁸

Simmel asserts that conflict occasioned by clashes of interests or clashes of personalities contain an element of limitation in so far as the struggle is only a means towards an end, if the desired result can be attained as well or better by other means, such other means may be employed. In such instances conflict is only one of several functional alternatives. In other words, conflict could be a means to reach or accomplish an end or a specific result. Therefore, he differentiates between two types of conflict: non-realistic conflict, which arises exclusively from aggressive impulses which seek expression no matter what the subject and has no specific aim. The other type is the realistic conflict which arises from frustration of specific demands within the relationship which are directed at the presumed frustrating object.⁴⁹ In this sense the conflict between the Palestinians and the Zionists is a realistic conflict. The Palestinians are fighting to gain their rights which are frustrated by the Zionists and "Israel".

Simmel believes that if the conflict or fight is just a means to reach a specific aim or object, it is possible to reach such specific results by means other than fighting (perhaps peacefully). "Since the fight is centred in a purpose outside itself, it is qualified by the fact that, in principle, every end can be attained by more than one means. The desire for possession or subjection, even for the annihilation of the enemy, can be satisfied through combination and events other than fight. Where conflict is merely a means determined by a superior purpose, there is no reason not to restrict or even avoid it, provided it can be replaced by other measures which have the same promise of success."⁵⁰

Pluralism

Of the various models used in the analysis of multi-ethnic and settler societies, Pluralism and colonialism stand out as the most relevant. In this Chapter I am going to discuss and apply Pluralist theory to the situation in Palestine and the conflict between the Palestinians and the Zionists. A theory of the "Plural Society" in relation to colonialism has been developed from the work of two Dutch social scientists John S. Furnivall and Julius H. Boeke.⁵¹ To Furnivall and Boeke, Pluralistic Society derived from the disintegration of native cultures under the impact of European colonialism. Their principal problem was thus to explain how the native cultures of the world, all non-white and living in the tropics, contrived to respond to capitalist culture during the period of colonization.

As conceived in the literature of race and ethnic relations, Pluralism departs drastically from the "political" model of Pluralism to which I alluded previously. Pluralism in this sense denotes differentiation and segmentation along cultural, social and racial lines. When Colonialism brought the West into contact with the East in an unequal relationship of economic exploitation and political dominance, one result of this process, Furnivall noticed, was the disintegration of these societies into many groups different ethnically, culturally, linguistically and economically. He describes the relation between these different groups as follows:

"They mix but not combine, each group holds by its own religion, its own culture and language, its own ideas and ways. There is a Plural Society. With different sections of the community living side by side, but separately, within the same political unit. Even in the economic

sphere there is a division of labour along racial lines."⁵²

Malcolm Cross has argued that the colonial policies which were based on the notion of "divide and rule" to protect the colonizer's interests were responsible for creating Plural Societies in the colonized countries. He argues that: "The Plural Society is the product of colonial exploitation while the racial divisions which, most frequently characterize it, are exacerbated by the operation of colonial policy."⁵³

For M.G.Smith, the thing which really mattered in deciding whether a society is Plural or not is its institutional system. "Pluralism is a condition in which members of a common society are internally distinguished by fundamental differences in their institutional practices."⁵⁴ A society is therefore, heterogeneous if it exhibits single basic institutions, for Smith the United States, but varies at the secondary level, while it is Plural if this institutional diversity is also present at the basic level.⁵⁵ Thus, "Pluralism simultaneously connotes a social structure characterized by fundamental discontinuities and cleavages, and a cultural complex based on systematic institutional diversity."⁵⁶

In a Plural Society, the subjected majority of the population may or may not share a single common system of institutions; often the people are internally subdivided by their differing institutional allegiances, but in all cases they simultaneously differ in their political status and in their institutional practice and organization from the discrete minority who rule them.⁵⁷

Boeke identifies the Plural Society as follows: "It is not necessary that a society be exclusively dominated by one social system. Where this is the case at least, one social style prevails, the society in question may be called homogeneous; where on the contrary, simultaneously two or more social systems appear, clearly distinct the one from the other, and each dominate a part of the society, there we have to do with a dual or Plural society."⁵⁸ The essence of Pluralism, Boeke, observes further "is the clashing of an imported social system with an indigenous social system of another style."⁵⁹

This concept of the Plural Society is useful for my purpose. It was the clashes between the indigenous Palestinian social order with the

more advanced imported Zionist and British Capitalist systems which led to the conflict between the Palestinians on the one hand and the Zionists and the British on the other. The Palestinians, as a result of this colonial and settlement process, were kept mainly occupied by agriculture and lowergrade jobs, divided along family, religious and district lines, encouraged sometimes by the British, and left without any representative bodies, while the Zionists dominated commerce and industry, with the help of the British, and were well represented in Palestine and in London through the Jewish Agency which was approved by the Mandate over Palestine.⁶⁰

As in any other colonized society, the British used military force to suppress Palestinian resistance to British occupation and Zionist settlement. Such repression and military power, according to Smith, is an essential pre-condition for the maintenance of the Plural Society's structure, which is the only guarantee for continuation of the colonial rule over the natives. He observes that: "Given the fundamental differences of belief, value and organization that connote Pluralism, the monopoly of power by one cultural section is the essential pre-condition for the maintenance of the total society in its current form."⁶¹

According to Smith it is the relative power positions of the various groups in society vis-a'-vis each other which keep a Plural Society in its current form. When the balance of power is disturbed, Smith expects violence among the different segments of society. He observes that: "Since the Plural Society depends for its structural form on the regulation of intersectional relations by the Government, changes in the social structure pre-suppose political changes, and these usually have a violent form."⁶²

The Plural Society which emerged in Palestine as a result of Zionist settlement is a good example for Smith's point of view. The Palestinian majority were against Zionist settlement in Palestine and in time a conflict developed between the Palestinians and the Jews. This conflict was there all the time but was suppressed by the British military forces. When the British left the country the conflict between the two communities developed into violence and war. Smith goes on to say that "When the dominant section is also a minority, the structural implications of Cultural Pluralism have their most extreme expression,

and the dependence on regulation by force is greatest."⁶³ In this concept Pluralism differs from Robert Park's Race Relations Theory which states that "The Race relations cycle which takes the form, to state it abstractly, of contacts, competition, accommodation and eventual assimilation."⁶⁴

Pluralism is not without its critics. Some are sympathetic, but others such as Oliver Cox,⁶⁵ question the entire theoretical viability of the concept. Essentially because of the multiplicity of its dimensions, social, political, racial and so forth, Cox argues that: "Pluralism cannot now be accepted as a scientific concept."⁶⁶ And his final conclusion states that "the value of the term Pluralism for the study of race relations is quite limited. It has been given no consistent meaning or interpretation...but it is popular and scientifically resonant, hence I have no illusions about its future career."⁶⁷

David Lockwood, while admitting that Pluralism may go some way in illuminating black-white relations, remarks that: "the concept of Plural Society is less of a novel contribution to social theory, and in several respects, it poses less fundamental issues of sociological analysis."⁶⁸ He goes on to suggest that Pluralism was not the best model for examining race relations in a society such as the United States. In summarizing the utility of the various perspectives discussed in this chapter so far, Rex makes the following relevant remark: "It will be noticed that, relatively speaking Pluralist theory seems to accept a certain looseness in the relationship of one segment to another while at the same time attaching a crucial significance to cultural differences. By contrast structural functionalist and Marxist stratification theories seems to point to a much closer involvement of one group with another. Functionalism emphasizes the ultimate value system, Marxism the activity with the social relations of production as the central issue in mens lives. Pluralist theory seems to imply that involvement in the policy and in production is less important for men, as a central life interest, than is the culture which governs their relations outside their working lives."⁶⁹

Nevertheless, Rex concludes by stressing the point that: "the emphasis of Pluralist theory does draw attention to some central features of colonial social structures, which Marxism, for instance does not."⁷⁰

These features are best described in the presence of specific marketplace relationships not depicted either in classical Marxist class relations or in situations which typify Capitalist systems with so-called free labour. Rex goes on to make an analytical distinction between colonial and metropolitan society. In the case of metropolitan society with colonial migrants, the models of contact between colonizer and colonized are characterized by:⁷¹

A. Urban systems of stratification of a variety of different kinds in which the migrants add to the system at the bottom, forming some kind of a new under class element.

B. Situations in which a particular group of outsiders is called upon to perform a role which although essential to the social and economic life of a society, is in conflict with its value system. This is the type of society which emerged in Palestine as a result of Zionist settlement there.

It must be noticed that in Rex's terms the definition of what constitutes a metropolitan society is not identical with what other students of race and ethnic relations designate as such. Banton, for one, reserves the definition for the traditional centre in the mother country which regulates the setting up of a colonial society, London, for example, played such a role relative to the overseas colonies.⁷² For Rex, the concept is not strictly bound up by a geographical relationship, but rather by the structural features which determine the role played by the immigrants in the colonial economy. Thus, when colonial and metropolitan societies exist in one nation state, as is the case in the United States and South Africa and we might add, in Israel, the geographical distinction between metropolitan and colonial society vanishes: "Thus a migration from the deep South to Chicago for a black American is akin to a migration from Jamaica to London or Birmingham, while on the other hand the boardrooms of Johannesburg are much like those of London or New York, a metropolitan economy and society having been established in this latter case as close as possible to the production system."⁷³ However, Banton explains that a conflict of interest could happen between the mother country and the settler groups: "The tension between its (the settlers') interests and those of the metropolitan society may then become as important as the tension between the colonialists and the colonized."⁷⁴

In the light of this notion it will be possible to explain the relation between the Zionist settlers in Palestine and the British imperialist power between 1940 and 1946. British interests became different from those of the Zionists and, therefore, military violence broke out between the two allies as will be shown in the coming chapters.

Aware of the various shortcomings and pit falls inherent in Pluralism, Van Den Berghe does not restrict his conception to one dimension of society at the expense of another. Neither does he conceive of Pluralism in a binary fashion, that is to say, either societies are Pluralistic or they are not. Although Pluralistic Societies have to manifest institutional duplication, such duplication is a matter of degree only.⁷⁵ He observes that: "Clearly, Pluralism is best conceived as a matter of degree rather than an all or none phenomenon. A Society is Pluralistic to the extent that it is structurally segmented and culturally diverse. In more operational terms, Pluralism is characterized by relative absence of value consensus the relative rigidity and clarity of group definitions, the relative presence of conflict, or at least, of lack of integration and complementarity between various parts of the social system, the segmentary and specific character of relationships, and the relative existence of sheer institutional duplication between the various segments of the Society."⁷⁶

Some writers remove the ideological and political economic aspect of Zionism from the European colonial imperial context of which it was "an integral part and from which it drew much early inspiration."⁷⁷ Some Israeli and European writers are particularly sensitive and some times deny the colonialist nature of Zionism.⁷⁸ As I will show later in this chapter what is important for a sociologist, however, is the outcome of any sociological process. It is more important for us to study the outcome of Zionist settlement, its relation with the colonial power, Britain, and its effects, in the end, on Palestinian society and the nature of the Plural Society which emerged there.

South Africa: A Model Of A Plural Society

Zionists always denied any association between Zionist settlement and colonialism. They argued that the Zionist settlers did not go to

Palestine for material profit or to exploit the natives which are the main aims of colonialism (other than political and strategic considerations). Such popular views among Zionists are expressed clearly by Avnery who argues that: "The means employed by the Zionist Movement were the antithesis of colonialism...Zionists did not come to Palestine to rule over its inhabitants. They aspired to settle and work the land they bought by themselves. Those who embodied the Zionist ideal sought to create a new type of society and of a national economy, where Jews would engage in all type of labour...without exploiting anyone."⁷⁹

It is true that the Zionist settlement was not a classical colonialism, rather, in my view, it is much worse than that, it was settler-colonialism with its main aim as the dispossessing and uprooting the native population in order to establish there an exclusively Jewish state. This Zionist settlement was even worse than the classical white settlement elsewhere in the World in the sense that although classical white settlers exploited the natives, they nonetheless, allowed them to continue to live in their country with the prospect of gaining independence in the future.

In order to make this point absolutely clear, it seems useful to use the South African white settlement as a model for the Plural Society, in relation to colonialism, and compare the Zionist settlement in Palestine with it.

In the light of previous analysis of the Pluralist model, South Africa stands as a typical settler and Plural Society. And because there are not many differences among social scientists about the dual nature of South African society and the existence of great similarities between the situation in Palestine before 1948 and between the Palestinians and Jews at the present time and that of South African case I intend to make a comparison between the two situations.

I will be looking for similarities as well as differences in methods, policies, attitudes, aims, and more importantly in the impact of both settlements on the natives in both Palestine and South Africa. This I hope will give us more insight into the nature of the conflict and the best ways of solving it. I am, however, not going to give historical details about the process of settlement in South Africa, but suffice it to say that this settlement took place under the 18th and 19th century

imperialist notion which considered any land outside Europe as empty and ready for the white man's occupation and settlement. Moreover, under such a notion, the Whites could install themselves, by force and the protection of a mother country or any imperial power, as the dominant element in the territory with the absolute right to confiscate the land and to exploit the native people and the mineral resources of the territory.

The similarities between the settlement in South Africa and Palestine are the following:

1. Both settlements took place against the will of the natives and under the sponsorship, encouragement and protection of a colonial power. In both cases the majority of the settlers were European who used military force to suppress the natives' opposition to their settlement.

2. In both cases the settlers confiscated most of the natives' lands and uprooted a great number of the native population from their homes and lands to other areas. In South Africa the natives were forcibly removed from areas designated by the settlers as whites' areas to the so called Black Homelands. In Palestine the majority of the natives were expelled by the Zionist settlers or they fled from fear of being killed during the Zionist attacks on their areas. They were not allowed to return to their homes even after the end of the hostilities between the Arabs and "Israel."

3. In both cases the settlers developed their own capitalist economic systems and followed a policy of discrimination and economic social and political segregation. However, while the natives in South Africa were exploited by the settlers, the Palestinians were denied work and employment on the the land bought by Zionists or in the Zionist sector. This Zionist policy was designed to force the natives to leave the country altogether. Indeed it forced many rural workers to migrate to the towns, thus creating a class of landless and unemployed people who formed the seeds of the Palestine Revolt of 1936-1939.

The result of both settlements was the creation of plural societies in both countries consisting of two different communities with clearly conflicting interests. In both cases the settlers denied the natives the right to self-determination and in the end the settlers established their exclusive regimes. Consequently, the natives in both cases are engaged in a political and military struggle to correct this abnormal

situation and gain their independence.

In the light of this analysis it can be said that the process of Zionist settlement in Palestine before 1948, which started at the beginning of the 20th century and under the protection of the British imperialist power, can be labelled as settler colonialism and it is similar in this respect to the White settlement in South Africa.⁸⁰

The main difference between the two settlements is in ideology. While the White settlers in South Africa built their argument in settling in that area on the imperialist notion, the right of the White man to settle anywhere outside Europe, the Zionists based their argument on the following:

1. The religious argument. Zionist ideologists argued that Palestine was promised to the Jews by God and therefore, by emigrating to that country they fulfill God's promise.⁸¹

2. The historical connection. This goes back more than two thousand years to when a Jewish kingdom was established in part of Palestine. After the destruction of their kingdom the Jews dispersed all over the Old World and perhaps Europe. The Zionists argued that the present Jews were the descendants of the ancient Hebrews and therefore had the right to return to Palestine.⁸²

3. Humanitarian reasons. The Jews were persecuted and the best solution for their problem was to emigrate to Palestine.

4. Legal reasons. Britain had promised the Zionists to establish in Palestine a Jewish home and the League of Nations had accepted their claim for a historical connection with Palestine and stated this in the provision of the Mandate for Palestine. Therefore, the Zionist immigration was legal and was accepted by the League of Nations.⁸³ Such arguments, however, are proved to be not relevant to the 20th century Zionist settlement in Palestine as we will see in the next chapters.

5. Realism. Finally "Israel" was established as a result of a U.N. resolution⁸⁴ and the Arabs and the World have to accept and live with this reality.

Native choices and future prospects

The South African regime of today is built on the old imperialist notion of the so called the "White Man's Burden" and therefore it ignores completely the rights of the natives. The racist regime still practises, until the present day, clear and declared policies of racial,

political, and economic discrimination against the Black South Africans.⁸⁵ For Von den Berghe, South Africa offers a test case. The dual political structure was clear cut, cultural and national apartheid was highly visible, so was the economic system, "with a high productivity money economy (among whites) and a subsistence one (among Blacks)."⁸⁶

The social mechanisms which ensure the workings of the South African system are varied. While naked coercion is an obvious feature of this system, it is only one aspect of it. The basic feature of this system is the adoption on the part of the Blacks of compliance procedures which imply adherence to instrumental norms connected with occupational role, rules of etiquette, styles of dress, and so forth, yet retaining a degree of dissension concerning fundamental values. In this manner, Van den Berghe points out that the Africans are able to cope with the dual Society through shuttling between the native culture of the Blacks and the White culture of the metropolis. Thus the Black "migrant workers can adjust to town life, so that while in town they appear quite Westernized, only to become very traditional at home in rural areas."⁸⁷

Notwithstanding the ability to adjust, the Blacks' social structure exhibits all the symptoms of social disorganization typical of colonial regimes. In spite of a distorted class structure, Van Den Berghe sees a revolutionary potential among the oppressed African masses: "In erecting a rigid color bar, the dominant Whites succeeded in maintaining a monopoly of leading positions in Government, commerce, industry, finance, farming, education, and religion. By the same token, they prevented the rise of a class of Africans with a stake in the status quo; for all practical purposes, there is no African landed peasantry or bourgeoisie (in the Marxian sense of owners of means of production). Conversely, the Whites created an exploited urban proletariat, a "middle class" of under paid clerks and other petty white collar workers, and a tiny elite of professionals and semi professionals who are strongly discriminated against. All these strata share a common interest in radical change."⁸⁸ Van den Berghe then concludes that: "The end of White supremacy must come in South Africa, and it will come through revolution and violence."⁸⁹

Fanon agrees with Van Den Berghe in his optimism about the revolutionary potential of the colonized peoples. He argues that the Colonized people are no longer alone or isolated from the rest of the World and their frontiers remain open to new ideas and echoes from everywhere. He believes that the colonized people "discovers that violence is in the atmosphere, that it here and there bursts out, and here and there sweeps away the colonial regime."⁹⁰ Fanon concludes that for the native this violence represents the only line of action.⁹¹

However, such optimism is not shared by H. Adam. According to Adam, who takes South Africa as an example, the demise of South Africa through internally inspired revolutions is not likely to come about in the near future.⁹² He states this for three reasons:

1. Increasing economic interdependency between the Blacks and the Whites will eventually mean that South Africa will lose its Pluralistic character through increasing economic integration. According to Adam, changes in the class structure will necessitate "deracialization" and incorporation of the blacks into the productive and consuming sectors of society. While such a process might bring the subordinates (blacks) into a relatively improved position, their fragmentary nature and absence of organized political parties, or trade unions among the blacks will compel the politicized blacks to withdraw and reorganize under the umbrella of African Nationalism.⁹³ Adam argues that the emerging class conflict between the Whites and the Blacks would create a need for political accommodation, or as Adam would put it, the need for a "pragmatic oligarchy."⁹⁴

In other words Adam's thesis is that the common interests of the Blacks and the Whites will lead eventually to a peaceful accommodation between the two communities without the need for complete assimilation. The Whites need the Black workers for the development of their economy while the blacks need the jobs and the money, which are offered by Whites, and are necessary for their survival. This interdependency will lead the two communities to come closer and closer to each other and in time they will accept the reality of life and the need for "pragmatic oligarchy" to regulate their relations. Adam's conclusion⁹⁵ in this manner is similar to that of Max Gluckman in his analysis of Nuer society in Sudan.⁹⁶ Bearing in mind that the circumstances between the two situations were different, since there was no foreign settlement supported by colonial power in Sudan's case, Gluckman states that the

more common interests and close relations, became dominant in the Nuer's relations the more likely they were to develop peaceful relations and vice versa. In his words: "Feud is waged and vengeance taken when the parties live sufficiently far apart, or are too weakly related by diverse ties...But where they are close together, many institutions and ties operate to exert pressure on the guerrillas to reach a settlement."⁹⁷

Furthermore, Gluckman noted that the pressure for peaceful relations, "Is exerted by common interest in a modicum of peace over a certain area, which is necessary if men are to live in any kind of security... The conflict between the loyalties held by a man thus, in a wider range of relations, establish order and lead to recognition and acceptance of obligation within law."⁹⁸

2. South Africa's economic strength compared to the rest of the neighbouring African countries. According to Adam, "for nearly one third of all commodities produced for the market in Africa stem from this area."⁹⁹

3. The disunity and disintegration among the Blacks in South Africa and the military weakness of the neighbouring countries. Adam argues that there is no revolutionary potential among the Blacks in the near future because of these combined reasons: "As long as African unity is a dream without economic and social reality, the highly equipped industrialized state of the South will not be threatened."¹⁰⁰

Adam uses similar arguments to rule out any possible effective assistance from the neighbouring African States to the Black South Africans in the near future. That is due to the military superiority of South Africa vis-a'-vis the rest of the neighbouring countries. Therefore, Adam sees the African choices as follows: "In the face of total subordination political behavior becomes redefined as a technique of maximum survival. No longer can victory be expected or even sought. The choice they (the Africans) have to make is between political suicide or accommodation. Realising this alternative many opted for pragmatic survival."¹⁰¹

Adam also pointed out another important aspect of the conflict in South Africa, that is the outcome of the Africans' violence. Instead of bringing about any concessions from the Whites, it strengthened their military power to such an extent that it became extremely difficult for the Black majority to overcome it. "Operation Mayebuye (come back) which

aimed at frightening Whites into making concessions, instead resulted in a strengthening of the repressive machinery and a general discouragement of African militancy closer to general resignative despair than determination to actively resist White domination."¹⁰²

I agree with Adam in his point of view that the military and economic superiority of South Africa will succeed in suppressing the Black South Africans' resistance and preventing any effective assistance from outside as long as the Black South Africans' social structure stays disintegrated, without a representative political body and the neighbouring countries stay disunited and militarily and economically weak. On the other hand, I disagree with him in his view that the black South Africans will eventually give up their struggle and integrate into South African social life or economy. The black South Africans may have to accept the situation as long as the Whites manage to suppress them by force. But this situation cannot last for ever since according to Dahrendorf, with whom I agree, "effective suppression of conflict is in the long run impossible."¹⁰³

I also agree with Van Den Berghe that there is a conflict between the two communities in South Africa at least simmering under the surface and in 1985 this conflict became more violent. I would argue, therefore, that there is a real revolutionary potential among the Blacks in South Africa.

Nevertheless, Adam distinguishes between "colonies of exploitation" and "settler colonies." The former typifies classical colonialism where the colonizing group has no plans to settle permanently in large numbers in the colony and continues to conduct its affairs in terms of an official mother country. In the latter type the settler group remains in the country in relatively sizeable numbers cutting off its official ties with a sponsoring foreign entity, and assumes responsibility for conducting its own affairs.¹⁰⁴ This distinction is useful to my purpose since it is this type which most closely relates to the situation in Palestine. "The colony of this type is neither exploited in the interests of a foreign power, nor degraded to a market for foreign surplus commodities but is characterized rather by a domestic colonialism which at certain stages might exceed the metropolitan colonies in degree of exploitation. But it is questionable whether this holds generally true. For as a ruling class the settlers are also forced

to maintain a degree of harmony in the system. They have more at stake than a foreign colonial power in their own survival."¹⁰⁵

Albert Memmi makes a relevant remark about the future relation of the colonizer and the colonized: "The refusal of the colonized cannot be anything but absolute, that is, not only revolt but a révolution."¹⁰⁶

From the previous analysis of the Plural Society in South Africa two different points of view emerge:

Firstly, the possibility of pragmatic accommodation and peaceful relations between the Blacks and the Whites which is Adam's view;

Secondly, eventual revolution by the Blacks leading to the destruction of the apartheid system and the restoration of freedom and equality between Blacks and Whites, which is Berghe's view.

What choices do the Palestinians have compared to the Black South Africans? In the light of the previous analysis it seems that the Palestinians in principle have two choices: assimilation or revolution. In examining the possibility of the Palestinians' assimilation in "Israeli" society it seems that it is not likely to happen for three reasons:

1. Policies of "Israel" which discriminate against the Palestinians and consider them as second class citizens.¹⁰⁷

2. Palestinians themselves feel that they have more right to Palestine than the Zionists have.

3. They now have a representative body namely the Palestine Liberation Organization (P.L.O.)¹⁰⁸ which is recognized by all the Arab countries and some non-Arab states as the sole representative of the Palestinian people. The PLO has succeeded in securing an observer seat in the U.N. and has many representative and officially recognized offices in many countries, including Russia, France and India. The P.L.O also has its own guerrilla forces which are engaged in military struggle against the Israeli occupation of their homeland and it is not likely that they will stop this struggle before they achieve their rights according to the U.N. Resolutions of 1947 which recognise their rights for the establishment of their independent state. Briefly, assimilation of the Palestinians is not possible either in "Israel" or in the Arab countries because it is against the wishes of the majority of the Palestinian people, against the policy of most Arab countries and against the policy of "Israel", which calls for an exclusively Jewish state and opposition

to a Palestinian one.

The other alternative for the Palestinians is revolution. In my view the present "Israeli" policies of non-recognition of the existence of the Palestinian people, denial of their right to self-determination and policies of annexing East Jerusalem and settlement in the occupied Arab territory have left the Palestinians without any other choice but revolution. The Palestinians, I believe, have a real revolutionary potential for the following reasons:

Firstly, The Palestinians are part of the Arab Nation and all the Arab countries support their struggle to reach their aim of self-determination. For example, four wars have taken place between certain Arab states¹⁰⁹ and "Israel" to try to correct the injustice which was done to the Palestinians and in support for their rights. On the other hand, the Arab States are committed not to accept any decision concerning the Palestine question without the approval of the Palestinians. "The position of the Arab States fully supports the Palestinian Arabs' demand for rights to homes and country. Any solution agreed to by the Palestine Arabs would be acceptable to the Arab States. Conversely, the Arab States cannot conclude a settlement that is unacceptable to the Palestine Arabs."¹¹⁰

Secondly, the Palestinians now comprise four categories. About 650,000 live in "Israel", 1,300,000 live in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip under "Israeli" occupation,¹¹¹ about one million are in Jordan and about one million more live in Lebanon, Syria, the Gulf Area and in the rest of the World. From this distribution it seems apparent that the Palestinians not only have revolutionary potential against "Israel" but also a destabilising potential in the Arab host countries and in the Gulf Area. Evidence for this is the civil war in Jordan in 1970 and the civil war in Lebanon between 1975-1985. Through active propaganda, during the last 35 years, through the different media, writing, education and cinema the Palestinians have gained a great deal of sympathy and support among the Arab masses in the Arab World. Furthermore, the Palestinians' miserable life in the refugee camps still represents living proof of their tragedy. It can be said that the Palestinians now have a real influence on the policy makers, especially in the neighbouring countries to Palestine and to some extent in the Gulf States.

In contrast, the Blacks in South Africa neither have large numbers of refugees in the neighbouring states, nor are they considered as citizens or part of the population of these neighbouring countries. Therefore, they do not have as much influence on those countries as the Palestinians do on the Arab Countries. For example South Africa has signed a non-aggression pact with Mozambique and a ceasefire with Angola¹¹² which aim at stopping the Black guerrillas from operating against South Africa from these countries.

It is true that both South Africa and "Israel" have military superiority over their neighbours, but the gap between "Israel" and the Arabs seems to be closing as time goes on, especially with support from Russia for some Arab countries such as Syria. "Israel", unlike South Africa, does not have any economic or diplomatic relations with her neighbours and recently she began to experience economic difficulties as a result of the continuous state of war with the Arabs and the policy of economic boycott imposed by the Arabs against her.¹¹³

The other similarity between the conditions of the Palestinians and the Arab states and that of the Black South Africans and the African states is the disunity among the Arab states and disintegration and differences among the Palestinians. Any active resistance and guerrilla war against "Israel" must come from and be initiated by the Palestinians living in the Arab countries and supported by a strong united Arab government. This I think is not likely to happen in the very near future.¹¹⁴ The quiet intervals between the Arabs and "Israel" are not a result of the Arabs' pragmatic acceptance of the status quo, but rather, in my view, a preparatory time for yet another confrontation. Past experience has taught us that it is difficult to make accurate predictions in the Middle East because the situation could be changed in days and in hours rather than years. Therefore, if South Africa has had to resort to "Pragmatic Apartheid" to quote Adam, "Israel" would have to incorporate a wider range of pragmatic policies and compromises to meet the Palestinians' demands and grant them the right to self-determination according to the U.N. resolution and international law in the area assigned to them by the same Resolution by which "Israel" itself was established.

One of the pre-requisites for solving or regulating a conflict, Dahrendorf argued, was that both parties to a conflict have to recognize the necessity and reality of the conflict situation and in this sense, the fundamental justice of the cause of the opponent. That is to say that both parties have to accept their conflict as it is.¹¹⁵ Dahrendorf argues that wherever the attempt is made "to dispute the case of the opponent by calling it unrealistic or denying the opponent the right to make a cause at all, effective regulation (of the conflict) is not possible."¹¹⁶

In applying this principle to the Palestinian-Zionist conflict we find the following:

Firstly, the Palestinian did not recognize the Zionist settlement as legal or legitimate because it took place against their will and brought alien settlers to their country. On the other hand, the Zionists and the British denied the Palestinian majority the right to self-determination. As I will show in the next chapters this was one of the major obstacles which prevented the two parties from reaching any understanding in Palestine before 1948.

Secondly, at the present time we still have the same situation, that is "Israel" refuses to recognize the Palestinian cause and denies them the right to self-determination even in the parts of Palestine which were assigned to them in the U.N. Resolution of 1947 and also refuses to comply with the U.N. resolutions in regard to their rights to return to Palestine.¹¹⁷ Consequently, the Palestinians refuse to recognize the right of "Israel" to exist before it recognizes their rights. This situation, which I believe is not realistic, consumes a lot of money, human lives, and efforts from both sides, which could be better used for the development and progress of the area.

Concluding Remarks

In the light of the preceding discussion it is possible to draw up a list of the main features of settler societies which can be applied to the history of Palestinian-Zionist relations in Palestine and later to the relations between the Jews and the Palestinians both in "Israel" or in the Palestinian areas under "Israeli" occupation (the West Bank and the Gaza Strip).

First and foremost to be noted is that the conflict and the Plural Society which developed in Palestine were the product of the clashes

between the Palestinian traditional social order and the imported capitalist Zionist system supported by the British forces. While this feature typifies to a large extent the situation in Mandate Palestine, its remnants are present up to the present moment, as is evidenced by the striking contrast between contemporary Palestinian and Jewish sectors in Palestine and "Israel."

The asymmetrical relationship through contacts between the Palestinians and the Zionist settlers was governed and regulated by the gradual emergence of the Zionist settlers political and economic institutions, by the importation by the Zionist settlers of European technology and know-how, and by the influx of Zionist capital and the steady increase in the number of settlers.

An integral part of this process was the acquisition of land by Zionists and the eventual distortion of the Palestinian social structure, best reflected in the emergence of landlessness, unemployment and migrant workers, which continue to be features of the economic life of "Israel" and the West Bank and the Gaza Strip which "Israel" occupied in the 1967 War. The asymmetrical relationship between the Palestinians and Zionist sector was augmented by maintaining a complete closure in the economic, educational and cultural spheres and later in the residential quarters of the settlers vis-'a-vis the indigenous Palestinians.

A second aspect of a settler regime is that it creates a justificatory ideology based on the dehumanization of the culture and way of life of the indigenous population. Thus, the native Arabs are masked by a negative stereotypical image which is utilized to justify his neglect. Needless to say, this type of image, augmented with an inferior perception of the self is often enough internalized at one stage of colonization by the native people. An important corollary of this is that the native, even when he assumes an impressive numerical superiority, becomes invisible in the eyes of the settlers.

It seems to me that the final aim of Zionist settlement decided the pattern of their relations with the Palestinians. The initial Zionist settlement did not rest on physical subjugation or on exploiting the natives, as has occurred in other cases of classical settler colonialism. The aim of Zionism was to dispossess the Palestinians and

eventually converting Palestine into an exclusively Jewish state. As I will show in the next chapters, this manifest goal of Zionism produced other consequences such as Jewish exclusiveness, a developed Jewish sector, an undeveloped Palestinian sector, sporadic Palestinian violent reaction and revolt and political separation. It is this system of domination and the imposition of foreign settlement and rule that created the Palestine conflict.

Maxime Rodinson rightly defines the conflict as follows: "The conflict therefore appears essentially as the struggle of an indigenous population against the occupation of part (now all) of their territory by foreigners. Of course there are many other sides to the conflict which could be brought out. None of these, however, seems relevant to the basic definition."¹¹⁸

The other important conclusion to this chapter is that Zionist settlement in Palestine is similar to the white settlement in South Africa in the following aspects:

1. Both settlements took place against the will of the natives and were not possible without the sponsorship and the protection of a colonial power.
2. In both cases the natives were denied political rights and some of them were dispossessed while others were uprooted from their homes and lands and transferred to other areas.
3. In both cases only the settlers established their exclusive states while the natives were denied such rights. The main difference between the South African regime and Zionism is that while the South African Whites denied the Blacks any political rights and followed a complete policy of segregation, the Zionists claimed that they developed their separate institutions because they did not want to be seen as colonialists. From the outset the Zionists made such a claim and tried to use the so called historical and the religious association of the Jews with Palestine as a justification for their settlement as I will show in the next chapter.

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CHAPTER TWO

Historical Background

The Zionist claim to Palestine is primarily based on ancient Biblical promises of four thousand years ago that God promised Abraham and his sons the land of Palestine.¹ And since they claimed that they were the descendants of the the Hebrews, who, they claim, were in previous occupation of the land, then they were entitled to emigrate to Palestine and re-establish a Jewish state there.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the validity of such Zionist claims and more importantly to see if these claims are relevant to the 20th century Zionist colonization of Palestine.

For the Palestinians, Palestine has been their undisputed homeland since the dawn of history. They are not, as is popularly believed all exclusively the descendents of the Arab Muslim conquerors of the 7th century, they are, in fact, mainly the descendants of the original native population, Canaanites, Philistines, and partly the descendants of a mixture of all the conquerors, Babylonians, Greeks, Romans and Turks.²

The name of the country Palestine discloses its non-Jewish character. It could be a variant of the Arabic word "Filisteen" which means the abode of the Philistines.³ While some other writers also believe it could be derived from Philistenes one of the earliest tribes which lived in Palestine in the 12th century B.C.⁴

In the Old Testament the word Palestine was used in different forms: Philistia⁵, philistim⁶, and in the Bible it was also referred to as the "Land of Canaan."⁷

These forms and uses of the word Palestine support the argument that when the Hebrews came to Palestine for the first time, between 1400-1200 B.C., from Ur in Iraq or later from Egypt, they found the country already inhabited by the Canaanites and the Philistines who had already established their distinctive culture and civilization, which was represented in hundreds of villages and towns. Even the name of the country had been related to the natives.⁸ The Hebrews were, therefore, neither the natives nor in earliest possession of the land as the

Zionists claimed.

Under the leadership of King David (1016-971 B.C.) and his son King Solomon (976-936 B.C.) the Hebrews established their kingdom in most of Palestine after overcoming the Philistines and the Canaanites. However, the Jewish kingdom, after Solomon's death, split into the kingdom of Israel in the north and the kingdom of Judah in the south. In 721 B.C. the Assyrians occupied the kingdom of Israel, which from that date became politically extinct, while the kingdom of Judah lasted till 585 B.C. when Nubuchadnezzar of Babylon occupied it, destroyed Solomon's Temple and took most of the Jews into captivity to Babylon.

After less than half a century (538) the Persians occupied Palestine and allowed those Jews who wanted to return to Palestine to do so. Some of the Jews returned and rebuilt the Temple while others opted to stay in exile.⁹

In 331 B.C. the Greeks occupied Palestine, followed by the Romans (63 B.C.) who in 70 A.D. occupied Jerusalem and destroyed Solomon's Temple. In 132 A.D. Hadrian crushed the last Jewish revolt and this time he destroyed the old city of Jerusalem and built another one called Alia Capitolima.

The majority of the Jews, however, had been dispersed throughout the different Middle Eastern countries and perhaps elsewhere, and even those of them who remained in Palestine were prevented from entering the new city.¹⁰

The Arab Muslims occupied the country in 637 A.D. and from that date the majority of the natives converted to Islam and became Arabized.

The interesting thing which has to be noticed in this respect is that there was always a distinction between the natives of the country and their conquerors. For example, when the Babylonians occupied Palestine they picked out the Jews from the natives and sent them to live in exile, while when the Babylonians were defeated by the Persians the latter allowed the Jews to return. The Romans did as the Babylonians, they picked out the Jews and destroyed their Temple and even sent some of them to live in exile in other parts of the Roman Empire.¹¹

There is no talk about such action against the native population, the Palestinians, who survived all these waves of conquests, preserved their own life and culture and never assimilated with any of these conquerors.

It seems likely that the Palestinians did not assimilate and preserved their distinctive identity because there were big differences: racial, cultural, religious, linguistic, between them and those occupiers. But this was not the case with the Arab Muslims, with whom they must have had common racial, cultural, language and social relationships, which made it easier for them not only to assimilate and become Arabised but also to identify themselves as Arabs.

It is true that many Arabs settled in Palestine after the Arab conquest, but the majority of the Palestinians who became Arabized were the very same natives who had lived in the country for centuries before the Hebrew conquest.

Rodinson points out that the Palestinians "were native in all the senses of that word."¹²

Cattan, argues that "The Palestinians of today are the descendants of the Philistines, the Canaanites and other early tribes. They are the earliest and original inhabitants of the country. They have lived continuously and without interruption in their country since the dawn of history. Their settlement in Palestine can be traced back at least forty centuries. There were infusions of other racial elements into the Palestinian stock, mainly from the Greeks, the Romans, the Muslim Arabs and the Crusaders. But this Palestine stock which comprises both Muslims and Christians, continued to constitute the main element of the population until the majority of the original inhabitants were displaced by the Israelis in 1948."¹³

The only real title which any people has to its country comes from birth and long continued possession. It is these that give the Palestinians their rights to Palestine,

the British their rights to Britain, and the French their rights to France. And in this sense "the historical connection of the early Hebrews with Palestine is not one based on birth and long possession but upon occupation through invasion."¹⁴

The other important and relevant point in this respect is that not all the Russian, Polish, American and European Jews are physical descendants of the Hebrews of 2,000 years ago.

Dr Shapiro disagrees with those Zionists who attempted to prove that all the Jews of the world belong to one race and form a nation. After briefly tracing their history, Shapiro declares "It is odd, in the light of their past, that the Jews are often considered and much effort expended to prove them to be a distinct race...these (biological) comparisons... prove that the fundamental requirement for any claim that the Jews form a racial entity cannot be met, at least by those traditional standards of racial classification... The wide range of variation between Jewish populations in their physical characteristics and the diversity of the gene frequency of their blood groups, render any unified racial classification for them a contradiction in terms."¹⁵

Koestler, too advanced similar arguments. He argued that the majority of world Jewry are not the descendants of the earlier Hebrews but rather of Khazar origin. The King of Khazar converted to Judaism in A.D. 640 with many of his people.¹⁶

Professor Juan Comas also expresses the view that there is no Jewish race "So far as our knowledge goes, we can assert that Jews as a whole display as great a degree of morphological disparity among themselves as could be found between members of two or more different races."¹⁷

I would argue therefore that there was a historical and religious connection of the Hebrews and their physical descendants¹⁸ with Palestine similar to the historical and religious connection of the Christians, especially the Romans, with the country. Such a spiritual and historical connection, however, entitles the Jews perhaps to visit the Jewish religious sites in Palestine, but surely does not entitle them to political or sovereignty rights over the country, least of all to occupy the country and displace its inhabitants by the use of force.

The Zionist movement, however, used this "historical connection" of the earlier Hebrews with Palestine and God's promise of that country to Jews as a pretext to justify their demands for colonizing the country. The Zionists knew that the idea of "historical connection" would be acceptable to the Christian West which was educated about the connection

of the Jews with Palestine through the Christian faith and the Old Testament. They, to some extent, succeeded in giving the impression that Zionist settlement in Palestine was not a colonization but rather it was a fulfilment of God's promise. Such a misconception was spread due to the concentrated efforts of the Zionist Movement in Britain and America as I will show in the following Section.

Zionism and Palestine¹⁸

The Zionist movement appeared in late 19th century Europe, influenced by the nationalist ferment sweeping the continent. Zionism acquired its particular focus from the ancient Jewish longing for the return to Zion and received a strong impetus from the increasingly intolerable conditions facing the large Jewish communities in Eastern Europe. The movement also developed at the time of major European territorial acquisition in Asia and Africa and benefited from the European powers' competition for influence in the shrinking Ottoman Empire.¹⁹

One result of this involvement with European expansionism, however, was that the leaders of Arab nationalist movements viewed Zionism as an adjunct of European colonialism. Moreover, Zionist assertions of the contemporary relevance of the Jews' historical ties to Palestine, coupled with their land purchases and immigration, alarmed the Palestinian Arabs. The ultimate aim of Zionism as expressed by some Zionist settlers was "eventually to gain control of Palestine"²⁰ and the establishment of an exclusively Jewish state. This goal, they argued, would be accomplished both by agricultural and industrial development and by military means. These aims were embodied in the political Zionist programme crystallized at the first Zionist congress of August 1897. This programme included:²¹

1. The promotion of colonization (settlement) of Palestine by Jewish workers.
2. The organization of European Jewry within the law of each country.
3. The strengthening of Jewish national sentiment and consciousness.
4. Preparatory steps towards getting governments' consent for the attainment of the aim of Zionism.

The idea of a Jewish state was, in the beginning, a reaction to the social and political disabilities which had been imposed on Jews in Eastern Europe. There was no mention of any "historical or religious connection" with Palestine, which became later the main Zionist

argument, in this programme. Other institutional developments followed soon after: the creation of the Jewish National Fund in 1901, the opening of the Palestine Office in Jaffa in 1907 to assist immigrants and purchase land, and the establishment of Tel-Aviv in 1909.²²

Zionism was and had been from the start the faith of a comparatively small minority of Jews. The movement was under persistent attacks from two opposite quarters, in Russia by the general Jewish workers organization (the Bund) and in the west by the leaders of the assimilated Jews who saw in Zionism a weapon which might be used by the anti-semites against them.²³

However, the roots of political Zionism's policy were based on several basic concepts which eventually would lead to an exclusively Jewish state through:²⁴

1. Gradual build-up of an economic and military potential as the basis for the achievement of political aims;
2. Alliance with a great power external to the Middle East which would give their settlers the necessary protection;
3. Acquiring as much land as possible through purchase;
4. the Zionists civilizing mission which would represent Western civilization in an undeveloped country;
5. Non-recognition of the existence of a Palestinian entity;
6. Economic, social and cultural segregation as pre requisites for the eventual establishment of a Jewish state.

Against this background Theodor Herzl, the Zionist leader, first approached Germany. He defined the Zionists' role in the Middle East as follows: "For Europe, we would constitute a bulwark against Asia. Down there we would be the advance post of civilization against barbarism. As a neutral state, we would remain in constant touch with all of Europe, which would guarantee our existence."²⁵

When the Germans rejected²⁷ this Zionist bargain Herzl turned to Turkey offering to buy Palestine with Zionist money. "If His Majesty the Sultan were to give us Palestine we could undertake to regulate Turkey's finances."²⁷ The Turkish Authorities, however, rejected the Zionist offer perhaps because it was against Islam's traditions to sell lands and more importantly to let the Holy Aqsa Mosque come under Zionist control.

Herzl then turned to Britain which first proposed in 1902 that the Zionists could settle in Cyprus, El-Arish or in East Africa. The Zionist congress held in August 1903 accepted the last British offer, the Uganda area. But this acceptance was short lived and the project was abandoned by the seventh Zionist congress held in Basle (Switzerland) in 1905²⁸ in favour of Palestine. Since Palestine was under Ottoman rule the Zionists decided to continue their contacts with Britain and in the meantime they called for physical occupation of the land through immigration.

At the close of the Ottoman era, Zionism was still a small, struggling movement. It had an increasing number of adherents in Europe and some practical achievements in Palestine, but its growth was inhibited by the opposition of the Ottoman Authorities²⁹ and by the absence of a strong European patron.

Nevertheless, the Zionist settlers of the 1900s, provided the nucleus for a major political force and worked out political and socio-economic programmes that guided the movement for the following decades, when political conditions became more auspicious as we will see in the next Chapter.

Britain's Conflicting Promises to both Arabs and Zionists

Shortly after the outbreak of World War One, the British Government concluded a treaty with Sharif Hussein of Mecca that the Arabs should revolt against Turkey in return for Arab independence within certain boundaries. The two sides reached an understanding and alliance in a series of letters exchanged between McMahon, then the British agent in Egypt, and Sharif Hussein as representative of the Arabs during 1915-1916.³⁰

According to this pledge Britain agreed to recognize Arab independence within the boundaries requested by Hussein in his first letter of July 14, 1915. The letter defined the boundaries of the Arab state as: bounded on the north by Mersina and Adana up to the 37th latitude, on the east by the borders of Persia up to the Gulf of Basra, on the south by the Indian Ocean, with the exception of the position of Aden to remain as it was, on the West by the Red Sea, the Mediterranean Sea up to Mersina.³¹

The British agreed to Hussein's proposals but they made some reservations in regard to certain portions of Northern Syria, which France had some interest in and had to be consulted about their future.

Here is McMahon: "Great Britain is prepared to recognize and uphold the independence of the Arabs in all the regions lying within the frontiers proposed by the Sharif of Mecca... The portions of Syria lying to the West of district of Damascus, Homs, Hama and Aleppo cannot be said to be purely Arab."³²

The British perhaps wanted to exclude these portions, which correspond to Lebanon, on the grounds that they had Christians who had traditionally allied themselves with the French.

However, Hussein rejected this British demand stressing that: "these are purely Arab provinces in which the Muslim is indistinguishable from the Christian."³³

The British accepted Hussein's argument in regard to the composition of the population in these areas, but insisted that France should be consulted over their future: "As for the two vilayets (districts) of Aleppo and Beirut the government of Great Britain have fully understood your statement in that respect and noted it with greatest care. But as the interests of their ally France are involved in those two provinces the question calls for careful consideration."³⁴

Hussein, however, accepted the British argument but reserved the right to claim back these areas through negotiations with the Allies after the War: "We shall deem it our duty, at the earliest opportunity after the conclusion of the war, to claim from you Beirut and its coastal regions which we will overlook for the moment on account of France." He emphasised that "any concession designed to give France or any other power possession of a single square foot of territory in these parts is out of the question."³⁵

The important thing here is that there was no thought in those days about a Jewish national home or any deal with Zionism, yet later the British government claimed that Palestine was excluded from the Hussein-McMahon agreement and therefore Britain had the right to dispose of the country as she wished. This matter become so controversial that in 1939 a committee was formed, which consisted of Arabs and Britains, to study the correspondence.

The two sides in the committee admitted that the wording of the letters was vague but each side insisted on its position, the Arabs claimed that Palestine was included in the Arab state while the British claimed that it was excluded.

However, they agreed that the British government "were not free to dispose of Palestine without regard for the wishes and interests of the inhabitants of Palestine."³⁶

According to Marlowe, Hussein agreed to revolt in return for an "undertaking by Great Britain to secure Arab independence over an area from which it can fairly said that Palestine was not specifically excluded."³⁷

I would argue that the important issue here is not whether Palestine was included in the promised independent Arab State or not, but rather if Britain had the right to dispose of the country against the will of its inhabitants, a thing which, in my view, she did not have.

In the light of the previous evidence and in my view Palestine indeed was included in the proposed independent Arab state. There was no mention of a Jewish state at the time nor even was there any agreement between Britain and the Zionists at that time. Britain wanted to reserve the Lebanon for France as became clear in the Sykes-Picot Agreement of the same year.

The Sykes -Picot Agreement³⁸

Immediately after the British had secured the Arabs' alliance they started secret negotiations with the French and Russian governments for the division among themselves of the Asiatic provinces of the Ottoman Empire after victory. According to the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916, the Arab areas were divided into British sphere of influence areas: Iraq, Palestine and Transjordan, and French areas: Syria and Lebanon.

The Sykes-Picot Agreement, however, was negotiated and concluded without the knowledge of the Arabs. It contained provisions which were in direct conflict with the terms of the British pledges to the Arabs.

This Agreement gives us an indication of the the real value of British agreements with countries other than colonialist countries. Such agreements indeed intended to secure their interests as they understood them and not as the other countries might understand them. In other words these agreements were not conducted between two equal states, but

rather they were intended to serve the interests of the colonial power in the first place. Therefore, Britain entered into the Sykes-Picot Agreement which was indeed in violation of their agreement with the Arabs.

The Sykes-Picot Agreement was not the last element in British policy towards the Arab countries, since in 1917 the British government entered into yet another commitment, this time with the Zionist movement, that was the issuing of the Balfour Declaration.

The Balfour Declaration³⁹

In the very early days of World War One the British government realised the importance of having control over Southern Syria in order to protect the Eastern flank of the Suez Canal, which the Turkish army very nearly succeeded in crossing in 1915. The British official mind was somewhat exercised as to how Britain could establish a claim to this region which would satisfy her allies.⁴⁰ We have already seen how she entered into agreements with Hussein, France and Russia in the Hussein-McMahon agreement and the Sykes-Picot Agreement respectively.

In the context of the British imperialistic design in this area, the Jewish national home idea was born in the minds of certain British planners and politicians. Some of them even believed that Britain could win the United States to their side in the war against Germany through Jewish influence, which could be guaranteed by promising them Palestine.

James McMahon expressed this view to Mark Sykes of the Foreign Office:⁴⁰ "You can win the sympathy of certain politically minded Jews every where, and especially in the United States, in one way only and that is by offering to try and secure Palestine for them."

The Zionist leaders on their side were prepared, in return, for a declaration undertaking to establish a Jewish national home in Palestine, to do all in their power to "rally Jewish sentiment and support through the world to the Allied cause."⁴¹

Negotiations between the British government and the Zionist leaders especially Dr Weizmann in London, lasted for most of the year 1917 until finally on 2nd November 1917 the British Foreign Minister, Arthur Balfour, issued the "ill-fated" Declaration which now bears his name.

The Balfour Declaration was issued in the form of a letter from Balfour to Lord Rothschild:⁴² "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".

The wording of the Declaration is vague and ambiguous because it was intended to be vague and ambiguous. It was intended to leave the British Government free later to put whatever construction it liked on the undertaking given.

There were different reasons other than colonialistic motives given behind Britain's commitment to Zionism, among which are the following:

1. That the Zionists might use their influence in the United States to bring the United States into the war on the side of the Allies.
2. It was a reward for Dr Weizmann for his participation in the war effort.
3. It was given for human and religious motives.

George Antonius, with whom I agree, considered the colonialistic motives as the dominant ones, and "Whatever part other considerations, financial, political, religious or humanitarian may have played, there is no doubt that it sufficed by itself to bring about the Balfour Declaration."⁴³

John Marlowe presents a similar view: "The Zionist leaders knew, the Allied powers knew, that the British government, like Lloyd George did not "care a damn about the Jews ", but simply wanted Palestine for strategic reasons, and was using Zionism as a means to get it."⁴⁴

The text of the Declaration may be divided into three parts:

The first part applied to the Jews: "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." This has no definite meaning, "if all Great Britain had done in Palestine after the war had been to facilitate the foundation of

a Hebrew University and a few orphanages and homes for aged Jews it could have been quite plausibly argued that she had carried out what was undertaken in the Balfour Declaration."⁴⁵

There is no mention of "historical connection" nor Jewish state but rather a vague statement which was soon the subject of controversy. This was understandable because at that time there were only about 57,000 (9 percent) Jews in Palestine and nobody was sure that the Zionists would succeed in persuading a large number of Jewish settlers to emigrate to Palestine where they faced harsh weather, social and economic conditions.

Lloyd George excluded the idea of converting Palestine into a Jewish State. "Whichever, interpretation we adopt, Palestine would appear to be incapacitated by physical and other conditions from ever becoming in any real sense the national home of the Jewish people."⁴⁶

Even Weizmann denied that the Zionists wanted to establish a Jewish State in Palestine. This was his answer to a question put to him during the Paris Peace Conference about the meaning of the Jewish national home:⁴⁷ the Zionists did not want an autonomous Jewish Government, but merely to establish in Palestine under a mandatory Power an administration, not necessarily Jewish, which would render it possible to send into Palestine 70,000 to 80,000 Jews annually.

Lloyd George also confirmed that it was not the British Government's idea that a Jewish state should be set up in Palestine against the wishes of its inhabitants.⁴⁸

On the other hand, some Zionists and other American and British political figures did talk about a Jewish commonwealth. For example: Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States said: "The Allies, are agreed that in Palestine shall be laid the foundation of a Jewish commonwealth."⁴⁹

The significance of the Balfour Declaration to the Zionist movement lies in the fact that it was legally utilized by both Britain and Zionists alike, especially after it was embodied in the Mandate, to legitimize their colonization of Palestine and it was the document which the Zionists used successfully to frustrate all the Palestinians'

efforts to gain their independence.

The second part, concerning the rights and position of the Palestinian people, stipulated: "It being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine."

Reading through this part or the safeguarding clause, it will be observed that the Palestinian people are mentioned in such a way as to give an entirely false picture of their position in the country and their indubitable right to it. Although constituting in 1917 about 90 percent of the population, they were referred to as "the existing non-Jewish communities of Palestine." This tended to give the erroneous impression that they were an insignificant minority occupying a position subordinate to the Jews.

This British Zionist policy of non-recognition of the Palestinians as a people was in my view the basic obstacle which directly or indirectly prevented the achievement of a lasting settlement for the Palestine conflict during the Mandate as we will see in the next chapter.

The Arabs, however, were not aware that Britain after promising to support their independence had concluded two secret agreements which conflicted with Arab aspirations, the Sykes-Picot Agreement and the Balfour Declaration. The texts of the two Agreements were disclosed by the Bolsheviks on coming to power in 1917.

Since Britain did not consult the Arabs about entering into agreements with other parties, the French and the Zionists, on matters which concerned directly the Arab people, the Arabs protested strongly to the British Government and made it clear that the Arabs would never accept or recognize these agreements.

The British Government, however, gave the Arabs assurances at various times after the disclosure of these agreements and convinced the Arab leaders to carry on their fight against the Turks.

Among these assurances were the following:

1. The Hogarth message of January 1918.⁵⁰ An explicit assurance was given that Jewish settlement in Palestine would only be allowed in so far as it would be consistent with the political and economic freedom of

the Arab population.

2. The Bassett letter of 8th February 1918:⁵¹ "His Majesty's Government and their Allies remain steadfast to the policy of helping any movement which aims at setting free those nations which are oppressed... The Government of His Britannic Majesty repeats its previous promise in respect of the freedom and the emancipation of the Arab peoples."

3. The British Declaration to the seven of 16th June 1918.⁵²

This Declaration assured the Arab people that the British policy towards them in regard to the future government would be based upon the principle of the consent of the governed.

4. The Anglo-French Declaration of 9th November 1918.⁵³ If there had been any doubt in the minds of the Arabs, these were dispelled by this last Declaration "France and Great Britain agree to further assist in setting up indigenous governments and administrations in Syria" (which then included Palestine) "and Mesopotamia" (Iraq).⁵⁴

However, during the Paris Peace Conference the British Government tried to bring her two allies the Arabs and the Zionist together and to sign an agreement of understanding. Indeed an agreement was reached between Emir Feisal, son of Sharif Hussein of Mecca, and Dr. Weizmann, head of the Jewish Agency.

Feisal-Weizmann Agreement.⁵⁵

In January 1919 at the Paris Peace Conference Emir Feisal and Dr. Weizmann reached an agreement which provided, among other things, for "cordial goodwill and understanding" between Arabs and Jews. According to the agreement the Arabs would allow Jewish immigration into Palestine, presumably under Arab control and regulation, to participate in developing the country and perhaps the rest of the Arab world, through Jewish skills and money, provided that such immigration would not affect the political and economic rights of the Palestinian Arabs.

This Arab concession was given in return for complete Arab independence, including Palestine, which could be achieved through Zionist influence in the West.

Feisal certainly did not agree to turn Palestine over to the Zionists, or to establish a Jewish state there, as the Zionists tried to suggest, but rather it was a deal whereby the Jews could immigrate to Arab

territories to participate in their development under Arab control and under similar regulations on immigration into the United States, Canada, or the Arab World today.

Feisal, however, put in an important reservation, written in Arabic in his own handwriting, at the end of the agreement which made it clear that this agreement could be valid only, "Provided the Arabs obtain their independence " but if that was not achieved "I shall not then be bound by a single word of the present agreement which shall be deemed void and of no account or validity and I shall not be answerable in any way whatsoever."⁵⁶

The significance of that agreement lies in the fact that it was the first and last attempt to reach an understanding directly negotiated and based on the common interest of both sides. The agreement clearly was not executed because neither Britain, France nor the Zionist movement was, at that time, prepared to give up its colonial interests in the area and agree to complete Arab independence.

In July 1920 the French occupied Damascus and deposed King Feisal. The British continued their occupation of Palestine and in 1922 secured a Mandate over the country from the League of Nations.⁵⁷

The Palestine Mandate⁵⁸

The granting of the Mandate to Britain, without consulting the Palestinians, was seen by the Arabs as a violation of the Covenant of the League of Nations itself. According to the Covenant "the wishes of these communities (under Mandate) must be a principal consideration in the selection of the Mandatory." The victorious British colonial power thought, at that time, that the inhabitants of Palestine were not worth consulting about their own future which must be decided for them by the British government at their convenience.

A. J. Balfour, then the British Foreign Secretary, expressed this view in clear terms:⁵⁹ "Whatever deference should be paid to the views of those living there, the powers in their selection of a Mandatory do not propose, as I understand the matter, to consult them."

If the Palestinians had been consulted or even considered worthy of consultation, they might not have chosen Britain, which was committed to Zionism through the Balfour Declaration, and the whole conflict might

have been avoided.

According to the King-Crane Commission,⁶⁰ which was sent to consult the population about their choice of the Mandatory regime, the Palestinians were totally opposed to Zionism and put their first choice as independence within a unitary state to include the whole of Syria.

The King-Crane Commission Report makes this point very clear when it states that: "If that principle is to rule, and so the wishes of Palestine's population are to be decisive as to what is to be done, then it is to be remembered that the non-Jewish population of Palestine, nearly nine-tenths of the whole, are emphatically against the entire Zionist programme."⁶¹

The Commission made it clear that the final Zionist aim was the dispossessing of the Palestinians through various sort of land purchase. "The fact comes out repeatedly in the Commission's conference with Jewish representatives, that the Zionists looked forward to a practically complete dispossession of the present non-Jewish inhabitants of Palestine by various forms of purchase."⁶²

The approval of the Palestine Mandate which included the Balfour Declaration and recognized the "historical connection" of the Jews with Palestine, without Palestinian approval or consultation made it almost impossible for the Palestinians to recognize this document. And since British attempts to solve the problem were based on this document, there was little chance of their being acceptable to the Palestinians, as we will see in the next chapter.

Concluding Remarks.

Palestine, in its Mandated borders, was founded in 1919 during the Paris Peace Conference as a part of the overall Anglo-French division of the Arab countries. Before that the country had no specific frontiers but rather it was referred to as Southern Syria. The country though small in size (26,000 square kilometers), occupies a strategic location in the Eastern Mediterranean.

It forms the only land bridge between Asia and Africa and today it is located in the heart of the Arab World. This strategic location made it a cross-roads and subject to a series of foreign conquests from the East as well as from the West. Its original inhabitants were the Canaanites and the Philistines. These native populations lived in the country

throughout known history and between 1200-1400 B.C. they faced the first wave of alien conquerors the Hebrews, who are believed to have come from Ur in Southern Iraq or from Egypt.

The Hebrews were able to establish their control over most of Palestine but that occupation came to an end in 585 B.C., when the Babylonians occupied the country and took most of the Jews to live in captivity in Babylon. The Babylonians were followed by the Persians, the Greeks and the Romans.

Despite the fact that the native population had mixed with their conquerors, especially in the towns, they preserved their own culture and identity and never assimilated with their conquerors.

In 637 A.D. the Arab Muslims occupied Palestine and from that date on the country became an Arab territory, like Syria and Lebanon, and the Palestinians became not only Arabized but identified themselves as Arabs too.

It is true that many Arab tribes settled in the country after it became Arabized, but the majority of the Palestinian Arabs are the physical descendents of the Canaanites, the Philistines and a mixture of some elements who remained in Palestine after the end of each conquest, and not, as is the deliberately created misconception, that they exclusively came with the Arab Muslims in the 7th century.

The real title which the Palestinians Arabs have to Palestine therefore comes from birth and long continued possession of the country, from the dawn of history until the majority of them were forced to leave their homes and lands by the Zionist forces during the civil war in Palestine between November 1947 and May 1948, and the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, as I will show in the next Chapters.

On the other hand, the Hebrews were neither the natives nor the owners of the land in Palestine and their occupation of the country in Biblical times was an episode in the long history of the country like that of the Babylonians, the Romans and the Turks. Palestine therefore, may be associated with those who today profess the Jewish faith, but this association is only spiritual, not political or physical.

The Zionist movement appeared at the end of 19th century as a response to social and political discrimination in Eastern Europe. The Movement quickly associated itself with the leading powers and tried to strike a deal with one of these powers, whereby they could get a territory large enough to establish a Jewish State in return for Zionist services or money. They first approached Germany and Turkey and when they failed to achieve a deal, in 1917 they turned to Britain. By now Britain had secured an alliance with the Arabs through the Hussein-McMahon Agreement and with France and Russia through the Sykes-Picot Agreement. The Zionist movement appeared a potential client to fulfil two main imperialistic objectives:

First, to bring the United States into the war through Jewish influence and secondly, to give the British Government an acceptable pretext to secure their occupation of Palestine for a long time on the ground that they were there to protect the Jewish community.

Within this context of colonial design, Britain, without consulting the Palestinians, issued the Balfour Declaration in November 1917 which promised to facilitate the establishment of a Jewish home in Palestine provided that it would not prejudice the rights and positions of the Palestinians.

Britain knew that such a Declaration did not carry legal weight and therefore she embodied that Declaration in the Palestine Mandate which was approved by the League of Nations in 1923 without any Palestinian consultation or consent.

The Mandate, however, recognized the "historical connection" of the Jews with Palestine without questioning the validity of the Zionist claim and without consulting the Arabs.

First of all it has been established that not all the Jews of the world are the physical descendants of the Hebrews, nor were the Hebrews the original natives of Palestine.

Secondly, the spiritual connection of the Jews does not legitimize their 20th century colonization of Palestine against the wishes of its inhabitants, the Palestinians, least of all to occupy most of the country by the use of force and to force the Palestinians to leave the country and to live as refugees under unacceptable conditions.

However, despite British assurances to the Arabs⁶³ that it was not their intention to create a Jewish state in Palestine the British government used the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate as the legitimate tools to prevent the establishment of a national government in Palestine and at the same time allowed more than half a million Zionist settlers to enter the country under the terms of the Mandate, but practically imposed them on the country against the will of its natives. In this sense it was not different from any other white settlement elsewhere.

Thus, Palestine was transformed from a once predominantly Arab society into a Plural Society with a clear continued and widening conflict between its main segments, the Palestinian Arabs and the alien Zionist settlers. The Palestinians resisted this process of colonization with their limited resources, but they did not succeed in stopping it because they could not match the combined forces of Great Britain and Zionism. However, Britain put forward several proposals to solve the problem but they did not succeed either because they did not meet the Palestinians' demands for independence, or Zionists' demands for exclusively Jewish state, as I will show in the next Chapters.

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CHAPTER THREE

The Transformation of the Palestinian Society under the Mandate, A Socio-Historical Profile

Introduction

The single most important fact about Palestinian society, during the Mandate period, is that it was a predominantly traditional Arab peasant society. This is true in the sense that if Palestine had not been a traditional backward society by Western standards, it could not have been the target of Zionist colonization. Therefore, any interpretation of the transformation of the country from a homogeneous Arab society into a Plural one has to be developed in the context of settler colonialism.

The purpose of this chapter, however, is to examine the social structure of Palestinian society and its implications for the Palestinian responses to Zionist settlement and the different attempts to solve the conflict.

This Chapter will be divided into four sections:

1. Population

In this section I will examine the composition of Palestinian society, the relationship between its different segments and the implication of this composition and relations on the Palestinians' mode of action and on their overall responses to Zionist settlement and on attempts to solve the conflict. The interesting question here would be: Was the Palestinian social structure responsible for the Palestinians' inability to stop Zionist and British colonization of their country? Or was it due to the military and material superiority of Great Britain and the Zionist Movement?

2. Demographic Transformation

The purpose of this section is to present a factual account of the process whereby Palestine was transformed from a country inhabited by settled Palestinian Arabs, to one now inhabited overwhelmingly by Zionist settlers and Jews from all over the World. This radical and continuing replacement of population, despite the opposition of the indigenous Arab inhabitants, created a grievance which present proposed

solutions to the Palestine conflict tend to be relegated to the background. Yet what may appear to outside observers to be a peripheral issue is, to the Palestinians, the real and most basic issue from which all others follow. To understand this reality one must become more fully aware both of the magnitude of the demographic transformation and, more importantly, of its startling recency.

3. Land Alienation

The purpose of this section is to examine the process of land alienation in Palestine during the British Mandate in the hope that it will give us an idea of the size of Zionist land acquisition and the effect of this acquisition on Palestinian peasant conditions, including landlessness, the decline in the size of plots of land and more importantly on the relationship between the Palestinians and the Jewish settlers. It is equally important to know why the Zionists purchased land in Palestine and why did the Palestinians sell their land? How much land did the Zionists acquire before the end of the Mandate? Why did the Palestinians oppose Zionist land purchase?

4. Separate Development

The purpose of this section is to examine the Palestinian and Zionist policies of political, economical and social development and their effects on the relationship between the two communities and on the attempts to solve the conflict. Was separate development a deliberate Zionist policy? Or was it implemented to avoid exploiting the Arabs?

1. Population

At the close of World War I in 1918, Palestine was an Arab country similar to other parts of the Arab World. It had a population of about 700,000 of whom 574,000 were Muslims, 70,000 were Christians and 56,000 were Jews. The latter were mostly Arabs of the Jewish faith.¹ The outstanding characteristics of Palestinian social structure during the Mandate appear to have been segmentalism, regionalism and a tendency towards autarky (self-sufficiency) within social segments.² All three characteristics, segmentalism, autarky and regionalism, can be viewed as related effects of declining central power during Ottoman rule and the lack of adequate roads and other means of communication between towns and between towns and villages.

The contribution of the Ottoman State³ to security or communication was minimal, thus, the population was thrown back upon its own resources for survival: a task it managed through well-developed forms of social relations, reinforced by specific culture values. As the class most vulnerable to exploitation and oppression by other classes, the fellaheen (peasants) developed these social relations and cultural values with possibly greater tenacity and emphasis than the other classes, to whom alternative methods of survival were available.

To elaborate first upon segmentalism: Palestinian society was divided into groups,⁴ clearly marked by linguistic labels, and specialized as to occupation, area of settlement, and way of life. There was, however, no ideology of caste, or hierarchy, to separate the classes.⁵ On the contrary, Islam tends towards egalitarianism, and the idea of "one society." But in practice the social classes remained fixed and separate. Not only was there little movement of persons between classes, but there was also little exchange of any kind, trade, visiting, marriage, until the late Mandate period, when it began to become fashionable among city people to spend the summer months in the countryside. Palestinian society was divided into three distinct groups or classes:

a. Madeniyeen (city dwellers)

They were predominantly merchants and craftsmen. They formed only a small proportion of the population at the beginning of the Mandate (between 10 and 20%), but by the end of the Mandate they had grown to around 30 percent.

b. Fellaheen (peasants)

The single most important fact about Palestinian society during the Mandate is that it was overwhelmingly peasant or fellaheen. The Palestinian peasantry formed about 80 percent of the total population at the beginning of the Mandate.⁶ The heart of rural society was the village. "The majority of Palestinians were gathered into somewhat more than one thousand villages of varying size and fortune. After the extended family, the village was the most important unit in the fellah's life. Its functions were not only social and economic but, in the broadest sense, political as well."⁷ The size of villages varied greatly as did their land area and socio-economic level. Granott,⁸ gives an

average population size of 7 to 8 hundreds and an average land size of 6 to 7 thousand donums. (Donum =1000 square metres). The link between the village and the larger unit of administration was the Mukhtar (head man).⁹ The smallest social unit in Palestinian villages was the household. It consisted of a man, his wife, their unmarried children, their married sons with their wives and children, and unsupported female relatives such as widowed mothers, unmarried sisters of the family head.

It is worth noting here that there were feuds among the different sects (Muslims, Christians, Jews and Druze) or families in the same village and between one village and another village or one group of villages against another group of villages.¹⁰ This was possible because different branches of one tribe happened to live in different villages and in Arab culture it is usual that if something happens to one branch all the other branches intervene. The causes of feuds and conflict between families (tribes) or villages seem to have been mainly water, land and grazing.

However, the distinction between madeniyeen and fellaheen tended to diminish at the end of the Mandate for several reasons. One was the drift of evicted or indebted peasants to the cities, especially Haifa, where there was employment in the port; another was the improvement of education, whereby students from villages went to study in towns, and finally, the improvements in roads and other communication means which facilitated the exchange of the farmers' produce for other goods in the cities. However, it is clear from the situated usage of the terms madani and fellah, that they indicated social and cultural differences, and not simply occupational differences.¹¹

c. The Bedu (Nomads)

The Bedu formed about 5 percent of the total Arab population of Palestine and numbered about 66,553 at the beginning of the Mandate, and had not greatly increased at its end. The majority of the Bedu lived in the Beersheba district and some of them lived in Galilee.

Relationships between Different Groups

The Relationship of the Wujaha' (notables) with other Groups¹²

As a class the Wujaha' consisted of heads of rich families, merchants

and landowners. They lived in the main cities but in many cases had land in the countryside which was run by agents. The stance of the Palestinian ruling class the a'yan and Wujaha' (notables) towards the other groups, peasants and Bedu, was more complex, and requires a more detailed historical study than I have space for. Therefore, it suffices for the purpose of this chapter to examine the relationship between the ruling class and the rest of the population on one hand and on the other the relationship between the Fellaheen and the Bedu with particular reference to the implication of these relations on the overall Palestinian mode of action and responses to Zionist settlement and the attempts to solve the conflict before the end of the Mandate.

The Palestinian leadership was dominated by two large and rich families the Husseinis and their rivals the Nashashibis.¹³ Both families were located in Jerusalem but they had a clan network and connections all over the country. The Husseinis were opposed to any concessions to the Zionists other than individual and minority rights, while the Nashashibis were prepared to accept autonomy for the Zionist settlers and unification with Transjordan. There were of course, other rival families in Jerusalem itself and in Jaffa, Haifa and Nablus.¹⁴

The Palestinian leaders were quick to realize the danger of the Zionist settlement in Palestine, especially after the Zionists made it clear that they were coming into Palestine to establish an exclusively Jewish national home and not simply as colonialists like the British or the French or occupiers like the Romans, or the Turks.¹⁵ Muslim landowners in particular made it conditional, in all their meetings with outside parties, especially the British, that the peasants must be left in undisturbed tenancy. On the other hand, it is evident that all peasant guerrilla action until 1936 was undertaken without leadership, or even advice, from the higher levels of the Wujaha', although provincial notables may well have played a supportative, though not an active role.¹⁶ This was possible because the social distance between Palestinian Notables and peasants,¹⁷ deriving from the special form of Arab and Turkish traditions, had not been broken down during the Mandate.

Palestinian Notables, whatever their origins, lived in cities, and managed their estates through agents. Although towards the end of the

19th century rich city merchants began to buy land for plantations, these were strictly commercial transactions, with almost no socio-political effects. Thus, unlike the ruling classes of England, Russia or Japan, the Palestinian ruling class had weak ties with the peasantry.

Two other characteristics of the Palestinian Wujaha', equally rooted in history, may be explanatory factors in the debacle to come. Firstly, it is instructive to discover that the Palestinians were not strongly represented at the leadership level in the early Arab Nationalist organizations such as al-Fatat, al-Ahod, the Decentralization Party, and the Beirut Reform Committee, that formed the nucleus of post-Turkish Arab leadership. These were based on Damascus, Cairo and Beirut. Although not attached to Syria under late Ottoman administrative arrangements, Palestine appears to have been regarded by the early Arab Nationalists as an outlying part of Syria. The important thing here is that the Palestinian leaders, at the beginning of the Mandate, accepted this view and did not demand a separate Palestinian state, but rather the integration of Palestine within the Arab government established by Emir Feisal in Damascus in 1920.¹⁸

The second characteristic concern was mode of action. The Palestinian leaders' mode of action was: "Negotiatory rather than mobilization, or, in as far as they attempted mobilization, it was through exhortation of the masses to sacrifices rather than commitment."¹⁹

In seeking to explain this limitation of political methods, we may note the limited power and wealth of the Palestinian Notables. Their status derived from lineage rather than the great wealth or estate to be found in Syria or Egypt, their role was bureaucratic, judicial, and religious, never military, and political only in a limited sense.

The other major factor in limiting their action during the Mandate was the ruthlessness of the Mandatory regime which in 1936-1939 disbanded all Palestinian organizations, arrested most of the Palestinian leaders, deported others and used severe military measures to suppress the Palestinian Revolt.²⁰

Integratation into the Ottoman administration confirmed their local status, depriving them of national political power, or responsibility. Their role was essentially mediatory, protecting their clients and

passing on information, advice, and warnings, both upwards and downwards. "It was their access to high officials that reinforced their local influence, while their local status made the authorities ready to listen to them: a classic form of colonial rule."²¹

While nationalist political parties²² were formed under the Mandate and led by individual members of the notables, their style and methods were carried over from the Ottoman period. They sought to change the Mandate government's commitment to Zionism through argument, warning and hints of potential violence. But it is typical of this political strategy that the threat of mass violence is used, but never actualized, because the individual Wajih (notable) will not jeopardize his position. Lacking mass support and in rivalry with other leading Wajaha', the individual Wajahi's position depended, in the last analysis, on balancing a nationalist stance against his usefulness to the authorities as a moderating and defusing influence. "It is a form of political action that requires intelligence, judgement, diplomacy, eloquence: qualities very far from those of the mass political organizer."²³

Thus, as peasant landlessness, unemployment and discontent grew with the increase of Zionist immigration and land purchasing, the Palestinian Wujaha' drew the attention of the British Mandatory government to these facts in countless memoranda and meetings. But this was as far as they could go until 1936, when a broad form of political action, involving peasants and a younger, educated middle class element, forced them to the extremity of action. Even then they were reluctant to resort to action, and it is instructive to see how the General Strike and the Revolt's gains were thrown away for worthless promises, and through the intervention of the leaders of the neighbouring Arab States, favouring a diplomatic rather than a resistance stance towards British power.²⁴ "The upper classes could not think in terms of being obligated to the lower classes in the context of a total national struggle; they could only feel some obligation for the lower classes in so far as this did not conflict with their own vital interests."²⁵

It seems to me that it is instructive to understand the precarious position of the Palestinian leaders at that time and not simply say that they did not do what we see now as the right thing. In the first place most of the Palestinian leaders were head of families or land owners

and, therefore, in most cases they only represented their own families or region and consequently their influence was within that family or region. There was in each city or region more than one family and leader who were in competition with each other for power, status and government posts. The Mandatory government played those leaders off against each other, especially through its monopoly over the important jobs such as mayors and religious posts, especially Mufti of Jerusalem. It was also not difficult for the Mandatory Government to arrest, depose or deport any of those leaders at its convenience.

The Palestinian leaders, however, failed to transfer their regional or family leadership into a national leadership capable of exploiting the people's readiness to be mobilized into a coherent resistance movement during the first two decades of British occupation when the so-called "Jewish national home" was at its most vulnerable.

The Relationship between the Fellaheen and the Bedu

Relationships between the two poorest social groups, the bedu and fellaheen appear to have been harmonious when central authority was strong. But a long history of conflict gave rise to a depth of hostility and suspicion between the two. The historical and cultural roots of their differences go back to the early stages of Islam. The superiority of the bedu in terms of status derived partly from their close association with Arab conquests and the spread of Islam. It was the nomadic tribes, not the peasants, who formed the military basis of almost every Arab dynasty and empire. Moreover, bedu leaders formed part of the ruling class, linking their tribes to the source of power,²⁶ while the essence of peasant class helplessness was that they had no such links. Finally the decline of central authority, throughout the whole region, during Ottoman rule, tipped the power balance in favour of the bedu, because unlike peasants, they were both mounted and armed. In times of drought or bad harvest, the bedu were likely to raid the fellaheen for grain or alternatively, to protect the fellaheen from other bedu in return for payment of the Khuwa.²⁷

Although, less powerful in Palestine than in Syria, the bedu were probably a factor in isolating villages, and in preventing the accumulation of a peasant surplus. As late as 1948, the historical pattern of bedu-fellaheen relations was still alive. Shoufani²⁸ tells

how, with the breakdown of central authority, bedouin round the Galilean village of Mi'ilya began to kidnap draft cattle and hold them for ransom. He also notes social distance between the villagers of Mi'illya, and the towns-people of nearby Tarsheeha. Both he and Nafidh Nazzal,²⁹ in their accounts of the 1948 War in the Galilee area, note a lack of communication, or co-operation, between individual villages.

Relations between Towns and Villages

The social distance between fellaheen and medaniyeen was almost as strong as between the former and the bedu, though different in its historical origin. Cities were the centres of state and under the successive administrations of the Romans, Arabs, and Ottomans, no social group interposed itself between the peasants and the officials of the state. Even when not the seat of government, cities enjoyed a certain autonomy and capacity for self-defence. Because of peasant poverty,³⁰ there was little economic exchange of agricultural produce against city artifacts to link the rural and urban population.

The present author recalls the conditions and some aspects of the relationship between medaniyeen, fellaheen and bedu as he himself experienced it in his village during the early 1950s. These conditions and relationships could be a typical example for Arab society during the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s including Palestine.³¹

Kufferrahta is a small village located in the north west of Jordan and fifteen miles from the town of Irbed. The social and economic conditions in this village were almost similar to those in most of the villages in Palestine. My village located about 35 miles from the Palestine borders. The fellaheen lived a co-operative community life in almost complete isolation from the outside world. There were no roads, cars or any other mobile transportation to connect the village with the town or other villages. No electricity, water supplies, school, post office, telephone, radio, television or any other social services (before 1950s).

What they knew about the government was that it had brutal police who came to the villages on horses and stayed in the Mukhtar's house for few days, at the expense of the village, and collected the taxes. The people lived mainly from the produce of the land and animals. They did not deal

with cash nor there was any shop in the village. Instead they used to exchange the surplus of their production from the land or animals or labour among each other. There was no wage labour but rather the villagers, men and women, assisted each other during the harvest, building, picking fruit or vegetables. They made their own agricultural and building tools mainly from wood and made their own clothes. Even wives in some cases were exchanged. One man could exchange his sister with another man's sister, thus making two marriages.³² This practice, however, was later abandoned because it proved to cause problems among both families.

The main conflict among fellaheen was about land and animals. The area allocated for village building was not registered and there were no borders between the houses. If some one wanted to build a fence or a new house a dispute could be started and nobody could tell who was right because there were no marks or borders. The other source of conflict was the animals. They could get loose at night and cause damage to the crops or trees.

These disputes usually finished through the intervention of elderly people who were not involved and worked as neutral judges. The only time the people went to the town was when they needed to buy their supplies, sugar, rice, coffee, some clothes, and metal tools which they could not make in the village and when they wanted to buy animals from the town animal market.³³ Usually the villagers went to the town in groups of two or three people. There was more than one reason for that: some went for the first time and they needed help to find the right place to buy supplies. Some did not know how and where to sell their grain or animals. Others did not know how to count money because they did not deal with cash. And most important was that going in a group would guarantee that they would not be robbed on the way back home which could be during the night.³⁴

The villagers did not trust the madeniyeen, especially the merchants who in some cases cheated the villagers in weights, prices and in counting. The medeniyeen looked down on the villagers and considered them inferior to themselves and ignorant. The terms fellah was used as an insult among the madeniyeen and if some one wanted to tease another he called him fellah. It meant ignorant, poor, and uncivilized. Therefore, there were no social visits or marriages between the two

groups.

There was no migration from the villages to the town because the villagers were very poor and could not afford to live in the town; they did not have skills suitable for town jobs and they would lose the family security which they had in the village.

The main reason for sending village children to Kuttab or Shiekhs was to study the Kora'n (Holy Book) and not to learn new skills necessary for jobs. The attitude of the villager later became very positive and in some cases some villagers sold their land to be able to meet their children's education expenses. The reason for this change was that education became the only way to get government jobs, money and status.

The relationship between the villagers and the bedu during the 1920s and 1930s was not good, especially during the harvest season, May to July, when large numbers of bedu, usually armed, would come to the village and trample the crops during the night with their herds and sheep. The problem was that the bedu would not say who caused the damage and therefore the villagers had to guard their crops during the night. This led to some bedu or villagers being killed during clashes between the two sides. But this relationship improved largely as a result of the improvement of government authority and the decline in the number of bedu who used to come to the villages. In the 1960s the relationships improved and both sides started to benefit. The bedu started to buy the remaining harvest and water from the fellaheen in return for sheep, milk and cheese. Relations became more organized when some bedu started to come again and again to the same village and even marriages took place between the two sides.

Although in Palestine they were clearly demarcated from one another through linguistic labeling and socio-cultural distance, the four major groups (wujaha' medaniyeen, fellaheen and bedu) were not united internally by a consciousness of common interests, nor by the practice of group action. As far as their members perceived each other as belonging to the same social category, they tended to act competitively. This was true in all spheres of action: social, economic and political. For example, the ruling class or notables consisted of heads of large families and landowners who were competing against each other for

government posts or other religious or traditional positions. The villagers or fellaheen were fighting each other and the best thing they could do was to form alliances of a few villagers against other villages and not fellaheen against madaniyeen. The bedu also consisted of tribes and always had conflicts over water, and land suitable for their herds. Sometimes some bedu made alliances with fellaheen against other bedu.³⁵ As I mentioned earlier they were not groups in the normal sociological use of the term, but were internally segmented along sectarian regional and kinship lines into smaller units that could not form the basis for social or political action.

Of all Arab countries, Palestine appears to have been historically, one of the least affected by sectarianism. This, perhaps, was a result of the seriousness of external aggression upon the country. National consciousness began early to eclipse sectarian division, especially among the more educated sectors of the population. This national consciousness increased with the increase of the Zionist danger at the end of the Mandate.³⁶

However, at the village level, in Palestine during the Mandate, sectarianism clearly had a role; villages were designated Muslim, Druze or Christian according to their majority sect, and the British authorities and the Zionists developed different policies towards each, encouraging sectarian hostility. Historically developed stereo-types certainly existed around these labels, yet as Zwinner notes,³⁷ in a study of Galileen rural people personal friendships frequently crossed sectarian lines.

Regionalism, a consequence of poor communications, insecurity and other aspects of Arab traditional society, continued throughout the Mandate period to stand in the way of concerted action. Uprisings tended to be confined to particular cities, or group of villages, without spreading to other areas. Segmental political structures, by reinforcing the power of local leaders, made regionalism all the more entrenched.

The clan³⁸ was by any standard the most effective of social units in Palestine. It was a primary source of identification; it could own and transmit property; but more importantly, it was highly mobilizable in defence of the claims or rights of members. Clearly defined obligations linked specified kin to one another, to a specific distance, in all possible social contingencies: debt, attack, crime, property disputes,

false accusations, marriages. The clan formed a complete social security system. The status of the family (clan) was decided on the number of its members, especially the males. The larger the size of the family, the higher its status and its respect became among other families. The tribe which had more men would be more effective not only to defend its members but also to win battles against rivals. And because there were no modern arms or central government to preserve law and order, the number of males became the decisive factor in winning a conflict. For the above reasons, clan solidarity was much more highly developed among the bedu and the fellaheen, than among the madeniyeen or the ruling class. The clan could also supply all its members' basic social needs: for defence, loans, for marriage partners, labour and social visiting.

The other important form of social relation was the patron-client relationship. It was a code of sanctuary (dakheel), which could be invoked unilaterally by the client, without prior agreement and was considered absolutely binding on the patron. The dakheel was a person who had committed a crime, rape, murder, theft etc.. and went to another family asking their help and protection. The family had to accept him and take responsibility for solving his problem whatever the cost. In such a traditional society, dakheel can be seen as an individual solution to the problem of clan or family powerlessness. The dakheel in most cases was a member of a small family who sought protection from a stronger family

I have emphasized, in this section, the segmentalism regionalism and other aspects of the Palestinian social structure during the Mandate, but it would be incorrect to seek in these social characteristics the sole causes of the failure of the 1936-1939 revolt or the 1948 disaster. By 1936, two decades of nationalist activities and the double threat of British colonialism and Zionist immigration and land purchasing, had gone far towards unifying the Palestinian people emotionally. If the Palestinian revolt of 1936-1939 failed it was because of deliberate collaboration between an experienced colonial power, Britain, with a determined Zionist movement against a traditional Palestinian society which lacked the material power to defend itself against the combined forces of Great Britain and the Zionist.³⁹

Of course, there were mistakes and weaknesses at the level of the Palestinian leadership but such mistakes or misjudgements by the leadership could not have been and were not the only causes for the failure of the Palestinian Revolt or 1948 disaster as Sayigh suggests: "If the Great Rebellion failed, it was because of mistakes at the leadership."⁴⁰

The causes of the failure of the Great Rebellion was the superiority of the British forces and the Zionist paramilitary organization and the brutal way in which they were used against not only the Palestinian guerrillas, but also against the civilian population. These repressive measures included blowing up houses and quarters of cities, collective fines, and other severe restrictions on the population's freedom and movement as I will show in Chapter Five.

Nevertheless, it seems reasonable to conclude that in spite of the spread of nationalist consciousness throughout the Mandate period, and in spite of a high level of combativeness among the fellaheen, social segmentalism blocked the rapid mobilization of large groups, and long term political organization. Any political action initiated by one social segment tended to produce counter action in a rival segment. Because of the vertical social structure, rivalries at the leadership level would be translated into conflict or suspicion at the rank and file level.

Thus, the readiness of the peasants to take up armed struggle was dissipated in sporadic violence, and small regionally based guerrilla groups instead of a cohesive national resistance movement. The 1948 disaster, however, was the result of the combined political influence of both the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. on the U.N. to recommend the partition of Palestine, the failure of the U.N. to implement Partition and the military superiority of the Zionist forces, as I will show in the coming chapters.

2. Demographic Transformation of Palestine, 1917-1948

It is not necessary, I think, to trace the demographic composition of the country back into the dimness of history, but rather to examine the process which through mass Zionist immigration transformed Palestine from a homogeneous Arab society into a Plural society, from the appearance of the political Zionist movement at the close of the Nineteenth Century and more importantly since 1917.

In 1882, as reported by Zionist sources,⁴¹ there were about 24,000 Jews

in the general area of Palestine against about half a million Arabs. By 1914, according to Turkish sources, the total population of Palestine was 689,275 of which 85,000 were Jews. This increase in Jewish population (from 24,000 in 1889) came chiefly from foreign immigrants.⁴² According to the British census of 1922, and far from substantiating Zionist claims that Palestine was virtually unpopulated, there were 757,182 inhabitants in Palestine, 78 percent were Muslims; 73,024 (9.6 %) were Christian Arabs; less than 10,000 (1 %) others; and 83,794 (11 %) were Jewish, of whom, perhaps two thirds were European settlers and their offspring.

Not much change in the geographic distribution of the Jewish minority was discernible by this time. Most Jews and Zionist settlers were still located in a few urban areas. The sub-district of Jerusalem for instance, accounted for 34,431 and 24,000 were in the Jaffa and Tel-Aviv districts. Thus, three quarters of the total Jewish population of the country was concentrated in these two sub-districts.

In the large hill region of Samaria and the Southern area (Gaza and Beersheba) Jews constituted less than 1 percent of the population, 850 and 750 Jews respectively.⁴³ The Northern area, however, received maximum attention from the Zionists, for it contained the main water resources and irrigable land. By 1922 some 20,000 settlers had settled in this area where they constituted 12 percent of the population. Even in this area, despite the fact that Zionist ideology stressed agricultural development, most of the Jews settled in towns. More than 6,000 lived in Haifa, 4,400 lived in Tiberias and 7000 lived in Safad. They formed one quarter in Haifa, two thirds in Tiberias and one third in Safad. Thus, about 70 percent of the 20,000 Jewish inhabitants of the Northern district were urban.⁴⁴

It is important then, to recapitulate the demographic character of Palestine at the end of 1922, less than twenty six years before the proclamation of "Israel" in more than half of that country. As recently as the 1920s Palestine was still overwhelmingly an Arab country of stably settled fellaheen (peasants), madeniyeen (city dwellers) and by a small, linguistically and culturally assimilated Jewish community which had been joined at the end of the 19th century by a larger group of ethnically European Zionist settlers drawn chiefly from Russia and Poland. The Jewish communities combined, formed 11 percent of the total

population and owned less than 2 percent of the land of Palestine.⁴⁵

The Zionist movement, aware of the demographic composition of Palestine, realized that in order to be able to achieve their final goal, the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, they had to upset the balance of population and land ownership to the advantage of the Jewish community. From the start, the movement sought to achieve a Jewish majority in the country, and to obtain as much of the land as possible. The methods included promoting mass Zionist immigration and settlement and acquiring tracts of land that would become the inalienable property of the Jewish people.

Zionist ideologists knew that there was no point in Zionist immigration to Palestine in small numbers which would lead to yet another minority, the very thing which they sought to get rid of by immigrating to Palestine. What was important then, "Is first of all, a majority of Jewish people in Palestine,"⁴⁶ so that the Zionists would be able to establish a Jewish state in the whole country. But the Zionist leaders knew that a mass immigration and settlement in Palestine would face strong opposition and resistance from the Palestinians. Therefore, they demanded suitable protection from the British colonial power, through legislation and administrative action. "A large colonization cannot be conducted independently of a government, that it is the government enterprise by nature and can only be completed if the government by legislative and administrative action support the colonization." The Zionist argued that the Mandatory Government ought "actively to promote Jewish colonization with a view of course to establish a Jewish majority."⁴⁷

The doors of Palestine were officially opened to Zionist immigration by the British colonial power, in September 1920 and on December 1931, the British second and last census⁴⁸ revealed that the total population was 1,035,821, the overwhelming majority were still Palestinian Arabs: 861,110 (Muslim, Christians and Druze) and there were 174,606 Jews or double their numbers in 1922, mainly due to foreign immigration, constituting 16 percent. It is worthwhile mentioning here that although Jews constituted 16 percent of the total population, they accounted for about 11 percent of the citizens and only 8 percent of the native born population. During this decade (1922-1931) about 82 percent of the

Zionist immigrants came from Russia and Eastern Europe. About 9 percent came from Asia and Africa, 6 percent came from Germany, Austria and the United States and about 3 percent from other countries.⁴⁹

It will be recalled that in 1922 about 70 percent of the Jewish population was found in the Jaffa and Jerusalem urban areas, by 1931 over 68 percent of the Jewish and Zionist settlers in Palestine were still concentrated in those two areas. On the other hand, in other parts no Jewish settlers were to be found in the subdistrict of Beersheba, Ramallah Jenin or Nablus; well under 1 percent of the populations of the subdistricts of Gaza (0,4 percent) Hebron (0,2 percent) Bethlehem (0,1 percent) Tulkarm (0,14 percent) and Acre (0,7 percent) were Jews.⁵⁰

Between the beginning of 1932 and the end of 1936 about 170,000 Zionist settlers immigrated to Palestine. This radical change, occurring in the brief span of only 5 years, must certainly be recognized as an important underlying cause of the Palestinian Revolt of 1936-1939. as I will show in Chapter Five. Within five years the Jewish population doubled, almost exclusively as a direct result of mass immigration. By the end of 1936 Jews constituted some 28 percent of the total population as compared with 11 percent in 1922 and 16 percent in 1931.

It was therefore, not suprising that the Palestinian Arabs should have been become alarmed at the rapid rate at which the demographic composition of their country was being altered, without their consent and against their will, especially since self-determination was becoming an increasingly distant prospect.

The Palestinians expressed their opposition to Zionist settlement through continued political and violent action during the Mandate period which included a General Strike and a Revolt which continued for three years until it was defeated by the British Forces in 1939. More will be said of the Palestinians' opposition in the coming Chapters.

However, despite Palestinians' continuous opposition, Palestinian society was transformed from an overwhelmingly Arab traditional society, with a small culturally assimilated Jewish minority, into a plural society consisting of two distinctive Arab and Zionist settler communities different and separated in everything and in open conflict with each others.

The Palestinians revolted against this alien invasion of their country and from the mid-1930s they directed their attacks on the British as well as on the Zionists. As a result of this revolt and other considerations, the British government introduced new restrictions on Zionist immigration and recognized for the first time in 1939 the right of the Palestinian people to independence with guaranteed rights for the Jewish minority. The rate of Zionist immigration was lowered to 4000-5000 per year after 1939, and by the end of 1947 the total population of Palestine was estimated at 1,935,000 with the Jews and Zionist settlers numbering 608,225, or 31 percent.⁵¹

The main significance of the question of immigration in relation to Palestine was political since it affected the distribution and balance of power between the Palestinians and the Zionists. However, its economic importance is by no means negligible. The basic objective of the Zionist movement was to bring as many immigrants as possible and to guarantee for them the exclusive right to work in the Jewish sector. This policy of exclusive Jewish labour created unemployment and landlessness among the Palestinians and a grievance which was to continue to exist until the end of the Mandate and which indeed played a major role in poisoning relations between the two sides.

For the Palestinians, Zionist immigration took place under the rule of British colonialism and in violation of Article Six of the Mandate which states clearly that "the administration of Palestine, while ensuring that the rights and position of other sections of the population are not prejudiced, shall facilitate Jewish immigration."

The introduction of mass alien immigrants against the wishes and the will of the Palestinians and denying them employment and work in the Jewish sector was indeed against the rights of the Palestinians and presented a real threat to their existence. Moreover, this mass Zionist immigration and the exclusive Zionist policies were allowed to take place against the advice of the British Government's own commissions and economic experts, who reported that there was no land available for new immigrants and that there was a "very great deal of unemployment in the Arab section of the population."⁵²

The only explanation for such a British policy in regard to Jewish immigration to Palestine is that it took place in the context of colonialism whereby the only consideration, in deciding the size of immigration and land acquisition by the settlers, was the wellbeing and benefits of the settlers, regardless of its effects on the native Arabs. The British must have seen this policy as being in their own colonialist interests.

As for the characteristics of Palestinian Arab society, segmentalism, regionalism and poverty were similar to other traditional societies outside Europe and their conditions were used by the Zionists to justify the colonization of Palestine. The Zionists promised their European patrons that they would be the, "bulwark against Asia, down there we would be the advance post of civilization against barbarism. As a neutral state, we would remain in constant touch with all of Europe which would guarantee our existence."⁵³

3. Land Alienation in Palestine, 1917-1948

The territory of Palestine covers a total area of 10,435 square miles including the water and lake areas. Palestine is largely an agricultural country. Generally speaking it may be divided into four distinct soil regions.⁵⁴

1. Sahel (coastal plains). This consists of fertile land and has been relatively developed and contains large stretches of citrus groves.

2. Jebel (hill region) predominantly rocky and suitable for planting of deciduous trees, especially olives and figs.

3. Ghor (or Jordan valley) where the soil is good for many kinds of cultivation including citrus and tropical fruits. Water from the River Jordan is used for irrigation.

4. The Negeb (the Southern Desert). This region comprises nearly half the lands of Palestine (3,144,246 acres) and only some 640,000 acres of its Northern portion consist of good soil, suitable for irrigation.

Most of the Palestinian peasants lived in villages located in the hill areas (Jebel) and their exploitation of the Sahel (Plains) fluctuated with the state of security. The Palestinians lived in the hill areas, not as some Zionists claimed because it was part of their culture, but rather because of environmental, security and political necessities.⁵⁵ The Palestinian peasants were pushed back to the hill areas when there was no power of Government to protect them from foreign invasion to

which Palestine, because of its geographical location, was subject or from local Bedu (nomads) raids on the plains. The hill villages were more easily defended against such invasion. Some diseases like malaria also made the plain unhealthy and played a role in pushing the fellaheen back to the hills: "The landed property of the villages; both in the plains and in hills was so extensive that some of it lay at a great distance from the village. For the sake of security, and also to some extent for health reasons and to keep away from Malaria spots, swamps or stagnant waters -the villages were built as far as possible on the summits or the slopes of the hills."⁵⁶

But whenever security improved, as it did at the end of Turkish rule and under the Mandate, the Fellaheen would re-establish village colonies in the plains or (Khireb).⁵⁷ These dependent villages (Khireb) were used as temporary dwellings during two short periods, the planting and harvesting seasons. This relationship between the fellaheen and the land in the plain continued until the Zionists purchased most of these lands and eventually pushed the fellaheen back and for good to their hill villages.

This process of pushing the Palestinians back to the less fertile, less watered areas, which was already clearly marked towards the end of the Mandate, was practically completed by Zionist military attacks and occupation of these areas shortly before the end of the Mandate and after the unilateral proclamation of "Israel" in these areas in May 1948. This process of Zionist colonization led in the end to the displacement of the majority of the native population and the creation of the Palestinian refugee problem which stands, even today, as the major obstacle in the way of a lasting settlement as I will show in Chapter Nine.

Before coming to the two main characteristics of the peasants' land relationship during the Mandate, the diminishing size of the average holding, and growing landlessness, it is, in my view, useful to set them in historical perspective

Land Ownership and Tenant in Palestine

The Islamic jural view of land is that ultimately it belong to the Muslim Amma'h (nation or community). This in effect, meant the state, but the collectivism of its ideal form did not prevent the emergence of

private, inheritable property. There were various forms of landownership and tenure in Palestine, as in other Arab countries under Ottoman rule, and most relevant to our subject are:

1. **Mulk:** corresponding to private ownership. This type of ownership was very limited and small in extent in Palestine under Ottoman rule. This was due to two main reasons. The first, was economic, that is to say that the fellaheen were very poor and could not afford to buy land or to pay estate taxes. The second reason was political. Ottoman Law forbade converting the Miri lands (see later) into Mulk, perhaps to avoid creating independent local powers. But Mulk ownership increased rapidly during the Mandate because the British did not follow Ottoman Law.

2. **Mesha ownership.** Here the property is joint and undivided, whether belonging to one family or to a number of families united into a hamula (tribe) or to the inhabitants of a whole village. According to Granott,⁵⁸ up to 1860 practically all land in Palestine was held in Mesha' ownership. Land property held in Masha' remained in many villages up to the Mandate time, in spite of the economic and social changes which had meanwhile taken place. Although the land belonged officially to nobody, each family or village usually took part of that land and in time every one knew his own land and of the others.

3. **Waqf.**⁵⁹ This property consists first and foremost of lands which were donated by the sultans, rulers and wealthy individuals, over the years, or bequeathed lands, for the purpose of establishing and maintaining with the income derived from them, holy place and educational and charitable institutions.

4. **Miri land or state land**⁶⁰

Among the four classes of land ownership the Miri was the most important from the point of view of extent; up to the end of the Mandate it included by far the larger portion of the landed property of Palestine, and amongst them some of the most fertile land. Under this head came first and foremost the lands in the plains and valleys, which at various times were transferred by the government to whole villages, and more importantly to individuals, that is to say, they were handed over to them to be cultivated in return for payment of the tithe (a form of religious taxation).

The main idea behind the Miri land in Islam was economic. The first Arab Muslim conquerors were few and they could not own all the conquered lands and, therefore, the Miri system enabled them to claim that the land did not belong to individuals, but rather to the whole Muslim community. The peasants who worked the land were considered to be temporary users on behalf of the community and were required to pay part of the produce of the land to the state in return for their use of the land. The rights to use or hold the land had revocable ownership and such rights were originally made for the lifetime of the holder only. If the land remained uncultivated for five years, the state could redistribute it to new heirs.⁶¹ These arrangements were made with the intention of preventing the growth of independent power and to make sure that most of the land was efficiently cultivated.

At the peasant level, tenancy, the right to farm land - whether for rent, tax or on a negotiated sharecropping basis - passed from fathers to sons in undisturbed succession until the mid 19th century. "Neither the state, nor individual land holders, had an interest in disturbing the peasants tenancy, since it was the taxes or rent that they produced, not the land itself, that the government and land holders wanted."⁶²

Ottoman legislation of 1856-1858 established the principle of the right to private property, and land was to be registered in the names of individuals and title deeds issued. This opportunity was not fully utilized by most of the peasants for more than one reason.

Some writers claimed that the fellaheen failed to register their lands because they did not understand the significance of the new laws nor the meaning of the concept of ownership.⁶³ But it seems that the main reasons for that were:

1. Poverty. The majority of the fellaheen were poor and did not have money to pay for the land and in many cases they did not have money to pay for the registration fees. On the basis of data collected from 26% of all rural families and 12% of all villages, it was calculated that there was an average debt burden per family of LP 27 (LP=Palestinian Pound) and an average yearly interest on debt of LP 8. The meaning of these figures can be grasped by setting them against the average yearly income of rural families then estimated at LP 25-30 per annum. The total debt burden of the fellaheen at that time was calculated at LP 2

million.⁶⁴ Indeed many fellaheen were working on the land just to survive like slaves and the rest of the produce was given away to the state as taxation, to the land holder or owner, to the money lender etc.

2. The fellaheen were afraid that if they registered the land in their names and could not pay the taxes they could lose the land to the state. More importantly they feared that they would be easily identified and consequently would be conscripted into the Turkish Army. "Conscription was the form of oppression most feared and detested by the Palestinian peasants. At a time of high infant mortality (perhaps 50%), it took their young men, their most valued form of capital, the basis of lineage and household survival, and almost never returned them."⁶⁵

Ruedy summarises these reasons as follows:⁶⁶ "Fearing that the tax collector and army recruiter would make effective use of the new registers, and hardly understanding the enormous importance of the new records and deeds to their own future, when the implementing regulation of the code began to be applied, they evaded massively and stubbornly."

Evasion took the form of registering land in the name of dead or fictitious persons, or, more dangerously, in the name of any important or influential man, who could be the shiekh, notable, city merchant or tax farmer. In the same way much of Bedu tribal land was registered in the name of individual chiefs.⁶⁷

The relationship of some peasants to land thus legally alienated became that of rent-paying or share-cropping tenants who could be evicted at will. The tenants were the main victims of Zionist land policy, since they were not protected under British regulations. They were evicted from the land before or after Zionist purchase.

Tenancy⁶⁸ was a prominent feature of the economy of Palestine and the Arab countries. It was widespread and played an important part in the life of the Arab village. A large number of the fellaheen of Palestine tilled the ground not as owners but as tenants or lessees on the land of large and absentee owners or the state. The large owners leased their land in two forms. Under the one, the land was handed over to a tenant contractor, who worked the land through fellaheen or sub-leased it further. The other was direct leasing by the land owner to the fellaheen. In the first form the hired fellaheen used to work and to

live on the land temporarily or permanently. In many cases the estate contained several villages and thousands of Fellaheen.

Most of the owners of the large estates however, used to live in the towns of Palestine or even in Beirut and other Arab countries. "Absentee landlords" were a characteristic feature of the Arab countries; their number was large and their possessions formed a considerable part of the landed property but this phenomenon almost disappeared after the division of the the Arab countries into independent States.

Tenancy was a recognized method of exploiting the lands of the absentee land lords. As a rule the tenants did not change, but remained on the land all their lives. "The right to remain on the land and till it was transmitted from father to son until in course of time it became itself a highly valued right."⁶⁹ As in the case of the Miri land the fellaheen lived and worked on the land and they did not see the landlord, like the state tax men, except once a year and during the harvest time.

Despite the fact that the fellaheen spent most of their lives working on the land, they were not protected. "No explicit tenancy contract existed in writing or even for the most part orally; there was only a custom going back for many years, a custom which had become a tradition. And tradition naturally acquires in course of time a power of compulsion."⁷⁰ Unlike leasehold, which has a fixed term, long tenancy was not defined in time. This feature increased its similarity to ownership, at any rate in the eyes of those who tilled the land. The problem which arose from such a traditional tenancy institution was that it had no legal standing under British law. As Granott described it: "Tenancy is, therefore, a unique institution. It is devoid of any formal or legal signs of ownership, those rights which the law recognizes and which provide security for one who enjoys them."⁷¹ In other words tenancy under the British law lacked the fundamental elements of ownership: legality and stability.

This tenancy however, was of great importance in Palestine because it determined the relations between the landlord and the fellah and also between the fellah and the land. "The lot of tens of thousands of Fellaheen was bound up with this institution, which in former days was the main pillar of the agrarian regime of the Arab village."⁷² Those

Palestinian tenants, however, were forced to leave the land once that land was acquired by the Zionists.

Thousands of those fellaheen who had worked and lived on the lands for generations, whose rights were guaranteed under the traditional system and were transmissible to their descendants, became a landless class who migrated to the big towns to form the seeds of the social unrest and disturbances, especially in the 1930s. The fellaheen in some cases were evicted by force from the villages and lands which were sold over their heads and without their consent to the Zionists and became victims of the British laws and the discriminatory policies of the Jewish Agency which states in Article 3 of its constitution that:⁷³

"D. The title to the lands acquired is to be taken in the name of the Jewish National Fund, to the end that land shall be held as the inalienable property of the Jewish people.

E. The Agency shall promote agriculture colonization based on Jewish labour and in all works or undertakings carried out or furthered by the Agency, it shall be deemed to be a matter of principle that Jewish labour be employed".

The Fellaheen evictions together with such exclusive policies of the Zionists created an atmosphere of enmity and hatred between the two communities which was reflected in their negative attitudes towards the attempts to solve the conflict. Suspicion and distrust have prevailed between the two parties up to the present day.

The significance of Miri land and tenancy appeared in 1948 when Israel invoked these categorizations to justify confiscation of Palestine land either when the occupant of the land was an absentee, refugee or when he had not registered it during the Mandate.⁷⁴ The traditional and customary rights of land ownership were not recognized as a legal or valid basis for land ownership.

Jewish Land Acquisition in Palestine

The answer to the question: Why did the Zionists buy land in Palestine? is simple if we understand the aim of the Zionist movement and the conditions which surrounded its efforts to reach that aim. The aim of the Zionist movement was the eventual establishment of a pure (exclusive) Jewish state in Palestine. To achieve this aim they needed

population and land.

The British Mandatory Government promised and pledged to facilitate the establishment of a Jewish home in Palestine. Under British protection the Zionists brought half a million Zionist settlers to Palestine during the Mandate period. But in regard to the land the matter was not that simple. British rule over Palestine continued after 1922, under the terms of the Mandate and therefore, she could not simply confiscate the natives' land, as in the case of the classical colonial practices, and give it to the Zionist settlers.

The Mandatory government, in its relations with the Zionist settlers, played the role of colonial mother country, but in the beginning stopped short of granting them or allowing them to confiscate large tracts of land. Instead of confiscating the lands, the British created the economic and political conditions which enabled the Zionists to buy as much land as they could find and to increase their numbers, train and arm themselves until they became able to occupy and confiscate what they could not buy during the Mandate, by the use of force in 1948.

The other reason behind the Zionists' purchasing land in Palestine is that the Zionist movement appeared almost at the turning point of the classical colonial era. The decolonization process was well under way and most of the people in the Middle East were demanding of the colonial powers, especially France and Britain, to quit their countries. In buying land the Zionists would, as they did, dissociate themselves from the hated process of colonialism and claim that they were living on their own land like the Palestinians themselves. Indeed the Zionists followed exclusive policies in regard to the land and labour and they justified their segregation policies on the ground that they were not colonialists.

The size of the land acquired by the Zionists from the beginning of their activities in Palestine until the end of the Mandate in May 1948, was estimated at 1.75 to 1.85 million donums⁷⁵ (1 donum = one thousand square metres) or 7 percent of the total land of Palestine, estimated at 26 million dunums.

The Zionists, however, argued that Jewish land acquisition was so small that it could not be responsible for the fellaheens' poverty or the

problem of landlessness. They claimed that out of the 1,850,000 donums acquired by them, 181,000 donums had been obtained through concessions from the Mandatory Government, 120,000 donums had been acquired from churches and from foreign companies. One million donums was acquired from absentee and large landowners and only 500,000 donums had been acquired from fellaheen. In other words about 1,3 million or 73 percent from absentee and large land owners, government, churches and foreign companies and half a million or 27 percent from fellaheen.⁷⁶

The Palestinians, however, opposed land purchases by Zionists for political and economical reasons. The Palestinian leaders realised from the start the danger of Zionist intentions towards Palestine. Moreover, above anything else it was the ultimate political content of Zionist land acquisitions that drove the Palestinians to oppose these purchases. Ruedy correctly argued that although there were economic and human problems caused by Jewish immigration and land purchase by Zionists, the main causes of Palestinians opposition to both were political: "While immediate economic and human problems played their part in the rising resistance movement of the native leadership, the leadership correctly saw the keys to Palestinian survival or the seeds of its destruction in the twin issues of immigration and land."⁷⁷

Violent Palestinian action in 1920, 1921, 1929 and the Revolt of 1936-1939 were connected with these two issues. Both British and United Nations attempts to solve the conflict failed because neither Palestinians nor Zionists were prepared to compromise on land and immigration.

The Palestinians did not dispute the Zionist figures about the amount and the sources of the land they acquired in Palestine, rather they utilized the same figures to show first, that the amount of land acquired by the Zionists was so small that it did not justify Zionist demands for a separate state, and secondly, the Palestinians argued that although the amount was small, it consisted mainly of large tracts of fertile land which amounted about 20 to 26 percent of the cultivable lands in the whole country.⁷⁸ They added that the land purchases coupled with Zionist segregation policies did cause some economic hardships and landlessness among the Palestinian fellaheen.

The Palestinians argued that the Zionists acquired the majority of the land from a small number of large and absentee landowners or from other institutions such as Government, Churches and foreign companies, in a small number of transactions. The problem was that although such transactions involved a small number of landlords or institutions, it in fact, included large tracts of land in each transaction and affected thousands of fellaheen tenants who were neither consulted on the sale nor protected against the exclusive policies of the Jewish Agency.

The British official economist Simpson warned the British Government about the dangers of the Zionist policy on the relation between the two communities. He argued that: "The principle of the persistent and deliberate boycott of Arab labour in the Zionist colonies is not only contrary to the provision of that Article (6) of the Mandate, but it is in addition a constant and increasing source of danger to the country."⁷⁹

The exact numbers of Fellaheen who become landless or unemployed as a result of Jewish land purchase or segregation policies are not known. But as to landlessness, already by 1930 Simpson reported that according to a Government study of 104 villages there were 23,573 families; of these 16,633 cultivated some land while 6,940 or 29.4 percent were landless.⁸⁰ Sayigh suggests a figure of 35 percent by 1945.⁸¹

Landlessness was usually the result of single sales of large areas of lands including villages. Most of these large sales occurred in the first decade of the Mandate for political and economic reasons which I will discuss later in this section. The largest was the sale by the Beirut family (Sursock) of 240,000 dunums in the area of Esdraelon to the Jewish Fund, involving the destruction of 22 villages and the eviction of more than 8,730 persons.

On fellaheen conditions, Simpson stressed that, "There is no question but that there is a very great deal of unemployment in the Arab section of the population."⁸² He added that: "The condition of the Arab fellah is little if at all superior to what it was under the Turkish regime."⁸³ The Shaw Commission also reported in 1930 that: "There is no further land available which can be occupied by new immigrants without displacing the present population."⁸⁴

This class of landless fellaheen, however, migrated to the big cities and lived under appalling conditions, especially in Jaffa. "Thousands of unskilled workers in Jaffa cannot afford a house to sleep in, they sleep in tin huts or in the open. Some 10 to 15 thousand people live in the city and its suburbs without a single proper latrine."⁸⁵

In contrast to these conditions the Zionist settlers were better off because they "have had every advantage that capital, science and organization can give them."⁸⁶

The disintegration of village society and the emergence of vast shanty towns in the large cities created according to Flapan⁸⁷ the social base for the emergence of the Palestinian Revolt of 1936-1939. Barbour advances a similar argument about the relationship between the land sales and the poisoning of the relationship between the Palestinians and the Zionists which led to the Palestinian Revolt. He argues that: "The question of land sales has, however, caused a profound sense of grievance, and was certainly a principal cause of the revolt of the peasantry which was maintained in Palestine for over three years."⁸⁸

The privatization and expropriation of peasant land in Palestine can best be demonstrated in the decline of average land holdings. It gradually dropped from 148 donums in 1917 to 42 in 1936.⁸⁹ According to the Shaw Commission the required viable plot for a family varied from 100 to 150 donums.⁹⁰ This drop in the size of the average plot, however, was not only caused by Zionist purchases but also because the population of Palestine, as we have seen in section two, had doubled during the first two decades of the Mandate. This increase in population simultaneously with the decrease of the viable land plots, must have played a role in worsening the economic conditions of the fellaheen since more fellaheen had to live on less land.

The last relevant question in regard to the land issue is this: If the Palestinians knew the economic and political consequences of selling land to the Zionists, why then did they do so? The Zionists succeeded in giving the impression that they acquired the land from the Palestinians, not only through bargains but also that the Palestinians had benefited from the high prices which they received for their lands.⁹¹ Such arguments which were generally accepted by the West, however, are deceptive unless we put them in the proper perspective and connect them

with the circumstances which surrounded the land sales.

The occupation of Palestine by Britain coupled with Britain's commitment to Zionism created political and economic conditions in the country which forced some landowners to sell part, or all their lands in Palestine rather than lose them in the uncertain future. Politically, Palestine was occupied by Britain in 1917 and eventually was separated from the rest of the Arab countries. Britain was committed to the Zionist movement to facilitate the establishment of a Jewish home in the country. These political circumstances forced the large absentee landlords to sell their lands to anyone including the Zionists. These private owners feared that the British government might in the course of time seize their lands, since they were not Palestinian citizens. In such a climate of fear and uncertainty together with the high prices offered by the Zionists, these owners had little choice other than to sell their lands.

The large owners, churches and foreign companies on the other hand sold their land because of the uncertainty which surrounded the future of Palestine in general but mainly for economic reasons and profit. Some Palestinians, large owners and foreign companies even worked as land brokers and profited from the land sales business. Their main concern was personal profit.

The last category, or the 27 percent of land acquired from fellaheen, was sold for economic reasons. The fellaheen needed cash to develop their lands and since they could not get the required money for such development from the Government, they were forced to sell part of their lands to the Zionists in order to buy better irrigated land or to develop the other part of their lands. This category, however, did not have much bearing on the landlessness problem but on the contrary it perhaps had a positive effect by increasing the Palestinians' land productivity and expanding their share in the citrus and other plantations, especially in the plains.

In conclusion to this section I would argue that the Palestinians opposed Zionist land purchases mainly for political reasons. However, the economic consequences of Jewish land purchases were severe on the fellaheen and led to the creation of a landless class who eventually

formed the seeds for the revolt of 1936-1939. On the other hand, the exclusive policies of the Jewish Agency on land and labour alarmed the Palestinian leaders who used them as examples of Zionist political ambitions and found no difficulty in convincing the population to take action against the whole idea of the "Jewish National Home". Separate development and segregation were used by the Zionists to demonstrate the non-exploitive nature of their settlement in Palestine. But they were used by the Palestinians to show that the Zionists were indeed aiming to take control of the whole country and dispossess them. The relationship between the British Mandatory government and the Zionist settlers had the characteristics of classical colonialism in the sense that what mattered for the colonial power was the benefit and welfare of the settlers in order to promote imperial interests and the complete neglect of the natives' rights.

4. Separate Development

According to the Palestinian version, there was a settler colonial dispossession of a native people by a European Zionist class bent on expansion at their expense. Zionism was seen as a racist⁹² movement, connected first with Western colonialism and later with American imperialism, which sought to establish an exclusively Jewish state in Palestine, ignoring the fact that Palestine was already inhabited by Palestinians who, not only owned the country but, also, had established a living culture in that country since time immemorial. This Zionist colonialist ideology was manifested in the exclusive policies of segregation between the Zionist settlers and the Palestinians in every aspect of life. The Zionist settlers' attitude towards the Palestinians was not different from the attitude of any white settlers towards the natives, it is the sense of superiority and contempt towards the natives and the refusal to deal with them as equals. It was this attitude which prevented any serious negotiations taking place between the Zionist settlers and the Palestinians during the Mandate period: "Bevin felt that the fundamental difficulty over Palestine was that the Jews refused to admit that the Arabs were their equals. If the Jews could be brought to see that the principle of one man one vote applied in Palestine to Arabs and Jews alike as much as everywhere else the difficulty would be solved."⁹³

This view of equating Zionism with racism was confirmed by the U.N. General Assembly in their Resolution 3379 (xxx) of November 10, 1975 which condemns Zionism as a form of "racism and racial discrimination."

This sense of superiority among settler colonialist societies is still, even today, the major obstacle to solving the conflict in South Africa and between the Arabs and "Israel." In South Africa the white racist government refuses to accept the principle of one man one vote as a basis for solving the racial conflict because this would mean black majority rule. "Israel" too, refuses to recognize or negotiate with the Palestine Liberation Organization or accept the fundamental principle of the right of the Palestinian people to self determination, even in those areas occupied by its forces in 1967, because she knows that it was established on territories mainly owned by Palestinians and once a Palestinian state was established it would continue to work for the liberation of those territories.

This Palestinian argument equating Zionism with racism and colonialism has been widely accepted by some on the European left,⁹⁴ and many Third World countries.

The Zionist view in this matter was, however, that Jewish immigration to Palestine had nothing to do with colonialism but rather was a necessity to rescue the European Jews from the persecution and social discrimination of the Gentiles. The Zionists argued that they were not alien settlers but rather returning to their forefathers' homeland and under the approval of the League of Nations. This Zionist argument prevailed in Europe during the Mandate period and most Western writers on the subject "have tended to represent the Mandatory period in terms of the political confrontation of two national communities in which each excluded the other"⁹⁵ rather than a conflict between a native population and alien Zionist settlers.

The Zionists attempted to develop their own political institutions from the outset and in April 1920 a Constituent Assembly was established. It proclaimed itself to be the supreme organ in conducting the national and communal affairs of the Jews in Palestine and its sole representative internally and externally. It elected a National Council (Vaad Leumi) of 36 members which was directed to prepare a draft constitution for the inner self-government of the Jewish community.⁹⁶ The Zionists indeed established a shadow government which was recognized by the British

government as responsible for the internal affairs of the Jewish community in Palestine, in addition to the Jewish Agency which was officially recognized by the Mandatory under Article Four of the Mandate. The Jewish Agency had two offices, one in Jerusalem to deal with the Mandatory Government and the other in London which gave them direct access to the British government and British public opinion and media.

In contrast, the British Government recognized no Palestinian national organization, such as the Arab Executive⁹⁷ or the Supreme Muslim Council⁹⁸ as representative of the Palestinians, nor did they promote any local autonomy or self government for them, despite the Mandatory Government's obligation under Article Two of the Mandate which states that: "The Mandatory shall be responsible for the development of self-government institutions" and Article Three which states that: "The Mandatory shall, so far as circumstances permit, encourage local autonomy."

However, the British government offered the Palestinians the establishment of an Arab Agency to carry out similar functions to the Jewish Agency. The Palestinians refused such an Agency on the grounds that it would equate them and the Zionist alien settlers at a time when the Arabs formed the overwhelming majority. What they wanted was self-government in the whole country representing all the inhabitants including the Jewish minority and with executive power over immigration and land sales, as I will show in the next Chapters.

The Zionists would not accept participation in such a government because it would prevent the development of the Jewish home in the country. And since Britain was committed to Zionism to establish the Jewish home, it was against their commitment to Zionism to agree to the Palestinian demands for independence. This British discrimination against the Palestinians by not applying the democratic rule of one man one vote in their efforts to solve the conflict was responsible, among other things, for the failure of the British Government to solve the conflict. More will be said about this subject when I discuss the British attempt to solve the conflict in the next chapters.

However, once the British Mandatory Government gave the go-ahead for separate political development she practically gave the Zionists a free

hand in developing separate economic, social, educational and health sectors.

The policy of separate development while it benefited the Zionist sector, damaged the Palestinian sector. The Zionists had the advantage of capital and technology while the Palestinian traditional sector, lacking material resources and human infrastructure, could not compete with such a relatively advanced Zionist capitalist and industrial sector. This situation led some writers to argue that the Zionist sector developed at the expense of the Palestinian sector. "Jewish capital which flows into the country secures the development of the country through industrialization; it fulfills the first part of the plan: it destroys in a significant way the small Arab industry, and transfers industries to new Jewish centres, without employing whatsoever, or they employ in an insignificant manner, Arab workers."⁹⁹

Zionist industries were also built in part at the expense of the Palestinian consumers, but they did not return to them any benefits in terms of absorbing Palestinian labour, or absorbing, in the Jewish sector, any Palestinian products. It is certain that without the internal Palestinian market, as well as those of the surrounding Arab countries, Jewish industries could not have become viable. The Palestine market was controlled by the Mandatory Government's taxation system which allowed the Zionists to import the raw materials necessary for their industries tax free and imposed high taxation on other important materials to protect Zionist industries and products from foreign competition, see table 1.

Table:1¹⁰⁰ shows the imbalance between the Palestinian and Jewish sectors in Palestine industry in 1942.

Table:1

<u>Sectors</u>	<u>Distribution</u>	<u>Distribution</u>	<u>Wages</u>	<u>Capital</u>	<u>Total</u>
	<u>of firms %</u>	<u>of workers %</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
Jewish	55	75	83	60	79
Arabs	44	17	17	10	15
Others	1	8	-	30	6

The Jewish population at that time represented less than one third of the population and such domination of Palestine industry by the Jewish

minority was possible for two reasons:

1. The Mandatory Government granted the Zionists big industrial projects and other economic concessions such as the electricity project for all of Palestine, the potash project on the Dead Sea as well as granting them certain lands.¹⁰¹
2. The flows of capital and technology from outside Palestine into the Jewish sector and the boycott of Palestinian labour and produce.

The Mandatory Government also discriminated against the Palestinians in jobs and wages in the Government and other public services and projects. The difference in wages between Palestinians and Zionists in government jobs reached 30 to 37 percent. The Government justified this on the grounds that the standard of living among the Palestinians was less than among the Zionist settlers.¹⁰²

Of course such an explanation does not make sense since the duty of the government was to narrow the gap between the two standards of living if she was interested in avoiding a social conflict between the two communities. Indeed the British Government tended to favour capital-intensive agriculture and industries, both of which characterised the Jewish sector more than the Palestinian one.¹⁰³

The Mandatory Government's discrimination against the Palestinians in its contracts can be noticed from the number of Government contracts awarded to both sides. Out of 2509 contracts the Zionists were given 1470 or 58 percent while the Arabs were awarded 1039 contracts or 42 percent.¹⁰⁴ This indicates how the Mandatory Government preferred the Zionist settler minority by granting them more contracts than the Palestinian majority.

The effect of the Mandatory's discriminatory policies and the Zionists' exclusive policies in development and boycotting the Palestinian workers became acute in the middle of the 1930s and led to the Palestinian General Strike in 1936 and the Revolt which lasted until 1939. During the Revolt (1936-1939) the Mandatory Government needed more police and military forces and consequently she switched the money from social services to the military and security services. In 1933 for example, the share of the social services amounted to 12 percent but this share dropped in 1936 to 7.8 percent. By contrast the share of defence which was 28.4 percent in 1933, had increased to 36.6 percent in 1936.¹⁰⁵

The Zionist policy with regard to Palestinian labour was that Jewish workers only could and should have jobs in Jewish firms and on Jewish land. This policy contributed more than any other factor to the crystallisation of the concept of territorial, economic and social separation between the two communities.¹⁰⁶

It is worth mentioning that such separation policies were not new phenomena in Zionist ideology but rather were as old as the Zionist movement itself. Arther Ruppin, a Zionist economist, stated at the eleventh Zionist congress that "the objective we have in view is the creation of a closed Jewish economy in which producers, consumers, and middle men will be Jewish."¹⁰⁷

By the 1930s the segregation policies and the boycott of Arab labour become political issues. Such policies were responsible for widening the gap and increasing hostilities between the two communities until it reached a state of war in 1936-1939 and 1947-1948 as we will see in the coming chapters.

Education

Like other aspects of Palestinian-Jewish development, Palestinian educational infrastructures and services will also show signs of weakness when compared to Jewish ones. In 1944, for example there were 97,000 Palestinian students in the elementary stage between the ages of five to fourteen years, comprising 32 percent of the total number of children of school age. In the same year among Jewish children it was 97 percent.¹⁰⁸

The figures for 1946 indicated that 85 percent of Palestinian boys and 63 percent of girls of elementary school age attended schools in the cities while the figures, for the Palestinian villages, were 63 percent and 7.5 percent for boys and girls respectively.¹⁰⁹ There were also differences in the level of education between the two communities. The Jewish education level was higher than that in the Arab sector.¹¹⁰

The Zionists referred the low level of education among Palestinian student to their traditional value system. The evidence presented here shows a different picture.

First, elementary school enrolment was dictated mostly by availability

of places, a factor which the Mandate Government controlled. For example, in 1945-1946, only 69 percent of Palestine children who applied to study could secure a place.¹¹¹ There were not enough schools or teachers. This shortage was especially acute in villages because the government aimed at coping with increasing city demands.

Table:2 Shows the Number of pupils who applied to enter elementary schools in contrast to those who entered 1933-1939.¹¹²

Table:2

<u>Year</u>	<u>No. of Applicants</u>	<u>Secured a place</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1933	14,383	8,638	60
1938	23,031	11,552	50
1939	25,488	13,222	52

Secondly, the Palestinian themselves were anxious for education for their children and by the late 1940s the total Palestinian contribution to education funds exceeded that provided by the British Mandatory Government.¹¹³ The Palestinian attitude towards education was positive but what could they do if the government could not provide adequate schools and teachers?

Thirdly, total government spending on Palestinian education per student was much lower than that in the Jewish sector. With a population of over a million there were, in 1944-1945, 71,662 Palestinian students in the public school system staffed by 1,871 teachers, housed in 478 schools. Total government spending for Palestinian education was LP 409.000. On the opposite side, the Jewish population, around half million, had 77,968 pupils in its schools, 3,783 teachers 573 schools and a budget of LP 1.489.563, with ten percent of its budget contributed by the British Mandatory Government.¹¹⁴ This contrast led Tibawi to comment that "one third of the population had more children at school than the other two thirds" and "the money spent on education of the children of one third of the population was three times the amount spent by the Government on the education of the other two thirds."¹¹⁵ The number of schools increased, between 1925/6 and 1944/5, from 587 to 749 while the number of pupils had increased in the same period from 38,327 to 105,386.¹¹⁶

In spite of this increase in the number of Palestinian schools between 1925 and 1944, the majority of these were primary schools. By 1944,

there were only 959 secondary school students, with no secondary schools in rural areas.¹¹⁷ The only university in Palestine was the Hebrew University, which was established in 1925, to serve the Jewish community exclusively. The Palestinian students who wanted to continue their higher education had to go to other Arab countries such as Egypt or Lebanon.

The Zionist policy of separate education had negative implications in the relations between the two communities. Although both Palestinian and Zionist settlers shared the same country, they talked and learned different languages and studied different subjects. There was not much intellectual communication between the two communities and the contents of their school curricula were in most cases hostile to each other.¹¹⁸

The Zionists taught their children that: Palestine was theirs and they should not share it with the Arabs. And the Palestinians taught their children that the Zionists were invaders and they had to fight them. So the education systems were utilized by both sides to serve their ends.

The Mandatory Government should have allowed only one educational system and it should have directed its content to serve co-operation, understanding and reconciliation. The British did not do that because it perhaps was considered against their interests. They, perhaps, wanted the conflict to widen and continue, giving them a pretext to stay in the country.

In conclusion to this Section, I would argue that the segregation policies were deliberately employed and utilized by the Zionists to achieve their ultimate aim namely an exclusively Jewish state.

Concluding Remarks

It would be incorrect to conclude, in the light of the evidence presented here, that the Palestinian sector was dependent on Zionist colonizing efforts in its pattern of development. Palestinian peasants were not exploited by Zionist settlers in the classical sense of colonialism. The situation more resembled a dual-society structure with one part deriving benefit from the sponsoring colonial power at the expense of the other.

Palestinian society showed all the characteristics of traditional society and suffered mainly from segmentalism, regionalism, poverty and lacked an able and organized leadership. By 1936, the external and double threat of British occupation and Zionist colonization, had gone far towards unifying the Palestinians. For a full period of three years they revolted against this external threat. Nevertheless, it seems right to conclude that, in spite of the spread of nationalist consciousness throughout the Mandate period, social segmentation blocked the rapid mobilization of large group, and long term political and military organizations. The readiness of the peasants to take up armed struggle was not fully exploited by the traditional leadership, which lacked the organizational powers necessary for conducting mass armed struggle.

But I think it would be incorrect to seek in these societal characteristics the causes of the Palestinian Resistance Movement's failure or the disaster of 1948. Indeed, the presence of serious internal cleavages within Palestinian society based on clan-ethnicity made the task of unifying opposition to British and Zionist colonization extremely difficult, but it was the combined material and military superiority of the British and Zionist forces which defeated the Palestinian resistance and made possible the proclamation of a Jewish state in two thirds of Palestine after uprooting the majority of its Arab inhabitants.

However, the Zionists realized quite early on that the land held by the Palestinians would have to be alienated so that settlement on the land and its development by Zionist settlers could eventually establish the necessary basis for statehood. A slow process of land alienation from Palestinians to Zionist settlers characterized the brief history of Palestine during the Mandate period. Though small and really minor, when the Jewish state was proclaimed, no more than 7 percent of the land of Palestine had been acquired by Zionists, the political and strategic implications of the process were clear to Arabs and Europeans alike.

The process of land alienation coupled with Zionist exclusive policies on employment on Jewish land had a serious impact on the relationship between the two communities and the economic conditions of the Palestinian peasants.

The average size of the peasant holdings decreased at a time when there

was an increase in population and the peasants evicted from land acquired by Zionists formed a new landless class. This class of landless peasants migrated to the big towns and formed the seeds of the social unrest and revolt of 1936-1939.

Though the process of land alienation was slow and continued to be a major problem for the Zionists, the process of immigration was relatively easier and in the end proved more significant in effecting the destiny of Palestine. What the Zionists had failed to buy, they eventually expropriated when they proclaimed the establishment of "Israel" in 1948.

The influx of Zionist immigrants, without taking into account the economic absorptive capacity of the country and the wishes of the Palestinian Arabs led to the Palestinians' revolt against this alien invasion of their country. The Zionist policy of separate development was, in fact, within their ideology to establish eventually an exclusively Jewish state in the country and not, as they claimed, a policy of non-exploitation.

This exclusive economic, social and political development, in addition to its negative effects on the relations between the two communities, was seen as a challenge to the Arabs and increased their suspicion of the Zionists' final goal. These segregative policies created a communications gap between the two sides and indeed formed a major obstacle on the way to any understanding between them.

The process of land alienation, Zionist immigration and the separate development of political, social, economic and educational institutions transformed Palestine from a traditional, pre-dominantly Arab society into a plural society with a direct conflict between its two segments, the Palestinians and the Zionist settlers.

In conclusion I would argue that the Palestine conflict was a conflict between a traditional Arab society and a periodic alliance between British colonialism and alien Zionist settlers. As in any other situation the material and military superiority of the colonialists led to the creation of new conditions desirable to the colonialists but hated by the natives, and since the new conditions were reached as a

result of military victory, which could be reversed, it is expected that the conflict will continue until the two sides reach an agreement based on rights, justice and the right to self-determination.

References For Chapter Three

1. Hadawi, S. Bitter Harvest Palestine between 1914-1967, The New World Press, New York 1967 p.11.
2. For more details about Palestinian social structure during the Mandate see Sayigh, R. Palestinian experience viewed as socialization, M. A Thesis American University of Beirut, 1970 pp.28-96.
3. The Ottoman rule over Palestine and the other Arabs countries until the end of World War One.
4. They were not groups in the normal sociological use of the term; they could not be activated as groups but were internally segmented along sectarian, regional and kinship lines into smaller units that could form the basis for social or political action.
5. The word "class" usually used in the West to refer to a set of social relations which arise from a specific mode of production. Marx makes distinction between classes based on wage labour, capital or landed property. Class here does not give the same meaning but rather a loose term to describe different groups in an Arab traditional society where there is not a clear cut definition between these different groups on occupational basis.
6. Sayigh R. op.cit p.29.
6. Ibid. p.29.
7. Ruedy, J. "Dynamic of Land Alienation" In Abu-Lughod I, ed. The Transformation of Palestine North Western University, Evanston 1971, p.122.
8. Granott, A. The Land System In Palestine Eyre & Spottiswoode, London, 1952 p.164.
9. For more details about role and position of the Mukhtar see Ben-Dor, Gabriel. The Palestinian And The Middle East Conflict, Turtledore Publishing London, 1976. pp.101-112.
10. For example, if one person from a tribe was killed all members of that tribe would be responsible for his revenge and all members of the other tribe would be responsible for his death regardless of whether he is from the same village or from another one. Therefore, one incident in one village could spread to other villages. Also lands around villages could be owned by other villages and this caused conflict between different villages.
11. For example if a fellah moved to a city he would not become

automatically Mudeni but he would stay as fellah. Even if he worked as a teacher or merchant in a city he continued to be called fellah. The same was true for the Mudeni if he moved to live in a village he would continue to be called Mudeni.

12. See Sayigh op. cit pp.31-36.
13. For more details about the conflict and rivalries between these two families. See Porath A. The Emergence of the Palestinian Arab National Movement, Frank Cass, London, 1974. pp.208-240. pp.208-240.
14. For more details about the factional struggle see Porath, A. The Palestine Arab National Movement volume two, Frank cass, 1977 pp.49-75.
15. Lesch, Ann. M. "Palestine: Land And People", In Aruri, Naseer. Occupation, Israel over Palestine Zed Book Ltd. London, 1984. pp.30-31.
16. Sayigh, op.cit. p.31.
17. The Medeniyeen in general and the notables in particular looked down on the fellaheen. Among the Medeniyeen the term fellah was and still is an insult. They considered the fellah inferior to them and there were no marriages or social visits between the two, but these stereotypes have begun to diminish in all the Arab countries. The spread of education and communication is responsible for this change.
18. The Palestinian leaders indeed, like most of the early Arab Nationalists in Syria, Iraq and Transjordan did not have a strong sense of separate identity and were strong advocates of pan-Arabism. For more details about the idea of unification of Palestine with Syria see Porath op.cit. volume one pp.70-123.
19. Sayigh, op.cit. p.33.
20. For more details about the Palestinian Revolt of 1936-1939 and the different military and economic measures used by the British to suppress, the Revolt see Chapter five of this study.
21. Sayigh, op.cit. p.34.
22. For more details about the six political parties see Porath op.cit. vol. 1. pp.49-75.
23. Sayigh op.cit. p.35.
24. This was during the 1936 general strike see chapter five for more details about the Revolt and the strike.
25. Waines, D. The Failure of the Nationalist Resistance in

Abu-Lughod ed. op.cit. p.228.

26. Even today in Jordan, Syria and Iraq, most of the large tribes, even after they have settled, are strongly represented in the governments of these countries.
27. Khawa. A ransom paid by the peasants to the bedu in exchange for their protection from other bedu or from the same bedu to whom they paid the ransom.
28. Shoufani, E. "The Fall Of A Village" Journal of Palestine Studies vol. No4, Summer 1972 pp.108-121.
29. Nazzal, Nafidh. "The Fall of Western Galilee" Journal of Palestine Studies, Spring, 1974. pp.58-76.
- 30 For more details about the fellaheen economic conditions see "Economic condition of fellaheen". Sayigh op.cit. pp.49-70.
31. Palestine, however, was more developed than Jordan during the 1930s and 1940s. There were more schools and roads and other means of communication as a result of the competition between Zionists and Palestinians and as a result of the British Mandatory Government's efforts. But the relationship among the different groups of the Palestine society was similar to those prevailing in Jordan, Syria or Iraq. For more details about the Palestinian village life, Sayigh, op.cit. pp.70-94.
32. This practice was not popular and it was done as follows:
two families who had boys or girls agreed that each family provide their daughter with all she needed for marriage including clothes, jewellery etc. and prepare the house for their son and provide it with all necessary things for a household. The marriage contract was done separately as they were two different marriages.
33. There was an animal market in the town and the villagers went there in most cases to exchange their animals with other more suitable ones to do their work.
34. The people normally went to the town early in the morning and came back at night because the distance was far and they needed time to buy all their supplies and carry them on donkeys back home.
35. This arrangement was called Khawah, whereby the fellaheen agreed with some bedu to give them exclusive rights for pasturing and water for their animals and some times grain and other produce in return for protecting them and their farms and animals against other bedu.
36. Moslem-Christian joint societies were established in Palestine during the Mandate in order to fight British occupation and Zionist immigration while in Lebanon Muslims and Christians were against

each other and the conflict between the two sects is still going at the present time.

37. Zwinner, "Some aspects of ethnic stereotype content in Galilee" Middle Eastern Studies, vol 8, 1972 pp.405-416.
38. I use the clan to indicate and include all the people descendent from usually a famous man a long time ago and still carrying the same name and blood regardless of whether they live together or not. Different branches of one family could live in different villages, towns or even countries.
39. For more details about the Palestinian Revolt 1936-1939 see chapter five.
40. Sayigh op.cit. p.48.
41. Official Israeli Year Book 1950-1951 Jerusalem, p.81.
42. Institute of Palestine Studies, The Palestine Question and the Zionist Danger, 1st edition, Beirut 1973 p.122. (Arabic)
43. Lughod J. The Demographic Transformation of Palestine in Abu-Lughod, I. op.cit. pp.124-143.
44. Ibid p.143.
45. Institute of Palestine Studies, op.cit. pp.122-123.
46. The Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Palestine disturbances of August, 1929, (Cmd. 3530), London, 1930. p.109. (now on referred to as Shaw Report).
47. Shaw Report p.109.
48. The census was conducted by the British Mandatory Government, It was published in Jerusalem in 1931, see pp.44-45.
49. Esco Foundation for Palestine A Study of Jewish, Arab and British Policies, vol.1 New Haven Yale University Press, London, 1977 p.406.
50. Abu-Lughod J. op.cit. p.147.
51. Official Records of the General Assembly of the U. N. Second Session (UNSCOP) Suppl. No. 2. Document A-364 vol. 1. p.54.
52. John Hope Simpson, "Palestine. Report on Immigration, Land Settlement and Development", (Cmd. 3686), London, 1930 p.134.
53. Quoted by Rodinson M. Israel: A Colonial Settler State, New York, Pathfinder Press, 1973 p.43. This was the idea of Herzl the first leader of the Zionist movement.
54. Hadawi op.cit. p.9. For more details about land characteristics see John Simpson Report, On Land Development in Palestine, (Cmd. 3686 and Cmd. 3687), London, 1930. In this Report there is useful information about fellaheen conditions, irrigated land viable plots and land ownership.

55. Such as Stanley, Diamond. In Search of the Primitive, Transaction books, New Jersey, 1974, p.60.
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57. Khireb: Is the usual name (code name) for actual ruins or the site of old settlement which in the course time had been abandoned by its inhabitants. For more details about the relationship between the fellaheen and their Khirebs see Granott, op.cit. pp.169-174.
58. For more details about land ownership Masha System see Granott, op.cit. pp.174-178.
59. For more details about Wagf land, the land dedicated for religious purposes, see Ibid, pp.128-155.
60. Ibid, pp.85-128. For more details about land ownership in Palestine in general see Moshe, A. "Land Ownership in Palestine 1880-1984" in Curtis, H. and others (eds) The Palestine People History and Politics, Transaction Books, New Jersey,
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63. Ibid. p.61.
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CHAPTER FOUR

Palestinian Reaction to Zionist Settlement and their Responses to British Attempts to Solve the Conflict, 1920-1935

Introduction

There were no serious problems between the Palestinians and the Oriental Jewish community in Palestine before 1917. According to Muslim doctrine, Christians and Jews are "people of the book", believers in God, revelation and the day of judgment. As such, they are not to be persecuted or forced to convert to Islam. They were left free to regulate their own communal and personal life in accordance with their own religious laws.

Although, the Jewish community preserved much of their exclusiveness, they became Arabized in their language and culture. In the history of Jewish culture the Arab period is among the happiest. In Spain, in Egypt and elsewhere, the Arabized Jews not only carried on their own life of devotion and learning but contributed to the general Arab civilization.¹ With the fall of Arab rule in Spain the Arab countries became places of refuge and a haven for the persecuted Jews of Spain and Europe, where they could pursue their daily lives in freedom and equality. This view was expressed by both Arabs and Jews to the Shaw Commission: "Representatives of all parties told us that before the First World War, the Jews and Arabs lived side by side if not in amity, at least with tolerance, a quality which today is almost unknown in Palestine."²

This harmony between Arabs and Jews in Palestine, however, was disrupted after the appearance of the Zionist movement in 1897 and developed into an open conflict after 1917, when Britain issued the Balfour Declaration in support to Zionist claims.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine first of all the underlying causes of this disruption of the good relations between Arabs and Jews between 1917-1935 and to highlight the Palestinians' responses to the attempts to solve the conflict during this period. It is interesting to know what were their basic arguments and mode of action in opposing Zionist settlement? What were their demands and condition for solving the conflict at that time? Were there any opportunities for peace which

missed? What were the British proposals to solve the conflict and why were they not accepted as a basis for a lasting settlement? What were the Palestinians responses to the British proposals to solve the conflict?

Basic Palestinian Arguments

Zionist settlement in Palestine from the end of the 19th Century brought to the country a new type of alien people, mainly European, who differed from the natives in social habits, language and way of life and who looked contemptuously on the natives as inferior to themselves.

The new settlement created considerable problems for the Palestinians both villagers and former tenants. Such problems resulted in the beginning from the total ignorance and disrespect of the settlers for the traditional Arab way of life. But this did not prevent the settlers from exploiting the cheap native labour in their farms and settlements. It was the type of classical relationship between white settlers and natives in Asia and Africa with its main features as suspicion, dislike and local disputes.⁴

After Britain officially committed herself to Zionism in 1917, through the Balfour Declaration, the Zionist method of colonization changed to what might be called land colonization. That is to say acquiring adequate land, clearing it of its inhabitants or tenants, bringing new settlers to work the land and establish a separate community with its exclusive economic, political, social, educational and language features, and create the infrastructure necessary for the eventual exclusive Jewish state.

According to the Palestinian point of view this Zionist ideology and policy had created serious political, economic and social problems such as lack of independence, land shortages, unemployment, landlessness and the destruction of Palestinian society. Such fears were aired to both the Mandatory and the British Governments and were presented to the Shaw Commission in 1929. The Palestinians complained that: "In the early days the Jew who came to work on his land had employed Arab labour. Since immigration commenced in large numbers these Jewish employers have employed Jews in their place thereby throwing out of work a large number of Arabs... All Arabs understand that the Zionist policy is to dispose

of the Arabs in every possible way and to replace them with Jews."⁴

The British Government considered the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate as the only basis and framework for all their proposals, especially during the first two decades, to solve the problem. Here lies one of the fundamental differences between the Palestinians on the one hand and the British and the Zionists on the other in their interpretation of the causes of the conflict and the right approach to solve it.

The Palestinian argument was simple. They as the overwhelming majority⁵ and the natives of the country had the right, according to all democratic rules, to establish a national government which would represent their aspirations and the aspiration of the Jewish minority.

As we saw in Chapter Two the Palestinians refused to recognize the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate because these documents carried promises, to the Zionists, which were against their interests and because these promises were given by Britain without their consultation or consent. The Declaration was seen as: "repugnant to the aspirations which they entertain, as an outcome of the war, and prejudicial to their national, political and economic interests."⁶

The Palestinians therefore did not at any time recognize the Declaration as a binding agreement and considered it null and void. The same rule applied to the Mandate because it was a British document which was approved by the League of Nations without Palestinian consent or consultation.

On the other hand the British and the Zionists regarded these documents as legal and considered that the Palestinians had to accept them as the only basis for any solution or understanding. The British Government was determined to carry out its policy in Palestine despite opposition from the Palestinians and against their wishes, because it was seen by Britain as the right policy to serve British interests. It must be remembered that colonial interest was always considered as more important than the natives' wishes. Here is Balfour: "In Palestine we don't propose even to go through the form of consulting the wishes of the present inhabitants of the country."⁷

This British attitude and action in Palestine was not, however, unusual but fitted perfectly into the great European-American movement of expansion in the 19th and 20th centuries whose aim was to plant white settlers in other countries in order to dominate them economically and politically.⁸

The British sponsored Zionist settlement in Palestine in order to secure, for Britain, long lasting strategical and economic interests in an area whose inhabitants were already demanding the end of British and French colonialism especially in Egypt and Syria. It was often declared that a Jewish community in Palestine, dependent for its survival on British protection would always provide a moral pretext for continuous British occupation of Palestine.

The basic problem then which faced the Palestinians was: How could they a small traditionally organized people gain their independence against the combined weight of the British government and the Zionist movement?

During the first decade the Palestinian leaders thought that they could persuade the British Government to abrogate the Balfour Declaration, end the Mandate and establish a national government, by political means. The methods of persuasion, included sending petitions to both the British and the Mandatory Governments and to the permanent Mandate Commission of the League of Nations. They sent four delegation to London⁹, Geneva and Lausanne to explain the Palestinian views and case. Palestinian action included demonstrations, one day strike and riots but did not develop into a full revolt before 1936.

From the outset the Palestinians, poor and divided as they were, realised that they could not face the combined forces of the British army and Zionism alone and therefore, they looked to the neighbouring Arab countries for help. When Amir Faysal (Son of King Hussein of Hijjaz) established an Arab government in Damascus in October 1918 the Palestinian aspiration focused on him and many Palestinians served in his government and Army.

The Palestinian leaders expressed their official views in regard to the Balfour Declaration and their desire to be united with Syria in an all-Palestine conference held in Jerusalem in January 1919.¹⁰ But the

establishment of the Civil Administration in Palestine in July 1920, the occupation of Damascus by the French forces and the confirmation of the British Mandate over Palestine at the San-Remo Conference in April 1920, obliged the Palestinians to reformulate their political position. They now formed a definite Palestine policy distinct from the former Syrian policy.¹¹

The new policy was confirmed by the Palestine Arab congress held at Haifa December 1920¹² which demanded the establishment of a national government which would be responsible to a representative council and be elected by the inhabitants of the country who were living in Palestine at the beginning of World War One.

During this conference the Palestinian leaders formed the Arab Executive. It consisted of 24 members who claimed to represent all the classes and creeds of the Palestinian people. According to Wain¹³ the Arab Executive was able to command the support of all segments and factions of the population. The executive programme may be summarized in four points:

1. Repudiation of the Balfour Declaration and the Jewish home policy.
2. Establishment of a Palestinian national government to be elected by the inhabitants of the country in their pre-War proportions.
3. Stoppage of Jewish immigration and
4. Free association of Palestine with other Arab countries.

The Arab Executive presented these demands to Winston Churchill, then Colonial Secretary, when he visited Palestine in 1921.¹⁴ In his reply Churchill, however, made it clear that there was no ground for hoping that the British Government would agree to the Palestinian demands for the establishment of a national government. He defended his government's pro-Zionist policy and the the policy of the Balfour Declaration but, at the same time, he assured the Palestinians that there was no intention on the part of the British Government to create a Jewish state that would dominate them.¹⁵

After the establishment of the civil government in Palestine in 1920 headed by a former British Jewish M.P. Samuel, who was committed to Zionism, the Zionists resumed their land purchases and immigration, this time under British official sponsorship and protection. The appointment

of a Jew, Samuel as High Commissioner, from 1920 to 1925, and the resumption of land sales to Zionists coupled with Zionist immigration increased Zionist morale and disappointed the Palestinians.

Thus, the atmosphere became tense in Palestine and in May 1921 the first serious outbreak of violence broke out in Jaffa. The disturbances and riots spread to some other areas in the country especially to Nablus and Tulkarom. During the disturbances 48 Palestinians and 47 Jews were killed, 73 Palestinians and 148 Jews were wounded.¹⁶

The British government appointed the Haycraft Commission to inquire into the causes of these riots and to recommend solutions which would prevent their recurrence. According to the Haycraft Report: "The fundamental cause of the Jaffa riots and the subsequent acts of violence was a feeling among the Arabs of discontent with, and hostility to, the Jews, due to political and economical causes, and connected with Jewish immigration, and with their conception of Zionist policy as derived from its Jewish exponents."¹⁷

I would argue, therefore, that the essence of the conflict from the beginning lies in the Palestinians' rejection of domination, dispossession and subordination by alien European Jewish settlers who came with the open intention of taking over their country. It is similar to the conflict with white settlers in Algeria, South Africa and elsewhere in the World. The other causes of the conflict such as economic, social or educational causes are secondary and are merely symptomatic of the process of settler-colonialism.

At the beginning of 1922 the Palestinian leaders sent yet another delegation to London in an attempt to influence the British Government and modify the draft Mandate before its approval by the League of Nations. Their main contention was that the Mandate as proposed did not conform to Article 22 of the League of Nations which stressed that: "Certain communities formerly belonging to the Turkish Empire (Palestinian included) have reached a stage of development where their existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognized subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a Mandatory until such time as they were able to stand alone."

The Palestinians wanted the draft Mandate to be amended to include a provision for self-government with powers which would enable the existing Palestinian majority to prevent the Mandatory power from putting into effect the policy of the Jewish national home. They wanted their own government which would be in charge of all Palestine's affairs assisted by a Mandatory power in administrative, technical and economical matters only.

The Colonial Office had not only rejected all Palestinian demands but rather accused them of being a hopeless delegation which the Colonial Office could not do business with: "Experience has shown that they are a hopeless body to deal with... It is submitted that the time has come to leave off arguing and announce plainly and authoritatively what we propose to do. Being Orientals they will understand an order, and if once they realized that we mean business may be expected to acquiesce."¹⁸

It is not correct, therefore, as it is generally believed, that the Palestinians refused British political efforts to solve the problem. On the contrary it was Britain which refused to recognize the Palestinians as a people and denied them the right to self-determination.

The Palestinians, like any other people in their situation, refused to give up their natural political rights to the British occupiers and Zionist colonizers. But their act was reversed by British and Zionist propaganda to be understood, and widely accepted, as a Palestinian refusal of peaceful solutions as I will show in the next Chapters.

Some writers have argued that if the Palestinians and the Jews had been left alone in Palestine they might have reached an understanding. As Cohen explains: "The history of Arab-Jewish relations before the British Mandate and in its early stages warrants the assumption that if the Jews and Arabs had been left to themselves, they would have been able to reach mutual understanding."¹⁹ Indeed if the number of Jews had not been increased by alien settlers supported by a colonial power they would have seriously negotiated a settlement with the Arabs. Even today it seems to me that if the Arabs and "Israel" were left alone they perhaps would reach a settlement.

However, the British government, after its failure to reach an agreement between the Palestinians and the Zionists in London, drew up a statement of policy referred to as the Churchill White Paper of 1922.²⁰ The contents of this policy were communicated to both Palestinians and Zionists and made public in June 1922. The main principles of the new statement of policy, in accordance with the government's official summary were as follows:²¹

1. His Majesty's Government reaffirm the Declaration of November, 1917 which is not susceptible of change.

2. A Jewish National Home will be found in Palestine and that the Jews will be in Palestine as of right and not on sufferance. But His Majesty's Government has no such aim in view as that Palestine should become as Jewish as England is English.

3. Nor do His Majesty's Government contemplate the disappearance or subordination of Arab population, language or culture.

4. Status of all citizens of Palestine will be Palestinians. No section of population will have any other status in the eyes of the law.

5. His Majesty's Government intend to foster the establishment of a full measure of self-government in Palestine, and as the next step a legislative council with a majority of elected members will be set up immediately.

6. Special position of Zionist Executive does not entitle it to share in any degree in the government of the country.

7. Immigration will not exceed the economic capacity of the country at the time to absorb new arrivals.

8. Committee of elected members of legislative council will confer with Administration upon matters relating to regulation of immigration.

9. Any religious community or considerable section of population claiming that the terms of Mandate are not being fulfilled will have right of appeal to the League of Nations.

Both the Palestinians and the Zionists were invited to offer their assent to the new statement of policy. The Zionist leadership accepted the new policy because it was a continuation of the British friendly policy towards the Jewish National Home. For the Jewish community the White Paper stressed that the Jews were in Palestine "as of right and not on sufferance."²² For Jewish immigration the statement stressed that: "It is necessary that the Jewish community in Palestine should be able to increase^{its} numbers by immigration."²³

On the other hand the Palestinian Delegation was not satisfied by the White Paper. They explained that it was not acceptable because it treated the Palestinians, as natives, and the alien Zionists as two groups with equal political rights. That the policy reaffirmed the Balfour Declaration and the Jewish home policy which the delegation refused to accept for reasons mentioned earlier in their correspondence²⁴ and mainly "because the immigrants dumped upon the country from different parts of the world are ignorant of the language, customs and character of the Arabs, and enter Palestine by the might of England against the will of the people, who are convinced that these have come to strangle them. Nature does not allow the creation of a spirit of co-operation between two people so different and it is not to be expected that the Arabs would bow to such a great injustice."²⁵

The publication of the White Paper was followed in quick succession by the passing of the Mandate for Palestine²⁶ at the League of Nations Council meeting in London on 24th July 1922 and then the promulgation of the Palestine constitution as an Order-in-Council on 10th August 1922.²⁷ The story of the granting of the Mandate over Palestine was similar to that of the Balfour Declaration. In both cases the wishes of the Palestinians were not taken into consideration. Article (22) paragraph (4) of the Covenant of the League of Nations stresses that: "The wishes of these communities (under Mandate) must be a principal consideration in the selection of the Mandatory."

No attempt was made to consult the Palestinians before the Mandate came into force as to their wishes in the matter of selection of the Mandatory. There are two reasons behind this:

1. The British imperialists, as any other imperial power, did not consider at that time, the wishes of any people outside Europe, if they saw them at all, as worthy of any consideration. Balfour, then the British Foreign Secretary, expressed this attitude plainly as follows: "Whatever deference should be paid to the views of those living there, the powers in their selection of a Mandatory do not propose, as I understand the matter, to consult them."²⁸

2. If the Palestinians had been consulted they would not have chosen Britain as Mandatory over Palestine because it was sponsoring Zionist activities in the country against their will. According to the

King-Crane Commission of Inquiry²⁹ the Palestinians and the Syrians were in favour of a united independent Syria and if that was not possible then they preferred a single Mandatory for all Syria.

The Mandate therefore, was granted to Britain not according to the wishes of the Palestinians but rather according to Britain's power and influence in the League of Nations.

The Mandate system had been applied to Palestine not merely on account of the inability of its present population to stand alone, as A.J. Smuts³⁰ had suggested and as was the case with the other mandated territories, but also, and perhaps chiefly, on account of the fact that the people whose connection with Palestine (the Jews) had been recognized were still outside its boundaries.

The Mandatory power thus appeared not only as a Mandatory, in the sense generally given to this term,³¹ but as a kind of a provisional administration in the interest of an absent people. In her capacity the Mandatory has assumed an obligation not towards the actual people, the Palestinians, but the potential population of Palestine, the absentee Zionists. The British Government, instead of responding to the Palestinians' demands for independence, proposed the establishment of a legislative council.

The Legislative Council

This was the first effort by the British Government to develop a joint administration for Palestine which would include both Arabs and Zionists. The composition of the legislative council which was based on the Balfour Declaration, was as follows: ten British government officials plus the High Commissioner, and twelve members elected by the people, of whom eight were to be Muslims, two Christians and two Jews. Two other members should be nominated by the High Commissioner which would bring the total to 25 members.³²

It is clear from the composition of the council that it was designed to allow the combined votes of the Government representatives (13) and the Zionist representatives (2) to defeat any resolution hostile to the main issues such as Jewish immigration, land sales to Jews and the Jewish national home policy in general.

After studying the legislative council proposals the Palestinian delegation sent their reply in writing to the colonial secretary dated February 21st 1922. Among the main points made was the following: "Whilst the position in Palestine is, as it stands today with the British government holding authority by an occupying force, and using that authority to impose upon the people against their wishes a great immigration of alien Jews...no constitution which would fall short of giving the people of Palestine full control of their own affairs could be acceptable."³³

The proposed constitution was unsatisfactory in their opinion because:³⁴

a. In the preamble to the Palestine order in council "the Declaration of November 2nd 1917 in favour of the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people " is made a basis for this order, the people of Palestine cannot accept this Declaration as a basis for discussion.

b. In Article 4 to 9 of the order dealing with the manner of appointment of a High Commissioner and his powers, Palestine is considered as a colony of the lowest order, whereas according to paragraph 4 of Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, Palestine comes under grade A.

c. The High Commissioner commands 14 out of 25 votes and of the 12 elected members there will probably be 10 or 11 that would represent the Arab majority, who would be unable to carry any measures against the officials preponderance of votes. It is interesting here to notice that the Palestinians considered the Zionist and the British as one party against them.

The Palestinian argument was that if they agreed to such a constitution "the Zionist policy of the government will be carried out under a constitutional guise."³⁵ The Balfour Declaration and Jewish immigration would become legal "Whereas at present it is illegal, against the rights and wishes of the people and maintained by force of arms alone."³⁶

Indeed, any acceptance by the Palestinians of such proposals would implicitly legitimise the Jewish national home and the British Mandate and thus weaken their power to oppose Zionism and British imperial rule.

Therefore, the Palestinian Delegation requested that the constitution

for Palestine should:³⁷

1. Safeguard the civil, political and economic rights of the people.
2. Provide for the creation of a national independent government in accordance with the spirit of paragraph 4 Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations.
3. Safeguard the legal rights of foreigners.
4. Guarantee religious equality to all people.
5. Guarantee the rights of minorities.

As an answer to their demands the Palestinian Delegation received a written letter from the Colonial Secretary in which he explained the British policies regarding the future of Palestine. He ruled out any hopes for establishing a Palestinian National government or negotiating with them on any basis other than that of the Balfour Declaration. The Palestinians had been told that: "It is quite clear that the creation at this stage of a national government would preclude the fulfillment of the pledge made by the British government to the Jewish people."³⁸ In regard to Jewish immigration the letter stressed that the: "Questions of immigration policy should be reserved from discussion by the legislative council and decided by the High Commissioner."³⁹ As basis for negotiations: "He cannot discuss the future of Palestine upon any other basis than that of the Balfour Declaration."⁴⁰

This British position provides us with a clear evidence about their approach to solving the conflict. The British Government, at that stage, was not seriously concerned with solving the problem because that would mean their departure from the country and the handing over the administration to the Arabs. Therefore, it is safe to suggest that Britain's main concern was to get both Arabs and Zionists to participate in a form of puppet administration without any real executive powers. Such participation would facilitate British rule over the country and make their position more acceptable in the eyes of the outside world especially their rival, France.

I would argue, therefore, that the British proposals during the first ten years were not genuine but rather intended to put the Palestinians in an impossible position leaving them without any alternative but to reject the British offer. The British Government, however, ignored the Palestinians' opposition to participate in the proposed Council and announced their intention to make the administrative preparations for holding the elections at the end of 1922. In a counter step the

Palestinian leaders called upon the people to boycott these elections. The Palestinian masses responded positively to their leaders' calls and boycotted the elections. The British Government found in the Palestinian boycott of the elections a suitable pretext for cancelling the elections, accused the Palestinians of non co-operation and consequently ruled Palestine directly as any other British colony.⁴¹

Years later the opinion was voiced in various quarters that by boycotting the elections and causing the failure of the idea of a legislative council the Palestinians forfeited an important instrument that might have assisted them in their national struggle. One of the arguments used by the British Government was that the Palestinian delegation was not an official body and had no right to claim to be the authorized representative of the Palestinians.⁴² Such an argument could hardly have been used against a legislative council acting officially. Another argument is that the government would not have ignored the stand of the majority of the population's representatives in this body, but would have been inclined to hear their demands.

It seems to me that had the Palestinians taken part in the elections and the council been set up, the outcome, at the end, would not have been much different. It must not be forgotten that the council would have been without the right to debate and decide upon matters apposed to the Mandate.

Moreover, participation in the council could indeed have been described as acceptance of the Mandate and the Balfour Declaration. True, the council was likely to have influenced, to some degree, the government's stand on everyday administrative matters and even on legislation, but in reality the pace of development of the Jewish national home was determined by factors which were beyond the control of the government of Palestine. One of these factors was the British government's strong commitment to Zionism.

On the other hand it seems that the Palestinians' mistake was to believe that participation in the legislative council meant acceptance of to the Mandate and the Balfour Declaration, while every day co-operation with the Government and acceptance of jobs in it were considered axiomatically permissible. Therefore the boycott by itself was not

effective and Porath rightly argues that: "The boycott of the legislative council could perhaps have been effective if it had been the high point of a policy of non-co-operation with the government."⁴³

I may add to Porath's argument that the Palestinians should, in addition to the boycott, have resorted to underground active resistance, non-payment of taxes and civil disobedience. Such action should have been directed not only against the Zionist settlers but against Britain too which was acting as protector for the settlers. But as the Palestinians were not able to adopt such a course of action, as a result of their internal weakness and the superiority of the British, there was little point, if any, in boycotting only the legislative council and co-operating with the Government in everything else.

The Palestinian leaders sent yet another another delegation to London in an effort to influence the new British Conservative Government which replaced the Coalition Government of Lloyd George on 19th October 1922. On 11th January 1923 the Delegation met the new Colonial Secretary presenting him with their usual demands. That was the setting up of a native government elected by all the inhabitants of the country which would direct internal affairs, including immigration; the constitution of the country would be determined by an elected constituent assembly. This native government would negotiate with the British Government over the form of advice and aid which the latter would be prepared to render to the native government. As on previous occasions, the Delegation rejected the Balfour Declaration but, nevertheless, they did not ask for complete independence.⁴⁴

The Colonial Secretary informed the Delegation that the new government would continue the previous government's policy in regard to the future of Palestine. Therefore, the Delegation ended its activities in London and returned empty handed to Palestine in March 1923.⁴⁵

The Palestinians, thus, did not succeed in attaining their goal in the twenties. The British government had denied them the right to self-determination and continued its pro-Zionist policy which was approved by successive British Governments.

The years between 1921 and 1929 witnessed the cessation of violent and active resistance against the British and the Zionists. The curbing of

violent action on the part of the Palestinians at the end of 1921 and their reliance upon political activity alone greatly influenced the subsequent development of the anti-Zionist and anti-British struggle of the Palestinian people. When at the end of 1923 it became clear that the political efforts to effect a change in the British pro-Zionist policy had failed, the reaction of the Palestinians was one of disappointment and despair. The Palestinians lacked institutions recognized by the British⁴⁶, lacked efficient leadership and being deeply involved in family rivalries and personal disputes, became unable to resort to violence again.⁴⁷ Thus, they gave the Zionists nine years of peace in which they succeeded in doubling the size of the Jewish community and enlarging its land possessions.⁴⁸

There were several reasons behind the cessation of violence among which were the following:⁴⁹

1. The Mandatory Government reacted forcefully, punishing the organizers of the 1921 riots, putting some cities under martial law, forbidding the carrying of arms and imposing collective fines upon some villages, all of which proved to be very effective in suppressing the Palestinians' resistance.

2. The Palestinian traditional leadership was opposed to violent action because they wrongly believed that they could change the British pro-Zionist policy by political means and they did not think of any alternative action if the political efforts failed, such as underground resistance, plans for civil disobedience and the non payment of taxes.

3. The internal struggle among the Palestinian leadership and family rivalries, especially between the al-Husseini and al-Nashashibi families, to secure government posts or places on Supreme Muslim Council and the Arab Executive. This struggle led them in some cases to put their personal interest above the national one and some leaders aligned themselves with the government against their opponents.

4. The weakness of their social structure. As we have seen in Chapter Three the majority of the Palestinians were fellaheen living in isolated villages and suffering from poverty, neglect, isolation and local disputes. It is safe to suggest that under these conditions most of the fellaheen, especially those who had no direct contact with the Zionist settlers, did not know much about the dangers of Zionist colonization. This situation was reversed in the middle of the 1930s after the improvement in communications, the substantial increase in size of

Jewish settlements and after the fellaheen themselves had felt the Zionist danger through the landlessness and unemployment which they suffered as a result of Zionist policies on land and labour.

5. The economic crises among the Jewish community and the failure of the Zionist movement to alter significantly the demographic composition of Palestinian society. The Zionists succeeded in bringing thousands rather than millions of immigrants and therefore Palestine remained pre-dominantly Arab.

The Disturbances Of 1929⁵⁰

This peaceful phase, however, was disrupted on August 1929 when hundreds of young Zionists organized a demonstration at the Western wall of al Aqsa Mosque (Wailing Wall), in the course of which the Zionist flag was raised and the Zionist anthem sung. On 23rd August a counter-demonstration by Palestinians was organized during which a serious outbreak of violence took place in Jerusalem between the Palestinians and the Jewish communities. The outbreak spread to other areas in Palestine in the course of which 133 Jews and 116 Palestinians were killed, and 355 Jews and 232 Palestinians wounded.⁵¹

There were different causes for these incidents on each side. On the Arab side these causes varied from political and economical to religious fears. for the previous decade the Palestinians had achieved nothing in regard to self-government and their traditional leaders found themselves in a precarious position. They could not maintain their silence in the face of British and Zionist colonization and at the same time they were not able to mobilize the people in an alternative local government to represent the whole population. The economic conditions of the fellaheen and workers had worsened during the last decade with thousands of them being thrown off the land or out of jobs in the Jewish sector. They also became alarmed at the strength of the Jewish community and feared that the Jews could take over their Holy Mosque al-Aqsa. The Palestinians in other words considered Zionism not only the main obstacle to their independence but also a movement which strove to change the national and the religious status quo of Palestine. Such feelings had been acknowledged by the Shaw Commission which noted that: "The presence of Jews in Palestine would be regarded by the Palestinians as the obstacle to the fulfillment of their aspiration."⁵²

On the other hand, the growth in number and status of the Jewish community was accompanied by efforts to attain recognition of new rights of worship near the western wall of al Aqsa Mosque (Wailing Wall). The Zionists demanded that the Mandatory Government give them control over the area adjacent to the western wall or at least allow them to buy it. The demonstration and counter demonstration were in fact the direct cause of the outbreak but they were not the true causes of the incident.

The British Government appointed a Commission of Inquiry⁵³ to investigate the causes of the violence and to propose a solution to the problem which would prevent its recurrence in the future. According to the Commission, the underlying causes of the riots were: Palestinian opposition to the Jewish national home policy, their fears of being swamped by the Zionists and other political and economic reasons. In the Commission's opinion: "The political and economic grievances of the Arabs...must be regarded as having been immediate causes of the disturbances."⁵⁴

The Commission recommended strict measures against Jewish immigration and land sales to Jews because they had a negative effect on the economic conditions of the Palestinians and stressed the need for self-government in Palestine similar to that in Iraq and Transjordan. The Commission agreed with the Palestinians that the Balfour Declaration was the main obstacle to their independence.

The Commission noted that: "Were it not for the obligations cast upon His Majesty's Government by the policy of the Balfour Declaration their hopes and expectations might to some extent have been realized."⁵⁵

Comparing the British treatment of the Palestinians and the Zionists the Commission noted that: "The Great majority of the people have no recognized channel of approach to the Administration while a small minority of a different race has close and official relations with the administration."⁵⁶ The Commission explained clearly why the Mandatory Government did not develop self-government in Palestine. It was certainly not because of Arab opposition. They noted that: "For twelve years the Arab leaders and with them the majority of those who are politically active, have not ceased to reiterate the claim that a representative government should be established; there is no reason to suppose that their views will change."⁵⁷

The Palestinians had been asking for the development of self-government for the last decade, and according to the Commission they were prepared to accept: "If not the creation of an independent state, at least the establishment of a representative government in Palestine."⁵⁸ The reason why the British did not develop self-government was because: "Leaders of important sections of Jewish opinion in Palestine are now strongly opposed to the development of self-government in that country."⁵⁹ The Commission warned of the consequences of the Zionist exclusive policies on the economic conditions of the Palestinian fellahen. The Commission concluded that: "Between 1921 and 1929 there were large sales of land in consequence of which numbers of Arabs were evicted without the provision of other land for their occupation."⁶⁰ The Commission added that: "There is no alternative land to which persons evicted can remove. In consequence a landless and discontented class is being created."⁶¹

It will be recalled that the findings of the Shaw Commission in this instance were almost exactly the same as those of the 1921 investigating commission: the fundamental opposition of the Palestinians to Zionism in any form.⁶²

The government was able to remove the problem of the Wailing Wall by establishing a definite set of rules. Yet when it came to dealing with the underlying causes of the disturbances, the British government initially did little more than reaffirm the principles contained in the Mandate documents.⁶³

The British government, in the light of the Shaw Commission report, appointed John Hope Simpson to inquire into the economic situation in Palestine. In his report he emphasised the following points:⁶⁴

1. There was no more land for settlement in Palestine without displacing more Palestinians.

2. There was a great deal of landlessness and unemployment among the Palestinians.⁶⁵

3. The Fellahs' conditions were not superior to those under Turkish rule.

4. The Zionist boycott of Arab labour was not only violating Article Six of the Mandate but formed a constant source of danger to the peace and stability of the country.

The British Government in the light of the Shaw and Simpson Reports made a statement of policy, the so called "Passfield White Paper".⁶⁶ The main points of the new policy were: the establishment of a legislative council, to limit immigration and land sales to Jews, and to take practical measures to solve the unemployment and landlessness⁶⁷ among the Palestinians through an economic and social development plan. The Zionists saw in the Passfield White Paper the seeds of the destruction of the Jewish National Home. Therefore they protested to the British Government and accused the British of violating their previous promises and the terms of the Mandate itself. Weizmann, the Zionist leader, resigned in protest from the presidency of the Jewish Agency and some British statesmen joined in demanding a reconsideration of the policy indicated by Passfield.

The British government appointed a special Cabinet Committee to examine the Zionist grievances. After a series of meetings between the Cabinet committee and the Zionist leaders, the two sides reached an agreement acceptable to the Zionists. Mr MacDonald announced the new agreement in a public letter to Dr Weizmann, published in the Times on February 14 1931.⁶⁸ Because this letter meant the abrogation of the White Paper the Arabs called it the "black letter".

The abrogation of the Passfield White Paper without consulting the Palestinians marked a turning point in the Palestinian attitude towards Britain and opened the way for more radical action. Many Palestinians came to realize that unless they did some thing against British rule they might lose their country for ever. Indeed since 1929 some Palestinians had started to form secret military organizations to resist British rule in Palestine as I will show in the following Section.

The Rise Of The Radical Organizations

The atmosphere prevailing in Palestine after the MacDonald letter was fertile ground for radical attitudes and extreme views. The period between 1930 and 1935 indeed witnessed for the first time the seriousness of the disastrous affect of Zionist colonization on the Palestinians political, economic, and social life.

After about two decades of passive opposition and political negotiations and demands, the Palestinians' independence was not in sight. Most of the surrounding Arab countries had attained some sort of

self-government and were expected to get their independence in the near future. Moreover, between 1932 and 1935 more than 150,000 Jewish immigrants were brought into the country creating greater demand for jobs in the Jewish sector.⁶⁹ Consequently, the Zionists began strictly to enforce their exclusive policies on labour, and more Palestinians were forced to leave their jobs or were dismissed. The issue of Zionist immigration was not merely a moral or national issue, it had a direct implication on the economic status of the Palestinians, affecting primarily low income workers and certain sections of the middle class. The immigration was not only designed to ensure a concentration of European capital in Palestine that was to dominate the process of industrialization, but also to provide this effort with Jewish labour. The policy that gave rise to the slogan of "Jewish labour only" was to have grave consequences, as it led to direct and violent clashes between the Zionists and the Arab labourers on the spot and poisoned the atmosphere generally between the two communities.

Another area of conflict between Zionists and Palestinians was the competitive struggle between the Jewish farmers and Palestinian fellaheen. This conflict also extended to higher classes, in so much as the Palestinian small landlords and urban middle classes realized that their interests were being threatened by growing Zionist domination in industry, commerce and capital. As we have seen in Chapter Three, Jewish immigration and the transformation of Palestine's economy from an essentially Arab agricultural economy to an industrial economy dominated by Zionist capital affected primarily the Palestinian fellaheen and workers.

Thus, in addition to the loss of land or jobs on the land the Palestinian rural community was being destroyed by the process of Zionist colonization. Thousands of evicted fellaheen who immigrated to the towns could not find proper jobs and they could not adapt to the new conditions. Those classes were among the earliest groups to join the 1936-1939 revolt, as we will see in Chapter Five.

Against this background the period between 1930 and 1935 witnessed the appearance of several military groups and organizations who called upon the people to resort to armed struggle to get rid of both British and Zionist colonialism and at the same time there sprang up half a dozen political parties which tried to organize political resistance and lead the military organization towards their final goal of independence.

Military groups and organizations

Various nationalist associations⁷⁰ began to express the view that the Palestinian leaders were acting too moderately. Some Palestinians had begun to consider covert underground military struggle against both British and Zionist alike. An early example was the "Green Hand Gang", which operated in the northern region of Palestine and "Al-Jihad al-mugadus" (Holy War) in the Jerusalem area between 1929 and 1931.⁷¹

During the same period Shikh al-Qassam had formed a secret religious military movement in Haifa. He was president of the Haifa "Young Men's Muslim Association." Haifa was an urban centre to which many fellaheen, evicted by Zionists from their lands, had immigrated. "These uprooted people were a fertile ground for the fundamentalist Islamic called Shikh Izz al Din al Qassam"⁷² who used his post and good connections with the population to promote the idea of military struggle as the best way to achieve independence.

During the five year period of his movement, al-Qassam through his daily contacts and in preaching to the masses in the mosques, inspired a revolutionary spirit and succeeded in forming secret groups and committees specialized in: the use of arms, collecting money and advances, his ideas on military struggle, arms purchases, security and information.

When al-Qassam was killed in a battle with the British forces on 19th November 1935 he was considered as a hero or martyr who sacrificed his life for the cause of his people and country and set an example to his followers. "The news of Qassam's heroic death had a tremendous impact throughout Palestine. He soon became the symbol of self sacrifice and martyrdom and his funeral at Haifa was a great national demonstration against the government and the Jewish national home during which the police was stoned."⁷³

However, by his choice of the form of struggle al-Qassam had made it impossible for the traditional leaders to stay indifferent. They discovered that if they did not try to mount the great wave that had been set in motion by al Qassam, it would engulf them.

The Qassamists played a significant role not only in raising a wave of powerful feeling but also prepared the Palestinians for the eventuality of military struggle with the British which they themselves participated and led in 1936-1939.⁷⁴

It is worth mentioning here that these military organizations were established in different regions and were never extended to take the form of a coherent national military struggle. This could be explained by lack of experience in political and military organizations and the shortage of arms, money and ammunition. It is important to mention here that this failure was partly due to a weak social structure characterised by division, local disputes, segmentalism and the dominance of regional and family loyalties and the lack of revolutionary leadership.

According to Subhi Yassin⁷⁵ al-Qassam did send a messenger to Hajj Amin the Mufti of Jerusalem asking him to join in the struggle but his call was turned down by the mufti on the grounds that the time was not ripe for military struggle and that the Mufti preferred political solutions.

The Political Parties

The period between 1930 and 1935 witnessed also the appearance of several Palestinian political parties. They were formed by the younger, educated and radical notables. Generally speaking they represented more or less the views of their respective families or regions. They did not enjoy mass support since they were built on family lines and, therefore, did not succeed in mobilising the nation into an effective national resistance movement. This meant that: "They had not engaged in a struggle for independence and that they were no more than general frameworks, without definite principles, controlled by groups of notables and dependent on loyalties rooted in and derived from the influence they enjoyed as religious or feudal leaders or prominent members of society they were not parties with organized bases."⁷⁶

The first effort in this respect was made to organize Palestinian youth. On 4th January the first National Congress of Palestinian youth was established in Jaffa. It was headed by Rasim al Khalidi who succeeded in the next three years in establishing about twenty local branches in various towns and villages. They formed their own watchguards to prevent illegal Zionist immigration. The members of the Youth Congress played an important role during the 1930s unrest, demonstrations and strikes by forcing the shopkeepers to close their shops and to participate in these strikes and demonstrations.

The Istiqlal Party (Independence)⁷⁷

This was a pan-Arab Party consisting of young Palestinian radicals and professionals, lawyers, doctors, bank managers and journalists. It was headed by Auni Abdel Hadi, a nationalist from Nablus. The Party's main objective was independence within a united Arab state to include Syria, Transjordan, Lebanon and others. The Party initiated a full scale campaign of political activities, public meetings were organized in the main cities and strongly worded manifestoes were issued calling upon the people to adopt a policy of non co-operation, non payment of taxes, civil disobedience and military struggle against British imperialism and Zionism. They attacked the traditional leadership as being unfit for leading the nation in a popular confrontation with the British Government and, therefore, they did not enjoy the support of the rich families. This not only affected their effectiveness but also caused the anger of these powerful traditional families who established their own parties, transforming the family rivalries into new parties.

The National Defence Party

In December 1934 the Nashashibis and their allies established their own party, the National Defence Party, which was headed by Rageb al-Nashashibi. The Party represented some rich urban notables and Mayors and worked as the opposition party to the Husseinis.

The Party's main objectives were:⁷⁸

1. Full independence of Palestine.
2. The establishment of a national government representing all the inhabitants of the country.

The main difference of this party from the Istiqlal was its readiness to co-operate with the mandatory Government in the matter of establishing self-government in the manner which was proposed by the British government (legislation council) and revision of the negative policy calling for rejection of government proposals which the Istiqlalists maintained. The party also called for the improvement of the economic, educational and social conditions of the fellaheen and workers. In its foreign relations, the Nashashibis allied themselves with the Emir Abdullah of Transjordan, and contrary to the Husseinis, they were ready to form a united kingdom with Transjordan.

The Palestine Arab Party⁷⁹

In March 1935 the Husseinis announced the establishment of the

Palestine Arab Party headed by Jamal al Hussein. It more or less embodied the policy of the Mufti of Jerusalem Haj Amin al Hussein.

The Party's main objectives were:⁸⁰

1. Independence of Palestine and the safeguarding of its Arab character.
2. The end of the Mandate and the policy of the Jewish national home venture connected with it.
3. Connecting independent Palestine with other Arab countries in a unity treaty.
4. Improving the economic, social and educational conditions of the population.

The Party paid special attention to organising youth in special organization. It opened 17 branches in different towns and established local branch committees. They established youth troops which took part in guarding the borders against illegal Zionist immigration.

Unlike their Nashashibi rival, the Arab Party, while it was in favour of Arab unity in general, opposed unification with Transjordan. They engaged in practical efforts to prevent sales of Arab lands to Jews.

The Islah (Reform) Party⁸¹

This party was established in June 1935 in Jerusalem to serve the Khalidis family interests and was headed by the family leader Dr. Husain Khalidi, the Mayor of Jerusalem. Its stated objectives were the same as those of the other parties.

The Congress of Youth⁸²

This party was headed by Yacoub Ghusseini who showed greater interest in the economic situation of the rural areas than the other parties. They established 20 branches in different towns and cities.⁸³ But its main objective was similar to the others.

The National Bloc⁸⁴

This Party was established by the Salah family in Nablus. Its objectives were similar to those of the other parties, especially resisting Zionist colonization by all possible means.

Although these military and political organizations failed to establish a coherent national military resistance and an alternative progressive leadership capable of organizing and mobilizing the

population against the British Mandate and the Jewish National home policy, they succeeded in influencing both their traditional leaders and the British Mandatory Government to take their demands more seriously. They in fact set the scene and prepared the ground for the revolt of 1936-1939.

The five Palestinian parties submitted joint demands to the Mandatory Government in November 1935. These demands were three:⁸⁵

1. Immediate stoppage of Jewish immigration.
2. Immediate stoppage of land sales to Jews.
3. The establishment of a democratic government in the country representing all its inhabitants. They warned the Government that if their demands were not met they would take every necessary action to achieve these demands.

The British Government, however, rejected these demands and proposed the establishment of a legislative council on the same lines suggested in 1922. It is worth noting here that the Passfield White Paper of 1930 recommended to the British Government the urgent need for the establishment of such a council. But the matter was delayed for a period of five years due to Zionist pressure on the British Government. The traditional Palestinian leaders were prepared to accept participation in such a council, especially after they began to lose some of their influence to the younger and more radical leaders between 1930 and 1935.

The Legislative Council Proposal⁸⁶

On 21st and 22nd December 1935, the High Commissioner submitted to the Palestinian and Jewish leaders successively a definite scheme for the constitution of the legislative council. It was to consist of 28 members only five of whom would be official; there would be 11 nominated unofficial members, and 12 elected members. Of the 23 non-official members eleven would be Muslim, seven Jews, three Christians, and two representatives of commercial interests. The President would be an impartial person unconnected with Palestine. There would be no official majority but there were to be three main safeguards:

1. The validity of the Mandate was not to be questioned.
2. The High Commissioner would have veto and legislative powers and
3. He would continue to determine the immigration quota and schedules.

The Palestinian responses to the proposal were not united.⁸⁷ Although the Palestinian leaders did not reject the proposal they pointed out

that it did not go far enough in the direction of self-government. They demanded that all members should be elected, that the seats should be allocated exactly according to the numerical strength of the communities, and that the council should be granted complete control over government policy including immigration.⁸⁸

Although, the legislative council proposal did not go far enough to meet the fundamental demands of the Palestinians for independence, or at least self-government with control over immigration, most of the Palestinian political parties accepted it for three reasons:

First, they found themselves threatened by the growing unrest among the lower strata of the population and really challenged by the younger and more radical leaders. Therefore, they hoped to secure an official recognition for their position as leaders of the country.

Secondly, they knew that the proposals were totally rejected by the Zionists and their acceptance would encourage the government to establish such a council without Jewish participation.

Thirdly, there was a large body of opinion among the Palestinians in favour of the legislative council. The High Commissioner reported that: "There is little doubt in my mind that with the exception of Haifa town, quite 80 percent of the Muslim population desired that the legislative council should be brought into being."⁸⁹

Suleman Tookan, leading member of the Nashashibi Defence party, demanded the Mandatory Government to establish a legislative council regardless of opposition from Arabs or Jews.⁹⁰ Government would be guilty of a serious breach of faith if, influenced by pressures from Jews or insincere Arabs, it postponed or abandoned the scheme.

The Zionists rejected the legislative council proposals and made it clear to the High Commissioner that "even if the council was formed on the basis of parity they would boycott it."⁹¹ This position was taken against the background of the dramatic increase of Jewish immigration in this period and in the hope that the Jews would form a majority in the near future.

The Zionist Congress rejected the proposals in September 1935 and even before it was officially announced: "The congress reaffirmed its opposition to the establishment of a legislative council in the present stage of the development of Palestine and reluctantly expressed its categorical rejection of the scheme."⁹²

The British government, due to Zionist pressure, was forced to bring the legislative council idea before the British Parliament for debate.

The issue was debated in the House of Lords on 28th February and in the Commons on 25th March 1936. All parties in both Houses demanded that the government suspend or abandon the scheme, which it duly did.⁹³

This British position on the development of self-government in Palestine gives us clear evidence that it was the Zionists and the British who were not interesting in such a development and not the Palestinians.

The suspension (in fact abrogation) of the legislative council drove the Palestinians into a state of despair and frustration. It is therefore understandable why a small incident in April 1936 was sufficient to bring the whole country into a state of general strike and local war. It is against this background that the Palestinians resorted to military struggle to achieve their national independence. This military struggle, however, lasted for three years and again was defeated by the co-operation of British and Zionist forces as we will see in the next chapter.

Concluding Remarks

The British Government unilaterally issued the Balfour Declaration in 1917 pledging to facilitate the establishment of a Jewish home in Palestine in the hope that such a home perhaps would be developed into a Jewish state which would guarantee to the British Empire a lasting foothold in the Middle East and consequently secure its economic and strategic interests in the area. Since the Declaration was intended to secure British interests in this area in spite of the opposition of the population, Britain did not consult the people directly concerned when she issued the Declaration.

Britain was not in full control of Palestine at the time of issuing the Declaration and, therefore, the Palestinians did not at any time recognize the Declaration and refused in principle to accept any solution based on it. Consequently, the Palestinians considered Zionist immigration, sponsored by British bayonets, to be illegal and developed their argument and responses accordingly. The Palestinians throughout the 1920s tried to change the British Jewish home policy by political means. Their mode of action included, peaceful negotiations, demonstrations and some outbreaks of violence in 1921, 1929 and 1933. They refused to deal with the Zionists as a main party in the conflict, but rather saw their opponent as Britain. They assumed that if they

reached an agreement with Britain Zionist activities in Palestine would come to an end.

The main Palestinian demands were: an end to the Mandate and the establishment of a national government to represent all the inhabitants of the country with guaranteed rights to the Jewish minority and free access to the holy places.

These demands, however, were rejected by both the Zionist and the British alike. Instead the British government offered the Palestinians participation in legislative councils. The constitution of such councils would not question the validity of the Mandate nor would they give the Palestinians any executive powers in relation to the most important issues, immigration and land sales. The Palestinians refused the proposed legislative council in 1922 but for political and other reasons accepted similar proposals in 1935. The Zionists, on the other hand, accepted the 1922 proposals but rejected the proposal in 1935. They accepted the proposals in 1922 because they wanted to secure recognition from the Palestinians when they were weak, while they rejected it in 1935 when they hoped that they would soon become a majority and rule by themselves.

During the first two decades the Zionists succeeded in altering the demographic composition of the country to their advantage; they formed 29 percent in 1936 against 9-11 percent in 1920. They succeeded in acquiring about one third of the cultivatable land in Palestine and developing their own political, economic and educational institutions. Moreover, they enforced their exclusive policies on land and labour.

The steady and gradual development of the Jewish National home had negative effects on the political, economic and social conditions of the Palestinians. Thousands of fellaheen were evicted from their lands and thousands of Palestinian workers dismissed from their jobs in the Jewish sector. Such conditions were fertile ground for political and military activity. With self-government becoming a remote possibility the Palestinians started to think of resorting to military struggle as the only way to gain independence. The period between 1930 and 1935 witnessed the appearance of several military organizations which worked in different regions and half a dozen political parties. Although these organizations did not succeed in forming a cohesive national resistance movement they formed the basis and prepared the ground for the Palestinian revolt of 1936-1939.

In conclusion I would argue that the Palestinians were interested in forming a national government in Palestine during the first two decades and that it was in their interest to do so. But Britain did not listen to the Palestinians' call for independence and prevented them, under Zionist pressure, from obtaining it.

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CHAPTER FIVE

Palestinians Resistance to Zionist Settlement and the British Mandate between 1936 and 1946

Introduction

Despite all Palestinian political efforts, the first two decades showed that the "Jewish National Home" was growing steadily and that a plural society was emerging in Palestine with direct conflict between its two main segments, the Palestinians and the Zionist settlers. But the first half of the 1930s witnessed two significant developments:

1. The development of a formal demand from the Palestinian leaders for the establishment of a national democratic government in Palestine representing all the inhabitants of the country. This demand was presented by the representatives of the six political parties at the end of 1935.

2. The appearance of several military and political organizations which worked for the attainment of this demand by all possible means, as we have seen in Chapter Four.

The process of radicalization of the Palestinians' responses to Zionist settlement and to the British Mandate gathered momentum with the increase in Zionist immigration and land purchase. In other words there was a positive relationship between the increase of Jewish immigration and land sales to the Jews and Palestinian violent reaction, especially between 1936 and 1939.

The Palestinians considered Jewish immigration as the main danger to their very existence. The trend of the previous three years (total Jewish immigration was 30,727 in 1933, 42,359 in 1934, and 62,000 in 1935) was such that the numerical relation in Palestine could be transformed within a decade. The amount of land purchased by Jews increased from 70,000 donums in 1931 to 187,000 in 1935. The total amount of land being transferred to Jews between 1931 and 1935 reached 667,000 donums.¹

The Palestinians feared that if this situation continued unchecked they might soon become a minority in their own country. According to

Porath, discussion of the Jewish immigration threat to the Arab character of Palestine was the "Central topic in almost every press article, political meeting or social gathering."²

Two more events in 1935 aggravated the situation. These were the debate over the proposed legislative council of 1935 by the British Houses of Lords and Commons which led to the postponement of the idea for an indefinite time; and the strict implementation of the Jewish Agency's old policies of "Hebrew labour". This meant that every job in the Jewish sector should be filled by a Jew. As we have seen in Chapter Three, the Agency's economic policy resulted in throwing a large number of Palestinians out of work by sacking some of them from their jobs or denying them jobs in the Jewish sector. This matter was so serious that a Palestinian daily newspaper wrote: "The real struggle which now exists in the country is between Arab and Jewish labour."³

It is worth noting here that in Haifa alone there were in 1935 over 11,000 Palestinian workers living in hovels made out of old petrol tins without any decent arrangements.⁴ Most of those labourers perhaps, came from the rural areas after they had lost their jobs or the hope of finding a job as a result of the Jewish Agency's land and labour policies. Moreover, the workers feelings were intensified as a result of another form of discriminatory policy from the British Authorities regarding their wages. Barbour described a worker's situation thus: "He had the experience of being driven from work by Jewish pickets and he resented the fact that the Government paid the Jewish worker double the rate which it paid him for the same work."⁵

The British permitted mass Jewish immigration into Palestine and did not dispute the Jewish Agency's previous policies (regarding land and labour) under the terms of the Palestine mandate, but she ignored the safeguard in regard to the Palestinians' rights, embodied in Article 6 of the Mandate, which states: "The Administration of Palestine while ensuring that the right and position of other sections of the population are not prejudiced, shall facilitate Jewish immigration."⁶

Britain was practically violating the spirit of this Article of equal weight: This Article carried two obligations: one concerned the rights and the position of the Palestinians and the other the facilitation of

Jewish immigration. To deny the Palestinians jobs in their own country or to sack them from jobs located in Palestine, regardless whether these jobs had been created Jews, Arabs or British, was a clear violation of the Palestinians' right to work. More important is the transformation of Palestine from a homogeneous society into a plural one. This process was prejudicial to their rights and positions.

It can be said that the Palestinians' fear of being dominated coupled with the discriminative policies of both the British Authorities and the Jewish Agency and the uncertainty about their future were the immediate cause of the Palestinian leaders' calling the general strike which lasted for six months.

However, the true character of the Palestinian resistance to the British Mandate and the Zionist settlement has unfortunately been obscured by many subsequent writings dealing with the socio-political history of that period. The confusion over the nature of the Palestinian resistance and behaviour derives, perhaps, from the failure to identify precisely the nature of the forces operating within the total power profile in Palestine, the dynamics of which produced, according to Waines: "What was undoubtedly, a situation unique in the annals of colonialism and imperialism."⁷

The source of this confusion may be illustrated by an example drawn from each of two different perspectives on the Mandate years. While some Zionists⁸ have denied the presence of a genuine Palestinian nationalist movement, more frequent is the implicit denial that it was a popular resistance or represented the attitude of the majority of the population. This, of course, will depend upon the point of view adopted towards the Balfour Declaration, the Mandate and Zionism. Thus one scholar has noted that: "During the past seventy-five years an Israeli nation has been forged in the fires of struggle no different from that of nations all over Afro-Asia."⁹

The writer did not question the origin of the majority of the Jewish European settlers and simply considered the Jewish settlers' efforts to take over Palestine similar to the Egyptian or Algerian struggle against the British and French occupations. The writer is not only silent about the existence of a Palestinian national movement or the damage which had occurred to the Palestinian people as a result of the process (Jewish

struggle) which led to the establishment of the Hebrew state, but he also: "Removes the ideological and politico-economic aspect of Zionism from the European colonial imperial context of which it was an integral part and from which it drew much early inspiration."¹⁰

Similarly, the nature of the Palestinian resistance to the British mandate and military occupation was obscured by the British Government policy of a dual obligation, incumbent upon the Mandatory regime, whereby the Palestinian and the Jewish community would receive equal and impartial treatment which made any Palestinian resistance to appear as unlawful. In fact Britain was using the Palestine Mandate and the Jewish national home as a legal cover for her own intention to stay in Palestine. Sheffers explains Britain's real intention as: "White Hall's basic intention, its determination to remain in Palestine because of that territory's new strategic value, rendered essential adherence to the Zionist ingredient in its policy."¹¹

When Palestinians resisted the British policy of establishing a Jewish national home and resorted to military resistance to force the British to recognise their rights, as a majority, for self-government, it was simple for the British authorities to accuse the Palestinians of being terrorists and let them appear in the eyes of world opinion as an uncivilised population who were violating the mandatory rule sanctioned by the League of Nations. By resisting Britain's policy, Palestinian resistance appeared unlawful according to British propaganda.

Therefore, Britain was able without much protest from most of the international community, to use military force to suppress the Palestinian Revolt in the name of keeping law and order.

The evidence for Britain's using the pro-Zionist policy as a pretext to stay in Palestine could be found in the following passage from a memorandum prepared as a reply to the High Commissioner's proposals for granting the Palestinians self-government.¹² If the Chancellor's recommendations were to be adopted, the Jewish Agency might abandon the Jewish home idea even as a "piece of bluff". This might be most damaging as: "With the national home policy eliminated our excuse for remaining in Palestine would be reduced to little more than that of the importance of a territory containing the Holy places."¹³

Britain, however, succeeded in diverting world attention from its colonial relationship with the Palestinians into a legally impartial power assigned to rule Palestine to serve the interests of both communities, Palestinians and Jewish settlers. This has frequently resulted in an interpretation of a struggle between two irreconcilable nationalisms and not as the history of a captive or powerless population fighting a colonial power sponsoring mainly European Zionist settlers in their country against their will and wishes.¹⁴ As a result of such an interpretation the burden of responsibility for the course of events and the ultimate failure of the Mandate was adroitly moved from Britain onto the backs of the Palestinian and Jewish communities.¹⁵

The purpose of this chapter is to analyse the nature of the Palestinian resistance to Zionist settlement and the British Mandate and to examine the effectiveness of their methods of mobilizing the Palestinian people against British rule. It is equally important to shed some light on the British responses to the Revolt, the outcome of the Revolt and finally the significance of the Revolt in the development of subsequent events up until the end of the Mandate.

The General Strike of 1936

The process of Palestinian radical resistance to Jewish settlement and the British Mandate began at the end of the 1920s and became more violent in the middle 1930s. There were several reasons behind the Palestinians' militant attitude:

First, the emergence of a genuine national feeling and desire for independence. Such national feeling was growing steadily and was felt by the High Commissioner who reported to the Colonial Secretary that: "It would be a mistake, however, to imagine that the sole cause of riots was Jewish national home immigration. A genuine national feeling is growing constantly more powerful in Palestine and more bitter against Britain."¹⁶

Secondly, their fear and uncertainty about Britain's real intentions in allowing thousands of Jewish immigrants to enter Palestine, especially between 1932 and 1936. The forecast was that if the rate of Zionist immigration was as large as 60,000 per annum, the Zionist settlers would begin to surpass the Palestinians within a decade or so.¹⁷

Thirdly, the implementation of the old Jewish Agency's land and labour policies which forced many Palestinians off land bought by Jews, and out of work in the Jewish sector.

Finally, there were the examples of successful nationalist struggle in Syria and Egypt which inspired the Palestinians to follow the same course of action to reach a similar goal.¹⁸

The Out Break Of Violence

On 15th April 1936 two Jews were killed by Palestinian guerrillas on the road between Nablus and Tulkarom. The following night two Palestinians were killed by Jews as an apparent reprisal. These killings set off a wave of Jewish demonstrations and Palestinian counter-demonstrations. On 17th April a Jewish demonstration occurred in Tel Aviv on the occasion of the funeral of the two Jews, and many speakers demanded that the government arm the Jewish community and even demanded the establishment of a Jewish Army.¹⁹

The police interfered to disperse the demonstration and stop the demonstrators from marching to Jaffa, the Palestinian city to the south of Tel Aviv. The police were attacked during the demonstration but they fought back and four persons were killed.

The following two days, Jews in Tel Aviv picketed businesses which hired Palestinians, and several Palestinians were assaulted in Jaffa and Tel Aviv.²⁰ On 19th April the Palestinians gathered in front of Jaffa municipal offices waiting for a demonstration permit from the British Authorities. Denied the permit the gathering became a mob. Disorder continued until the end of the day by which time nine Jews and two Palestinians had been injured. Similar, though less bloody, demonstrations took place simultaneously in Tulkarom and Nablus.²¹

During these disturbances an unprecedented phenomenon appeared. In addition to the political, social and economic separation of the two communities they began to separate spatially. The population was moving both ways, the Jews to the mainly Jewish areas and the Palestinians to the mainly Arab areas, apparently it was obvious to them that the disturbances would not finish immediately.²²

The London "Times" commented on the situation: "The question arises whether a permanent no man's land shall be maintained between the two communities."²³

On 20th April a National Committee was formed at Nablus and called for a general strike throughout Palestine, to last until the demands laid before the Mandatory Government by the five Palestinian parties should be conceded. Between 19th and 21st April similar National Committees were set up in most of the Palestinian towns. The members of these strike committees were for the most part "Small business men and professionals inexperienced in politics but shocked into action by the Tel Aviv riots and assaults."²⁴

While Palestinians perceived this violent action as a protest against the British Administration and the way they had handled the Jaffa and Tel Aviv demonstrations, their efforts and responses were in no way concerted at this stage. Each committee had its own demands which stressed every area or town's own grievances and without any co-ordination at the national level.

No doubt the common danger of Zionism had the effect of uniting all the Palestinian factions. As Marlowe observes: "The pressure imposed unity on the Palestine Arabs, compelling them, with ever-increasing insistence, to turn their attention away from domestic feuds and towards the common peril."²⁵

Barbour advances a similar view and argues that: "The common danger was bringing the various sections of the population closer together. Christians and Muslims, effendies and fellahin, were acquiring a new sense of solidarity."²⁶

On 25th April the leader of the different political parties held a meeting and established what became known as the Higher Arab Committee. The committee's job was to translate a direct Palestinian desperation into constructive political articulation through the language of nationalism. At the local level, most strikes were not politicized, this was the first time most strikers had attempted political action, and therein lay a weakness of the national movement.²⁷

However, it seems that the new Higher Committee had succeeded in establishing some sort of unity between the different groups and families, at least regarding the strike and the basic national demands. Kalkas notes that: "In the process, the Arab Higher Committee unified interest based and regionally based national strike committees into one, albeit loosely woven, organizational fabric."²⁸ The Higher Committee was able to unify the different sections of the Palestinian community by acting as an intermediary to help in the articulation of demands in a manner which the British would understand.

The Mandatory government, however, did not concede to the Palestinians' demands and consequently, on May 7th, the High Committee called a meeting in Jerusalem, of the representatives of the various national strike committees and other nationalists. The meeting of the 150 representatives produced a memorandum to the High Commissioner in which they declared:²⁹

1. That the strike would continue unless Britain altered its pro-Zionist policy and stopped Jewish immigration as an indication of such alteration.

2. That Palestinians should not pay taxes as from May 15 if the British Authorities did not respond positively to their demands.

On 15th May the High Committee issued a manifesto which called on the Palestinians to refrain from paying taxes or co-operating with the Government in any form.

The Palestinian's responses to the High Committee for civil disobedience differed from one class of people to another. Throughout May, group after group in Palestine voted to support the strike. On 12th May members of the Jerusalem Chamber of Commerce went on strike. The next day the Palestinians student organization voted to support the strike and endorsed the national demands. On 17th May Palestinian national guards issued a proclamation urging universal support for the Palestinians and appealed to the Palestinian people to resist British rule "even to the point of self extermination." ³⁰

Palestinian officials increasingly showed support for the strike but most of them did not strike. Two substitutes were found for the officials strike.

1. They contributed at least a tenth of their salaries to the strike

funds and passed to the strike leaders confidential information on British intentions.

2. A memo was signed by all the Palestinian senior officials on June 30th and in July by 1,200 second division civil servants, in which they expressed their solidarity with the aim of the strike. The Palestinian officials indicated that the strike was an example of Arab despair, their mistrust of the British Government and that the only way to bring peace was to tackle the real issue of the conflict namely Zionist immigration and the Arab demands for independence. They stressed that: "Force can suppress the people but never bring peace."³¹

The responses of the Palestinian Municipalities to the strike were not uniform. The Mayors of Jaffa, Ludda, Ramle, Jenin, and Tulkarom went on strike as of 1st June while Mayors of Jerusalem, Acre, Gaza, Safad and Nazareth struck a week later.³²

It seems that the delay in the Mayors' responses to the strike resulted perhaps from their fears of being dismissed or replaced by British, Jewish or other Palestinian rivals.

Some writers argued that the Palestinian leaders were pressured by their people to take a tougher action against the Government. Toynbee for one charged that some decisions taken by the Palestinian leaders at that time came about, "by pressure on the leaders from below." Toynbee gives an example of such pressure from below the Arab Higher Committee's decision on 7th May to adopt the Palestinian Drivers Association's "policy of the non-payment of taxation: "Again the Higher Committee took its orders from below."³³

However, the general strike and the Revolt were received with increasing enthusiasm by villagers. From the middle of May the rural sector became the centre of gravity of the Revolt. This came about as a result of British occupation of most Palestinian towns by military forces and the readiness of the fellaheen to co-operate, support and participate in the military struggle against British and Zionist rule.

By mid-June several attacks on Jewish settlements and British troops were carried out by Palestinian guerrillas. The emergence and spread of the rural guerrillas resulted in the military balance swinging temporarily to the Palestinian side. The most effective area was Samaria with its centre Nablus. This is a mainly mountainous area with poor

roads. The guerrillas had the advantage of knowing the terrain and could have food and information from their fellow fellahin while the British army had difficulty in reaching them in an area without proper roads.³⁴ The regular targets of the guerrillas were roads and railways, bridges police stations, telephone and, electricity lines, British troops and remote Jewish settlements.³⁵

The increase in number and the establishment of full time fighters brought about serious questions of finance and supply. The Higher Committee and the local national committees carried out the job of collecting the money and then expended it to maintain the guerrillas and to buy weapons for them.³⁶

The effectiveness of the Revolt and its organization was increased towards the end of August 1938 when a group of about 200 Arab volunteers from Syria, Transjordan and Iraq, headed by a former officer, Fawas al-Qawagji, went to Palestine to join the Revolt. al-Qawagji assumed the position of leader of the Revolt. His previous experience with the Ottoman Army helped him to organize the guerrillas into four companies and established an intelligence and information unit whose main task was to collect necessary information about the British Army and Zionist targets. A special court of the Revolt was established to judge traitors and spies and to enforce justice, security and order in the areas under the guerrillas' control.³⁷

As the strike became effective and the guerrillas' violent action spread to the rural areas, British military reinforcements began to arrive in Palestine in May, and by September the British garrison reached about 20,000.³⁸ This British force came to Palestine with full battle equipment and was supported by tanks, armoured cars, machineguns and warplanes.

The British Authorities' powers were extended through successive amendments of the emergency regulations of the 1931 Palestine Order in Council. These laws empowered the High Commissioner to impose curfews, authorize searches, close newspapers, make seizures without warrant, mass arrests, impose collective fines and demolish houses without giving any chance of appeal against these laws.

In view of this and under these regulations, the British Authorities arrested, on the eve of May Day, 1936, all known Communists in Palestine which included 15 Palestinians and 66 Jews, on the grounds that they were suspected of supporting Palestinian anti-British sentiments.³⁹ By 13th May The Authorities had arrested over 600 Palestinian agitators and on May 23 they arrested 61 more Palestinians, among whom were 40 heads of local national strike committees. By the beginning of June 37 more leaders had been arrested, including Awni Abdul Hadi of the Higher Committee and Asem Said Jaffa's 70 year old Mayor. By 19 June about 2,598 Palestinians had been arrested as a result of the strike and the Revolt. At one point during the strike more than 400 leaders of the strike committees were in prison.⁴⁰

When the Authorities realised that without these leaders the strike was continuing they started to use other methods, starting with collective fines. The collective fines began in mid May in the northern district with the Government confiscation of 193 houses as a punitive fine and by mid July fines in cash had been levied on most of the Palestinian towns. Kalkas notes: "By September 14, fines equalling £90,000 had been levied in 28 towns, yet rural resistance continued un-abated."⁴¹

The next method which the British used was to demolish houses. Jaffa, especially the old city which became a haven for snipers and manufacturers of home made bombs, posed special problems to the Authorities since its streets were very narrow and did not allow the use of armoured cars.

On 16th June planes flying over the city dropped leaflets urging the population to leave the old city immediately and informing them that the Government would not be responsible for any loss of property after that date. The operation of demolition of the old city of Jaffa left about 6000 persons without homes. The displaced persons were forced to take up shelter in orange groves to the east of Jaffa. The London "Times" reported on 22 June 1936 that the Hourani Quarter and much of Jaffa's old city had been eliminated.⁴²

On 6th July the British troops carried out a "comb-out" operation in the rural areas bounded by Jerusalem, Nablus, Talkarm and Ludda. While this force, which totalled 4000 troops, was searching houses,

questioning and arresting suspect persons, the air force planes dropped leaflets urging the population to give up the strike and to co-operate with the troops. Even such a large operation was not sufficient to stop the Revolt.

The British Government, however, announced on 29th July that a Royal Commission would go to Palestine to investigate the causes of the strike and disorders. But it would not proceed to Palestine until order had been restored. In the mean time the British Government attempted to obtain the assistance of certain Arab rulers to help end the Revolt.⁴³

The first effort for mediation between the Palestinians and the British came from Nuri Said, the Foreign Minister of Iraq, who visited Palestine on 20th August 1936 to mediate between the Palestinians and the British Authorities. The Arab Higher Committee accepted Nuri's initiative of mediation. But on the 7th September the British Government suddenly announced a new policy on Palestine. They made it clear that they were determined to stop the strike and crush the Revolt by military means. The statement implied that Nuri's mediation efforts had failed, because the Higher Committee refused to call off the strike. It declared that agreement with Palestinian demands would constitute an abrogation of the Mandate, something which Great Britain would not accept. The statements continued to explain that the Mandate was a responsibility and "trust which they have no choice but to carry out." The statement described the general strike and the Revolt as "Wide spread acts of murder and outrages by groups of armed terrorists", and because the Government's main concern "has been to restore peace between the different communities in Palestine", they "decided to take rapid action to bring the troubles to an end."⁴⁴

Such a statement from Britain undoubtedly contributed to the confusion about the nature of Palestinian resistance to British colonialism.

The Higher Committee was surprised by the British statement and found themselves in a difficult position. Although the strike had mobilized the Palestinians the colonial Authorities refused to make a move towards negotiations. Instead they soon declared martial law and forcibly put down resistance.

The Palestinian leaders called a congress on 17th September 1936 to consider what to do. As the British Authorities prohibited such a

meeting, the matter was left for the local committees to deliberate on separately. Each was unwilling to take the initiative of surrendering and declared to continue the strike.⁴⁵

The Higher Committee, with the threat of punishment hanging over their heads if they publicly advised retreat, and having failed to obtain moral support from the local committees for the step that became inevitable, turned to the rulers of the neighbouring Arab states. On 11th October the Higher Committee, after consultation with the representatives of Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Transjordan, published the text of the letter they had received from the rulers of these states. The letter called upon Palestinians to "resolve for peace in order to save further shedding of blood." The letter assured the Palestinians that "in doing this we rely on the good intentions of our friend Great Britain, who has declared that she will do justice." The letter assured the Palestinians that "you must be confident that we will continue our efforts to assist you."⁴⁶

This letter gives us an idea of those Palestinian leaders who agreed to publish it and to call off the strike when they knew, through their political contacts and Arab countries' mediation, that Britain did not promise any change in her policy.

It seems to me that the Arab leaders' letter was just a face-saving device used by the Palestinian leaders to call off the strike without facing the consequences of a lost battle against the British forces.

The real reasons for calling off the strike were the following:

1. If guerrilla warfare continued against an enemy now able to take the offensive, that would cost many lives and could only have one end, defeat.

2. The strike, had involved considerable financial sacrifices for Palestinian shopkeepers, owners of transport services and their employees, and dock labourers. The approach of the orange season brought the larger interests, both of capital and labour, into operation against the strike's continuation.

3. The Palestinians realized that the Zionists had profited by the strike. They had strengthened their military relations with the British through joint training and co-operation and succeeded in increasing their military defence units.⁴⁷

4. On the economic side the Zionist succeeded in filling all jobs in the Zionist sector which, before the strike, were occupied by Palestinians. The Zionists also secured many jobs, especially with the British Army's security projects.⁴⁸ They succeeded in building a port at Tel Aviv as an alternative to the Jaffa port which was closed as a result of the strike. The development of a rival and exclusive port for the Zionist sector was seen by the Arab workers as a threat to their interests. Such Arab worries were reported in The London Times: "In the Jews' avowed intention to develop independent harbour facilities, the Arab port workers see a menace to their livelihood."⁴⁹

5. The last reason for calling off the strike was the announcement by the British Government to send a Royal Commission to inquire into their grievances. The proposed Inquiry Commission was used this time, as a face-saving device, by both Arabs and British alike. For the Palestinian leaders they could tell their people that they had called off the strike because Britain was willing to investigate their grievances. For Britain it would enable them to carry on their pro-Zionist policy without the need to use their forces against the civilian population, which would damage their interests in the rest of the Arab countries.

On November 5th 1936, the Royal Commission arrived in Palestine and on the same day Britain announced a new quota of Jewish immigrants. This announcement prompted the Arab Higher Committee to declare their boycott of the Royal Commission because Britain had not, as they expected, suspended Jewish immigration until the Commission had finished its investigations.⁵⁰

The Palestinians' boycott of the Royal Commission in effect allowed Zionists to use it as a forum to present their demands. The Commission had been sent in the first place to investigate the Palestinians' grievances, but it actually listened to the Jewish point of view almost daily for six weeks. They listened to the Palestinian case for one week, the last, when the Palestinians, under pressure from the Arab countries, agreed to present the Palestinian case before the Committee.⁵¹

The Commission's Report was published on 7th July 1937 and recommended the establishment of a Jewish state on the coastal area and annexation of the rest of Palestine, except the Holy places, to Transjordan in order to establish an Arab state, as I will explain in details in the

next chapter.

The lesson which could be derived from this strike is that it is difficult in a plural society facing a colonial power, to conduct a successful strike if one segment of the society co-operates with the colonial power.

Waines explains that the failure of the Palestinian general strike came about as a result of the co-operation between the British and the Jews: The strike "could scarcely have the desired consequence when one third of the population could act as a buffer in the crisis and even derive benefit from it. That this was possible at all was due to the favoured position of the Yishuv (Zionist settlers) within the structure of the Mandate."⁵²

2. Resumption of the Revolt and its Organization

The manner of calling off the strike and stopping guerrilla warfare in Palestine left the organization of the Higher Committee, the local committees and the guerrilla forces intact and in high morale. For the Higher Committee it was a temporary truce to be used for recovery from the hardships caused by the long period of the strike. It seems that it was the moderate wing led by the Nashashibis who lost ground during the strike period. They had followed the lead of Amin al-Husseini and the youth leaders who became the only powerful leaders.⁵³

The relative truce which followed the cessation of violence was utilised for a major organizational effort. A fund raising campaign was made to collect money to sustain a renewal of the strike and the Revolt should the leadership decided to take such a course and a special levy of 1% on the Palestinian citrus industry.⁵⁴

The temporary substitute for more effective action was an attempt to impose a strict economic boycott of the Zionist sector. This action was not new. The Palestinians tried the boycott policy in 1922, 1923, 1929 and in 1933 without success. The only practical effect the boycott brought was the acceleration of the process of segregation between the two communities.⁵⁵

During the general strike the boycott of Zionists was a corner stone of Palestinian policy. The violence which accompanied the strike made the boycott far more effective than ever before.

The Higher Committee's decision to continue the boycott after the end of the strike was implemented rather easily and effectively. This of

course was due, in the first place, to the awareness of the Palestinian population of the Zionist danger and their readiness to take collective action to stop it. It was also partly due to the threat of violence against those on the Palestinian side who did not observe the boycott.⁵⁶

For the Palestinians, the boycott was mainly a political weapon, used in order to restrain the Jewish economy. It did not reflect the economic interests of the Palestinians. It spelled economic ruin for citrus growers and merchants. It brought unemployment for Palestinian workers and caused great losses to the peasants who depended on selling their products on the Jewish market. The only positive effect at least in the short run was that of bringing the majority of the Palestinian people under the Authority of their national leaders.

The effects of this boycott on the Zionists were that it liberated the labour market from Arab workers, it gave a boost to Zionist farming and created a totally independent economic structure. Flapan concludes that: "The call for an economic boycott of Jews played into the hands of the Jewish policy to build a closed economic circuit and facilitate the implementation of the policy of Hebrew labour and Hebrew goods."⁵⁷

The Zionist leaders found their opportunity to implement their own exclusive economic policies. What was important was not to allow Palestinian labour to come back, not to buy Palestinian products and not to renew the tenancy of Palestinian houses. But the Zionist leaders who were aware of the difficulty of explaining a boycott to international public opinion and the damage which a declaration of boycott could cause to their cause abroad abstained from declaring their boycott policy, leaving the Palestinians to do the job for them and, consequently, bear the responsibility. This was possible because of the disadvantaged political position of the Palestinian leaders compared to the Zionist leaders. For the Palestinians the boycott was part of their legitimate struggle and since they did not expect any help from the outside world it did not make much difference to them what the outside world might say about their actions. In this sense their position was different from that of the Zionists who were totally dependent on external support and, consequently, in need of World public opinion's sympathy.

This lack of political experience, however, put the Palestinian leaders in an awkward position when they declared a boycott of the Royal

Commission without having any other alternative option. They were forced to retreat from their hasty decision of boycotting the Commission, but not before they had given the Zionists most of the time allocated to the Commission to present their case, presenting the Arab case only in the last week of the investigation. During the period preceding the arrival of the Commission and pending the conclusion of its investigations, there were no real efforts made by the Palestinian leaders to establish a duly elected body which would represent the Palestinian case before the Royal Commission or to work as an alternative government should the Commission recommended granting Palestine independence. There were no efforts to organise an underground political infrastructure to lead the country, should the government decide to arrest the leaders, nor use that truce period for organising an underground national military movement to continue the military struggle against the British forces or to be the national army should independence be granted. The misuse of that opportunity to establish military and political infrastructures had grave consequences when the British Government decided to adopt the Royal Commission's recommendation to divide Palestine and to use the military alternative to implement that policy.

However, when the strike was called off the Palestinian guerrillas were not militarily defeated nor disarmed. During the truce period the guerrillas were directed and guided to some extent by the traditional leaders and communication between the two organisation continued through members of the local committees. Guerrilla leaders used the truce period to enlist and train new volunteers, purchase weapons and ammunition to be used should the Revolt be resumed⁵⁸

The Palestinians were surprised and shocked by the Royal Commission's recommendation to partition Palestine. The Report was received with indignation by the majority of the Palestinian Arabs who were adamantly opposed to the creation of the Jewish state on what they regarded as Arab land, as I will show in detail in the next chapter.

On 8 July 1937 the Higher Committee rejected the Partition scheme and appealed to other Arabs and Muslims for solidarity. They demanded the replacement of the Mandate with a national government bound by a treaty with Britain that would guarantee minority rights to the Jews.⁵⁹

As the general strike had started as a spontaneous response to the events which occurred in the middle of April 1936, the Revolt was resumed by individual attacks on British and Zionist targets without much guidance or planning from the leadership.⁶⁰ On 1st October the guerrillas killed L.Y. Andrews, District Commissioner of Galilee, and his police escort at Nazareth. The British Government was determined at this stage to carry out the Partition scheme by military force. Therefore, this incident was an opportunity for the British Authorities to carry out measures against the Palestinian political leaders and military action against the guerrillas themselves. Despite their public condemnation of the act which led to the killing of the Galilee Commissioner, the Arab Higher Committee and all national committees were declared illegal. The Mufitti was deprived of his offices as president of the Supreme Muslim Council and several members of the Higher Committee were deported to the Seychelles. Hundreds of political activists and suspected guerrillas were arrested. "The Government brought all its resources to bear on the Palestinians in order to crush the rebellion once and for all."⁶¹

The reason given for government action against the Palestinian leaders was their alleged "moral responsibility" for the various acts of violence which had occurred in the country.⁶²

The Palestinians responded to the British measures by a series of attacks on British and Zionist targets. On the night of 14-15 October 1936, several attacks were made on Jewish buses in the Jerusalem area and sporadic attacks were made on Jewish settlements, the Iraqi pipe line which carried oil to Haifa, telephone lines, passenger trains and troops and damage caused.

The following night Ludda air port premises were attacked and customs and passport offices were burned down. A twenty three hour curfew was imposed on Ludda for four days, two houses were demolished and a collective fine of £5,000 was imposed.⁶³

The second phase of the Revolt was already under way. But the dissolution, arrest and deportation of most of the Palestinian leaders denied the Revolt its previous organisational infrastructure, leadership and financial aid. On the military side the departure of the Arab guerrillas volunteers, including the leader of the Revolt, Fawzi al-Qawgji, inevitably caused the virtual collapse of the hierarchical

structure which he had succeeded in forming. Despite these disadvantages it did not take long before the guerrillas were called on, reorganized and started their operations. It was estimated that the number of permanent active guerrillas was between 1500 and 3000. This number was supported by 1000 urban guerrillas and 6000 armed villagers who could be called upon in time of need within their local areas⁶⁴.

The first category formed the military backbone of the Revolt and operated from the mountains against the British troops and engaged in sabotage of the oil pipe line, road bridges, military installations and railway lines. The second category consisted of the town commandos who carried on their ordinary civilian life but performed specific tasks or attacks at the request of their leaders. These were important in the liquidation of Palestinians suspected of collaborating with the British as well as the assassination of British officers accused of committing excesses against Palestinians. The third category was the partisans which consisted of ordinary peasants and only took up arms to relieve the guerrillas in the case of a battle taking place in their area⁶⁵

The problems which faced the leaders of the second phase of the Revolt were many. The first serious problem facing the leaders in Syria was how they could lead, direct, organize and finance the Revolt in exile. Therefore they formed al-Lujnah al-Markaziyyah Lil Jihad⁶⁶ (Central Committee for Holy War) to provide leadership for the Revolt.

Among other tasks the Central Committee was responsible for speaking on behalf of the Palestinian people in purchasing arms, collecting money and making arrangements for smuggling this money and arms into Palestine, together with their guidance and directions. Communication between the Central Committee and the district guerrilla leaders was carried out by messengers and occasional personal visits of the guerrilla leaders to Damascus.

The guerrilla formations were divided into four fronts headed by a district commander, who had armed formations varying between 150 and 200 Mujahidin (Holy fighters) led by a platoon leader. The most prominent leaders of the second phase of the Revolt were Abdul Rahim al-Hiji Mohammad, Tulkarm, Aref Abdul Razeg, Nablus, Abdul Qader al-Husseini, Jerusalem and later Yusuf Abu Dura, Galilee.⁶⁷

It can be said that as a result of the Palestinian leaders' failure to establish secret military and political alternative leaderships they could not establish such leadership when the British arrested the traditional and military leaders in October 1937. Therefore, the Palestinian guerrillas had to work in separate groups in their districts almost independent of each other. There was no co-ordination between these different districts and consequently they were not able to conduct their resistance to British rule in a manner similar to that of other organized resistance movements or revolutions such as in Algeria or Vietnam.

However, in the Summer of 1938, in an effort to establish a national resistance movement with a common leadership, the Central Committee requested the Palestinian guerrilla leaders to form a Higher Council to reorganise and lead the military resistance in Palestine on a national level. The major guerrilla leaders' response was positive. They formed "Diwan al-Thawrah al-Arabiyyah fi Filastin (Bureau of Arab Revolt in Palestine) composed of the regional commanders.⁶⁸

It was agreed that all members of the Bureau would serve as its head in rotation. This was one of the first indications that the new Bureau was not going to work. This set-up generated competition between the members of the Bureau originating from family, regional and political reasons. Abdul Qader al-Husseini the commander of Jerusalem district did not join the Bureau and he, therefore, had separate means of communication with the Central Committee in Damascus. Every Commander was authorised to command the guerrillas in his region and thus the status quo was maintained. In brief the Bureau did not serve as a real military command and at best it served as a limited co-ordinating body.

It is worth noting here that at the end of 1938 the disagreement between the guerrilla leaders reached a point at which A. R. al-Hajj Muhammad called himself Commander in Chief of the Arab rebels in Palestine and Arif Abd al-Razig called himself Commander-in-chief of the Rebels in Southern Syria. This rivalry contributed to weaken the military resistance at a moment when unity and co-operation were desperately needed.

In Summer 1938 the Palestinian Revolt reached its peak.⁶⁹ The rebels constituted the only authority in most of the rural areas and even

occupied some major towns such as Hebron, Jericho, Beersheba, and Rammallah. They even occupied the old city of Jerusalem for a short period. They established their own administrative offices, intelligence centres and special courts. Since the guerrillas were not completely dependent on the Central Committee's financial assistance they attempted to find local financial alternatives. They were able to levy taxes and quotas of volunteers on the villages and towns.

But when the Central Committee became unable to supply the guerrillas with their increasing demands for money, the latter used, in some cases, violence and intimidation to get what they wanted from the local population. The guerrillas used Revolt activists in the towns to collect monetary contributions while they used the commandos to attack selected targets inside their towns.

The Commandos were also instrumental in intimidating and threatening Palestinian collaborators with the British authorities, land brokers, and other opponents. Such threats and intimidations led according to Kayyali to an exodus of "thousands of rich Palestinian land brokers, and pro-government notables."⁷⁰

3. British Response to the Renewal of the Revolt

During the general strike the British Authorities attempted to repress the Revolt under the provisions of Palestinian civil law and the 1931 Palestine Order-in-Council. As the Revolt continued the Authorities' powers were extended through successive amendments of these emergency regulations. Mass arrests, collective fines, and demolitions were characteristic of government actions at this time. Cities where disturbances occurred were cordoned off and patrolled by occupation police.

After April 25 1936 the police were armed and empowered to use their guns in crowd control. By June 2 military reinforcements were empowered to work as police in crowd control and preventive control. But as the strike continued, the Authorities called in police and military reinforcements. By the end of 1936 the police forces had been increased by almost 1000 men to include 1,902 Palestinians, 930 British and 484 Jewish. In addition there were 3,000 Jewish supernumerary police.⁷¹ On 1st October the British Authorities outlawed the Higher Committee and

all other national committees and arrested most of the Palestinian national leaders.

The British Government realised that in order to carry out the Partition Scheme they had first to crush Palestinian military resistance as quickly as possible and by all possible means. This helps to explain for the British military offensive which began in May 1938 with the formation of joint British and Zionist special night squads under the Command of Captain Orde Wingate.⁷² These squads operated at night and attacked Palestinian villages and exerted systematic pressure, surveillance and harrassment upon the guerrillas. In May also, British troops occupied twenty villages in Samaria and Galilee permanently. Police and military posts were established or re-established in the main villages.

The objectives of this action were fourfold:⁷³

1. To prevent the villages from either becoming or continuing as a source of food, shelter, and recruitment for the guerrillas.
2. To re-establish British administrative control where such authority had ceased.
3. To prevent intimidation and threats to the population and regain the confidence of the population.
4. To effect more strategic control of the previously inaccessible areas for road making and patrols.

At the end of October Palestine was under military command and divided into four military districts each under a military commander. Some towns such as Jaffa, Acre, and Jerusalem were re-occupied during October and November. In re-occupying towns and villages the Army used brutal measures against the Palestinian civilians. Attacks or firing at the troops brought about immediate collective punishment. For example, on October 26th 1938 two British Bataillions launched a punitive raid against the Palestinian village of Mair. They requested the villages to surrender some arms and suspected guerrillas. When the villagers failed to do so, the British Army started to blow up the village houses with dynamite in front of their owners. A New York Times correspondent on the spot wrote: "When the troops left there was little else remaining of a once busy village except a pile of mangled masonry."⁷⁴

District officers were empowered to submit a village to a collective fine. Then if the villagers would not or could not pay they could confiscate the entire village's flocks of sheep and goats as security for the fine. They were empowered to impose punitive police posts at the villagers' expense, which might involve fifteen police men at six pounds a month for three months. Either method could cripple a village financially. The district officer had actually unlimited powers. He could demolish a house in no way connected with any violent incident but as reprisal for any act committed by an unknown person from the same village.⁷⁵

The trains and some times military vehicles were safeguarded by Palestinian civilians. "The natives (father and brother) of the band commander operating in a certain area or the local notables were ordered to sit on the inspection trolleys which drove at the head of the train."⁷⁶

The British Authorities imposed more severe measures upon the Palestinian people in order to make it easier to identify and pick up Palestinian guerrillas. They issued identity cards and forbade any movement by rail, road or car without a pass. Passes of different colours were issued giving the bearer greater or lesser privileges of travel. Such pass cards and laws are still in operation in "Israel" and are used mainly to restrict Arab movements in the country especially between the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the area called "Israel" proper. It is perhaps interesting to mention here that such pass laws and restrictions on the movement of the natives are one of the main features of the racist regime of South Africa today.

Card issuing offices were sited in large towns and traffic-checking posts established at the exit of every town and village as well as at other random points along the major roads. A permanent night curfew was also imposed on all roads outside urban areas. Hence anything that moved at night or moved by day without a pass was arrested.⁷⁷

It seems that British tactics of village occupation and restriction of movement proved effective. The guerrillas had been forced out of these villages into the hills. They were cut off from their base, supplies of food and recruitment, they were unable to move from one district to

another and more importantly they could not transport arms and ammunition from one area to another. They were denied security and rest and the British forces were even able to follow them to their hideouts and attack them with military fighters.

The presence of British troops also had a feedback effect on the number of Palestinians willing to express anti-guerrilla sentiments, especially those who had suffered from mal-treatment by the guerrillas before the British re-occupation. The British Authorities even encouraged and assisted the Nashashibis faction and other pro-government families to establish anti-guerrilla bands called "peace bands."⁷⁸

The task of these bands was to force the guerrillas out of their areas, to stop them from collecting money and to inform the British troops about their hideouts and plans. This internal conflict between the two main factions al-Husseinis and Nashashibis increased after the announcement of the Partition scheme in July 1937. The Husseinis were against while Nashashibis were in favour. This led the pro-Husseini guerrillas to attack and intimidate the pro-Nashashibis between 1937-1938. When the British reoccupied the villages and drove the guerrillas out, the Nashashibis had their revenge on the pro-Husseini guerrillas by fighting them or informing the British forces about them.⁷⁹

It is worth noting here that this disunity between the different Palestinian factions regarding the method of solving the Palestine problem still prevails among the different organizations of the Palestine Liberation Organization. Such differences, other than the fighting which broke out between the pro-Arafat (leader of the P.L.O) and the pro-Syrian guerrillas in Lebanon in Summer 1983, became clear when the pro-Syrian leaders boycotted the Palestinian National Council Conference held in Amman, Jordan, in November 1983.⁸⁰ Such differences, however, did not result from differences on the final goal but rather on the tactics to achieve that goal, self-determination.

Nevertheless, these severe British measures against the Palestinians did not crush the Revolt completely, but they did succeed in damaging the good relations between the guerrillas and their fellow-citizens and supporters. The guerrillas in this situation had to operate from the

hills and get their arms and supplies from the neighbouring Arab countries, especially Syria. In an attempt to block that route of supplies the British Army erected barbed wire fences across Palestine's northern borders.⁸¹

The British also made arrangements with the Transjordan frontier force to guard and control the Eastern border of Palestine completing a full blockade around the guerrillas in the hill areas of Palestine.

The British military offensive and their internal struggle substantially contributed to the destruction of the guerrillas' power. Many were killed and many others were encouraged to defect to the peace bands or simply quit fighting because there was no hope of victory against the British Army.

The guerrillas, short of supplies and denied the necessary popular support in Palestine, now faced new measures from the French colonial authorities in Damascus. The best indication of this poor situation of the Revolt was the fate of the chief guerrilla commanders. After Abd al-Rahim Muhammad had been killed by the British Army on 23rd March 1939, Arif abd al-Raziq was captured by the French forces in Syria on April 13th and finally in July Yusuf Abu Durrah was captured by the Transjordan frontier force and handed over to the British Army and was hanged in 1940.⁸²

Moreover Franco-British rapprochement on the eve of the Second World War led to the French decision to suppress guerilla movements and later to restrict their political leaders' activities against Britain. Kayyali remarks on the end of the Revolt. "Weariness with fighting, constant military pressure and the hope that some aspects of the White Paper would be applied, in addition to the lack of arms and ammunition, all played their part in making it difficult to continue the Revolt. Moreover, in view of the fact that the world was on the brink of the Second World War, France suppressed the Rebels' Head Quarters in Damascus."⁸³

The Palestinians actually paid a high price in economic and human losses. It has been estimated that the total losses were 19,792 killed and wounded during the revolt period (1936-1939).⁸⁴ This estimate is based on conservative admissions contained in official reports, checked

against other documents.

These calculations established that 1200 Palestinians were killed in 1936 120 in 1937, 1200 in 1938 and 1200 in 1939. In addition 112 Palestinians were executed and 1200 killed during various internal conflicts among Palestinian factions. Palestinian detainees numbered about 2,000 in 1936, 816 in 1937 and 2,463 in 1938 and approximately 5,679 in 1939. Thus, making a total of 5,032 Palestinians killed, 14,760 wounded and 10,848 detained. But the real and most serious losses lay in the rapid growth of both the military and economic sectors of the Jewish settler society.

The general policy followed by the Zionists during the revolt followed two lines:

1. Alliance with British imperialism including military co-operation to defeat and crush the Palestinian Revolt.

2. The mobilisation of the Zionist settler society which emphasised the necessity of laying the foundations of a military society and of its military and economic instruments.

Freed from the competition of cheap Palestinian agricultural produce the Zionists proceeded to take action to promote their economic existence. During the revolt the Zionists and the British Authorities built a network of roads between the principal Jewish colonies and the towns which were later to constitute a basic part of the infrastructure of the Zionist economy. They succeeded in building a harbour at Tel-Aviv which was later to kill the port of Jaffa. In addition the Zionists monopolised contracts for supplying the British troops which reached 20,000 men.

The Zionists were able to reduce Jewish unemployment by filling all the jobs abandoned by Palestinians during the strike and by getting jobs in British security projects and by the involvement of thousands of Jewish supernumeraries.⁸⁵ Fifty Zionist settlements were established between 1936 and 1939 and the Jews invested £p 1,268,000 in building works in five Jewish towns as against only £p 120,000 invested by Palestinians in 16 Palestinian villages in the same period. The value of exports of locally manufactured goods rose from £p 478,807 in 1935 to nearly double that figure (£p 896,875) in 1937.⁸⁶ This can only be explained by the greatly increased activity of the Jewish economy.

The scope of this mobilisation expanded from the economic field, in alliance with the British Authorities, to the military field, in collusion with it. To cover up their co operation, the Zionists came up with the idea of establishing Jewish defence units later to be known as colony police. The British Government believed that the formation of a Jewish strike force would solve many problems connected with the defence of their long term imperialist interests. They therefore held instruction courses on offensive operations against guerrillas which provided training for large numbers in Haganah cadres who later became cadres of the Israeli Army.⁸⁷ In 1937 the Jewish police were increased with 3000 new members, all of whom played a direct role in repressive operations against Palestinian guerrillas.⁸⁸

At the beginning of 1939 the British Army organised ten groups of colony police into well armed groups, which were given Hebrew names. These groups totalled 14,200 men each being commanded by a British officer assisted by Jewish officers. By the Spring of 1939 the Zionists also had 62 mechanised units of eight to ten men each.⁸⁹ In Spring 1938, for example, the British Authorities entrusted to the Zionist defence units the defence of railways between Haifa and Ludda and sent 434 members to do the job. Later this Jewish force was increased to 800 and entrusted with the defence of the oil pipe-line in the Bushan plain.

However, low scale military engagements continued between the British forces and Palestinian guerrillas until September 1939, the month in which World War Two broke out. In the main period of the Revolt the Palestinians suffered irreplaceable losses, the main leaders were killed and the newly constituted local commandos fell one after the other in the various fields of battle. British oppression had reached its climax when they started to train and cooperate with the Jewish Haganah in their operations against the guerrillas and the Arab population.

War weariness, continued military pressure, in addition to a shortage of arms and other supplies militated against the continuation of the Revolt. Soon after the declaration of the World War, the Revolt started to peter out, and the High Commissioner reported that as a whole the Arab Community had declared its support for the government in the War with Germany.⁹⁰ Bowden makes a relevant remark on the end of the Revolt: "A revolutionary war with a developed politico-military component and the cellular structure of mature underground alternative government may well have been able to survive such defeats, a peasant War or rebellion

could not."⁹¹

The Palestinian leaders were not able to revive the revolt after 1939. Being prohibited from entering their country and living in exile in other Arab countries made them dependent more and more on these Arab countries to solve the Palestine conflict with Britain by political means

After the Second World War the Palestine conflict was extended not only to involve the Arab countries but also international powers such as the United States. The development of Palestinian responses to different peaceful efforts to solve the problem between 1939 and 1946 will be discussed in the following chapter (chapter six).

4. Some Social Aspects of the Revolt

From analysing 282 members who held office in the Palestinian Revolt Porath, concluded that the revolt was carried out mainly by villagers and the lower classes. Out of the 282 members there were 187 (65%) villagers, 8 (3%) villagers who had emigrated to towns, 61 (22%) townsmen, 22(8%) bedouins and 8 (3%) Arabs from different countries.⁹²

The breakdown of the Palestinian population at that time was 62% villagers 30% townsmen and 8% Bedouins.⁹³ It is clear therefore, that the urban population was under represented in the sample.

If we break down the group of 61 townsmen by the role they played in the Revolt we find that only 34 (55%) of them were guerrilla group or sub guerrilla group commanders, the other 27 (42%) being advisors, arms transporters, instructors and 2 (3%) judges in the courts of the Revolt whereas almost all the villagers and bedouins were actual guerrilla group commanders.⁹⁴

I should add here that many townsmen lent their support to the Revolt in other ways, for example, the merchants, journalists, policemen, civil servants, who were townsmen and their support was very important, mainly in finance, newspaper reports and in the intelligence field. This composition of the guerrilla ranks necessarily raises questions about the social orientation of the Revolt: Was there any social ideology which the guerrillas cherished and which might have influenced their action? And what were their concrete relations with the people?

The reply to the first question is simple: The guerrillas did not articulate any new ideology of their own. In their communiques they generally accepted the political positions of the national leaders. They did not express, or perhaps they were still not able to express, social demands of their own even in an inarticulate way, which their political leaders of the upper class did not deem necessary. As Porath put it: "Being devoid of any social ideology, the rebels did not attempt, when they reached the peak of their power in Summer 1938, to bring about any change in the social structure of those large rural parts of the country which were then under their control."⁹⁵

Porath's argument is not far from the truth. But he failed to connect the Palestinian's inability to express their own social demands with their overall circumstances. With their leaders jailed, or living in exile without any permanent and regular financial resources, without any full and permanent control of any large area and with the British forces occupying their country, the guerrillas perhaps set as their main target the liberation of their country. If the guerrillas started to talk about social demands and changes without having the means and power to implement them it might have created more divisions among the people.

In answer to the questions of the relation between the guerrillas and the people it may be said that: during the general strike relations were generally good. The machinery of the Higher Arab Committee and the national committees was in operation and most of the guerrillas' needs in terms of money and weapons were supplied by them.

The leaders decided what demands should be made on the population. There were not exorbitant and so could be met. But when the Revolt resumed in 1937 the circumstances were different. There was no central leadership to control, organize and decide how much money should be collected from each area and this matter was left to the regional or local leaders to decide. Some guerrilla leaders even demanded more money than the villagers could afford.⁹⁶

The general strike had impoverished many peasants who could not sell their products during the strike. The other important factor which played a major role in worsening the relations between the guerrillas and the population was British intimidation, collective fines and house

demolitions which were imposed upon villages or people who supported the guerrillas. The misuse of authority by some leaders, poverty and government intimidation, all these factors combined together to damage relations between the guerrillas and the villagers.

The relationship between the guerrillas and the urban population grew much worse too. This was not only because of the above factors, but it is very probable that the guerrillas were also motivated by class animosities. The sums of money demanded by the guerrillas from the urban population were very high and perhaps these sums were asked not only out of need but also out of malevolence towards the rich population whose participation in the Revolt was slight. The climax was reached in December 1938 when the guerrillas asked the people of Jaffa to pay P£ 60,000 (Palestinian pound) Jerusalem P£ 30,000 Ramalah P£ 18,000 Nablus P£ 14,000.⁹⁷

The matter reached the Central Committee in Syria which tried to convince the guerrillas to reduce these sums, but their efforts were unsuccessful. These exorbitant demands and another two orders, which the guerrillas issued to the urban population during their occupation of Jaffa and other cities between August and November 1938, had some class connotations. They decreed that a moratorium on debts would be effective from 1st September 1938 indefinitely and that all actions of the courts in respect to debts would be stopped. It is clear that these measures were intended to benefit the lower classes. A second order made the anti-urban connotation very clear. This time the guerrillas requested the creditors not to ask the villagers to settle their debts. They warned these creditors against any legal action against their debtors. Another class action was the guerrillas' declaration that rents were cancelled.⁹⁸ Here the guerrillas identified themselves with the urban lower classes against the rich ones as well as with the poor villagers against the rich townsmen.

The Revolt leaders ordered all the population to wear the Palestinian traditional dress which in their opinion represented the true symbol of Nationalism and Arabism. The other action against the rich people was confiscation of the movable properties of the rich who had fled the country. This situation led Sir Harold MacMichael to write commenting on the Revolt: "Some thing like a social revolution on a small scale is beginning. The influence of the landlord -politician is on the wane. He

has done nothing but talk, others have taken the risks, and these others (Guerrillas) are disposed to take a line of their own. "99

Between 1936 and 1939 about 10,000 violent acts were carried out by the Palestinian nationalists. This included attacks on British troops, police stations, railways, pipelines and Jewish settlements and population. About 5,000 Palestinians were killed and fifteen thousand wounded.¹⁰⁰ Other sources put the numbers at 2,850 killed many thousands more wounded, 9,000 people arrested, 200 houses blown up and 30,000 Palestinian pounds in collective fines levied on Palestinian villages and towns.¹⁰¹

The British and Zionist casualties were estimated at 1,200 Jews and 700 British killed or wounded during the Revolt.¹⁰²

Flanon describes the Revolt as follows: "The events of 1936-1939 showed all the features of a popular struggle characteristic of fully mature national movements: a general strike, economic boycott, demonstrations, political actions and guerrilla warfare."¹⁰³

A Palestinian Revolt was just a beginning which was not given the chance to grow further. It was spoiled by British brutality and military interference and by internal Palestinian disputes, divided loyalties and lack of practical material and military support from the Arab countries.

Conclusions

The Palestinian Revolt of 1936-1939 was an important turning point in the history of the Palestinian-Zionist conflict. The Revolt was not simply a continuation of Palestinian protest against British and Jewish national home policy but rather a national rebellion against British colonialism and efforts to plant a Zionist settler society in Palestine against the wishes and the will of the Palestinian people.

The Revolt was mainly directed against British rule and its main demand was independence. It was mainly carried out by peasants and up to October 1938 they succeeded in holding onto, and even occupying, large parts of the rural areas and several towns in Palestine. The guerrillas, however, did not represent any specific social outlook nor did they develop any class solidarity. In addition to their lack of military experience and modern military technique and equipment, they could not overcome the gap in regional and personal interests.

The British Authorities used more than 20,000 troops and very severe measures, not only against the guerrillas but also against Palestinian civilians, cooperated with Jewish Haganath and established anti-guerrilla bands in order to crush the revolt. But it was not before the British Authorities had occupied all the towns and most of the villages in Palestine, cut Palestine off from the rest of the Arab countries and reached an understanding with the French Authorities in Syria to suppress the political and military leadership in Damascus that Britain was able to quell the Revolt.

In conclusion I would argue that the defeat of the Palestinians' Revolt was due to the superiority of the combined forces of the British Government and the Zionist settlers. Although other factors had contributed to this defeat, the superiority of the British forces was enough by itself to end the Revolt.

As a result of the Revolt (and other factors) Britain abandoned the Partition scheme in October 1938. There were also several new features which entered the Palestinian-Zionist conflict as a result of this revolt.

1. The intervention of the Arab states, which were invited by Britain mainly to pressure the Palestinians to adopt a more "moderate" attitude. This intervention became a permanent feature and later developed into the general Arab -Israeli conflict.

2. The appearance of the practical and open alliance between British colonialism and their prote'ges', the Zionist settlers, especially in the military field. The British Army assisted the Zionist settlers in establishing their defence units which received military arms and training from the British Army. These Jewish military units were increased during World War Two and later became the Jewish Army which defeated the Arabs in 1948.

3. It signalled further geographical as well as ideological segregation between Palestinians and Zionists to be crystallized in later Partition suggestions and direct negotiations between Palestinians and Zionists as I will show in Chapter Six.

4. It drove the Palestinians after their defeat to rely more and more on the Arab states and less and less on themselves.

5. The Revolt obliged Britain to acknowledge the seriousness of the Palestinian opposition to the idea of the Jewish Home and for the first

time a Royal Commission proposed the Partition of the country as the only hope for a lasting settlement as we will see in the next Chapter.

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CHAPTER SIX

Palestinian Responses to the British Proposals to Solve the Palestine conflict 1936-1939

Introduction

Britain wrongly assumed that the Palestinians, faced with her military strength and with the so called economic benefits which Zionist immigration would bring to Palestine as a whole, would accept the "Jewish home" idea and, consequently, they would drop their opposition to Zionism and be more reconciled to British rule. The Palestinians, however, were neither impressed by the so called economic benefits of Jewish immigration to Palestine nor were they prepared to surrender to British power. They argued that the best safeguard for their rights and future was the establishment of self-government in Palestine in the administration of which both Arabs and Jews would participate according to the size of their respective populations.

The Palestinians used political as well as military means to convince the British Government to accept their demands. But, as we have seen in Chapter Four, Britain, instead of responding to the Palestinians' demands, tried to bring about an understanding between Palestinians and Zionists to share the administration of Palestine with the British Government without questioning the validity of the Balfour Declaration or the Mandate. The best example of this approach was the legislative councils idea which was suggested in 1922 and later in 1935. But as I have explained in Chapter Four, these were neither serious nor genuine proposals to solve the conflict. Therefore, by the middle of the 1930s, Palestinian opposition to the British Mandate and Zionist settlement in Palestine developed into a state of general strike and full rebellion. It was during that rebellion that the British changed their approach to solving the Palestine conflict.

In this chapter I am going to shed some light upon the British proposals to solve the Palestine conflict and analyse the Palestinian responses to them. This is perhaps important because firstly, the Palestinians are a major party to the conflict and their views are

important for anyone concerned about a final settlement to the Palestine conflict. Secondly, there are some misconceptions and misguided common beliefs regarding the Palestinian position and views for a lasting settlement to this conflict. These misconceptions were created by both British and Zionist propaganda during the Mandate and later by the Zionist Movement and "Israel." For example the British Government held the Palestinians responsible for the failure of Nuri Said's mediation, during the general strike of 1936, at a time when the Palestinians were still waiting for the result of his mediation. The British announced: "The Palestinian Arabs are themselves entirely to be blame for the failure of all those well meant efforts at mediation."¹ Commenting on the outcome of the London Conference Esco (pro-Zionist Foundation) explains that "The Arab position left no room for compromise."²

King Hussein of Jordan rightly argues that despite the fact that both Zionists and Palestinians rejected the White Paper of 1939 the Palestinians appeared in the Western media as solely responsible for the failure of the plan: "The Zionists likewise, fought it tooth and nail, but in the eyes of the Western World it was the Palestinian Arabs who had thwarted the Plan."³

There is no doubt that the Palestinians were prepared to accept the Jewish minority living in Palestine and allow them to be represented in its government. The Palestinians expressed such views on several occasions and their attitude towards the Jewish community was expressed in their written proposals for solving the problem. "The Arabs are irrevocably opposed to political Zionism but in no way hostile to the Jews as such, nor to their Jewish fellow citizens. Those Jews who have already legally entered Palestine will be full citizens of the Palestinian state enjoying full civil and political rights and a fair share in government and administration."⁴

It seems that although the Palestinians were in principle prepared to accept the presence of a Jewish minority they failed to convince the British Government of their real intention.⁵ however, this was not the main reason which prevented both sides from reaching a lasting settlement. Rather British interests, their concern about the security of the Jewish community and the uncompromising Zionist demands for an open Palestine for unlimited Jewish immigration and land sales were the

main reasons behind the failure of the British, the Arabs and the settlers to reach an agreement, as I will show in this Chapter. The Palestinian divisions and lack of experience in political negotiations, however, played into the hands of the Zionists and contributed to the misunderstanding of the Palestinians' position.

It is worth while to mention here that the security of Israel, her racist policy on immigration represented in the so called "law of return" which gives exclusive right to every Jew in the world to immigrate to "Israel", her expansionist policies, such as her insistence on annexing Arab territories occupied in the 1948 War or in subsequent wars with the Arabs, such as East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights, and her refusal to recognize the right of the Palestinians to self-determination still continue as the main obstacles in the way of reaching a lasting settlement to the Palestine conflict.

However, the inability of the Palestinians to develop a clear and coherent policy toward a final settlement and their failure to accept the U.N. resolutions in regard to the problem as a whole, still play into the hands of "Israel" and give her the required excuses to continue her occupation of the occupied Arab territories in defiance of the U.N. Resolutions in this respect and without much criticism from world public opinion. In this sense there is a similarity between the Arab and the Zionist position and tactics of the 1930s and the present position and tactics of the Palestinians and "Israel." And until the Arabs overcome this rigidity in the way of handling this problem, it is not expected that they will be able to get the required international support which is needed to pressure "Israel" to recognize their rights.

This Chapter will be divided into three sections:

1. The Partition Proposals

The British Government, in the middle of the 1930s, came to the conclusion that the differences between Arabs and Zionist were irreconcilable and, therefore, they dramatically changed their approach to solving the conflict by proposing partition. The new approach was based on the argument that if Palestinians and Jews could not agree to share the government of Palestine, the best thing to do was to divide Palestine between them.⁶

Faced with a full scale Revolt by the Palestinians and political opposition from the Arab states, the British Government found themselves in an awkward position. Britain was forced to choose between (a) her continuing to support Zionist settlement and risking her vital strategic and economic interests in the Arab countries and (b) abandoning the "Jewish Home" venture and facing a world outcry if those settlers faced threats and danger from the Arabs. We must remember that one of the reasons which was used to justify Britain's decision to sponsor Zionist settlement was humane consideration, namely to save them from persecution in Europe. If Britain quit Palestine and those settlers faced any threat, Britain would be morally responsible before the entire world for their safety.

Against this background Britain attempted to solve the conflict in a way which could, as they say, kill two birds with one stone. The new idea was partition. The partition proposals therefore were advanced to serve the interests of the British and the settlers at the expense of the native population. Partition would give the settlers part of Palestine to be recognized as a Jewish state which would be guaranteed by the international community and not by Britain alone. Britain in this case would be relieved from the future responsibility for the security of the settlers. On the other hand Britain could claim that in return for such a Jewish state the Palestinians would not only be freed from the fear of Zionist domination but also they would gain their independence in part of their country. Britain too could sell this idea to the Arab states by telling them that the Zionists would be confined to a small area which would not form any threat to the rest of the Arab countries and if they accepted it British interests in these countries would be secured.

It can be argued therefore that the Partition proposals were not intended to serve the interests of the native population but rather to secure the interests of the colonial power and the security and the well-being of the Zionist settlers as we will see in this Chapter.

The Palestinians opposed partition on political and economical grounds. While partition gave the settler minority the right to establish their own state it denied the Palestinians a similar right. The Palestinians argued that the number of settlers (about 29 %) and the

size of the land they acquired (about 5 %) did not justify the partition of their country. On the other hand, partition was rejected by the Zionists because it did not give them what they wanted. They hoped to form a majority very soon and expected to control the whole country.

Against this background the British Government abandoned partition and instead they called upon both sides to hold a conference to discuss the conflict and to try to find a solution which would be acceptable to both sides.

2. London Conference⁷

As an alternative solution to Partition, Britain called upon Arabs and Jews to hold a round table conference in London in February 1939. The British Government, on the eve of World War Two, was desperate to find a solution to the Palestine conflict and for the first time she appeared willing to recognize the legitimate rights of the native majority provided that this would guarantee the rights and the security of the settlers minority.

But suspicion and mutual mistrust prevented the Arabs and the British from reaching an agreement. The Palestinians insisted, with reason, that a fixed date must be set for independence while the British insisted on a provisional ten year period after which, in the light of Arab-Zionist understanding, independence would be granted or not. When the London conference did not succeed in solving the problem, the British Government announced its own policy on the future of Palestine in a White Paper.

3. The White Paper of 1939⁸

The main features of that policy were the establishment of a National Government in Palestine after ten years, the acceptance of only 75,000 new Jewish immigrants in the first five years and no further immigration without the agreement of the Palestinians.

The significance of the White Paper lies in the fact that the British Government recognized the right of the Palestinian majority to the establishment of a unitary independent state with the Arabs in the majority and limiting the settlers to a permanent minority. The Palestinians, however, failed to exploit the opportunity to secure a written agreement with the British Government, a thing which they regretted in 1947 when they realised the significance of such

recognition. Despite the fact that the only difference between the Arabs and Britain was over a fixed date for independence and that the Arabs had accepted most of the principles embodied in the White Paper, officially it was announced that they rejected it. Their position was not different from that of the Zionists who saw in the White Paper the curtailment of the "Jewish Home" and declared that they would fight it with every means at their disposal.

The British Government, however, announced that she was going to implement the policy regardless of Arab and Zionist reaction. But the policy was never completely implemented and thus the conflict continued through the 1940s, as we will see in the next chapters.

First I am going to discuss the partition proposals and the Palestinian responses to them.

1. The Partition Proposals and the Palestinian Responses to them⁹

The Peel Commission was sent to Palestine to inquire into the causes of the Palestinian General Strike of 1936. Its terms of reference were to inquire into the manner in which the Mandate for Palestine was being implemented in relation to the obligations of the Mandatory Power towards the Palestinians and Jews, and to investigate any legitimate grievances from both sides.¹⁰

The Commission arrived in Palestine on November 11th 1936 and stayed about three months. In the light of their study of the causes of events in Palestine since World War One and after their examination of the evidence, submitted to them by British, Jewish and Palestinian representatives and witnesses, they stated that the underlying causes for the 1936 Strike were:¹¹

- a. The desire of the Palestinians for national independence.
- b. Their hatred and fear of the establishment of the Jewish National home.

The Commissioners made the following comments on these two "underlying causes":

1. That these were the underlying causes which brought about the disturbances of 1920, 1921, 1929, and 1933.
2. That the two causes were interlinked.

The Commission pointed out that the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate involved the denial of national independence at the outset for

the Palestinians. In their view, the subsequent growth of the Jewish National Home created a practical obstacle and the only serious one, to the attainment later of National Independence. It was believed that: "Its further growth might mean the political as well as economic subjection of the Arabs to the Jews so that, if ultimately the Mandate should be terminated and Palestine become independent, it would not be national independence in the Arab sense, but self-government by a Jewish majority."¹²

3. They were the only underlying causes and all the other factors were complementary or subsidiary, aggravating the two causes or helping to determine the time at which the disturbances broke out.

The other factors may be summarized as follows:

a. The effect on Palestinian opinion of the attainment of National Independence by other Arabs states such as Iraq, Egypt and Syria.

b. The high figures of Jewish immigration from 1933 onwards gravely accentuated Palestinian fears of Jewish domination over Palestine.

c. The Palestinians believed that the Zionists had greater influence on the London Government, which enabled them to get their way by means denied to the Palestinians. This belief was based on the status of the Jewish Agency both in London and Jerusalem, and was greatly strengthened by Mr. MacDonald's letter to Dr. Weizmann in 1931 and the debates in Parliament on the legislative council in 1936 which led to the abrogation of that idea.

d. The growth of Palestinian distrust of the British ability or will to carry out their promises to the Arabs dated back to 1915-1916 (Hussein-MacMahon Agreement, see Chapter Two).

e. Palestinian alarm at the continued purchase of Palestinian land.

f. The general uncertainty and ambiguity of certain phrases in the Mandate as the ultimate intentions of the Mandatory Government.

After a detailed study of the operation of the Palestine Mandate from its inception to 1936, the Peel Commission recommended that the Mandate should be abolished because it carried contradictory obligations to both Arabs and Jews. This was a new type of analysis of the Palestine conflict. All previous analyses of the conflict had assumed that the two undertakings were reconcilable. In the Commission's view:

"The application of the Mandate system into Palestine implied the belief that the obligation thus undertaken towards the Arabs and the

Jews respectively would prove in course of time to be mutually compatible owing to the conciliatory effect on the Palestinian Arabs of the material prosperity which Jewish immigration would bring to Palestine as a whole." The Commission concluded: "that belief has not been justified and we see no hope of its being justified in the future."¹³

The Commission pointed out that to allow Jewish immigration to continue in the hope that it might ultimately lead to a Jewish majority and the creation of a Jewish state in all Palestine, "Would clearly violate the spirit and intention of the Mandate System."¹⁴ The Commission explained that such a course of action would mean that National self-determination had been withheld when the Palestinians were a majority in Palestine and only conceded when the Jews became a majority. "It would mean that the Arabs had been denied the opportunity of standing by themselves, that they had in fact, after an interval of conflict, been bartered about from Turkish sovereignty to Jewish sovereignty."¹⁵

The Commission argued that the recognition of the Jews' right to immigrate to Palestine did not give them the right to rule the Palestinians against their will in Palestine. "The international recognition of the right of the Jews to return to their old home-land did not involve the recognition of the right of the Jews to govern the Arabs in it against their will."¹⁶

It is perhaps interesting to notice here how the Commission deliberately used misleading phrases such as "the right of the Jews to return to their old home-land" in their referring to Zionist settlement which, as I showed in Chapter One and Two, was not different from other white settlement elsewhere in Asia or Africa. Although the British Commission knew that the majority of the settlers had no physical connection with Palestine they used such misleading phrases to distort the facts about the nature of their support for Zionist settlement in Palestine.

The Commission also argued that the obligation to the Palestinians to develop in Palestine self-government and the obligation to the Jews to develop a Jewish national home were in conflict. The Commission pointed

out that they expected these two obligations would continue to conflict in the future. "The trouble is that they have proved irreconcilable and as far ahead as we can see, they must continue to conflict. We cannot both concede the Arab claim to self-government and secure the establishment of the Jewish national home. And this conflict between the two obligations is the more unfortunate because each of them, taken separately, accords with British sentiment and British interests."¹⁷

The Commission pointed out that the crown colony type of government was not suitable to govern "educated Palestinians and democratic Jews" nor was it acceptable to the British people to govern Palestinians against their will. "The task of governing without the consent or even the acquiescence of the governed is one for which we believe the British people have little heart."¹⁸

The Commission findings, however, were in conformity with the Palestinians' point of view. The Palestinians made it clear from the outset that the matter was not related to economic or material benefits, but rather it was a matter of identity, future, and life or death. "It is one of life and death to the Arabs in that it results in the transfer of their country to other hands and the loss of their nationality."¹⁹

Under the terms of the Mandate the British Government allowed thousands of European Jewish immigrants to enter Palestine and to establish their own community. The introduction of European Jewish settlers had the effect of transforming Palestine into a plural society consisting of two hostile communities - the Palestinian natives and the Zionist European settlers.

According to plural society theories, conflict between the two distinctive communities was inevitable. The Commission's Report agrees with this fundamental finding of the pluralism theory, as I have explained in Chapter One. The Commission reported that: "An irrepressible conflict has arisen between two national Communities... About 1,000,000 Arabs are in strife, open or latent, with some 400,000 Jews."²⁰ The report goes on to say that there was no hope for these two Communities to live in peace together because they had nothing in common. "There is no common ground between them, the Arab Community predominantly Asiatic in character, the Jewish Community pre-dominantly European. They differ in religion and language. Their cultural and social life, their ways of thought and conduct are as incompatible as

their national aspirations."²¹ The Commission, however, did not consider the conflict between Zionists and Palestinians as a new phenomenon but rather it "was inherent in the situation from the outset. The terms of the Mandate tended to confirm it."²²

The British Government actually did not make any serious effort to bring the two Communities together. Rather they left the matter to each Community to develop its own political, social, educational and economical institutions and to speak its own language. This led the differences between the two Communities to grow wider, and polarized the conflict between Palestinians or Arabs against Zionist settlers or Jews. The Commission pointed out that "for internal and external reasons it seems possible that the situation as it now is, will grow worse. The conflict will go on. The gulf between Arabs and Jews will widen."²³

If the Mandate proved to be unworkable how could the Commission solve the conflict? It was faced with two demands: the complete independence of the Palestinians and the continuation of the development of the Jewish national home under the protection of the Mandate. Who was going to govern Palestine? The Commission states the problem as: "Manifestly, the problem cannot be solved by giving either the Arabs or the Jews all they want. The answer to the question which of them in the end will govern Palestine? must surely be neither."²⁴

The Commission saw only one way out of the dilemma to divide Palestine between Jews, British and Transjordan. The Commission however, did not work out a detailed scheme of Partition, but in order to make their proposals concrete enough to serve as a basis for consideration, they presented a plan together with a map indicating suggested boundaries. According to the plan Palestine was to be divided into three regions.²⁵

1. A Jewish state, including the coastal region of Palestine from a point midway between Gaza and Jaffa to Megiddo in the valley of Esdraelon including Galilee, the area which was mainly inhabited and owned by Arabs.

2. British enclaves under permanent Mandate which would include Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Ludda and Ramleh and a corridor to the sea at Jaffa, and one including Nazareth.

3. The rest of Palestine would be attached to Transjordan to form an Arab state.

According to the Partition scheme, the population in these three areas

would be as follows:

The Arab state would contain 485,000 Arabs and 7,200 Jews, while the Jewish state was going to contain 309,900 Jews and almost the same number of Arabs, 294,700. The third part, the British enclaves would contain 221,400 Arabs against 80,200 Jews mainly living in the new Jerusalem.

In regard to land ownership the Palestinians owned 19,580,000 donums in the area allocated to the Arab state, while the Jews owned only 92,000 donums in that area.

In the area allocated to the Jewish state the Palestinians owned 3854,700 donums (75 percent) against 1,140,000 donums owned by Jews.

In Jerusalem and Nasareth enclaves (British Mandated area) the Palestinians owned 1,504,000 donums against 78,000 dunums owned by Jews.

The following table is a summary for the above figures.

	<u>Arab State</u>		<u>Jewish State</u>	
	Arabs	Jews	Jews	Arabs
Population	485,200	7200	309,900	294,700
Land	19,580,000	92,000	1,140,000	3,854,700

<u>British Mandated areas (Enclaves)</u>		
	<u>Arabs</u>	<u>Jews</u>
population	221,400	80,000
land	1,504,600	78,000

In the light of the main facts which emerge from these figures one cannot avoid questioning the wisdom of dividing Palestine if Partition could not solve the problem of domination either by Arabs over Jews or vice versa.

As the Arab Office explains:²⁶ "Having stated some of the fundamental principles of the problem the Commission failed to draw the logical conclusion from them. It ended by recommending the Partition of Palestine into Jewish and Arab states: a scheme which whatever its merits or demerits had no connection with the analysis contained in the report."

The first question to arise here is why did the Commission not recommend Partition on the lines of land and people segregation? The second question is why did they not recommend the establishment of a Palestinian state instead of attaching the rest of Palestine to

Transjordan? And finally why did they not recommend independence for Palestine as a unitary state?

The answer to the first question is simple. The Commissioners interested themselves in two main things, first, the security of the Zionist settler community, mainly European like themselves; secondly, the prosperity and free development of their economic enterprise, also European-style. These two considerations took priority over the rights and wishes of the Palestinians, a colonized population, who appeared to be the victims of such colonialist attitudes and prejudices. The Commission suggested the establishment of the Jewish state not only on lands owned by Jews but also on land mainly owned by Palestinians after the compulsory transfer of its occupants. Their aim for suggesting a compulsory transfer was to secure the establishment of a self-supporting and secure Jewish state, doing away with the wishes and rights of the colonized population.

The answer to the second question lies in the fact that Amir Abdullah of Transjordan was willing to accept the throne of such a state, while the Palestinians were not expected to accept the Partition scheme. The British feared, as "Israel" does today, that an independent Palestinian state under the leadership of nationalist leadership would be not only hostile to Britain (or today to "Israel") but also would continue to create security problems to the newly created Jewish state. On the contrary the unification of the rest of Palestine with Transjordan and under the rule of a pro-British ruler would make such Palestinian hostility ineffective.

The answer to the third question is obvious.

The Commission did not recommend independence for Palestine in order to avoid putting the Zionist settlers, a Westernized community, under the rule of a Palestinian majority. The Commission argued that to put the Jewish Community under Arab rule would hinder the free development of their modern European economic system and would put their security at risk. The Commission explained the very special relationship between the Jewish community in Palestine and Britain. They pointed out that Britain could not simply quit Palestine, because it had moral obligations and a responsibility towards the security and development of the Jewish national home. As the Commission put it: "It was not possible to argue

that since the home has been established we can honourably cease to interest ourselves in its security. There are 400,000 Jews in Palestine. They have come there not only with our permission but with our encouragement. We are answerable within reason for their welfare. We cannot in the present state of affairs abandon them to the good intentions of Arab government."²⁷

It is worth mentioning here that this statement could furnish a good reply to those Zionists who claim that Zionist settlement in Palestine was different from other white settlement and colonization in Africa and elsewhere, since it did not depend on military occupations nor did it depend on any government assistance or protection. For example, Wedgwood, a British MP, argued in the House of Commons that "We see in the Jewish colonization of Palestine something quite different, something of which everyone in the House can approve."²⁸

The previous British statement, however, indicates clearly that Zionist settlement was dependent on British protection and would not have happened without the British military occupation of Palestine and Britain's open commitment to the Zionist Movement to develop such a "Jewish Home" in the country. The notion that Zionist settlement in Palestine was different from other white settlement elsewhere was intended to disassociate Zionist colonization from the hated Western colonization in the 19th century. It seems though that the type of relationship between the Zionist settlers and Britain was not so important as the impact of this Zionist settlement on the Palestinian community. In this sense it seems that Zionist settlement had a similar impact on Palestinian society to that of the white settlement of South Africa as we have seen in Chapter One.

The important issue here is not whether we call Zionist settlement colonialism, settler-colonialism or just settlement, rather the important thing here is, in my view, how did the natives perceive it and how did it affect their lives. According to Rodinson, with whom I agree, the Palestinians rejected foreign settlement and occupation of their country, regardless of what it was called. "The Arabs rejected foreign occupation of their territory whether we choose to classify this phenomenon as colonialism or not."²⁹

The Commission's second main concern was the free development of the Zionist Westernised economic system. The Commission regarded the Zionist economic system as a European model in the middle of Backward Arab countries. Such a modern system must be left to prosper and continue its links with the rest of the developed World.

The Commission argued that: "It was not only a question of humanity. We have tried to show that the national home is essentially a European institution, modern and on its economic side especially, intimately linked with the outer world." The Commission goes on to cast doubts about the Arabs' ability to handle such advanced economic system. The Commission argues that: "The national home with its peculiar and delicate economic constitution cannot prosper under a government (Arab) which had little experience of modern capitalism and is not fully acquainted with financial and commercial problems on a wide scale."³⁰

The commission justified partition on the grounds that it: "Offers each (community) what its wants most, namely freedom and security. It means that the Arabs must acquiescence in the exclusion from their sovereignty of a piece of territory, long occupied and once ruled by them. It means that Jews must be content with less than the land of Israel they once ruled and hoped to rule again."³¹

This is another example of misleading statements which contributed to the misunderstanding about the nature of the conflict between the native Arabs and the Zionist settlers.

Although it has been established in Chapter Two, that not every Jew in the world is essentially a descendent of the the earlier Hebrews and that the majority of the settlers were Polish, Russian or West European, the Commission gives the impression that those settlers had ruled Palestine before and "hoped to rule it again." The truth of the matter is that the majority of the settlers had never been to Palestine nor did they have any physical relation with the country. Partition was recommended because it would have given the Zionist settlers what they wanted. First, they would be free from Arab majority rule and consequently they could bring in as many immigrants as they wanted; secondly, partition would give them security, since the Palestinian territory allocated to the proposed Jewish state would be handed over to them after removing its Palestinian owners from it, as suggested by partition.

In contrast, partition would have given Palestinians neither freedom nor security. Partition deprived the Palestinians of their basic freedom and right to establish a Palestinian state. Palestine was to be divided between British, Jews and Transjordan. Moreover according to the Partition proposal about 300,000 Palestinian peasants would be compulsorily transferred to uncertain areas with an uncertain future and deprived of their basic right to their land and property. According to the Partition scheme there would not have been a Palestinian state to look after the Palestinians welfare and therefore, Partition did not offer any security to the whole of the Palestinian community and in particular to those who would be obliged to move out of their only means of living, their land and homes.

The British Government, however, accepted the Royal Commission's Partition scheme and published the report together with a statement of policy which expressed the view that the British Government "are driven to the conclusion that there is an irreconcilable conflict between the aspirations of Arabs and Jews in Palestine, that these aspirations cannot be satisfied under the terms of the Mandate, and that a scheme of Partition on the general lines recommended by the Commission represents the best and most hopeful solution of the deadlock."³²

The Partition scheme was rejected by both Palestinians and Zionists alike for different reasons on each side. First I will present the Palestinian responses.

Palestinian Responses to Partition

The Partition scheme was a severe blow to the hopes of many Palestinian who expected the Commission to recommend independence for Palestine. The Palestinian leaders, surprised by the Partition scheme, found themselves unable to give an immediate response. If they accepted Partition they would appear traitors and would be accused of betraying the national cause. Such action would mean their denunciation and condemnation, not only in Palestine but throughout most of the Arab countries. Their lives could be in danger and they might have been killed. In rejecting the plan on the other hand, and without consulting the Arab states, they would be isolated and deprived from some Arab states' support.

As might be expected in such circumstances the Palestinians appeared divided on partition. Some of them, the so called "moderates" announced their readiness to enter negotiations with Amir Abdullah of Transjordan to establish the proposed Arab state. The other party, the so called "extremists" rejected Partition and in the end their view prevailed. according to Hussein, the present King of Jordan. "The so-called moderate leadership amongst the Palestinian Arabs accepted the plan and even initiated talks with king Abdullah for its implementation. The extremist elements within the Palestinian leadership rejected it outright and since they possessed the gun, their counsel prevailed."³³

The Palestinians, faced with this difficult situation, appealed to the Arab and Moslem world for help and advice. They explained the Palestinian position as losing their homes, lands, and identity. Their appeal goes on to say: "The Arab people in Palestine beg your Majesties to give them your support and advice in these very difficult critical and historical circumstances. They demand of you in the name of this Holy Country, the honour of the Arab nation and your religious duties to work for the aim of saving this country from the evils of imperialism, Judaism and division."³⁴

The Arab states also appeared divided on the issue. Therefore, they sent sympathetic replies to the Palestinian's appeal but rather cautious ones. The notable exception, apart from Syria, was Iraq. The Prime Minister, Sayyid Sulayman, in a statement to the press, called upon the Arab people to defend the rights of the Palestinians and to condemn the proposals to create an Arab state smaller than the whole of Palestine. He even warned any person who might accept the rule of such a state that they might be denounced throughout the Arab and Moslem worlds: "Any person venturing to agree to act as head of such a state would be regarded as an outcast throughout the Arab world, and would incur the wrath of Muslims all over the East. I declare, both as a head of an Arab government and as a Private citizen that I should always oppose any individual ready to stab the Arab race to the heart in order to secure the rulership of the proposed new state."³⁵

This threat perhaps was directed to Amir Abdullah of Transjordan who, according to Hussein, believed that "the Zionist thrust and avalanche could have been blunted but not entirely thwarted."³⁶ Abdullah's thesis

was that the best safeguard for Arab land from the Zionist design of expansion would be an undivided sovereign state with an Arab majority, a guaranteed status for the Jews, with autonomous administration in their areas and proportional representation in the national government and a treaty with Britain. But as a result of rivalry and division among the Arabs his plan was rejected on the Arab side. The Zionist rejected it too.³⁷

It is important to mention here that Hussein, the present king of Jordan has faced the same dilemma. The king believed that the best safeguards to the Arab interest is in reaching a negotiated settlement with "Israel ". According to King Hussein it is possible to exchange the Arab occupied territory for peace with Israel. In February 1985 he concluded an agreement,³⁸ with some moderate Palestinians from the Palestine Liberation Organization (P.L.O.) to explore this possibility. Just as Arab divisions and rivalries prevented Abdullah from reaching agreement with the Zionists in the 1930s, these Arab divisions and rivalries still hinder and frustrate king Hussein's effort to find a solution to the present Arab-Israeli conflict.

Nevertheless, Arab nationalism did not stop at the frontiers of Palestine. The Arab Higher Committee sent a memorandum to the High Commissioner, the Colonial Secretary and the Permanent Mandate Commission.³⁹ Their demands were:

1. The recognition of the Arab's right to complete independence in their own land.
2. The cessation of the experiment of a Jewish national home.
3. The cessation of the British Mandate and the substitution for it of a treaty with Britain according to which Palestine would be recognized as a sovereign state.
4. The immediate cessation of Jewish immigration and land sales pending the negotiation of such a treaty.

They also stressed that the strategic interests of Britain and the rights of the Jewish minority would be guaranteed.

On the other hand, Arab opinion had been mobilized throughout the Arab world. Partition had evoked a note from the Syrian Government to the French Authorities expressing the unanimous condemnation of partition by all parties in Syria, mass demonstrations in Baghdad, a one-day strike

in the Holy Cities of Hijjaz, a protest from the Muslim Youth of Tunis to the British Consul, numerous demonstration in India and a declaration against partition by the President of the All-India Muslim League.⁴⁰

Elsewhere the agitation largely took the form of pressure on the Egyptian Government to reject Partition. In a speech to the League of Nations, the Egyptian Foreign Minister asserted that partition was contrary both to previous British promises to Arabs and to the Article (22) of the League Covenant upon which the Mandate depended.⁴¹

Other objections to Partition come from the British House of Lords when the issue was brought before them for debate.⁴² It was, however, agreed that the Government should seek the approval of the League of Nations before drafting a scheme for Partition and before submitting it to the House of Commons for approval.

The Permanent Mandate Commission also objected to the partition scheme for two reasons:

1. That the area allocated to the Jewish state was not large enough to establish a self-supporting state;⁴³ and
2. That the Commission did not agree to transfer a substantial number of Palestinian peasants from their homes and lands. The Commission stressed that "Any solution, to prove acceptable, should therefore deprive the Arabs of as small a number as possible of the places to which they attach particular value either because they are their present homes or for reasons of religion."⁴⁴

Between 8th and 10th of September 1937 a Pan-Arab conference was held at Bludan in Syria. It attracted delegates from the neighbouring Arab states.⁴⁵ The Conference declared in its resolutions that Palestine was an inseparable part of the Arab countries. They demanded the immediate cessation of Jewish immigration to Palestine and the establishment of a Palestinian national government in treaty relations with Britain. The Conference warned Britain against its Partition policy and hinted that the Arabs might seek a new alliance to protect their rights.⁴⁶

In October the Palestinian rebellion was resumed and a guerrilla warfare campaign was started against the British troops and administration in Palestine. And by the end of 1937 the British Government itself began to doubt the viability of Partition,

particularly in view of the renewal of the Palestinian Rebellion, the Arab states' opposition, Parliament and League of Nations objections, Zionist rejection and finally the Munich crisis in Europe. The first sign of a British intention to abandon partition appeared in December 1937 when the British Government announced its rejection to the Royal Commission proposal for the compulsory transfer of land and population.⁴⁷ More significant was the Foreign Secretary's Memorandum which explained the dangers of the Partition policy to British interests in the area. If a major war should start Britain would need the cooperation of the Arab world.

The document argued that the policy of Partition and the subjection of the Palestinian people to "alien and dangerous invaders" faced serious opposition from the Arab countries. The document went on to say:

"It has been suggested to me that there is only one way in which we can now make peace with the Arabs and avoid any danger, that is, by giving the Arabs some assurances that the Jews will neither become a majority in Palestine nor be given any Palestinian territory in full sovereignty. We should go a long way towards recovering the confidence and friendship of the middle Eastern states and greatly strengthen our moral and political position in that vital area by re-establishing peace with the Arab world and fulfilling our objection to the Jews by the establishment of a fixed numerical proportion between the two races." The Foreign Secretary warned that failure to do so "would not only involve the British Government in continuing military commitment of a far reaching character in Palestine itself but also would bring on Britain the permanent hostility of all the Arab and Muslim powers in the middle East."⁴⁸

Zionist Responses to Partition

The Zionist attitude was revealed in the resolution of the twentieth Zionist congress held at Zurich on the 3rd of August 1937. The following are among the main resolutions:⁴⁹

1. The Conference expressed the view that the Zionists had understood at the time of the Balfour Declaration that the Jewish national home was to be established in the whole of historic Palestine including Transjordan, and the possibility of the evolution of Palestine into a Jewish state.

2. The Congress rejected the Peel Commission's view that the Mandate

was not workable and demanded its fulfilment. The Congress also rejected the Commission's conclusion that the national aspirations of the Jews and Arabs were irreconcilable. The Congress argued that the British Government should take more severe measures against the Arabs in order to force them to accept Zionist settlement and the gradual transformation of Palestine into a Jewish state. Therefore, "The Congress declares that the scheme of Partition put forward by the Royal Commission is unacceptable."⁵⁰

It is important to stress here that the Zionist rejection of the partition scheme played a significant role in the abandonment of the scheme by the British Government. For example Nahum Goldman, a key member of the World Zionist Congress, believed that the Zionist rejection of Partition was the main factor in the British decision not to implement Partition in Palestine. He argues that: "If there has been a tragedy in the history of Zionism it is the fact that largely through our fault, Partition was not put into effect the first time it was suggested in 1937."⁵¹ Goldman argues that "If the Zionist movement had accepted the proposals then, spontaneously and without delay, it is quite conceivable that it might have been implemented."⁵²

I do agree with Goldman that if the Zionists had accepted partition the British Government might have implemented it. This is true because the wishes of the Arabs had never been taken into account in regard to the British policy in Palestine. We must remember that the whole Mandate system was designed to serve British and Zionist interests and was carried out against the will of the natives. Clear support for such a view came ten years later when a similar scheme was approved by the U.N. because it was accepted by the Zionists, despite bitter opposition from the Arabs, as I will show in Chapter Eight.

The important thing here is that, despite the fact that Zionist opposition to Partition was no less than Palestinian opposition, King Hussein rightly believes that the Palestinians were held responsible for the failure of Partition. "The Zionist leadership, unhappy that their ground design of expansion would be blunted, left it to the Arabs to bear the onus of rejection. The Arabs almost played into their hands."⁵³

Indeed the Zionist anticipation of Arab reactions constituted a basic pillar in their calculations and decision-making. As Hussein put it "If the Arab leadership was always willing to play the Zionist game, out of ignorance, zealotry, over-confidence, complacency or even misguided selfishness, why should the Zionist leadership be the party to say no?"⁵⁴

It seems to me that if the Arabs' rejection of the Partition scheme in 1937 played into the hands of the Zionists the more recent rejection of some Arab states and Palestinian leaders to the Jordanian- Palestinian Agreement of February 1985, to exchange land for peace, also plays into the hands of the Israelis. "Israel" appears in the eyes of the Western World as the peace loving country surrounded by aggressive Arab states. This image helps "Israel" to continue her occupation of the Arab territories, occupied during her wars with the Arabs since 1948, such as Western Galilee, the West Bank, Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem, and the Golan heights, until the present day, to drain more economic, political and military support from the United States and Europe, which is necessary to keep up its military superiority over the Arab States.⁵⁵

Nevertheless, as a result of the opposition of the Palestinians, the Arabs and the Zionists, the British Government started during the year 1938 to question the viability of Partition and later to abandon the whole idea.

The Abandonment of Partition

Despite the fact that both Arabs and Jews had rejected the Partition scheme, proposed by the Royal Commission, the British Government announced on 23 December, 1937 that a Technical Commission⁵⁶ would be appointed to draw up a more precise scheme of Partition. The terms of reference provided that the Commission should recommend boundaries for the proposed Arab and Jewish area which would:⁵⁷

- a. afford a reasonable prospect of the eventual establishment, with adequate security, of self-supporting Arab and Jewish States;
- b. necessitate the inclusion of the fewest possible Arabs and Arab enterprises in the Jewish State and vice versa.

The Commission arrived in Palestine on 27th April and stayed there until 3rd August 1938. The report of the Commission published in October 1938 announced that they had not been able to find any practical plan

for Partition which fulfilled these terms of reference. The Commission announced that: "If we were to adhere strictly to our terms of reference we would have no alternative but to report that we are unable to recommend boundaries to form self-supporting Arab and Jewish States."⁵⁸

The Commission demonstrated that if the Peel scheme was accepted, the Jewish state would have a population of 304,900 Jews and 294,700 Arabs, or an Arab minority of 49 percent of the population; and secondly, that the Arabs would possess more than three times as much land as the Jews in the Jewish state. The Zionist settlers would possess only 1,140,200 donums of land while the Palestinians would retain 3,854,700 donums. In the Arab State there would be only a small number of Jews, about 7,200 out of a total population of 492,000, holding an even smaller proportion of land, 37,000 donums out of a total of 7,064,900 donums.⁵⁹ (The Negeb region was excluded).

The Commission examined the possibility of voluntary transfer of population which was not ruled out. They concluded that a voluntary exchange of land and population between the Arab and Jewish State was not possible because, according to the Commission, "it is in any event improbable that the Arab cultivators would be prepared to migrate in order to create space for Jews. The Arabs look upon Jews as foreigners invading their country."⁶⁰

In addition to Arab opposition, the inequality of inhabitants and land involved in the suggested transfer from each side, there were the following reasons:⁶¹

1. Even on an optimistic basis it was not likely that many Palestinians would be transferred from the proposed Jewish State because there was not enough land ready for their resettlement and even if it were possible to make land available for them it was unlikely that the Palestinians would be willing to leave their homeland and start life afresh in a new area.⁶²

2. The lands which they would be called upon to leave constituted the most fertile and best watered part of Palestine, while the lands on which they would be invited to settle were situated in arid tracts with scanty and uncertain rainfall.

3. Galilee should not be included in the Jewish State for three reasons:

- a. The inhabitants were almost entirely Palestinians and the land was

almost entirely owned by Palestinians.

b. The Palestinians living there were vehemently opposed to the inclusion of Galilee in the proposed Jewish State and would resist such inclusion by force.

c. If Palestinian resistance were effectively crushed, the pacification would be only temporary and the area would continue to be "a running sore" in the body of the proposed Jewish State.

The Woodhead Commission, in accordance with the principle of racial segregation laid down in its terms of reference, was compelled to reject the Peel Commission's plan. The Commission argued that the exchange of land and population was a fundamental assumption in the Royal Commission's Partition scheme. They argued that "If it should appear that no such solution can be found the greater part of the case on which their plan rests falls to the ground."⁶³

However, the Woodhead Commission produced three alternative plans A, B, and C.⁶⁴ Plan C, was considered the "best Partition plan we have been able to devise."⁶⁵ In any case plan C, reduced the boundaries of the proposed Jewish state to a small area, 400 square miles, consisting of a narrow strip of coastal area along the Mediterranean.⁶⁶ It was clear that the Zionists would not accept such a small area since they had refused earlier a larger area allocated to them by the Peel Commission and the whole report was a good pretext for the British Government to cancel the partition scheme.

It seems to me that was perhaps the right time for the Palestinians to play their political game. If the Palestinians had accepted the Partition plan C, in theory they could have achieved one out of two things: first, if Britain, as a result of Palestinian acceptance imposed the plan on the Zionists, which was highly unlikely, that would have confined the Jewish state to a limited area and perhaps relieved the rest of Palestine from the Zionist expansionist design. Secondly, if Britain could not impose the plan on the Zionists it was probably going to cause some damage to the good relations between Britain and the Zionists, something which would work to the advantage of the Palestinians. They for example would gain more sympathy from the British Government and from British and international public opinion.

However, I am not suggesting here that the Zionists were right to demand to establish a Jewish state in part of Palestine and the Palestinians were wrong when they refused the plan, but rather I mean that this was the right tactic which the Palestinians should have followed. Perhaps the possibility of the establishment of a potential expansionist Jewish state was out of the Palestinians' minds. They were honest and straight-forward in their thinking and demands and therefore there was no room for such political games or tactics even if such action could serve their cause. From the outset the Palestinians considered the Zionist settlement as illegal and consequently, they in principle rejected it. Their leaders publicly announced their position and made clear promises that they would never recognize this settlement as legal and committed themselves to fight it to the end by all possible means. It was inconceivable that they would reverse this declared position without losing their credibility and the confidence of their people. This is perhaps still true even up to the present moment. In the Arab culture it is extremely difficult to retreat from a declared opinion or position even in ordinary life. That is perhaps why the Arabs are sometimes accused of being rigid in their thinking during negotiations. They do not have much room for manoeuvre in their negotiations and that is why perhaps many of the Arab leaders prefer secret negotiations and appear very sensitive to public opinion and media reports.

It is worth mentioning here that until the present year -1985- the Palestinians, as a result of their declared politics and principles are still following the same old tactics which events have proved to be ineffective. For example, the United States of America has committed itself not to talk directly to the Palestine Liberation Organization (P.L.O.), even as part of a joint delegation with Jordan, unless the P.L.O. recognizes the security council Resolution 242 of 1967.⁶⁷ The P.L.O., however, refuses to accept Resolution 242 because while the Resolution recognizes "Israel" right to exist it does not recognize the Palestinians except as refugees, essentially without a country.

Although their position is understandable but it seems to me that at least tactically, if the P.L.O. recognized Resolution 242 it would gain recognition from the Americans and the rest of the Western World. Again as in the 1930s, divisions and rivalry not only among the Palestinians but also among the Arab states made it difficult for the Palestinians

and the Arab leaders to reverse their previous decisions such as no negotiations, no recognition, of "Israel" and that Arab occupied territories must be liberated by military means. For example if any Arab leader called for reversing these decisions people would confront him with the this question: Why then he did not do this from the beginning and avoid the huge loss of lives, lands and property? or he would be accused of being a traitor, puppet to imperialism or simply he had no right to speak on behalf of the Palestinian people.

Such fears of public reaction, in my view, prevent some Arab leaders from making some difficult but perhaps necessary decisions, such as the recognition of the U.N. resolutions in regard to the conflict, to gain international support for Palestinian rights and to put more pressure on "Israel" to accept and comply with these resolutions. Such divisions and rivalries still provide obstacles up to the present day.

The year 1938, however, witnessed a full scale Palestinian revolt and thousands of British troops were dispatched to the country to suppress the revolt. Arab and Muslim public opinion was mobilized in a "World Inter Parliamentary Congress of Arab and Muslim countries for the defence of Palestine." It was held in Cairo from 7th to 11th of October 1938. Delegates were present from most of the Arab and Muslim countries including: Egypt, Syria, India, China, and Yougoslavia. The resolutions which were adopted declared that the Balfour Declaration was null and void, that no further Jewish immigration into Palestine should be permitted, that no form of Partition should be accepted and that Palestine should be maintained as an Arab country. They included demands for the establishment of a national government and the termination of the Mandate after reaching a treaty relation with Britain. The Conference declared that in the event of the non-acceptance of these demands, the Arab and Muslim peoples throughout the World would be compelled to regard the British attitude as inimical to them and thereby forcing the Arabs and the Muslim to adopt a similar attitude, with its natural consequences upon political, economic and social relations.

Against this background the Colonial Secretary, MacDonald, informed the British cabinet that: "If Britain were to insist upon Partition of Palestine into an Arab and Jewish state, we should forfeit the friendship of the Arab World."⁶⁸

During the course of discussions Neville Chamberlain stated quite

bluntly that Palestine had become a "pan Arab question ", in that the issue had to be viewed within the wider context of the Middle East and it was agreed that the Woodhead Report would be published together with a Government White Paper rejecting Partition. The statement explained that after careful study of the Partition Commission Report the British Government "Have reached the conclusion that this further examination has shown that the political, administrative and financial difficulties involved in the proposal to create independent Arab and Jewish states inside Palestine are so great that this solution of the problem is impracticable."⁶⁹

The statement stressed the British Government's concern about reaching an agreement between the Arabs and the Jews and therefore they "propose immediately to invite representatives of the Palestinian Arabs and of neighbouring states on the one hand and of the Jewish Agency on the other, to confer with them as soon as possible in London to discuss Palestine's future policy."⁷⁰ The Government made it clear that if such a Conference failed to produce agreement between the two parties they would take their own decision and announce the policy which they proposed to pursue.

The London Conference⁷¹

The Conference was officially opened by the British Prime Minister Chamberlain on 7th February 1939. The Arab representatives, from the outset, refused to sit face to face with the Zionist delegation and therefore, the British had to hold separate sessions, one with the Arabs and another with the Zionists. The Arabs justified their refusal to negotiate with the Zionists on the grounds that they had come to London to discuss with the British Government as a colonial power the terms of their independence from British rule. The British Government therefore worked as a party involved in the conflict and at the same time as a mediator between Arabs and Zionists.

For the Palestinians' part, their demands were as they had always been. Jamal al Husseini, acting as spokesman for them, demanded the abrogation of the Mandate, the establishment of a Palestinian national state, the end of the Jewish national home experiment and the creation of a sovereign state with treaty relations with Britain. He stressed that the Palestinians were ready to negotiate an agreement which would safeguard British interests and the right of the Jewish minority in Palestine.⁷²

The British delegation submitted on 15th February general suggestions on immigration, land sales and constitutional measures. Their plan involved the establishment of a single Palestinian state after a transitional period, continuation of Jewish immigration for a limited period and up to an agreed number, in any case the Jews would remain a permanent minority in Palestine, and the safeguarding of British and Jewish rights and interests in Palestine.⁷³

The Zionist delegation rejected these suggestions on the ground that a Jewish minority in a Palestinian state would lead to their expulsion from the country. Ben Gurion, a Jewish leader, declared that "The Jews would not consider a minority status in a foreign state. And could not recognize a law by which the Muffti would have the right to exclude the Jews from Palestine."⁷⁴

The Palestinians were anxious about the length of the transitional period and demanded the immediate independence of Palestine after securing a treaty with Britain. By this time, however, the British

Government had set out a new policy to follow in Palestine. The Colonial Secretary, MacDonald, circulated the crux of the new policy to the Cabinet in a memorandum. He explained that

"We cannot accept the contention that all Jews as such have a right to enter Palestine. We cannot avoid an eventual clash, if we continue to carry out the Balfour Declaration, between the forces of persecuted, desperate, brilliant, constructive Jewry in Palestine and the wide spread Pan-Arab movement which is rallying to the defence of its weakest brethren, the Arabs of Palestine. Arab detestation of the Jewish invasion into Palestine, being what it is, it would be wholly wrong to suggest that this large Arab population should one day in their own native land and against their will come under the rule of the newly arrived Jews."⁷⁵

This statement indicates clearly that the Colonial Secretary recognized for the first time that the "Jewish invasion " should not be allowed to continue. He recognized also that it was injustice to allow such "invaders" to take control of Palestine and rule the Palestinians against their will. It was indeed the beginning of a new policy and approach to solve the the conflict which the Arabs failed to exploit to the full.

The efforts of the British delegation to bring about a compromise between the Palestinians and the Zionists to solve the problem met with no appreciable success. After two weeks of negotiations and exchanges of views with both sides, the British delegation decided to put forward their own proposals which might bridge the gap between the Arab and the Zionist standpoints. The British thought that it would be better to bring both sides face to face to discuss their proposals. The British delegation indeed succeeded in arranging an informal meeting between an Arab and a Zionist delegation. The meeting took place on 23rd February and the British suggestions were submitted to both delegations.

The British proposals included general suggestions such as the termination of the Mandate and the establishment of a Palestinian state in treaty relation with Britain at some future date. The next day, 24th, the British submitted to both delegations more precise proposals such as a limited provisional period before independence and the admission of limited numbers of immigrants within a specific period, after which no

further immigration would be allowed without Arab consent. MacDonald explained to the delegations that if they agreed to these proposals the British Government would call a round table Conference in the Autumn for the purpose of deciding upon an agreed constitution. Meanwhile the interim legislative institutions would consist of an executive council with the participation of three Palestinians and two Jews and an advisory council governed by proportional representation.

According to Rose: "The Arabs accepted MacDonald's general line of argument even pinning down the proposals with details concerning the stages leading to full independence."⁷⁶ But the Zionists rejected it. The Arab delegation took exception to certain aspects, notably to the length of the proposed period of transition (ten years) and to the suggestion that British representatives, should at the round table Conference, participate in the drafting of the new constitution for Palestine. They therefore, made counter proposals which together with the British proposals were referred to an Anglo-Arab Committee⁷⁷, but without success.

The Zionist delegation on the other hand, rejected the British proposals for reasons explained in a statement dated 27th February, 1939. In their view these suggestions "pass over in expressive silence the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate. They fail to envisage any further development of the Jewish national home at all." The statement went on to say: "no settlement can be considered which would place the Jewish national home under Arab rule, or condemn the Jews to a minority life in Palestine."⁷⁸ After that date the Anglo-Jewish Conference was consequently suspended, though informal contact was maintained between the two delegations until 15th March.

The final session of the London Conference was held on 15th March 1939. MacDonald presented the final proposals for both the Arab and Jewish delegations. The scheme provided for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, possibly of a federal nature, in treaty relations with Britain after a transition period of ten years. The constitution would be worked out by a national assembly with British participation and would have to include safeguards for the Jewish national home and the British interests in the country.

On immigration, a total of 75,000 Jewish settlers would be allowed within the next five years at the rate of 10,000 per annum and 25,000 refugees. This would raise the number of the Jewish population to one third of the whole population. Further immigration should not be permitted without Palestinian consent. The scheme included provisions restricting land sales for Jews in some areas and prohibiting such sales in others.

The British proposals were rejected out of hand by the Zionist delegation and their main leaders did not even attend the last session. According to Rose, "the Jews asked no questions nor offered any discussion."⁷⁹ The Jewish delegation explained their position as follows: "The Jewish delegation having carefully considered the proposals communicated to them by His Majesty's Government on March 15, 1939, regret that they are unable to accept them as a basis for agreement, and decided accordingly to dissolve."⁸⁰

The main obstacle on the way to reaching agreement between the Arab and the British delegations was the uncertainty as to the date at which independence would finally be granted. The Palestinians, with their bad experience of unstable British policies, demanded that Palestine should become independent at the end of the ten year transitional period regardless of the state of relations between Jews and Arabs and that a national government should be established at the beginning of the provisional period rather than after five or ten years.

The Palestinians knew the declared Zionist reaction to the British proposals and argued that the Zionists would do everything to delay or prevent the establishment of an independent state and therefore the conflict would continue. According to "The Times": "The objection of the Palestinian Arabs to the British proposals are based on their belief that an independent Palestine state could not be established without the cooperation of the Jews, and that this cooperation was problematical."⁸¹

However, MacDonald made it clear that independence would depend on Jewish consent, just as further Jewish immigration was made dependent on Palestinian consent. Such a policy was intended to put pressure on both sides to reach an agreement. The British Government knew that the aspiration of Arabs and Zionists had proved to be irreconcilable and

leaving independence or the development of the "Jewish Home" dependent on the agreement of antagonists was, in my view, not realistic. According to Rose, with whom I agree: "To deny each side that which it most covets and thereby to put pressure on both sides to reach a compromise was condemned as illusory."⁸² It seems that the British Government intended to leave the independence date open so as to make things easier for them in case of they had second thoughts about the matter. Therefore, they did not alter from this position and on this point the Anglo-Arab negotiations broke down.

The British Government in fact invited both Arabs and Zionists to participate in a London Conference in the hope that they could find an agreeable settlement to the Palestine conflict. Officially both Arabs and Zionists refused the British proposals each for its own reasons. "Neither the Arabs nor the Jewish delegations felt able to accept these proposals, and the Conferences therefore did not result in an agreement."⁸³

The Palestinians fears and suspicions can be appreciated. But it seems to me that it would have been better for the Palestinians to accept the British proposals for three reasons:

First, accepting those proposals would have led to the isolation of the Zionist delegation and consequently the latter would have borne the responsibility for the failure of the Conference in the eyes of the Western World; secondly, the Palestinians would have gained a legitimate right to press the British Government to implement its own proposals; thirdly, it would have been more difficult for the British Government to retract its own proposals and this could perhaps have led to their genuine implementation of the scheme.

The British Government, however, announced that both sides had refused their proposals and consequently they announced their own policy regarding the future of Palestine. They announced the new policy in a White Paper which was published in May 1939. The White Paper included most of the British proposals discussed during the London Conference.

The White Paper of May 1939⁸⁴

In the White Paper the British Government admitted that the ambiguity of the provisions and terms of the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate

had caused friction and conflict between the two communities in Palestine. The White Paper pointed out that previous expert Commissions "have found in this ambiguity and the resulting uncertainty as to the objectives of policy a fundamental cause of unrest and hostility between Arabs and Jews."⁸⁵

One of the main objectives of the White Paper, therefore, was to offer a clear definition of policy and objectives regarding the future of Palestine.

The White Paper was published on May 17th 1939 and was outlined under three headings:

1. Constitution
2. Immigration
3. Land

Constitution

The statement started with a clear definition of the exact meaning of the term "Jewish National Home." The White Paper states that: "The British Government believe that the framers of the Mandate in which the Balfour Declaration was embodied could not have intended that Palestine should be converted into a Jewish state against the will of the Arab population of the country."⁸⁶

The White Paper acknowledged the fact that previous Government statements did not remove doubts about the exact meaning of the term "Jewish national home" and the British Government therefore intended to give clear definition to their policy and intentions. The British Government now "declare unequivocally that it is not part of their policy that Palestine should become a Jewish state." The statement went on to state that the British Government "would indeed regard it as contrary to their obligations to the Arabs under the Mandate as well to the assurances which have been given to the Arab people in the past, that the Arab population of Palestine should be made the subject of a Jewish state against their will."⁸⁷

The White Paper expressed in a clear manner that the Mandate was never intended to continue indefinitely over Palestine. But rather the British Government see "It is proper that the people of the country should as early as possible enjoy the rights of self-government which are exercised by the people of neighbouring countries.... They desire to see

established ultimately an independent Palestine state... in which Arabs and Jews share authority."⁸⁸

In the light of these considerations the British Government made certain proposals. The followings are a summary of these proposals:⁸⁹

1. The objective of the British Government is the establishment within ten years of an independent Palestine state in treaty relation with Britain.

2. The independent state should be one in which Arabs and Jews share in Government in such a way as to ensure that the essential interests of each community are safeguarded.

3. The establishment of the independent state will be preceded by a transitional period throughout which Britain will retain authority. During this transitional period Palestinians will be placed gradually in charge of departments. The number of Palestinians in charge of departments will be increased until all heads of departments are Palestinians.

At the end of this period the Executive Council will be converted into a Council of Ministers.

4. After restoring peace and order the Government will start transferring some of the Government duties to Palestinians.

5. The British Government make no proposals at this stage regarding the establishment of an elective legislature, but if local conditions permit and the local opinion would favour it, the Government are prepared to establish such machinery.

6. At the end of five years from the restoration of peace and order a joint British and Palestinian body will be set up to review the working of the constitutional arrangement during the transitional period and to consider and make recommendations regarding the constitution of the independent state.

7. The British Government must be sure that provisions have been made for the security of, and the freedom of access to the Holy Places and the protection of the interests of religious bodies.

8. The British Government will do everything in their power to create conditions which will enable the independent Palestine state to come into being within ten years. If at the end of ten years, it appears to the British Government that contrary to their hope, circumstances require the postponement of the establishment of the independent state they will consult with representatives of the people of Palestine, the

Council of the League of Nations and the neighbouring Arab states before deciding on such a postponement. If His Majesty's Government come to the conclusion that postponement is unavoidable, they will invite the co-operation of these parties in framing plans for the future with a view to achieving the desired objective at the earliest possible date.

Immigration⁹⁰

The White Paper admitted that in accordance with the Mandate and other subsequent statements of policy, Jewish immigration was to be facilitated in so far as it did not prejudice the economic position of the Palestinians. The British Government, nevertheless, did not read these various statements "as implying that the Mandate requires them, for all time and in all circumstances, to facilitate the immigration of Jews into Palestine subject only to consideration of the country's economic absorptive capacity."⁹¹

The White Paper asserted that in the light of the last three years of disturbances and Palestinian Revolt the British Government had arrived at the conclusion that the principle of economic absorptive capacity as the sole criterion was not one which it was possible for them to continue "The alternatives before His Majesty's Government are either

1. To seek to expand the Jewish national home indefinitely by immigration against the strongly expressed will of the Arab people of the country or

2. To permit further expansion of the Jewish national home by immigration if the Arabs are prepared to acquiesce in it."⁹²

The former policy, the Government believed, meant "rule by force" which was not only "contrary to the whole spirit of Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations" but also "to their specific obligations to the Palestine Mandate."⁹³ Therefore the British Government "have decided that the time has come to adopt in principle the second of the alternatives referred to above namely, that after a intermediate period, Jewish immigration was to be permitted only if Palestinians acquiesced."⁹⁴

In the light of these considerations the British Government proposed the following policy:⁹⁵

1. Jewish immigration during the next five years will be at a rate of

10,000 per year.

2. In addition 25,000 refugees will be admitted as a contribution towards the solution of the Jewish refugee problem. This total of 75,000 immigrants will bring the Jewish population in Palestine up to approximately one third of the total population.

3. After the period of five years no further Jewish immigration will be permitted unless the Palestinians are prepared to acquiesce in it. Finally the British Government declares that when the immigration over five years which is now contemplated has taken place "they will not be justified in facilitating, nor will they be under any obligation to facilitate, the further development of the Jewish national home by immigration regardless of the wishes of the Arab population."

Land⁹⁶

The White Paper repeated the findings of the several previous expert Commissions regarding the land problem in Palestine. It stressed that: "There is now in certain areas no room for further transfers of Arab lands, whilst in some other areas such transfers of land must be restricted if Arab cultivators are to maintain their existing standards of life and a considerable landless Arab population is not soon to be created."⁹⁷

Palestinian Response to the White Paper

Palestinian response to the White Paper was not uniform. The Arab Higher Committee rejected the White Paper for two main reasons:

Firstly, It envisaged the establishment of the national government at the end of the ten year transitional period while the Palestinians wanted it at the beginning of that period; and secondly, the White Paper did not set a definite date for independence while the Palestinians wanted a definite date after which Palestine would become completely independent.⁹⁸

In contrast the British Government was concerned about the security and the rights of the Jewish community. They wanted to set up an independent Palestine state in which both Arabs and Jews would participate in administration. They wanted to use the transitional period as a trial period to see how both communities would work together in a joint administration. In the light of such a joint administration they would be able to develop a suitable constitution for Palestine

which would guarantee the rights of each community. The British Government made Palestinian independence conditional on such an understanding and co-operation between Palestinians and Zionists.

MacDonald expressed the Government's view in the House of Commons debate on this matter as follows: "There is nothing in this White Paper suggesting that a Jewish minority is to be handed over to the mercies of an Arab majority." He describes the state as a state "in which Arabs and Jews share authority and the essential interests of each community are secured."⁹⁹

The Colonial Secretary explained the Government's intentions regarding the transition period by saying: "We are anxious first to gain experience of the first part of the transition period and to see how matters work out in actual practice. We shall then have a clearer idea for the constitution which may be necessary in Palestine to protect the interests of those very different peoples."¹⁰⁰

The Palestinians argued that it was much better if the national government could be established at the beginning of the transition period because this would give such a government the opportunity to gain practical experience under British supervision. They argued that such experience would be necessary for the government if at the end of the ten year period Palestine were to stand alone as an independent state. Some Palestinians, however, feared that the British Government would not implement the White Paper and they saw no point in accepting it. Yasin for example, argues that "some Palestinians believed that Britain was not going to implement the White Paper's policy as happened earlier with similar promises."¹⁰¹

The Palestinians' other concern was that leaving the transition period open as it did would invite the Zionists to use all their strength to influence the British Government to delay the time for independence or even to abandon the whole idea of independence. They argued that the Zionists could block the independence of the country by non co-operation with the Palestinians. Therefore they believed that the best policy which would guarantee their independence was to set a definite date for the independence of Palestine regardless of any other conditions.¹⁰²

It seems that the Palestinians were right in their analysis of the situation. The Zionists knew that the British Government had issued the

White Paper in a tense international situation and to gain Arab support if a major war should start. For many Zionists it was a temporary state of affairs which would be reversed once the circumstances changed. Some Zionists viewed the White Paper as a temporary aberration of British policy brought about by existing circumstances. It was hoped that after the immediate dangers of 1939 had been repulsed Zionist and British interests would unite for a second time.¹⁰³

There were, however, other important factors which played an important role in shaping the final Palestinian response, among which were divisions and family rivalry and other kinds of internal conflict which I have already explained in Chapter Three. It was easier for some leaders to accuse their rivals of betrayal and being collaborators with the British. Such accusation are so effective in the Arabic culture that they can damage the career and the social position of a person for the rest of his life or even lead to his assassination. There is no worse crime in Arab culture than being accused of betrayal or singled out as traitor. This would lead not only to public denunciation and condemnation but also the life of the person could be physically threatened. Therefore, many leaders who might have been aware of the right decision dared not take it. It is worth mention here that two Arab rulers have been assassinated because of their position on the Palestine conflict, King Abdullah of Jordan in 1951 and Sadat, President of Egypt in 1981.

The other factor was that the Muffti, Hajj Amin was living in exile and no decision was to be taken without his approval. The British Government excluded him from the negotiations and, therefore, it was expected that his exclusion would affect his attitude and decision in regard to any Palestinian British agreement. The third factor is the division between the Arab countries and their effect and influence on the different factions of the Palestinian leadership. The Palestinian leaders were, and still are up to the present day, divided into pro-Syrian, pro-Jordainian and pro-Egyptian groups. The divisions and rivalries among these states are reflected in the Palestinian leaders' virtual inability to make any coherent agreement among Palestinians. This phenomenon, however, is still one of the clear shortcomings of Palestinian and Arab politics.

The final factor was the cultural differences in understanding politics and decision making between Arabs and British. Subhi Yasin,¹⁰⁴ explained that most of the Palestinians in reality accepted the White Paper. But they wanted to hide their feeling from the Zionists. They wanted to give the impression that the White Paper was not a Pro-Arab document.- The Zionists described the White Paper as a pro -Arab document and it was thought that the Arab rejection of the White Paper would weaken the Zionist claim. Yasin believed that the Arabs were anxious that the British Government might change their minds and wanted in reality to implement the White Paper policy. He explained that that Palestinians' rejection was perhaps intended to provoke the British Government into forcing the White Paper immediately on both Communities.

Some Palestinians, however, announced that the White Paper was an acceptable basis for the furtherance of Palestinian aspirations. Seven Palestinian rebel leaders not only accepted the White Paper, but accused those among the Palestinian leaders who opposed the White Paper of being British agents.¹⁰⁵ "In principle there was not one single Palestinian who is honest and mature, who did not agree on the White Paper which would prevent the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine. Those among the Palestinians leaders, who rejected the White Paper were certainly encouraged by the British Government to do so in order to weaken the plan and give the British Government a pretext not to implement it."¹⁰⁶

The Governments of the independent Arab states, however, made no official statement on the White Paper. This perhaps can be explained as a sign of acceptance. But they did not publicly announce their position, perhaps to avoid criticism and accusation from some Palestinian extremists and other rival Arab states. Only a minority of Arab leaders made it known that they thought the Palestinians should accept the White Paper. Abdullah, King of Transjordan, advised the Palestinians to accept the White Paper and he was criticised by the Palestinians and other Arabs for his position. Hussein, the present king of Jordan, argues that the fate of Palestine "might have taken a sharply different course if he (Abdullah) had been at the helm or at least if his advice had been headed by those who were." Hussein went on to argue that Abdullah's pragmatic attitude about the Palestine conflict "sometimes made him misunderstood among sections of the uninformed, who are inclined to hear

what pleases them rather than what serves their cause."¹⁰⁷

King Hussein believes that the Palestinian leaders failed to take the right decision at the right time and indirectly contributed to the tragedies of their people. He argues that: "Resistance can take many forms, and not the least of them is wise political decision at crucial turning points. It is often said that the Palestine question is a chronicle of missed opportunities. This is partly true, though not entirely for judging in retrospect, it is my considered opinion, as it was my grandfather's, that the Zionist thrust and avalanche could have been blunted but not entirely thwarted. Morality and power politics do not, in most instances, match. The tragic undoing and dismantling of the Palestinian people to which their leadership unwittingly contributed, was that they adamantly refused to understand or accept this unpleasant but elementary fact of life."¹⁰⁸

Hussein rightly argues that the Palestinian rejection of the Partition plan, and later of the White Paper, cast them in the eyes of the Western World as responsible for the failure of these proposals despite the fact that the Zionists likewise refused these proposals. "The extremist Arab leadership rejected the plan (White Paper) on the grounds that the plan included a proviso for a five years interim period before it went into effect. The Zionists likewise, fought it tooth and nail, but in the eyes of the Western World it was the Palestinian Arabs who had thwarted the Plan."¹⁰⁹

Zionist Reaction to the White Paper

The Zionist leaders rejected the White Paper on the ground that it limited the size of the Jewish community to a permanent minority. They even set plans to use every available means to prevent the British Government from implementing the policy of that Paper. On May 18th, one day after it was issued, demonstrations were held throughout Zionist settlements in Palestine and public meetings denounced the White Paper as a "treacherous document" which would never be accepted by the Jews. "The Jewish population proclaims before the World that this treacherous policy will not be tolerated. The Jewish population will fight it to the uttermost, and will spare no sacrifice to frustrate and defeat it."¹¹⁰

Ben Gurion, as chairman of the Jewish Agency Executive, described these demonstrations as the beginning of a military resistance to the White Paper. "The Jewish demonstrations of yesterday marked the beginning of Jewish resistance to the disastrous policy now proposed by His Majesty's Government."¹¹¹

Concluding Remarks

During the second half of the 1930s the Palestinians' opposition to British and Zionist colonization reached a state of general strike and revolt. It was only after this revolt that Britain agreed to send a Commission to inquire into the causes of that revolt and other Palestinian and Zionist grievances. In the light of their investigations the Royal Commission stated that the underlying causes of the strike and revolt were the desire of the Palestinians for independence and their fear of converting Palestine into a Jewish state. The Commission pointed out that these were the very same causes of the previous disturbances and revolt of 1920, 1921 and 1929.

The Commission came to the conclusion that the Mandate involved the denial of national independence for the native population and carried contradictory promises for both Arabs and Jews. It was not possible in their view to promise the Arabs self-government in Palestine and at the same time to promise the Jews a national home in the same country. Therefore they recommended the abolition of the Mandate.

The Commission agreed in their analysis with the Palestinians' point of view in regard to the consequences of unlimited Jewish immigration. They pointed out that it was not right to allow Jewish immigration to continue, against Arab wishes, in the hope that it might ultimately lead to a Jewish majority and the creation of a Jewish state. This was in their view a violation of the British obligation to the Arabs, to the Covenant of the League of Nations and to the spirit of the Mandate.

In the light of their investigation into the origin of the problem and the demands of both Arabs and Zionists, the Commission concluded that the aspirations of these two Communities were irreconcilable, and that the best hope for a lasting settlement for the problem was to partition the country between them.

But it seems that the main reason behind their proposal to partition

Palestine was to secure British and Zionist interests. The Commissioners realised that the continuation of the British pro-Zionist policy was in conflict with Britain's own economic and strategic interests in the Arab World. On the other hand, Britain had a moral responsibility towards the Zionist settlers who immigrated under British encouragement and protection. Britain could not just quit Palestine and abandon them.

I would argue, therefore, that partition was suggested not because it was the right solution or to serve the interests of the native population but rather to serve the interests of the British and the Zionist settlers. Support for this view can also be found in the partition scheme itself. According to partition Palestine was divided into: a Jewish state, British enclaves, and the unification of the rest of the country with Transjordan - a British ally. The partition plan completely ignored the natives' desire for independence which was, according to the Commission itself, the underlying cause of the Palestinians general strike and revolt.

The Palestinians rejected the partition plan because firstly, while the Zionist settler minority, (29 % of the total who owned about 5 % of total land of Palestine), were offered the right to establish their own state on the best watered and most fertile land of Palestine, the Arab majority were denied similar rights. Secondly, partition implied the dispossession of about 300,000 Arabs who owned 75 % of total lands allocated to the Jewish state. The partition plan also implied a compulsory transfer of those innocent peasants from their homes and land to other areas for no other reason than to make the settlers' state more viable and secure. They argued that partition practically meant the destruction of Palestinian political, economic, and social life. The Arab states also joined the Palestinians in their rejection of partition.

On the other hand, the Zionists rejected partition because it did not give them all they wanted, especially New Jerusalem and the Negeb. They also hoped that they would form a majority in the near future and take control of the whole country.

At the end of 1937, however, the British Government appointed a Technical Commission to draw up a more precise plan of partition with the possibility of voluntary rather than compulsory exchange of population. The Technical Commission visited Palestine at the beginning

of 1938 and conducted their work during a full scale Arab Revolt. Although they suggested three alternative plans of their own, they concluded that they were not able to recommend boundaries for self-supporting Arab and Jewish states. The British Government found in the Technical Commission's report a pretext to abandon partition and instead invited both parties to a London conference to discuss a possible solution through negotiations.

On the eve of World War Two Britain realised that in order to guarantee Arab support if a major war started, she had to solve the Palestine problem in a manner satisfactory to the Arabs. Therefore, the British for the first time, proposed the establishment of a single independent Palestine state within a certain period, limiting the size of the settlers' community to about one third of the population and making Jewish immigration, over a certain number and after a certain period, dependent on Arab consent. The only condition for that was a treaty relation with Britain and guaranteed rights for the Zionist settlers.

The Palestinians accepted these proposals in principle but objected to the length of the provisional period, ten years, and insisted that independence must not depend on Zionist consent. The British Government rejected the Arab demand for a fixed date for independence and at this point the negotiations between the Arab and the British broke down.

The Zionists, on the other hand, rejected these proposals out of hand and even boycotted the official session of the Conference before it was officially closed.

At the end of the Conference the British Government announced that both side had rejected their proposals and consequently they announced a new policy for Palestine. The new policy was published in a White Paper in 1939 and included:

1. The establishment of an independent Palestinian state within ten years which both Arabs and Jews participating in its administration.
2. The admission of 75,000 Jewish immigrants within a five year period after which no more immigration would be allowed without Arab consent.

The Palestinians rejected the White Paper mainly because it made independence dependent on Zionist consent. They argued that since the

Zionist openly rejected the White Paper it was inconceivable that they would co-operate with the Arabs in forming such a government. They demanded that independence should be granted at the end of a fixed period with or without Zionist consent.

The Zionists too rejected the White Paper on the ground that it limited the Jewish community to a permanent minority under Arab rule. The British Government, however, announced that they would implement the policy of the White Paper on Palestine regardless of Arab and Zionist objections.

The White Paper was, in my view, the best offer the Palestinians ever had and which they failed to exploit to the full. It was indeed the first real opportunity for an overall settlement which was spoiled by the Zionists' demand for the control of the whole country and the Palestinians' lack of experience in political negotiations. In my view the Palestinians lost a valuable opportunity when they rejected the White Paper, which offered them a written recognition of their right to independence and control over Jewish immigration. It must be noticed here that the Palestinians considered Zionist settlement illegal and, therefore, they rejected in principle any proposal which implied the recognition of that settlement. That same principle prevents the present Palestinian leaders from recognising "Israel" up to the present day.

However, at the end of 1939 Britain entered World War Two and the Palestine problem was shelved for the time being. Both Arabs and Zionists announced their support for Britain for different reasons. The Arabs hoped for complete independence while the Zionists hoped for the abolition of the White Paper and the continuation of the previous British pro-Zionists policy.

During the 1940s, however, the Zionist shifted most of their political activities to the U.S.A and after the War the U.S.A. became deeply involved in the Palestine conflict to the extent that they persuaded the British Government to appoint a joint Anglo-American Commission to inquire into the problem and suggest a solution. The British Government emerged from the War economically exhausted and it was difficult for them to resist the American pressure towards a settlement favourable to the Zionists. The British made a last effort to solve the problem in 1946 when they proposed, during a London Round Table Conference, the establishment of Arab and Jewish Provinces or Cantons. But the Zionists,

backed by the U.S.A., had already made their minds up to accept partition as the only acceptable solution to the conflict. In the next Chapter I will discuss the development of the conflict during the 1940s, the new British and American proposals to solve it, and the Palestinians' responses to them.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

Palestinian Responses to the British Proposals to Solve the Palestine Conflict 1945-1947

Introduction

In Chapter Six I have discussed the British proposals to solve the Palestine conflict during the second part of the 1930s and the Palestinian responses to them. As I have shown in that Chapter these proposals took the form of partition or a single state with Arab and Zionist sharing its administration. In the light of their investigations the Royal Commission pointed out that the British undertakings, to Arabs and Jews under the terms of the Mandate, were irreconcilable. It was not possible to promise the Arabs self-government in Palestine and at the same time to promise the Jews a home in the same country. The Commission therefore recommended the abolition of the Mandate on the grounds that it was unworkable and recommended the partition of the country between Arabs and Zionists.

The Commission pointed out that there was nothing in common between the Arabs and the Zionist settlers and that their aspirations were irreconcilable and would continue to conflict in the future. The Commission concluded that if Arabs and Zionists could not live in peace together the best solution would be to partition the country between them. According to the partition plan Palestine was divided into three areas: a Jewish state in the Coastal Plain and Galilee, British Enclaves in Nazareth and Jerusalem and the unification of the rest of the country with Transjordan to form an Arab state. The Commission based most of their plan on the assumption of transferring about 400,000 Arabs from their homes and land to unspecified areas, probably to Transjordan, in order to make possible the establishment of a viable and exclusive Jewish state.

The Palestinians rejected partition on political, economic and humanitarian grounds. They argued that the number of settlers (29 %) and their land holding (5 %) did not justify the partition of their country and the establishment of an independent Jewish state in the best watered

and irrigated lands of Palestine. They argued that while partition offered the settler minority the right to establish their own state, it denied the Arab majority similar rights. They also objected to the idea of the compulsory transfer of about 400,000 Arabs from their homes and lands and considered such action discriminatory against the Arabs and completely unjustified. The Arab states also objected to partition and demanded its abrogation. On the other hand, the Zionists rejected partition because it did not give them what they wanted, especially New Jerusalem and the Negeb. They hoped that they would soon form a majority and take control over the whole country.

The British Government, however, appointed a Technical Commission to draw up a detailed plan of partition with the possibility of voluntary rather than compulsory exchange of population. Although the Technical Commission suggested three alternative plans of their own, they concluded that they were not able to recommend boundaries to form self-supporting Arab and Jewish states.

Against this background the British Government announced that the partition solution had proved to be impracticable and, therefore, they called upon both Arabs and Zionists to meet at a London Conference in September 1939 to try to find a solution to the problem through negotiations. During this Conference the British Government proposed the establishment within a certain period of an independent Palestine state with the Arab in the majority and limiting the size of the settler community to a permanent minority.

These proposals were rejected by both Palestinians and Zionists. The British Government then announced a new policy which they would follow in the future in Palestine regardless of Arab or Jewish responses. The new policy was published in a White Paper at the end of 1939 and included some assurances to the Arabs in regard to the British intentions and explained clearly the meaning of the Jewish home which was neither to convert Palestine into a Jewish state nor to make the Arabs subject to Zionist rule.

The White Paper proposed the establishment within ten years of an independent Palestine state with both Arabs and Zionist participating in its administration. It limited the number of Jewish immigrants to 75,000 spread over a five year period, after which no further immigration would be allowed without Arab consent. This practically meant limiting the

number of settlers to about one third of the total population.

It was indeed the first opportunity for a lasting settlement which was spoiled by the Zionists' greed for the control of the whole country and the Arabs' lack of experience in political negotiation. The White Paper not only assured the Arabs that it was not Britain's intention to convert Palestine into a Jewish state but also, in my view, it was the first and the last fair offer which the Palestinians have ever had.

The Arab Higher Committee rejected the White Paper of 1939 because:

1. It did not set a definite date for independence;
2. It made independence dependent on Zionist consent, which was not expected to come. The Palestinians believed that there was no hope for Zionist co-operation in a joint government in Palestine unless they knew that: "Self Government was going to be established in any event."¹
3. They feared that Britain's policy could be changed under Zionist pressure; and finally
4. They expected to get a better deal in the future. Such expectations were based on the assumption of massive Arab and Muslim support and on the justice of their case.

The interesting question here is: Did the Palestinians possess the required means, political or militarily, to achieve a better deal than that offered by the 1939 White Paper? Certainly they did not. The Arab Higher Committee rejected the White Paper at a time when they knew that the British were already re-asserting their military superiority against the Palestinian guerrillas. British authority was gradually re-established in the rural areas and the Palestinian villagers, expecting that Britain would carry out the White Paper policy, began to quit the Revolt and surrender their arms, and by the end of 1939 the revolt was defeated. The Palestinians, however, discovered their mistake in 1946 when the British Government rejected their demands to implement the policy of the Paper they had rejected in 1939, as I will explain in this Chapter.

The Palestinian Position during the War

During the 1940s the British Government found themselves not only unable to implement partition but also that they were not the only power which could decide the future of Palestine. Britain emerged from the War economically exhausted and in bad need of American financial aid. The

U.S.A. was won over to the Zionist side and immediately after the end of the War the Americans persuaded the British Government to appoint a joint Anglo-American Commission to investigate the Palestine conflict. The Joint Commission recommended the continuation of the Mandate, practically cancelling the recommendations of the Royal Commission, the immediate admission of 100,000 Zionist immigrants (refugees) and the rejection of the idea of establishing of a single state. The British Government, however, called upon both Arabs and Zionists for yet another London Conference to be held at the end of 1946. The British proposed this time less favourable schemes such as cantonization and provincial solutions. The Arabs rejected these new schemes and demanded complete independence. The Zionists too rejected the new proposals and made it clear that they would not accept any solution other than a Jewish state in a viable area of Palestine. This Zionist demand was approved and backed by the U.S.A.

Against this background the British Government transferred the Palestine conflict to the U.N., asking for assistance to solve the problem as I will discuss in the next Chapter.

However, on the political side and during the first years of the War, Britain banned all political activities in Palestine. None of the important Palestinian leaders was on Palestine soil after October 1937.² They were forced to flee the country, in fear of British arrest, imprisonment or exile. The moderate elements of the Palestinian leadership were divided among themselves and the Palestinians were left "with no single body to represent their interests vis-a-vis the British and the Jews."³ However, once the War had started, Britain sought to placate the Palestinians by strictly enforcing the immigration and land provisions of the 1939 White Paper, and with the final defeat of Rommel at the end of 1942 the Mandatory Authority pursued a policy of partial amnesty and encouraged some of the exiled Palestinian leaders to return to Palestine. The ban on political activity was lifted and the Palestinian political parties resumed their activities.⁴

However, during the critical War period, no significant Palestinian disturbances took place in Palestine. Moderate Palestinians who backed the Allies had come to consider the 1939 White Paper as a British policy pledge and they were generally ready to accept it. By 1943, about 8,000 Palestinians had joined the British military forces in one capacity or

another.⁵

After Britain had lifted the ban on political activities the Palestinian leaders focused on efforts to revive the Higher Arab Committee. A new Higher Arab Committee was established on November 25, 1945. The new Committee had five Husseinis, five representatives of other parties and two neutrals. The Nashashibis, a rich and influential family who thought their own representation too small, boycotted it. The strong division and rivalries among the Palestinian leaders led in 1946 to the condemnation of the Arab Higher Committee, by the five other parties, as a Husseini creation and set up a rival body, the Supreme Arab Front.⁶

From mid 1944 the Palestinian worked in the shade of and later under the aegis of the Arab states in recognition both of their weakness and of the relative bargaining power possessed by the Arab states. As Khouri put it: "Due to constant factional bickering and the absence of effective leadership, the initiative in Palestine Arab politics passed increasingly in the later War years to the heads of the Arab States."⁷ This trend, however, was accelerated after the establishment of the Arab League in March 1945. Arab Governments, individually and collectively, began to apply diplomatic pressure on behalf of the Palestinians. For instance, in April 1945 King Ibn-Saud elicited a promise from president Roosevelt that he would consider Arab interests and views in any final settlement of the Palestine issue.⁸ On 12th October, 1945, the representatives of Syria, Egypt, Iraq and Lebanon, in Washington, in a joint memorandum warned the United States that peace in the Middle East would be jeopardised if a Jewish state was established.

The Arab League opened Arab information offices in London and Washington in an effort to counter Zionist propaganda in these countries. But Arab measures were, according to Khouri, ineffective.⁹ There were several reasons for this: Firstly, Zionist propaganda over the years had already conditioned a large part of public opinion in the West and Arab efforts were "too weak and too late."

Secondly, there was no Arab influence in the West to match that of the Zionists, because the number of Arabs in these countries was insignificant compared to number of Jews, especially in the United States. And finally, the Arabs were unable to match two major advantages held by the Zionists a well-publicized humanitarian issue and the

powerful support of numerous Jewish organizations and individuals, including many with far greater knowledge and experience than the Arabs in Western propaganda techniques and many in key positions in various fields within their respective countries.

The Palestine conflict became after 1944 an Arab issue rather than a Palestinian one. The Arab League passed special resolutions concerning Palestine which stressed that Palestine constituted an important part of the Arab World and the League "declares its support of the cause of the Arabs of Palestine and its willingness to work for the achievement of their legitimate aims and the safeguarding of their just rights."¹⁰

During the first part of the 1940s the Palestinians neither succeeded in establishing an effective resistance movement nor an alternative shadow government. They depended on the promised support of the Arabic and Islamic Worlds which was not forthcoming. They realized their mistake after they had rejected the British offer of the White Paper of 1939. The interesting thing here is that the Palestinian leaders were divided according to their loyalties to the leaders of the Arab states. This phenomenon, however, is still a feature of Palestinian and Arab politics. The Palestinian leadership is divided into pro-Syrians, pro-Egyptians, pro-Jordanians and pro-Iraqis and because there is no agreement between these states on a definite plan for solving the Palestine conflict their differences are reflected in the Palestinians' decisions. This state of affairs among the Arabs certainly played into the hands of the Zionists in the 1930s-40s and still plays into the hands of "Israel" today.

It seems to me that this division in the Arab camp is a major obstacle to a united Palestinian decision. This chaos and inability to reach a united decision in the past was one of the factors which contributed to the development of the Palestinian tragedy into its present form. The major factor was the co-operation of Britain and the Zionist Movement to colonize Palestine against the wishes of the Palestinians.

the Zionist Position and Activities during The War

Although this Chapter deals mainly with the Palestinian position and responses, it seems to me that it is necessary to discuss in brief the Zionists' activities during this period which enabled them to declare

their own state in 1948. During World War Two Zionist efforts were aimed in three directions:

1. The extension of Zionist settlement to the frontier areas of Palestine in order to be able to lay claim to the whole country, or at least to a viable area, at the appropriate time.¹¹

2. To train as many Zionists as possible in the use of arms and by early 1944 about 43,000 Zionists joined the British forces and many already belonged to the Haganah.¹² A separate Jewish Brigade was set up in the British Army at the end of the War. The establishment of such separate Jewish Brigades did not result from military needs, since the War was in its closing days, but perhaps because it was intended to provide the Zionists with a good opportunity to train as many soldiers as they wanted, under British supervision, in preparation for an eventual war with the Arabs in Palestine.¹³

3. Thirdly, the smuggling of as many arms and illegal immigrants as possible into Palestine. Between 1939 and 1943 close to 20,000 illegal immigrants were smuggled into Palestine in addition to the 19,000 "legal" ones.¹⁴ It is perhaps very interesting to notice here that the White Paper, despite Zionist objections, did not damage the good relations between the two Allies nor did this alliance change the Zionist attitude towards the White Paper. Ben Gurion, a prominent Zionist leader, made this point very clear when he declared in 1939 that: "We shall fight with Great Britain in this War as if there were no White Paper. And we shall fight the White Paper as if there were no War."¹⁵

The Zionists, however, did not fight against the Axis Powers for the sake of Britain but rather "to serve their own best interests"¹⁶ namely the future establishment of a Jewish Army and a Jewish State.

It is perhaps important to stress here that the process of protection, arming, military training and support of the Zionists by the British, from the early 1920s up to 1948 and the simultaneous process of suppression and disarming of the Palestinians played a decisive role in defeating the Palestinians and the Arabs in 1948. "The veterans of the Jewish Brigades became the nucleus of the future Israeli Army and the decisive factor of the Arab defeat"¹⁷ in 1948-1949.

Indeed the Zionists entered World War Two with Britain against Germany in the hope that the War would bring to them a Jewish State. Such a view was expressed frankly by Ben Gurion: "The World War of 1914-1918 brought

us the Balfour Declaration. This time we have to bring about a Jewish State."¹⁸ The Zionists, however, not only hoped for a Jewish State but rather they worked for it. In May 1942 the American Zionists, for the first time explicitly defined their goal in what became known later as the Biltmore Program.

"The Conference urges that the gate of Palestine be opened that the Jewish Agency be vested with control of immigration into Palestine and with the necessary authority for upbuilding the country.....and that Palestine be established as a Jewish commonwealth integrated into the structure of the new democratic World."¹⁹

By the end of 1944 they were implementing new tactics. On the one hand the United States became the focus of their political activities, on the other they stepped up their terrorist attacks against the British Administration in Palestine. Such attacks were carried out by Zionist underground organizations such as Haganah, Irgun, and the Stern Gang. The exact numbers belonging to these terrorist organizations were not known but some estimates put the members of the Haganah alone at 60,000.²⁰

It is important to stress the fact that the Zionist attacks against the British Administration and forces in Palestine should not be understood as a national struggle of an indigenous population against an occupying enemy but rather sporadic terrorist attacks resulting from the conflict of interests between the Zionist settlers and their British sponsors. The aim of such attacks was not to cause casualties among the British but rather to attain political concessions. "Since early 1944 Palestine, however, has been the scene of a series of outrages, crimes of violence by Jewish terrorists acting with the deliberate intention of bringing about by force developments favourable to the realisation of their political aims."²¹

The Zionists political aim was the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine. But the establishment of such a Jewish State would cause serious damage to Britain's economic and strategic interests in the Arab World. Such a conflict of interests between the settlers and their protector or mother country (Britain acted as a mother country to the Zionist settlers) is in some cases, according to the plural society theories, stronger than the conflict between the colonizers and the indigenous population.²²

It is important to note that despite the complaints and warnings from some British Chiefs of staff in Palestine about the moral effects of Zionist terrorist attacks on the British troops, the British Government was adamant in her position and refused to take any effective military measures against the Zionist terrorist organizations.²³ This British position was contrary to their position during the Palestinian revolt of 1936-1939 when they used every possible measure to suppress the Palestinian Revolt.

The British forces had reached 100,000 troops by 1946 and were sufficient to crush the Zionist terrorist organizations if Britain wanted to. Only at the end of June 1946 did the British seize the Zionist headquarters in Jerusalem and arrest 2,700 including most of the leaders of the Jewish Agency, but they were released at the end of same year.²⁴

It is important to stress the fact that even the convicted Zionist terrorists were on some occasions released by the British Government and then even used in special missions in the Middle East and Europe.

Arthur Koestler explains the relationship between the British forces and the Zionist terrorists as follows: "It became the practice to conclude agreements and formal truces between the Administration,....on one hand and Haganah or Jewish terrorist groups on the other. Men were put into jail for life or for ten years, quietly released a year or two later, and put into British uniform to carry out some dangerous mission."²⁵ Moreover the British Authorities knew about the Zionists efforts at illegal smuggling of arms and immigrants into Palestine from the early days of the Mandate but did nothing to stop it. Koestler states "That: the Haganah was buying illegal arms just as they were bringing in illegal refugees, was a fact known to the Administration for a quarter of a century, tolerated at periods, penalized at others, but certainly no news."²⁶

Contrary to the Palestinian position, the Zionists emerged from the War with a new national consciousness, a unity of purpose overriding party conflicts and internal feuds and with military forces capable of defeating not only the Palestinians but even the entire Arab forces. When the British commander of the British forces in Palestine was asked, by the Anglo-American Committee, what would happen if British troops were withdrawn from Palestine his answer was "If you were to withdraw

British troops, the Haganah would take over all Palestine tomorrow." Then he was asked: "But could the Haganah hold Palestine in such circumstances"? He answered, "Certainly they could hold it against the entire Arab World."²⁷

During World War Two the Zionists changed their political tactics. Instead of concentrating on Britain, they focused on the United States. They recognised the role of the United States in a future Middle East settlement and therefore they intended to play the Jewish votes to serve their cause in Palestine. "They threatened electoral punishment through the Zionist vote if the American Administration failed to support a Jewish State."²⁸ The Zionist propaganda campaign in America was so successful that in 1942 and 1943 thirty three state legislatures passed pro-Zionist resolutions."²⁹ The American Zionist Emergency Council established state and regional branches throughout the nation subdivided into a myriad local committees.

Through an endless stream of books, pamphlets, letters to the editor, mass meetings and every other conceivable means of communication, the Zionists effectively won the support of many ordinary Americans disturbed by Jewish suffering and persecution under Nazi rule in Europe. One of their very influential organizations was the American Palestine Committee. It included in its membership, "two thirds of the Senate, 200 members of the House of Representatives and leaders of both major political parties and labour organizations."³⁰

In the presidential campaign of 1944, both political parties and their candidates, Roosevelt and Dewey, issued very strong pro-Zionist statements. On June 27th 1944 the Republican Party called for free Jewish immigration into Palestine. On October 15th, President Roosevelt promised, if re-elected to help bring about the establishment of Palestine as a free and democratic Jewish Commonwealth.³¹

Palestine became at the end of World War Two an area of Anglo-American controversy. To Britain it seemed that the United States was prepared to sacrifice British strategic and economic interests on the altar of American domestic policies.³² The British Government charged the Americans with being hypocritical in their campaign against the British immigration policy in Palestine. At a time when they demanded the

admission of the Jewish refugees into Palestine, a country for which America had no responsibility, they shut their own doors in their faces. The British believed that such a demand "Seemed a way of easing American consciences over the refusal to admit significant numbers of Jewish refugees to the United States, and a means of diverting the problem to an area over which the United States had no responsibility."³³

The Arabs were angered by the Americans pro-Zionist statements. "The Arabs wanted to know why Americans were forcing open the gates of Palestine to Jewish refugees when they were so unwilling to open the doors of their own spacious country despite the fact that the United States could have absorbed far more refugees more quickly and efficiently than any country in the World."³⁴

The victory of the British Labour Party in the July, 1945 elections raised Zionist hopes because it had consistently backed the Zionist cause. For example, during the annual Party Conference of 1944, the Labour Party promised, if elected to office, to let Jews enter Palestine "in such numbers as to become a majority" and even contemplated the possibility of removing the Arabs to make room for the settlers."³⁵ But when the Labour Party was demanded to assume full responsibility for its election promises, it found that it could not fulfil such promises on Palestine without causing serious damage to their national strategic and economic interests in the Arab World.³⁶ "Thus the Labour Party, much to its embarrassment, soon discovered that it could not fulfil its pledges to the Zionists."³⁷

The British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin was convinced that much of the Zionist impetus came from British and American anti-Semites, who simply wanted the Jews in their midst removed to Palestine. After consulting the experts on the Palestine problem Bevin came to the conclusion that "Zionist demands were fundamentally unjust as well as contrary to Britain's national interests."³⁸ Bevin believed that the solution to the Jewish refugee problem in Europe "should be resolved by reintegrating the Jews into European society rather than encouraging mass immigration into Palestine"³⁹ as the Americans and the Zionists wanted. On December 19th, 1944 an article which appeared in the New York Post showed a clear desire among the American people that the Jews should be encouraged to immigrate to Palestine rather than America. "It

would be better for the United States to have Palestine re-opened to the Jews than to have millions of them coming over here after the War as unassimilated refugees."⁴⁰

Clearly there was now no chance of avoiding a British-American rift over the Palestine issue. Therefore, in October 1945 the United States and Britain agreed to establish a joint Anglo-American Committee to study the Palestine conflict and Jewish refugees problem.

The Anglo- American Committee⁴¹

Since there are several pieces of published and unpublished material about the Anglo-American Committee and because its report was never implemented, it seems sufficient for the purpose of this section to discuss its main recommendations, and more importantly, their practical implications and Arab reaction to them.

In October 1945 an Anglo-American Committee, composed of six Britons and six Americans, was set up. The joint Committee was a better tool for solving the rift between Britain and the United States rather than for solving the Palestine conflict. Unfortunately the Jewish refugee problem in Europe was used as a cover up for the real aim behind the forming such a Committee.

On the one hand America had no responsibility over Palestine but they used the Jewish refugees as a pretext to serve their domestic politics and to increase their influence in the Middle East.⁴² Britain too used the Jews as a pretext to increase their influence in the area and later used them as a bargaining counter in order to receive economic aid from America.⁴³

Both the United States and Britain indeed put their own interests before any humanitarian consideration or human suffering, be it by Jews or Arabs. As one member of the joint Committee, Crossman, put it, both British and American Governments had talked of humanity "but shut their doors to human suffering."⁴⁴ The Palestinians rejected British and American claims that their support of Zioninst settlement in Palestine was purely on the grounds of humanitarian considerations. If that was true, the Arabs argued, then why did not the British and the Americans allow the Jews to immigrate to their own countries, larger and richer, rather than encouraging them to immigrate to a small country were they were neither welcome nor safe?

"The Arabs protested that there was no reason why they, the one race

with no anti-semitic tradition, should have to bear the sins of Christian Europe."⁴⁵ The Arab argued that: "If the United State and Britain wished to atone for their failure to save European Jewry, they could best do so by accepting the survivors in their own countries, rather than in an Arab country like Palestine."⁴⁶

The first sign of British retreat from the policy of the 1939 White Paper, conceding to Zionist and American pressure, came on November 13th 1945. The British Government sent individual notes to the Arab States asking their acquiescence in continued Jewish immigration to Palestine after the deadline date specified by the White Paper.⁴⁷ The British Government argued that an extension of immigration would be for the period required for the completion of the joint Committee's inquiries. It was, however, the first sign of Britain's using the Committee as a pretext to violate the White Paper policy on immigration.

The Arabs, accustomed to such changes in British policies under Zionist pressure, informed the British Government through the Arab League that: "The Arabs will never be able to agree to a Jewish immigration emanating from Zionist pressure."⁴⁸ However, despite this Arab opposition, the British Government decided on 1st January 1946 that Jewish immigration must continue at the rate of 1,500 per month.⁴⁹

Against this background of multi-conflict of interests between, British, Arabs, Americans and Zionists, the joint Committee began its inquiry in January 1946 in Washington.⁵⁰ To the astonishment of the Arabs the future of Palestine was now connected with the Jewish refugee problem in Europe. Since then the local conflict in Palestine between the Zionist settlers and the Palestinians has become an international issue. The Committee started their investigations in Washington, London, the refugee camps in Europe and Egypt, Palestine and Transjordan. Extensive testimonies were presented by Arabs and Zionists and the Committee published their report in April 1946.

The Anglo American Committee Report

The Report was published on 20th April 1946 and included the following main points:

Firstly, the immediate admission of 100,000 Jewish refugees into Palestine. They justified such, recommendation on the grounds that there was "no country to which the great majority can go in the immediate

future other than Palestine.⁵¹

This of course was typical colonialist thinking. they knew that there were certain laws in their countries which were designed to protect the interests of their people against alien immigrants. Therefore, instead of recommending changing such rules and opening their countries to Jewish refugees, they wanted to solve the problem at the expense of other people who, according to their thinking, did not have or deserve to have rules to protect their interests against such alien immigrants.⁵²

It must be remembered that the Jews had suffered under the Nazi and Fascist forces in Europe. But after the defeat of the Nazi there was no immediate threat to Jews in Western Europe. All displaced persons, including the Jews, came under the protection of the Allied forces. The British Government favoured the rehabilitation of all refugees and displaced persons in their European countries.⁵³

But Zionist officials were at work in camps, urging all Jews to emigrate to Palestine. They discouraged Jews from the idea of emigration to America or integration into other European societies.

"There had been organized Zionist propaganda in all camps, organized by the inmates, organized by the representatives of the American joint Distribution Committee and the Jewish Agency who were struggling desperately to maintain a declining morale, organized some times by the Rabbis attached to the American Army or by members of the (British) Jewish Brigade or by sympathetic UNRRA⁵⁴ officials."⁵⁵

In a press conference General Morgan described the exodus of Jews from Europe as a "well organized positive plan." He described the young Jewish "infilitree" as "well dressed, well fed, rosy cheeked and having plenty of money....They certainly do not look like persecuted people."⁵⁶ The British Government expressed their concern that most of the Jewish immigrants "were carefully selected for their military qualities."⁵⁷

Secondly, they recommended the abolition of the 1940 land regulation which sought to protect Palestinian tenants and its replacement by a regulation based on a policy of freedom in the sale of land irrespective of race or community.

Thirdly, they recommended the extension of the British Mandate under United Nations Trusteeship with the gradual development of self-governing institution, and the continuation of Jewish immigration

according to Article 6 of the Mandate, pending the new trusteeship agreement from the United Nations.

The future government was to be build on the three principles:

1. That Arabs should not dominate Jews and vice-versa.
2. That Palestine should be neither a Jewish state nor an Arab one.
3. That the form of government ultimately to be established should be dependent on a constitution with international guarantees of the rights of both communities.

Practically these recommendations put an effective end to the 1939 White Paper. These recommendations indeed came as a shock to certain Palestinians, especially the Nashashibi faction, and the Arabs who believed that Britain would stick to their promise and allow the establishment of a Palestinian state according to the terms of the White Paper. It also strengthened the position of the Palestinian extremists who rejected the White Paper on the ground that Britain, anyhow, would not fulfil its pledges to the Palestinians and therefore, there was no point in accepting them.

The fluctuation of British policies towards Palestine and the feeling which it caused among the Palestinians of being ignored, not listened to and discriminated against is perhaps one of the reasons which created a common belief among the Palestinians and the Arabs that Britain was completely responsible for the creation of the Palestine conflict.⁵⁸ Indeed such a feeling was one of the fundamental causes of the Palestine conflict during the Mandate period and perhaps one of the main causes which prevented the Arabs and the British from reaching an agreement. As an Arab witness put it, for the Palestinians "Zionism was an imposition (by Britain) on the Arabs of an alien way of life which they resented and to which they would never submit."⁵⁹

The Arab Reaction to the Report

The Palestinians reaction to the Report was similar to their reaction to the previous British proposals, namely that Palestine was an Arab country inhabited by an Arab majority and neither Zionists nor the great powers had any rights to impose alien settlement or create a Jewish State against their wishes. The Palestinians believed that "the only solution lay in a Palestinian State with an Arab majority who would

guarantee the equal rights of Jewish citizenship."⁶⁰ The Palestinians argued that it was not possible to establish a Jewish State in Palestine without dislodging its inhabitants: "The logic of facts is inexorable. It shows that no room can be made in Palestine for a second nation except by dislodging or exterminating the nation in possession."⁶¹

The problem of the Palestinians was that they did not have any alternative means, other than words, to press their demands. Divided as they always were without any self-government to represent them and deprived of an able leadership capable of mobilising them militarily or politically, they condemned themselves to the role of spectators without any real influence on the development of the Palestine conflict after the War specially between 1940 and 1947.

It was the position of a powerless native population against determined Zionist settlers, supported by two great powers Britain and the U.S.A. That position, however, was partly their own creation. The Palestinian leaders, despite the defeat of their Revolt by the British forces, declined to accept the 1939 White Paper which provided them with a legal political status and a valuable opportunity to develop the political organizations necessary for leading the people into the post War era.

Therefore, it can be argued that the Palestinians emerged from the War practically without any effective political or military organization and consequently eliminated themselves from the scene of power-politics in Palestine.

The Report itself was received with anger and frustration among the Palestinians and the Arab people. The Arab Governments responded to public pressure and held a summit meeting in Inchass, Egypt on May 27-28, 1946. The heads of the State of Egypt, Transjordan, Saudi Arabia and the Yemen published a statement, at the end of their conference, warning Britain and America that, although the Arabs wanted their friendship, that friendship would depend on whether the two powers would or would not transgress upon the rights of the Palestine Arabs. The statement stressed that: "Palestine is an inseparable part of the Arab countries and the Arab States consider the implementation of the Report as an act of aggression directed to them and that they will use all necessary measures to defend Palestine."⁶²

There is no doubt about the sincerity of the Arab States intentions and concern to help and support the Palestinians against the British and the Zionists. But did they have the capability to provide the required material support for the Palestinians? The evidence suggests that they did not. Egypt and Transjordan for instance were at the time still under British control and they themselves were not able to get rid of British domination. Saudi Arabia and Yemen had hardly, at that time, any army at all.

Therefore such statements, in my view, similar to ones which still occur at the present time, damage more than benefit the Palestinian cause. It gave the Palestinians false expectations such as, that they were part of a large Arab nation which in the end would win the dispute, and it gave the Zionists an ideal propaganda ingredient: that they were facing a large Arab nation and they therefore, deserved support and sympathy from World Jewry and Western democracies.

It must be noticed here that such statements were typical traditional leaders' threats to a colonial power which had never been carried out and therefore they were, in most cases, ignored by the British Government. Therefore the British government in most cases disregarded them.

However, the Arab League held an extraordinary meeting in Bludan, Syria in June 1946 during which they passed resolutions:⁶³

1. To set up a special Committee to supervise all activities relating to Palestine.
2. To tighten the Arab boycott of Zionist products.
3. To send notes to Britain and the United States opposing the recommendations of the Anglo-Americans Committee's Report.
4. To refuse all kinds of Partition and demand that Britain should negotiate with the Arab states on the future of Palestine or refer the problem to the United Nations.

The British Government responded to these statement by inviting both the Arabs and the Zionists to a Conference to be held in London on 10th September 1946.

Before I move on to discuss the London Conference, it seems necessary to highlight the Zionist, British and American responses to the Report. Both Zionists and American leaders had only accepted the Committee's recommendation regarding the admission of 100,000 settlers into

Palestine. They gave no indication that they would accept the rest of the recommendations.⁶⁴

The British Government argued that they were prepared to accept the figure of 100,000 Zionist settlers but only on certain conditions. In the first place it must be clear that immigration must not start until disarmament of the Jews had taken place. The British Government explained to the Americans that many of the new arrivals in Palestine "were not refugees at all. They were young men specially selected by the Jewish Agency for military purposes."⁶⁵

On May 1st Attlee, then Prime Minister, confirmed publicly in the House of Commons that the disarmament of illegal Zionist armies⁶⁶ were prior conditions to the entry of the refugees. Therefore a major disagreement developed between Britain and the United States over Palestine. As a way out of this deadlock Britain suggested holding joint consultations between British and American experts to study the best ways for implementing the Report.

In the 13th July 1946 an American team led by Henry F. Grady (deputy to the Secretary of State) and a British team led by Herbert Morrison (leader of the House of Commons) started their first working session. The two teams agreed on a plan⁶⁷ to convert the Mandate into a British United Nations Trusteeship. Under the Trusteeship Palestine would be divided into four Jewish and Arab provinces and purely British Administration areas composed of the districts of Jerusalem and the Negab. There would be provisional autonomy with certain powers reserved for the central Government, such as, foreign relations, defence, justice and taxation. The provinces might evolve into either a unitary, binational state, or two separate sovereign states. In purely inter-community affairs the two provinces would develop representative institution that would lead to self-government. Final control over immigration would rest with the central government but in the end would be left to governments of the Arab and Jewish provinces. On July 25 1946 the plan was endorsed by the two expert teams, and hoping that President Truman would endorse it, Britain invited Arabs and Zionists to attend a Conference in September 1946 in London.

The London Conference⁶⁸

In a final, desperate attempt to resolve the Palestine conflict through direct negotiations between the Arabs and the Zionists, on July

25th 1946, Britain invited the Arab Governments, the Arab Higher Committee for Palestine, and the Jewish Agency to attend a Conference beginning in September 1946 in London. While the Arab States accepted the invitation, the Arab Higher Committee accepted the invitation on condition that Britain would allow their leader Haj Amin to attend the Conference, a thing which was rejected by the British Government and therefore, they did not participate. The Jewish Agency also refused to attend because Britain would not accept its conditions, namely that their Partition plan⁶⁹ would be the sole item on the Conference agenda and the release of their jailed leaders. The Conference was opened by the British Prime Minister Attlee on September 9, 1946.

At the first business session the Foreign Secretary, Bevin, asked the Arab delegation to view Palestine in its international setting. He stressed the fact that Britain could not any more decide the future of Palestine without consulting the United States. "It was impossible to isolate the Middle East from the rest of the World and our diplomatic relations there formed part of a single network from which they could not be detached...neither we nor the Arabs could afford to disregard entirely the wishes of the American people and their government."⁷⁰

It must be borne in mind that the United States had nothing to do with Palestine at that time and therefore their interference in Palestine's affairs was not acceptable to the Arabs, and is still not today. Why should the future of Palestine be decided by a foreign country like the United States which had no connection whatsoever with that country? This conception namely that the whole problem was imposed upon the Palestinians by foreigners against their wishes was and still is one of the main causes of the conflict.

Bevin next introduced the provincial autonomy plan, the Morrison Grady Plan,⁷¹ or the expert recommendations. The Plan was attacked immediately by the Syrian representative Faris el Khouiri.⁷² In his view, the Plan contained unacceptable principles. Firstly, it divided the country into four separately administered units, whereas the Palestinians wanted a national government for the whole of Palestine; secondly, it contained provision for further immigration without Arab consent; thirdly, the proposal would clearly lead to the formation of a Jewish state in Palestine, something which would not be acceptable to the Arabs.

At their next meeting, on September 12, each Arab delegate rejected the Morrison Grady Plan in turn and almost all gave the same reasons namely that Britain had already more than fulfilled her obligations to the Zionists, and that her main obligation now was defined by the 1939 White Paper, which had promised the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in the whole of Palestine.⁷³

On September 16 Bevin informed the Arab delegations that the White Paper of 1939 was no longer available for discussion and therefore they had to consider only the new proposals which had not been put forward as a bargaining position but "in the belief that they represented a reasonable and workable solution."⁷⁴

It is worth mentioning here that time was working to the Zionists' advantage and not to the Palestinian's advantage. In most cases the previous deal or proposal was much better than the latest one. For instance, the 1937 Partition scheme was better than the 1947 one, the White Paper of 1939 was much better than the provincial autonomy plan of 1946 and the situation before 1967 was much better than the situation today.

It seems that although on each occasion the Arabs lost some parts of the previous deal, they refused to compromise on the principles of justice, equality and the right to self-determination. The Palestinians always gambled on time and on potential Arab unity which would one day become a reality and consequently enable them to achieve a settlement according to their terms.⁷⁵ This, however, does not mean that the Palestinians were naive or did not know what the consequences would be, rather it seems to me that the Palestinians believe that Palestine is their country and according to all democratic measures they have the right to live there and establish a form of government which would represent them. All loss of land, property and the social and economic hardships which had been inflicted upon them, as a result of Zionist settlement, were not, in their view, sufficient reasons for surrendering their legitimate rights.

To outsiders this position might appear unrealistic but it seems to me that this Palestinian position is a true reflection of their deep feeling toward the justice of their cause. The Palestinians believed that if they compromised on this basic principle it would mean that they had surrendered their legitimate rights simply because they could not

defend their country. They would be indeed the first people in history who surrendered their right to their country because they had lost a military battle with their enemies.

This also would set a precedent in the world namely: if a powerful country occupied part of another it could annex it - something which is not, until now, acceptable in international law and the U.N. Charter.

However, the Conference was unable to make any real progress and therefore the Arabs submitted their own proposals⁷⁶ providing for the creation of an independent unitary state, in accordance with a constitution to be laid down by an elected constituent assembly. The Jews would enjoy guaranteed minority rights and political rights according to their numerical proportion. "The representation of Arabs and Jews in the provisional government would be without prejudice to the proportions to be determined in the constitution for the representation of the Arabs and Jews in the legislative assembly."⁷⁷

These proposals provided hard evidence of the Arabs' genuine intention and desire to share the administration of Palestine with the Palestinian Jews. They are contrary to the popular belief in the West that the Palestinians wanted to expel all the Jews from Palestine or throw them into the sea.⁷⁸ The Arab proposals also provided for the protection of the Holy Places and for the concluding of a treaty of alliance with Britain. The British Government needed time to study the Arab proposals and in the hope that the Palestinians and the Zionists would change their minds and participate in the Conference they adjourned the Conference until January 1947.

Soon after the British had suspended the London Conference, President Truman rejected the Morrison-Grady plan and announced his support for a solution on the lines of a Partition Plan proposed by the Zionists.

On 4th October, 1946, Truman published a policy statement to this effect:

"The Jewish Agency proposed a solution of the Palestine problem by means of the creation of a viable Jewish State in control of its own immigration and economic policies in an adequate area of Palestine instead of in the whole of Palestine. It proposed further the immediate issuance of certificates for 100,000 Jewish immigrants....It is my belief that a solution along these lines would command the support of public opinion in the United States....To such a solution our Government

could give its support."⁷⁹

The decisive factor prompting Truman's statement had, according to Cohen,⁸⁰ been the Democratic Party's need to mobilize the Jewish vote for the approaching mid-term Congressional elections due in November 1946. Acheson, however, disagrees with Cohen and argues that Truman was actually concerned about the fate of the displaced Jews in Europe and "never took or refused to take steps in our foreign relations to benefit his or his party's fortunes."⁸¹

In any case, the Jewish vote was important in American elections but it was certainly not the only factor which decided American policy towards Palestine. According to Bethell the British Government had looked suspiciously at the American pro-Zionist statement and considered it as the "first step in an American bid for Middle East supremacy. It seemed a total surrender to the Zionist credo, a gesture that went far beyond the President's electoral requirements."⁸²

Bethell argues that the United States used her Jewish citizens to build a bridge to the Zionist settlers in Palestine "to establish an American base in Palestine that would serve American interests rather than British."⁸³

It seems to me that it was a combination of the value of the Jewish vote in American elections and America's interests in the area which decided the shape of American policy in Palestine before 1948 and it seems that these two in combination are still playing the same role in influencing United States policy towards the Arab-Israeli conflict until the present day.

By October 1946 it seems that the Zionists had made up their minds not to accept less than a viable Jewish State in part of Palestine and that the American President would not accept any other solution. The London Times commented on the new development and the American position in the Palestine conflict as follows: "President Truman's latest pronouncement on Palestine affords further evidence of his sympathy with the ideas of certain Jewish groups exercising great influence upon public opinion in the United States at a time when public issues are about to be brought to the test of a congressional election. This attitude formerly caused him to refuse his support to the "Morrison Plan", in spite of its endorsement by British and American experts when it proved unacceptable

to Jewish sentiment... In the President's view the sole importance of the London Conference seems to lie in the possibility it offers of reconciling the Morrison Plan with the Jewish project for a viable Jewish State. He does not recognize that the Arabs also have a case to which the London Conference has rightly devoted attention." The comment goes on to say that the President's statement would compel both Arabs and British to the reluctant conclusion that "no solution of the Palestine Question will satisfy the President unless it goes the whole way to meet Jewish claims."⁸⁴

The other important development which took place in October 1946 was in the British position. On 4th October 1946 Creech Jones "a self-confessed Zionist" replaced Hall as colonial secretary. "In all probability, the change was designed to appease the Zionists."⁸⁵ As a good-will gesture to the Zionists the new colonial Secretary ordered the release of 2,700 Zionist terrorists from jail, and the return of illegal immigrants to Palestine from Cypriot camps (about 2,800 immigrants). British military searching of Jewish settlements had been stopped, recruitment for the Jewish police was allowed to continue and the British military commander, General Barker, was removed from his post because he ordered his troops to stop their "social contacts" with the Jews as a punishment for their terrorist attacks on the British forces. The British Government hoped that these measures would win over the moderates in the Zionist leadership and would encourage them to participate in the second phase of the London Conference. But it seems to me that this was the first sign of the British giving in to Zionist and American pressure and the acceptance of a solution on Zionist terms.

In December and January of 1946-1947 the British Government became divided on the Palestine issue. The Foreign Office, led by Bevin, worked towards the creation of a genuine unity or binational state which they hoped would preserve British influence in the Middle East through Anglo-Arab friendship. The Colonial Office, on the other hand, believed that Partition was the best solution because it would eliminate any confrontation with the Americans, which might affect American financial aid, and secondly, longterm friendship of the Zionists was more important and guaranteed than that of the Arabs.⁸⁶

However, the British Government did not commit themselves to either side but rather decided to invite both Arabs and Zionists to the second stage of the London Conference. When the London Conference was resumed on 27th January 1947, only the Arab states and the Arab Higher Committee attended while the Zionists refused to participate. The Conference dragged on until 7th February without significant progress since the Arab insisted on their demand for a unitary state and the Zionists through their informal talks insisted on their demand - a viable Jewish State in part of Palestine. The British therefore, submitted their final proposals to both sides and made it clear that if these proposals were not accepted the problem would be referred to the United Nations.

The British proposals or "Bevin Plan"⁸⁷ as it became known later was a combination of British (provincial autonomy) Arab (unitary state) and basic Jewish demands on immigration and land sales. According to the Plan there would be a five year trusteeship regime supervised by the Trusteeship Council in which Palestine would be prepared for independence as a binational State. Instead of provincial autonomy there would be cantons determined by Arab or Jewish majorities. The cantons were not necessarily contiguous and were more restricted in autonomous government than the scheme for provincial autonomy. Within these cantons immigration and land sales would be decided by the local authorities and therefore, the 100,000 Jewish settlers would be admitted to Palestine within two years while the Arab local government would have the right to prevent any Jewish immigration to its area.

The Jewish Agency rejected this Plan and declared that it would not accept less than a viable Jewish State in an adequate area of Palestine.⁸⁸ For the Palestinians the fundamental point was that Palestine should no longer be denied the independence which had now been attained by every other Arab State, and that, in accordance with the acceptable principle of democracy, the Palestinian majority should be free to determine the future destiny of the country. They regarded the expansion of the Jewish Home as jeopardising the attainment of national independence which was desired by all Palestinians and Arab States.⁸⁹ They therefore, demanded that a democratic government should be established in Palestine representing all the inhabitants of the country and opposed any kind of Partition.

After October 1946 the Zionists' point of view, supported by the U.S.A., became the decisive factor in determining the future of Palestine. The Zionists made it clear that they wanted a Jewish state in a viable part of Palestine. The British Government, on the one hand, was in need of U.S.A. economic aid and if they did not give the Zionists what they wanted such aid would not be possible. On the other hand, if Britain conceded to the Zionists' demand she would lose some of her interests in the Arab Countries. Therefore Britain sought a solution which would guarantee her interests in both the U.S.A. and the Arab Countries, namely a U.N. solution which would relieve Britain of her direct responsibility for a solution.

The British Cabinet met on 14th February 1947 to discuss the problem and it was decided to reject the schemes proposed by both the Arabs and the Zionists. On 18th February the Foreign Secretary, Bevin, told the House of Commons: "We have decided that we are unable to accept the schemes put forward either by the Arabs or by the Jews or to impose ourselves a solution of our own. We have, therefore, reached the conclusion that the only course now open to us is to submit the problem to the judgement of the United Nations... We do not intend ourselves to recommend any particular solution."⁹⁰

On April 12, 1947 the British Government formally requested the Secretary General of the United Nations to discuss the problem of Palestine in a special session of the General Assembly as I will show in the next Chapter.

Summary and Concluding Remarks

The Palestinians entered the 1940s without any effective military or political organization to represent them before the British Government or to mobilize them in a national resistance movement against the colonization of their country. At the end of 1939 the British forces succeeded in defeating the Palestine Revolt and the British Government banned all their national organizations and political parties. Most of their important leaders fled the country, were arrested by the British or killed during the three year Revolt. The Palestinian leaders who remained in Palestine were divided and weak to the extent that they were busy fighting among themselves rather than organizing the people to resist British rule. However, between 1943 and 1946 the British Government granted partial immunity to most of the leaders and lifted the ban on political activities. But despite this the Palestinian

leaders failed to re-establish an effective political leadership or revive their revolt and, therefore, the Palestine issue passed from their hands to the hands of the independent Arab states. This situation was confirmed in 1945 when the Arab League was established and started to negotiate on behalf of the Palestinians with the British Government and from that date the Palestine issue became an Arab rather than a Palestinian one.

In contrast the Zionists during the same period shifted most of their political activities to the U.S.A. and by 1944 they had won over the U.S.A. to their side. On the other hand, they strengthened their military power through new recruits and participation within the Allied forces or by separate Jewish Brigade within the British forces. Despite the fact that establishment of the Zionist forces was not possible without British assistance they were used, between 1944 and 1947, in an active terrorist campaign against the British Administration in Palestine and inflicted heavy casualties among the British forces in the country.

Palestinian military and political power vis-a'-vis the Zionist settlers in the 1930s was reversed in the 1940s. In the 1930s the British Government viewed the Arab political, economic, military and strategic value more important than the Zionist value. Therefore their proposals for solving the conflict were more favourable to the Arabs than to the Zionists. This situation was reversed in the 1940s when the British considered Zionist military and political value more important than the Arabs. Consequently they recommended or accepted proposals more favourable to the Zionists than to the Arabs.

Britain emerged from the War economically exhausted and needed American economic aid rather than Arab support. And because the Americans by this time had been won to the side of the Zionist Britain had to accept a settlement on Zionist and American rather than Arab terms if she was to get American aid.

After 1944 the American Government became deeply involved in the Palestine affair. And under strong American pressure the British Government accepted the establishment of a joint Anglo-American Commission to study the conflict. The Anglo-American Commission was in fact a tool which was used by both governments firstly, to solve their

own differences and secondly, to work out the best way of solving the Jewish refugee problem in Europe, rather than solving the real conflict between Arabs and Zionists in Palestine. The Anglo-American Commission after connecting the Palestine local conflict with the Jewish refugee problem in Europe (a Zionist demand) recommended the immediate admission of 100,000 Jews into Palestine, the abolition of the 1940 land regulations and the extension of the British Mandate under U.N. Trusteeship with gradual development of self-governing institutions.

The Palestinians saw in these recommendations a reverse of the policy of the 1939 White Paper and therefore they rejected them. They argued that Palestine could not absorb such large numbers of immigrants and if the British and the Americans were so sympathetic to the Jewish refugees why did they not allow them to emigrate to their own countries?

The Zionists only accepted the first recommendation and concentrated their propaganda pressure on the British Government to open the doors of Palestine for them. The Americans too required Britain to allow the suggested number to enter the country immediately. However, the British demanded that the report should be implemented as a whole and they could not, for security reasons, allow the 100,000 immigrants to enter Palestine before the complete disarming of the Zionists.

As a way out of this deadlock a joint team of Anglo-American experts met in London to find an acceptable way to implement the Report. They in fact agreed on a solution which implied the establishment of four Arab and Jewish provinces with the political, economic, taxation and security matters resting with a central government.

The British Government, hoping that this scheme would gain the approval of the U.S.A. Government, invited both Arabs and Zionists to a yet another London Conference. Only the Arab states attended the Conference while both Palestinians and Zionists rejected the invitation. But without Palestinian and Zionist participation it was doubtful if anything positive would come out of the Conference. Indeed, the British Government adjourned the Conference without reaching any agreement with the Arabs.

At the end of 1946, things were developing so quickly that President Truman declared publicly his support for a Zionist Partition scheme and

demanding the British Government to consider it as the only basis for settlement, doing away with the provincial scheme which was approved by his own experts. In a final effort the British Government invited again both Arabs and Zionists to resume the adjourned London Conference. Both representatives of Arab states and Palestinians attended it while the Zionists boycotted it. During the second phase of the Conference the British Government proposed the establishment of Arab and Jewish cantons according to the majority of their Arab or Jewish inhabitants with the possibility of developing these cantons into binational, federal or independent states.

The Arabs rejected this proposal and demanded the implementation of the White Paper. Against this background the British Government referred the Palestine problem to the U.N. which recommended the partition of the country between Arabs and Jews. The U.N. Partition Scheme was seen by many as an opportunity for a lasting settlement. What was it and why did not the Arab take that opportunity? This will be the subject of the next Chapter.

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 32. For more details about Anglo-American conflict over Palestine during and after World War Two see A. Ilan, The Origin and Development of American intervention in British Palestine policy 1938-1947 D.Phil Thesis, Oxford, 1974.
 33. Ovendale, op.cit. p.80.
 34. Khouri, op.cit. p.33.
 35. Labour Party Conference 1944 p.9.
 36. Lapping, op.cit. p.121.
London, 1985, p.121.
 37. Khouri, op.cit. p.33.
 38. Bethell, op.cit. p.204.
 39. Louis Rm Roger, The British Empire in the Middle East 1945-1951, Clarendom Press, Oxford, 1984, p.384.
 40. New York Post 19-12-1944. p.12.
 41. For the Terms of Reference and the Report see, "The Report Of The. Anglo-American Committee", (Cmd. 6808) op.cit. for more details about their inquiries see Cohen, op.cit. pp.96-115. Also Nachmani, Amikam. British policy in Palestine after World War Two The Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry D.Phil Thesis, Oxford 1980.
 42. Bethell, op.cit. p.167.
 43. Allen, R. Imperialism and Nationalism in the Fertile Crescent

- Oxford University Press, London, 1974. p.375.
44. Crossman, R. Palestine Mission Hamish Hamilton, London, 1946, p.88.
 45. Ovendale, op.cit. p.93.
 46. Bethell, op.cit. p.211.
 47. According to the 1939 White Paper no more immigration should be allowed after the admission of 75,000 immigrants within the five years expired by May 1945, without Arab consent.
 48. Arab League Cairo, to Foreign Office 5 December 1945, Colonial Office, 733-463. 75872-142, London, 51-12-1946.
 49. Cab. 128-5. 1-1-1946.
 50. For more details about the Committee inquiries in Washington, London, Cairo, and Palestine see Crossman, op.cit. pp.7-197. and the Anglo-American Committee Report, (Cmd. 6808).
 51. Anglo-American Committee Report, op.cit. p.2.
 52. The Palestinians of course opposed any Jewish immigration to their country but because they did not have a national government to look after their interests the British Mandatory Government ruled the country directly and she never took the Palestinians' views seriously. See Crum, op.cit. p.26.
 53. Lapping op.cit. p.121.
 54. UNRRA, United Nations Relief on Rehabilitation Administration, it was headed by General Morgan.
 55. Crossman, op.cit. p.86.
 56. New York Times 3-1-1946 p.1. The Zionists denied Morgan allegations and soon Morgan was dismissed from his job.
 57. Cohen op.cit. p.112.
 58. Ovendale, op.cit. p.198.
 59. This view was expressed by Dr. Hitti, a Palestinian, before the joint Committee, Quoted by Crum, op.cit. p.26.
 60. Louis, op.cit. pp.413-414.
 61. Antonious G. Arab awakening Hamish Hamilton, London, 1938, p.412.
 62. Institute For Palestine Studies, Al Qadhiyyah al-Filestinyyah wal-Khater al-Sahyyoni (The Palestine Question And The Zionist Danger) Beirut 1973, pp.246-247. (Arabic)
 63. Ibid, pp.246-247.
 64. Acheson, Dean. Present At The Creation Hamish Hamilton, London, 1970 p.127. President Truman accepted one recommendation out of ten that is the admission of 100,00

- immigrants. This caused anger in Britain and the Arab States. Ibid, p.173.
65. Bethell, op.cit. p.235.
 66. Attlee demanded this in the House of Common debate, 1-5-1946. vol. 422 col. 197.
 67. For more details about the Morrison Grady Plan as it became known latter see, Proposals For The Future Of Palestine, (Cmd. 7044) London, 1947, pp.3-8 And House of Common Debate, vol.426. July 1946, col. 957-1254.
 68. For more details about British and Arab proposals
See, Forign Office,371-52641 Eq 122. also Arab Office, op.cit Appendix A "the Arab proposals " pp.91-94. Also "Future proposals for Palestine", (Cmd. 7044) London, 1947, pp.3-14.
 69. It provided for the creation of a Jewish State which was to include Galilee, the coastal plain, Jerusalem and the Negeb
See, Cohen, op.cit. pp.135-184.
 70. Colonial Office to the Higher Commission in Palestine, London, 11-9-1946, C.O. 733-464-75872-147.
 71. House of Common. Deb. vol.426 July 1946 col.960-971.
See also, (Cmd. 7044) London, 1947. pp.3-8
 72. Al Musoo'ah al Filisteenyyah (Palestine Encyclopedia)
Part Four 1984. pp.52-54. Also Cohen, op.cit. pp.197-202.
 73. Cohen, op.cit. p.198,
 74. Ibid, p.199.
 75. Most of the Palestinians and the Arabs understand the Palestine conflict as a conflict between all the Arab countries against "Israel". It is popular among the Arabs that all Arab's defeats by "Israel" possible because of Arab divisions and once the Arabs united it would became possible to regain Palestine.
 76. (Cmd. 7044) pp.9-11. and the Arab Office, op.cit. pp.91-94.
 77. Arab Office, op.cit. pp.91-92.
 78. Ibid. p.92. Such misconception was developed as a result of Zionist propaganda in the West which succeeded to give the impression that they were a minority threatened by a large Arab majority.
 79. Statement by the President following the adjournment of the Palestine conference in London, October 4, 1946 Public Papers of the President of the United States, Harry's Truman 1946
washington, 1962, pp.442-444.
 80. Cohen, op.cit. p.164.
 81. Acheson, op.cit.p.176.

82. Bethell, op.cit. p.167.
83. Ibid.
84. The Times, London, 7-10-1946, p.5.
85. Cohen, op.cit. p.159.
86. Lapping, op.cit. pp.125-126, also Kirk G. Survey Of International Affairs The Middle East 1945-1950, London, 1946, pp.229-230. Also, Louis, op.cit. p.454. And Marlowe, op.cit. pp.215-216.
87. For more details about Bevin Plan see House of Common debate, 18-2-1947, vol.433.cols.985-989. and (Cmd. 7044) pp.11-14.
88. For more details about the Jewish demands see House of Commons Debate, 18-2-1947, vol. 433 cols. 988-989.
89. Ibid col. 987.
90. House of Commons Debates 18-2-1947. vol. 433, cols. 985-989.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Palestinian Responses to the U.N. Proposals to Solve the Palestine Conflict 1947-1948

Introduction

The practical result of thirty years of British rule in Palestine was the creation of a Plural Society with two different and segregated communities, the Palestinians and the Zionist settlers. The conflict between the native Arabs and the Zionist settlers started at the beginning of this settlement and grew wider and wider over time until it became clear, even to the British Government, that there was no hope for reconciliation between the two communities.

As we have seen in the previous Chapters, the British Government tried to solve the conflict by partition, single state or cantonization solutions. But when her proposals were rejected by both Arabs and Zionists, she issued a White Paper implying the establishment of an independent Palestine state within a ten year period regardless of Arab or Zionist objections. But soon after the end of World War Two Britain found herself unable to carry out the White Paper policy without causing serious damage to her relations with the U.S.A. The Zionists succeeded, during the War period, to win the U.S.A.' support for their demand to abrogate the White Paper's policy, to connect the Jewish refugee problem with the conflict in Palestine, and more importantly to endorse a Zionist Partition scheme for the establishment of a Jewish state in a viable area in Palestine.

In 1945 the British Government conceded to American pressure to have a say in Palestine affairs, and a joint Anglo-American Commission was formed to study the problem. As we have seen in Chapter Seven, the Commission recommended the continuation of the Mandate under U.N. Trusteeship, the admission of more Jewish immigrants, and the abolition of the 1940 restrictions on land sales to the Zionists. This practically meant the abolition of the White Paper policy. While the Arabs rejected the Report the British and the Americans differed in their interpretation of it and the best ways of implementing it. The Americans

and the Zionists demanded the immediate implementation of the first recommendation of the Report, the admission of 100,000 immigrants. The British insisted on implementing the Report as a whole, instead of selected parts, and put as a precondition to the admission of those immigrants the disarming of the Zionist terrorist organizations. Therefore two Anglo-American teams of experts met in London to try to solve these differences. They agreed that the best way to implement the Anglo-American Report was by establishing autonomous Arab and Jewish provinces with a central government in charge of security and foreign affairs.

Against this background and in the hope that the American Government would endorse these proposals, the British Government invited both Arabs and Zionists to yet another London Conference in the Summer of 1946. The Conference was held in two phases, September to October 1946, and January to February 1947. Only the Arabs and the British participated in the Conference, the Zionists boycotted it. During the first phase of the Conference, the British Government proposed the establishment of Arab and Jewish cantons according to whether there was an Arab or a Zionist majority with the possibility of developing these cantons into bi-national, federal or independent Arab and Jewish states. These proposals were rejected by the Arabs who demanded complete independence or at least the implementation of the White Paper's policy. The British Government adjourned the Conference until January 1947 in the hope that both Palestinians and Zionists would participate in its proceedings. But on October 1946 President Truman publicly announced his support for a Partition Scheme suggested by the Zionists and requested the British Government to consider the plan as the only basis for solving the problem. Since that date the fate of Palestine was determined by the influence of the U.S.A. on Britain and later on the U.N.

The problem which faced the British Government was this: how could she find a solution which would satisfy the Arabs, the Zionists, the Americans and at the same time secure her own interests in the area? Britain in fact was faced with an uneasy situation and she had to make a decision. Britain actually adopted and supported the idea of a "Jewish Home" in Palestine because she thought that such a "Jewish Home" would provide her with a good pretext to stay in Palestine for a long time and consequently maintain her influence over the whole Middle East. But she

soon realised that the "Jewish Home" idea had become the very reason why the Arabs demand her departure from their countries and would consequently lead to the loss of the vital economic and strategic interests which she sought to protect. More over Britain realised that she had moral obligations towards those Zionist settlers who came under her encouragement and protection and that she could not leave the country without ensuring their absolute safety.

After World War Two both Arabs and Zionists demanded that the British Government terminate the Mandate and quit Palestine. On the one hand, the Palestinians thought and expected that after the departure of the British they would be able to force their will on the Zionist settlers in Palestine and impose a settlement which would satisfy their basic demands, namely an independent Palestine with an Arab majority and guaranteed rights for the Jewish minority. On the other hand, the Zionists thought that they had the military power not only to protect themselves but also to establish a Jewish state if not in all of Palestine at least in a viable area of the country. They made it clear politically that they did not need British protection any more and followed this by terrorist attacks on the British Administration and forces in a designed move to force the British out of Palestine especially after they had secured the support of the United States of America for their demands.¹

The British position in Palestine became therefore desperate and they wanted to withdraw from the country with the least possible damage to their relations with both sides. Therefore, Britain looked to the United Nations as the best place to study and recommend a solution to the conflict which would guarantee British interests, and the security of the Zionist settlers. At the same time Britain would not appear responsible for it or for its implementation. Their representative to the U.N. made this very clear when he explained that: "We should not have the sole responsibility for enforcing a solution which is not accepted by both parties and which we cannot reconcile with our conscience."²

The British representative knew that there was no solution which would satisfy both parties since his own government had not been able to find

one or at least claimed so, over a period of 30 years, but he put it here clearly as a pretext for rejecting any solution which would not guarantee British influence in the country. Hurewitz argues that Britain had put such unrealistic conditions in order to be able to stay in Palestine especially after a growing desire for expansion in the area by the Russians³

The transfer of the Palestine conflict to the United Nations, however, gave no advantages to the Palestinians. They did not have the support of a super power or any influential power in the United Nations. It made it extremely difficult for them to reject a resolution supported by a majority in the organization, and if they did so they would be isolated and without any real support from the international community.

The Zionists, on the contrary, had obvious advantages. They already had the support of the United States for the establishment of a Jewish State in a viable area in Palestine and British approval for such a state, at least in principle, but perhaps in a smaller area.⁴ Finally a Jewish state suggested by the United Nations would be difficult for the British and the Arabs to reject and it would give the Zionists moral support from the international community.

It can be argued that the transfer of the Palestine conflict to the United Nations was similar to the transfer of the problem to the League of Nations in 1922. Britain used the League of Nations in 1922 as a tool to endorse and give some kind of legality to their policy in Palestine and in carrying out the policy of the Balfour Declaration.

The United Nations was used as a similar tool in 1947 to endorse the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine along the lines of a Zionist partition scheme suggested in 1946 and publically endorsed by the U.S.A. and approved in principle by Britain.⁵ As the League of Nations endorsed the British Jewish Home policy in 1922, the U.N. endorsed, under American influence, a partition plan favourable to the Zionists.

Since, however, most of the materials concerning the Palestine problem before the United Nations could be found in the United Nations records it seems to me that it is perhaps sufficient for the purpose of this Chapter to discuss the United Nations' major proposals to solve the

problem and the Palestinians reaction to them. The U.N. Partition Plan was seen as a good but lost opportunity for a lasting settlement. If this was true the following questions arise: What was it and what was the Arabs' response to it? Did the United Nations' solution reflect the wishes of the inhabitants of Palestine? Or was it simply a modified draft of previous British proposals? Why did the United Nations not implement its recommendation or resolution? Did the Palestinians suggest any solution?

The United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP)⁶

Britain requested the United Nations on 2nd April 1947, to summon a special session of the General Assembly for the purpose of constituting and instructing a special committee to study the Palestine conflict and to prepare recommendations for the future government of Palestine.⁷ It had not been usual for Britain to request an international body to form a committee to study the future government of any other Arab Mandated country such as Iraq and Transjordan. Rather Britain transferred the Administration in each case to a local government and then recommended its acceptance in the League of Nations or in the United Nations.

It seems therefore that the British objective from setting up an investigative body, despite their full knowledge of the root of the conflict, was to deprive the Palestinians of their right to independence and perhaps to appear as a neutral party in the eyes of both Arabs and Zionists. The immediate implication of forming such a commission was the deprivation of the Palestinian majority of their basic right to self-determination. Therefore it became clear from the outset that, once the terms of reference of the Commission were not based on the principle of justice and the right to self-determination, the Commission had little chance of recommending any solution which would be acceptable to the Arabs.

From the beginning, Britain and the United States rejected an Arab suggestion to include on the agenda of the U.N. General Assembly a supplementary item concerning the termination of the Mandate over Palestine and the declaration of its independence.⁸ Not only was the Arab request voted down, as a result of British and American rejection, but the latter succeeded in deciding the composition of the proposed

inquiry committee and its terms of reference, which included matters far removed from the local conflict between Palestinians and Zionists in Palestine, such as the Jewish refugee problem in Europe.⁹ It is worth noting here that this was clear evidence for the strong American influence on the U.N. which was similar to their influence over the Anglo-American Commission which I have discussed in Chapter Seven.

Britain and the United States also rejected the inclusion of any member of the Big-Five powers or the Arab states in the membership of the projected committee because of their "Special interests", but in fact to make their influence over the Commission's members easier. The British and Americans demanded the composition of the committee be from "neutral countries."¹⁰ Despite Arab objections to both the composition of the Commission and its terms of reference: "The Anglo-American view was upheld in the end."¹¹

The Arab Higher Committee informed the United Nations that they would not be able to cooperate with the Special Committee and stated the following reasons for this position.¹²

1. The Committee had a wide range of terms of reference including the Jewish refugee problem in Europe, which should not be included in the investigations.

2. The United Nations refused to insert the termination of the Mandate and the declaration of independence in the agenda of the special session and the terms of reference of the special committee.

Finally they declared that: "Palestine Arabs' natural rights are self-evident and cannot continue to be subject to investigation but deserve to be recognized on the basis of the principles of the United Nations",¹³ namely, the right of every people to self-determination. It is worth noting that the Arab states disagreed with the Arab Higher Committee's decision and agreed to co-operate with UNSCOP.

The UNSCOP Report¹⁴

The members of the special Committee arrived in Palestine on 14th and 15th June 1947. By 31st August, they completed their investigations and submitted their Report to the General Assembly of the U.N. After analysing the problem and summarizing the main solutions previously advanced, the committee unanimously endorsed eleven guiding principles, provided for the termination of the Mandate, independence for Palestine

after a transitional period during which administration of the country would be the responsibility of the United Nations, and for the preservation of the Holy Places. A twelfth principle was approved (with two members dissenting and one recording no opinion) providing that "In the appraisal of the Palestine question, it be accepted as incontrovertible that any solution for Palestine cannot be considered as a solution of the Jewish problem."

The Committee's Report was a collection of some of the previous British proposals and contained two main suggestions:

1. A Plan of Partition with economic union supported by seven members of the Committee; Canada, Czechoslovakia, Guatemala, Netherlands, Peru, Sweden, and Uruguay.¹⁵ This Plan divided Palestine into an Arab state, a Jewish state, and an International Zone of Jerusalem to be administered by the United Nations.

The area allocated to the Arab State was to comprise 4,476 square miles or 42,88 percent of the total of Palestine. It would include Western Galilee, the hilly central area with the exception of the Jerusalem enclave and the Coastal Plain. In regard to population, the Arab state would contain 725,000 Arabs and only 10,000 Zionist settlers and Jews.¹⁶

The Jewish state was to comprise 5,893 square miles or 56,47 percent of the total. It was to consist of Eastern Galilee, the Coastal Plain including the Arab city of Jaffa and the Nageb. As regards population, the Jewish state was to contain 498,000 Jews and 497,000 Palestinians. Jewish land ownership within the proposed Jewish state was less than 10 percent and less than 7 percent in the whole of Palestine.¹⁷

Jerusalem International Zone would comprise 68 square miles or 0,65 percent. It would contain 105,000 Palestinians and 100,000 Jews.

2. The Second Recommendation was a federal state plan supported by three members: India, Iran and Yugoslavia.¹⁸ This Plan provided inter alia, that an independent state of Palestine would be established which would comprise an Arab state and a Jewish state, Jerusalem would be its capital. The federal state would comprise a federal government and governments of the Arab and Jewish States respectively. The federal government would exercise full powers over such matters as foreign affairs, defence, national motorways, transport and communications. The

Arab and Jewish states would enjoy full control over local self-government in its various aspects. There was to be a single Palestinian nationality and citizenship, with guaranteed equal rights for all minorities and fundamental human rights and freedoms, as well as free access to the Holy Places.

Both Palestinians and Zionists reacted quickly to the U.N.S.C.O.P. Report when it was made public early in September 1947. While the Palestinians denounced both the Partition and the federal state plans, the Zionists rejected the federal scheme but accepted the Partition Plan.

The second session of the General Assembly, convening in September 1947, had before it "the Question of Palestine" submitted by Britain, the UNSCOP Report and an Arab proposal for the termination of the Mandate over Palestine and the recognition of its independence. The General Assembly set up an Ad Hoc Committee on Palestine to study these three items. This Special Committee invited the Palestine Arab Higher Committee and the Jewish Agency to send representatives to its deliberations.

On 29 September 1947, the representative of the Arab Higher Committee was invited to address the Committee.¹⁹ He began by stating that it was the duty of the Palestinians to defend their country against all aggression, including the Zionist campaign to secure by force Palestine which was not theirs by rights. The duty of the United Nations was, he said, to assist self-determination against aggression. He reminded the Committee that: The rights and patrimony of the Palestinians had been subject of no fewer than eighteen investigations within 25 years, all to no purpose. Commissions of Inquiry had either reduced the national and legal rights of the Palestinians or had over glossed them. The few recommendations, he added, favourable to the Palestinians had been ignored by the Mandatory power.

The Representative of the Arab Higher Committee then pointed out that the struggle of the Palestinian people against Zionism had nothing in common with antisemitism. The Arab World, he said, had for centuries been one of the rare havens of refuge for the Jews of the world until the atmosphere of neighbourliness had been poisoned by the Balfour Declaration and by the aggressive spirit of the Zionist Movement. He

disputed the claims of Zionists to Palestine as having legal or moral basis. The religious connection of the Jews with Palestine which he noted was shared by Muslims and Christians, gave them no secular claim to the country. As for the Balfour Declaration, the British Government had no right to dispose of Palestine, which it had occupied in the name of the Allies as a liberator and not as a conqueror. The Declaration was in contradiction to the Covenant of the League of Nations and was an immoral, unjust and illegal promise.

The Palestinian representative then said that the Palestinians would be pleased to see the distressed Jews of Europe given permanent relief. But he pointed out that Palestine had already absorbed far more Jews than its just share, and the Jews could not impose their will on other nations by choosing the place and the manner of their relief, particularly if that choice was inconsistent with the principles of international law and justice, and prejudicial to the interests of the nation directly concerned.

The Palestinian representative noted that the solution of the Palestine conflict was simple. It lay in the Charter of the United Nations in accordance with which the Palestinians, constituting the majority of the population, were entitled to a free and independent state. The United Nations, he pointed out, was not legally competent to decide or impose Palestine's constitutional organization, and he outlined the following principles on which any solution to the problem must rest to be acceptable to the Palestinians:

1. The establishment of a democratic Arab State in the whole of Palestine.
2. That state must respect human rights, fundamental freedoms and equality of all persons before the law.
3. That state must protect the legitimate rights and interests of all minorities.
4. That freedom of worship and access to the Holy places must be guaranteed to all.

However, on 22 October 1947, the Ad Hoc Committee appointed two Sub-Committees to examine and report on the findings of the UNSCOP. Sub-Committee 1, composed of nine Pro-Partition states²⁰ (including the U.S.A and the Soviet Union) recommended the adoption of the Partition

Plan with economic union after slight modification. The main changes included increasing the powers of the joint economic board and shifting the boundaries slightly to reduce the number of Palestinians left in the proposed Jewish State. The proposed Arab State was to comprise 4,500 square miles and contained 800,00 Arabs and 10,000 Jews while the proposed Jewish State was to comprise 5,500 square miles and contain about 500,000 Jews and about 400,000 Palestinians.²¹

Sub-Committee 2, comprising nine states (including Egypt, Pakistan, Syria, Colombia and Afghanistan) presented three draft resolutions:²²

1. The General Assembly should request an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice on certain legal questions concerning the competence of the United Nations to recommend or enforce any solution contrary to the wishes of the majority of the people of Palestine.

2. A recommendation for an international settlement for the Jewish refugee problem.

3. The third resolution provided for the creation of a provisional government of the people of Palestine to which the authority of the Mandatory power would be transferred, as a preparatory step to the setting up of an elected constituent Assembly. Sub-Committee three was set up to conciliate the two opposing sides. But it hardly functioned at all.

On November 25, 1947, the Ad Hoc Committee passed the amended Partition resolution by a vote of twenty five to thirteen with 17 abstentions.²³ The recommendations of sub-Committee 2 were voted down.²⁴ On the 26 November 1947, the General Assembly began to debate the Partition resolution passed by its Ad Hoc Committee and on 29 November 1947, adopted the Partition Plan with economic union by a vote of 33 in favour, 13 against, with 10 abstentions.²⁵

Arab Response to the UNSCOP Report and the U.N. Partition Plan

Both Palestinian representatives and Arab Governments rejected the UNSCOP Report and the U.N. Partition Plan for the following reasons:²⁶

1. The Arabs argued that UNSCOP had not based its report on the basic principle of the right to self-determination and in doing so they had violated the U.N. Charter.

Arab claims to Palestine, they argued, rested upon their long occupation and centuries of continuous possession of the country. And

since the removal of the legal basis of the Mandate, after the dissolution of the League of Nations, and since they formed a two thirds majority in Palestine they were entitled, like any other nation, to the establishment of an independent Arab State in the whole of Palestine without the intervention either of the United Nations or any other party. The Arabs also denied even the legal or moral right of the General Assembly to partition Palestine without consulting the inhabitants of the country and against the wishes of its native majority.²⁷ They argued that the General Assembly could only make recommendations which had no legal binding force.

2. The Arabs argued that while the Arabs' claims rested on long possession of Palestine, the Zionists' claim rested on the Balfour Declaration and historical association of the Hebrews with Palestine in Biblical times. The Arabs repeated their previous claims. Firstly, that the Balfour Declaration was illegal because it was given by Britain, who had no right to do so, to the Zionists, who had no political or sovereignty rights over the country. Secondly, that the Declaration was given without the consent of the Arabs and it violated the principles of human rights and self-determination. Thirdly, that Palestinian independence was promised by the British Government to the Arabs in pledges before and after the issuing of the Balfour Declaration such as, the Hussein-MacMahon Agreement of 1915-1916 and the 1939 White Paper. They argued that Britain never contemplated that a Jewish national home meant a Jewish state in Palestine as a whole or in any part of it when she had recognized the right of the Arabs to independence in the 1939 White Paper.²⁸

The Arabs, however, accepted the fact that Palestine was a sacred place for Muslims, Christians and Jews but rejected the Zionists' claim that they were entitled to colonize the country against the will of its natives and that every Jew in the World had an exclusive right to immigrate and settle in Palestine. The Palestinians in fact repeated their previous arguments (see Chapter Two) for rejecting Zionist claims to the right to settle and colonize Palestine. They argued that not every Jew in the World is physically descended from the earlier Hebrews who lived in Palestine two thousand years ago and stressed that most of European Jewry were Polish, Russians and Germans of Khazar origin.²⁹ They argued that the Jews' religious connection with Palestine did not

give them political rights over the country.

In contrast, the Palestinians were the physical descendants of the Canaanites and the Philistines, the original inhabitants of Palestine, who had continually lived in and possessed the country since time immemorial which give them more valid and legal right to Palestine than any Zionist historical or other claims to the country.

3. The Arabs opposed partition and the establishment of a Jewish state for security, political, economic and social reasons.

a. Security reasons. Palestine is the centre of communication of the Arab World and the only land bridge between the Arabs in Asia and those in north Africa. It had common frontiers with four Arab states and the creation of an alien Jewish state would hamper Arab unity, security, peace and stability in the Middle East as a whole. "There is no doubt that the forcible creation of a Jewish state in the heart of the Arab World introduce a new highly disturbing threat to peace and stability in the Middle East."³⁰

The creation, with the assistance of the West, of such an alien state was seen as a confrontation between the West and the Muslim World. "In the heart of the population of all the countries from the north African Atlantic coast to the steppes of central Asia, you sow doubt and mistrust of the designs and motives of the Western Powers. You take the greatest risk if impairing beyond the possibility of repair, any chance of real co-operation between East and West, by thus forcibly driving what in effect amounts to a Western wedge into the heart of the Middle East."³¹

This is an important analysis of the conflict. The Arabs did not look on the Zionists as a persecuted minority who were really seeking freedom and refuge. Rather they looked on them as a spear head of the Western Powers who would work to secure more influence for those imperialist Powers in the Middle East. The Arabs, with sound reason, feared that such a Jewish state would, according to the Zionists' declared policy, flood the country with foreign immigrants and eventually seek expansion at the expense of the Palestinians and the neighbouring Arab States.³²

In contrast the conflict was seen in the West, and perhaps still so, as a conflict between Western civilisation, represented by the European

Zionist settlers, and backwardness and barbarism represented by the Arabs. Such a concept about the conflict was formed under the influence of Zionists, British and Americans' propaganda in order to justify their support for Zionism and the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, which would represent the Western civilization and would guarantee their long term of influence in the area. This concept was expressed clearly by a British expert on the Middle East: "Whatever our interests may be called, economic, political or strategic, they are all part of one interest, the survival of Western civilisation, to which "Israel" professes to belong."³³

b. Political reasons: the Arabs rejected partition on political grounds especially regarding the unfairness of the distribution of population. The population in Palestine as a whole, according to the report of the Special Committee on 31 December 1946, was 1,935,000 of which 1,327,332 were Arabs and 608,225 Jews.³⁴

The Jewish State would contain: 498,000 Jews and 407,000 Arabs, while the Arab state would contain: 725,000 Arabs and 10,000 Jews. If we add the number of unsettled Arabs (nomads) who would be incorporated in the Jewish state to the Arab population then the population in the Jewish state would be: 509,780 Arabs and 499,020 Jews, so the Arabs would form a majority from the outset in the proposed Jewish state.

It is even more instructive to consider the relative proportion of Arabs and Jews in the three regions which would comprise the area of the Jewish state. In the southern section, the Beersheba area, there were 103,820 Arabs as against 1,020 Jews or the Jews represented about 1 per cent of the total. Despite this fact this area was allocated to the proposed Jewish state. Similarly in the northern section of the proposed Jewish state, Eastern Galilee, the Arab population was three times as great as the Jewish population, or 86,200 Arabs against 28,750 Jews. Only in the central section of the proposed Jewish state had the Jews a majority and even there it was not a decisive majority. The representative population figures were 469,250 Jews and 306,760 Arabs.³⁵

The Palestinians argued that such a partition was neither logical nor justified. While it recognized the right of the Jewish minority to self-determination it denied such a right not only to the Arab majority in Palestine as a whole but also to the substantial Palestinian minority

in the proposed Jewish state. The Arab Higher Committee, the body which represented the Palestinians at that time, protested: "How was it possible to recognize the right of half a million of Jews, most of them still nationals of foreign nations, to self-determination while at the same time refusing it to half a million Arabs... How could a minority be allowed to separate itself from the majority and at the same time to take under its domination an equal number from the majority."³⁶

Indeed it seems to me that partition as suggested by the U.N. was neither fair nor justified. It could not fully be understood outside the context of the colonial powers' domination of the U.N. and their strong influence over the Third World members to utilise double standards in dealing with matters concerning Western settlers, Western countries and Third World countries. The Arab-Zionist conflict was not exceptional. This made many countries in the Third World lose their confidence in the Organization. Indeed the Palestinians looked at the U.N. as a tool which was used by the Western Countries as well as the Eastern Countries to pass resolutions in their favour and against the national interest of the Palestinians or other national movements in the Third World.

The double standard followed by the U.N in dealing with the rights of Arabs and Zionist settlers in the Palestine conflict was, in fact, a revival of the Nineteenth Century concept of the "White man's Burden", which had been used as a pretext by the colonial powers to annex the so called backward areas.³⁷ Such a notion was expressed by the Zionists in their justification of their demands for a Jewish state and their denial of the same right for the Arabs: "In a unitary state a highly democratic minority (the Jews) would be forced down to the economic and social level of an Arab majority, whereas under Partition the Arab minority would benefit from contact with the progressive Jewish majority."³⁸

Clearly such concepts should not be acceptable in the U.N. or in any other organization whose main aims are supposed to be peace, equality and freedom for all. Peace could not be established on bases other than justice and equality.

c. Economic reasons:

Closely connected with the distribution of population was the land ownership in the proposed Jewish state.³⁹ The Arabs argued that there

was not a single sub-district in which the percentage of Jewish land ownership exceeded 39 per cent, and that in nine of the sixteen sub-districts the percentage of Jewish ownership was less than 5 per cent.⁴⁰ The Palestinians protested that while the Jews represented only one-third of the population and owned only less than 7 per cent of the total land they were given more than half of Palestine's lands including nearly all the citrus land, 80 per cent of the cereal area and 40 per cent of Arab industry. The ownership of fertile land was as follows:⁴¹

<u>Category of crops</u>	<u>Arab ownership</u>	<u>Jewish ownership</u>
Citrus	135,368	139,728
Bananas	1,843	1,079
Plantations	1,052,222	94,167
Taxable cereals		
categories (9-13)	5,653,346	869,109
Categories (14-15)	823,646	67,839

The Palestinians argued that: since citriculture was the most important industry in Palestine and the main export crop, amounting to 80 per cent of the total value of exports, and since about 65 per cent of the population gained a living directly from agriculture, and since 50 per cent of Palestine's cereals were being imported, the inclusion of most of these producing areas in the Jewish state made it impracticable to establish a viable Arab state.⁴²

This Palestinian view was supported by the finding of the Sub-Committee 2 of the AD HOC Committee which concluded: "It would thus appear that the partition proposal is legally objectionable, politically unjust and economically disastrous; in short it is utterly unworkable."⁴³

d. Social and religious reasons: The Arabs also rejected partition because they feared that their religion and other social and cultural heritage would not be secured or guaranteed under the rule of a westernized Jewish state and under Jewish laws. The position of the Muslim woman provides us with a good example for such fears.

The Arabs, however, proposed as a solution to the problem, the establishment of a unitary state representing all the inhabitants of the country and based on the principle of self-determination.⁴⁴ At the last moment and during the debate on partition the Arabs, in a tactical move

to avoid the partition which was becoming certain, accepted a federal state constituted from Arab and Jewish cantons. Their proposals included:⁴⁵

1. The establishment of an independent federal state of Palestine not later than 1st August 1948.

2. The government of the independent federal state of Palestine should be constituted on a federal basis and should consist of a federal government and the governments of Arab and Jewish cantons. The relationship between the federal government and the cantonal governments would be guided principally by the basic pattern of the constitution of the United States.

3. The delimitation of the cantonal boundaries should be carried out in such a way as to leave the smallest possible Arab or Jewish minorities in each canton.

however, this final Arab proposal was rejected by the Zionists, the Americans and the Russians. The Russian's representative, Mr. Gromyko, argued that: "We referred to the this (the federal state) as one of the possibilities at the outset of the debate on this question. The delegation of the USSR considers that it would be wrong now to set the General Assembly back six months and to begin all over again."⁴⁶ It must be remembered that the position of the Arabs towards the Russian's proposal of a federal state was similar to their position towards the British White Paper of 1939. In both cases the Arabs rejected the proposals when they were suggested to regret their action at a later date.

The Russian, indeed, made it clear on May 14th 1947 that they would support a unitary state in Palestine if both sides accepted it.⁴⁷ They were still anti-Zionist at that time. According to Hurewitz: "In Russian eyes Zionism was merely a tool of British imperialism."⁴⁸

But from the middle of May 1947, according to Khouri, the Russians "hoping to gain some political advantages from increased tension and strife in the Middle East and from the early departure of Britain from Palestine, began to alter their traditionally anti-Zionist position."⁴⁹

It seems to me that the Palestinians followed wrong tactics in handling the Palestine problem before the U.N. For example, the Arabs knew that the United States and her allies would support partition and

Britain would not object to such a solution. Therefore, the only rational thing which they could have done, in order to block a partition resolution, was to reach an understanding with the Russians and the Eastern Bloc. The Russians were, until then, not committed to either side and in theory they could go either way to support the Arabs or the Zionists. The Russians perhaps, preferred the binational solution and if the Arabs had co-ordinated their position with them and accepted their proposal when it was suggested, at the beginning of the U.N. debate, or if they had suggested their own federal scheme at that time, the outcome of the U.N. debate on the Palestine conflict might have been different and partition might have been blocked by a Russian veto.

Of course there were other factors which played an important role in preventing the Arabs from coordinating with the Russians. For example, three of their independent states (Egypt, Iraq, and Transjordan) were still under British influence and tied with unequal treaties and Saudi Arabia was pro-American and pro-British. The position of the Syrian and Lebanese governments would have been vulnerable to French and Western influence if they had tried to go to the Russians at that time. It is highly likely that if the Arab states had made a deal with the Russians they could have been thrown out of power by the British and their allies. Their position in fact is one of typical traditional leaders facing the danger of losing their posts and privileges in confronting the colonial powers. They choose rather to compromise and accept the "status quo" than to take the risk of fighting colonialism.

The other thing which is perhaps worth noting here is the way in which the Arab and Zionist position regarding partition was presented to Western public opinion. While Zionist acceptance of partition, a scheme which met almost all their demands, was presented as a compromise, the Arabs' rejection of partition, a scheme prejudicial to their rights, was presented as an extreme or uncompromising position. It is perhaps more important for us to know the Palestinians' point of view and their reasons for rejecting partition than to pass judgement on their action in terms of right and wrong. For the Palestinians the U.N. did not consult them over a matter concerning their future. If the U.N. did not bother to take their views into consideration, why should they accept the U.N. recommendation?

The lesson which the U.N. must have learned from the Palestine conflict and the way which the U.N. handled it must be that the U.N. must take into consideration the wishes of the people directly concerned with the conflict and not suggest proposals in accord with the wishes of the big powers or other parties. Therefore, it seems to me that peace between the Arabs and "Israel" is not possible without a full recognition of the Palestinians' right to self determination in those areas allocated to them by the U.N. respective resolutions. Time and events had proved that the U.N., "Israel" and U.S.A. approach to solve the conflict through separate agreements with some Arab states as an alternative to a negotiated settlement between "Israel" and the Palestinians, is a futile effort and can only delay the time of the next confrontation.

For the Zionists the matter was much better. The U.N. scheme in fact gave them more than their actual share of land and population. It was the type of solution which they wanted and one which it would not be possible to get through the U.N. without the U.S.A.' influence. "Without U.S. leadership and the pressures which developed during U.N. consideration of the question, the necessary two-thirds majority in the General Assembly could not have been obtained."⁵⁰ Therefore, Zionist acceptance of partition was not a compromise but rather an approval of a pre-prepared and known Zionist scheme which had been suggested and accepted by America since 1946.⁵¹ Moreover, a short look at the three areas which were to form the Jewish state would prove that these areas were not allocated to the Zionists as a compromise but rather these areas were intentionally selected to include water resources (Eastern Galilee), citrus and other important plantation and cereals (The Coastal Plain) and the Negeb with its potential oil and mineral reserves and as a strategic location as an exit to the Red Sea.⁵²

The division of Palestine, with the allocation of more than half the country including the best fertile and irrigable lands to the Zionists, was similar to the division of the land of South Africa whereby the best land was given to the white settlers while the waste land was allocated to the blacks and designated as the home lands for the black majority of the country. Such unjust division, be it from a racist regime like South Africa or from the U.N., does not make any difference to the natives. So long as a solution is not based on the principles of equality, justice and self-determination, it will never lead to peaceful settlement but to

conflict and it will be resisted by one party or the other.

Indeed for many countries and people the U.N appeared to be an impartial organization and any rejection of its decisions would appear extreme and unconstructive. This however, applied to the Arab position on partition. Such misconceptions about the nature of the Arab position created a gap of communication between the Arabs and the West. It became a sort of Arab complex that all the Western countries were natural supporters of Zionism and therefore it seemed to many of them as hopeless or a waste of time to try to change Western public opinion or even make it more understanding towards the Arab position.

The United Nations, however, failed even to secure for the Palestinians those hilly areas which were allocated to them by the partition plan recommended by the U.N. itself. Before proceeding to discuss the reasons behind the failure of the U.N. to implement partition it is necessary to clear up a major misconception about this plan. Most scholars who have dealt with the Palestine problem before the U.N. have concentrated on the aspect of partition, and both Arab and Zionist attitudes to it, as if the U.N's plan included only partition. And since the Arabs had rejected partition and the Zionists had accepted it, it was understandable why most of them reached similar conclusions namely blamed the Palestinians for not taking the opportunity of establishing an Arab state according to the partition scheme suggested by the U.N. The new line of thinking which I would like to follow here is to examine the U.N. Resolution 181(II)⁵³ as a whole and to try to offer some answers to questions such as, why did the U.N. fail to implement their plan and who was responsible for that failure?

Resolution 181(II) adopted by the U.N. on 29th November 1947, included a plan of partition with economic union. This plan was to be carried out in three steps: Termination of the Mandate, partition and independence. The British Government had made it clear that it would not take part in implementing partition and left the matter to the U.N to decide the best way to implement it.⁵⁴ Therefore, Resolution 181(II) recommended practical steps to be executed before partition itself could be implemented. These preparatory steps were:

1. The establishment of a Palestine Commission to include representatives from five states.⁵⁵
2. The commission was supposed to take over the administration of

Palestine from the Mandatory power gradually and in conformity with the recommendation of the U.N. and under the guidance of the Security Council: "The Mandatory Power shall to the fullest possible extent co-ordinate its plans for withdrawal with the plans of the Commission to take over and administer areas which have been evacuated."⁵⁶

3. On its arrival in Palestine the Commission should proceed to carry out measures for the establishment of the frontiers of the Arab and Jewish states.

4. The commission should select and establish in each state as rapidly as possible a Provisional Council of Government. The provisional government of each state should recruit an armed militia from the residents of that state, sufficient in number to maintain internal order and to prevent frontier clashes.

5. If by April 1st 1948 a provisional council of government could not be selected for either of the states or, if selected could not carry out its functions, the Commission should communicate that fact to the Security Council for such action with respect to that state as the council might deem proper.

6. There should be a progressive transfer, from the Mandatory Power to the Commission, of the responsibility for all the functions of government, including that of maintaining law and order in areas evacuated by the British Forces. Moreover, resolution 181(II) requested that the Security Council determine as a "threat to the peace, breach of the peace or act of aggression, in accordance with article 39 of the Charter, any attempt to alter by force the settlement envisaged by this resolution."⁵⁷

In brief the Palestine Commission was created and charged with the task of implementing the measures recommended by the U.N. in its plan of partition with economic union, provided that the Commission should act under the guidance of the Security Council and should receive from that Council such instructions as the Council might consider to issue.⁵⁸ The question which arises here is: Why was the Commission not able to implement the partition plan? The answer to this question can be found in the Commission's reports to the Security Council. The following are among its main points:⁵⁹

1. Concerning the attitude of the Mandatory Power, they made it clear that:⁶⁰ The mandate would be terminated on 15 May 1948 and that the Commission would not be allowed to enter the country earlier than two

weeks before this date. Meanwhile the Mandatory would retain full responsibility for the country as a whole and there would be no transfer of authority to the Commission before the end of the Mandate.

2. The Commission was advised that the Mandatory could not facilitate the delimitation of the frontiers on the grounds, that it would not allow any selected provisional councils of governments to exercise any authority, nor would they allow the establishment of armed militias before the end of the Mandate and: "There can be no question of the outgoing authority handing over to the Commission their former servants under any obligation."⁶¹ The Commission concluded that: "The refusal of the Mandatory Power to co-operate in implementing the plan, its rejection of any progressive transfer of authority, and the inability of the Commission to be in Palestine, constitute a serious jeopardy to the discharge of the Commission's responsibility."⁶²

Britain in fact obstructed the execution of the most significant part of the Partition plan, namely the practical preparatory work which was necessary if partition was to be successfully carried out. The United States representative correctly announced before the Security Council on 19th March 1948 that: "The Plan proposed by the General Assembly is an integral plan which cannot succeed unless each of its parts can be carried out."⁶³

Indeed to take out the practical part of the U.N. partition plan would make the whole scheme no more than an empty recommendation. The Commission, however, supplied the Security Council with two monthly reports and a special report.⁶⁴ These reports included their work, its needs and the major obstacles it had encountered in its efforts to implement the partition plan. It stressed the fact that without the effective assistance of the Security Council it was firmly convinced that, it could not discharge the great responsibility entrusted to it by the U.N.

In their second report the Commission made it clear that unless they got armed forces they would not be able to implement partition. The Commission argued that the Mandatory forces: "must be replaced by an adequate non-Palestinian force which will assist law-abiding elements in both the Arab and Jewish communities, organized under the general direction of the Commission, in maintaining order and security in Palestine, and thereby enabling the Commission to carry out the

recommendations of the General Assembly. Otherwise, the period immediately following the termination of the Mandate will be a period of uncontrolled and widespread bloodshed in Palestine."⁶⁵

The Security Council, however, according to the Commission: "Did not provide armed assistance for the Commission, nor did it give to the Commission guidance or instructions, as envisaged in the resolution of the Assembly."⁶⁶

The refusal of the Security Council to carry out its responsibilities in providing necessary armed forces to implement the Partition Plan was the second major factor leading to the failure of the Palestine Commission to implement Partition,⁶⁷ the first major factor being the attitude of the British Mandatory Government.

Since both America and Russia supported the Partition Plan it was expected that they would work together to implement that solution through the Security Council. The question which arises here is why the Security Council did not provide the Palestine Commission with the necessary forces to implement the U.N. Partition Plan. The problem was that both the Americans and the Russians had supported Partition, not because such a solution would bring peace and stability or because it was a fair and just solution, but rather because each of them thought that such a solution would serve their own aims in this strategic area.⁶⁸ The Russians had apparently become convinced that they had more to gain than to lose from the Partitioning of Palestine because according to Khouri it would:⁶⁹

1. Drive out British control and influence and increase anti-Western feeling generally in the Middle East, thus making it possible for the Russians to make some headway there.
2. Bring about a highly nationalistic anti-British Jewish state containing many thousands of Russian immigrants,
3. Cause a general increase in tension and unrest in the Middle East which would hurt the West and enable the Communists to exploit the situation.
4. Compel the Security Council, where Russia had a veto, to deal with the Palestine conflict and require the U.N. to dispatch an international force, possibly including Russian troops, into Palestine.

The Russians, in fact, succeeded in creating the conditions of instability in the Middle East and became one of the major factors which have to be taken into account in any efforts to solve the Arab-Israeli conflict.⁷⁰ It is odd enough to discover that the Russians today are supporting the same people, the Palestinians, who became the victims of the Russians self-interested policy in 1947, when they supported Partition without taking any practical and effective measures to stop the displacement and the tragedy of the Palestinian people, which was only possible because the two super powers, Russia and America, in an unprecedented agreement, agreed on Partition without any guarantee for its implementation.

The United States on the other hand supported Partition because they believed that it was in the interests of the United States to do so. As Clifford, president Truman's consul, presented the Palestine problem to Truman. "The Palestine problem should not be approached as a Jewish question, or an Arab question, or a United Nations question. The sole question is what is best for the United States of America."⁷¹

Clifford advised the President that: "Vigorous American support of the U.N.'s Palestine decision is the only policy which is in American interests in the Middle East."⁷² Clifford also discounted Arab threats of forcing an oil embargo or that the United States interests would be damaged if America supported Partition. He argued that "the Arab States have no customer for their oil other than the United States... and that they must have oil royalties or go broke."⁷³ In a prejudiced remark he claimed that if it were not to support Partition "the United States appears in the ridiculous role of trembling before threats of a few nomadic desert tribes."⁷⁴ Other reasons, however, were given as an explanation for the Americans' support for Partition such as Truman's religious, humanitarian feeling or because he believed that a Jewish State would relieve Jewish suffering and that Partition was a practicable solution that could be achieved "without blood shed."⁷⁵

The United States on the other hand opposed and still opposes any Russian involvement or penetration into the Middle East, even within a United Nations force. The standing American policy on this subject is that such an event constitutes a danger to the United States security. "Any solution of the Palestine problem which invites direct Soviet participation in administration, policing or military operations in

Palestine is a danger to the security of the United States."⁷⁶ The Americans, in fact, wanted to solve the Palestine conflict within their own arrangement with their Western Allies and exclude the Russians, whom the Americans considered "the only nation that would gain from sending troops into Palestine. Since both the U.K. and the U.S. have strong strategic reasons for refusing to allow Soviet or Soviet-controlled troops to enter Palestine it is highly improbable that an international police force will ever be formed."⁷⁷

It is worth mentioning here that the rivalry between the Americans and the Russians, which prevented the establishment of an international police force to implement the U.N. Plan, still remains a significant negative factor in preventing the convening of a proposed International Peace Conference on the Arab-Israeli conflict.⁷⁸ Such a conference would include, in addition to Arabs and "Israel", the five permanent members of the Security Council. Both America and "Israel" oppose such an idea because they do not want any Russian or P.L.O. participation and insist on direct negotiations between the Arab states and "Israel" to solve the conflict. In my view, peace cannot be achieved in the Middle East without the full participation of the Palestinians in any future conference on the Palestine conflict.

The United States policy during the first quarter of 1948 was to allow the local conflict in Palestine to develop under the eyes of the 100,000 British troops in Palestine and at the same time to frustrate any efforts which might be taken by the Security Council to form armed forces to be sent to Palestine.⁷⁹ The United States tried during this period to give the impression that it was retreating from its support of Partition by spreading doubts about the competence of the Security Council and the General Assembly to implement Partition by force. In his statement before the Security Council the American representative stressed that: "The Security Council should instruct the Palestine Commission to suspend its efforts to implement the proposed Partition Plan."⁸⁰ He then suggested the establishment of a temporary trusteeship for Palestine.⁸¹ A draft letter from Truman to Attlee gives us a similar attitude towards Partition. "We cannot undertake to impose this solution (Partition) on the people of Palestine by the use of force, since the Charter of the United Nations does not empower the Security Council or the General Assembly to enforce such political recommendations."⁸²

The American tactics, however, succeeded in giving the Arabs the impression that the Americans were finally convinced that Partition was not just and should not be imposed upon the Arabs against their wishes. The Arabs were pleased by this American position and indeed some Arabs considered the American position as a change of heart about partition. The American consul in Jerusalem reported the effect of such American tactics upon the Arabs: "Arabs, while pleased with United States abandonment of Partition regard it as only the natural return of the U.S. to principles of democracy and justice and are glad Arabs and Americans can resume traditional friendship."⁸³

The Arabs also misunderstood the real aim of the British Government when it refused to allow the Palestine Commission to do the preparatory work which was to precede independence: "A general disbelief among the Palestinian Arabs that Britain had any intention of evacuation. The Arabs had not forgotten that the Peel Report had come to nothing, after having been all but adopted."⁸⁴ Not only did the Arabs misunderstand both American and British real intentions but some scholars and writers did so too. Some writers for example maintained that the British refusal to allow the Palestine Commission to carry out their duties before the end of the Mandate was a neutral position.⁸⁵ Others considered the American tactics before the Security Council a retreat from their pro-Zionist position and support of Partition.⁸⁶

There is much evidence to suggest that such views were not entirely correct. For instance, the British Government knew more than anybody else that the Zionists had well-organised, trained and armed forces compared to a poorly armed unorganized Palestinian population.⁸⁷ In preventing the establishment of armed militias and the demarcation of the borders between the proposed Arab and Jewish states they served the Zionist side. During the local fight which broke out in Palestine before the end of the Mandate, the British practically helped the Zionists by not only preventing the Arab regular armies from entering Palestine, but also by allowing the Zionist forces to occupy large areas allocated to the proposed Arab state and uprooting almost all of its Arab inhabitants. The British Forces not only watched in silence the occupation of Arab areas and the displacement of thousands of Palestinians but also helped in transporting them to other areas inside and outside Palestine,⁸⁸ helping the Zionists to achieve their exclusive

state as I will show in the next Chapter.

On the other hand the Americans in fact never intended to abandon Partition, but rather it seems that their tactics were designed to create a temporary and ready alternative in case the Zionists could not win a complete victory over the Palestinians or if they could not secure all those parts allocated to them by the United Nations Plan. President Truman himself made it clear to his secretary of state that the American position was not a retreat from Partition. "I want to make it clear, however, that nothing should be presented to Security Council that could be interpreted as a recession on our part from the position we took in the General Assembly."⁸⁹

Trusteeship as the best alternative was also discussed in the British Foreign Office as another alternative for which the Zionists would mobilize American support if they failed to get what they wanted. "If Partition was either defeated, or approved with borders considered insufficient by the Zionists, the latter might support, and mobilize American support for, trusteeship as the best alternative."⁹⁰

In a letter to president Truman the Department of State made it clear that Trusteeship would be suggested, if Partition was not implemented, as a measure to block Palestine independence and not as a retreat from Partition. "The Department of State considers that it would then be clear that Palestine is not yet ready for self-government and that some form of United Nations trusteeship for an additional period of time will be necessary."⁹¹ The Americans' tactics and policy during this period puzzled many observers who thought that the Americans had changed their pro-Zionist policy or abandoned Partition, especially when the Americans, after the Zionists' major success in the local war in Palestine, stopped talking about the trusteeship proposal and when they recognized the new Jewish state within 11 minutes of the official declaration of the establishment of that state by the Zionists leaders on 15th May 1948.

15th May, however, marked the end of the British Mandate, the proclamation of "Israel" and not only the replacement of British occupation by Zionist occupation for many Arab areas but also the displacement of 200,000 Palestinians from their villages, towns and cities. Not many Western people knew that the Palestinian refugee

problem had been created before the end of the Mandate, and because this problem has a direct implication on any future settlement of the conflict, I will discuss its origin in the next chapter.

Concluding Remarks

After nearly three decades of British sponsorship of Zionist settlement in Palestine, Palestinian society was transformed into a plural society with open conflict between its main segments, the Palestinian Arabs and the Zionist settlers. These two communities were not only segregated in their political, social, economic and all other aspects of their lives, but also demanded the establishment of their own states in the same country.

The British Government failed to bring about a peaceful settlement between them and therefore she transferred the problem to the U.N. Britain, however, did not transfer the problem to the U.N. before it became clear to her that the conflict, if it was allowed to continue, would cause great damage to her interests in the Arab World and to her relations with the U.S.A. and the Zionists. Therefore it can be argued that Britain transferred the problem to the U.N. in the hope that a U.N. solution would guarantee her interests, through the influence of her allies, the security of the Zionist settlers, who would become a U.N. rather than a British responsibility, and at the same time the Arabs could not blame Britain for such a solution.

It must be remembered that one of the main reasons for Britain's failure to solve the conflict was her refusal to apply, as a basis for her proposals to solve the problem, the principles of equality, justice and self determination. Unfortunately the U.N. did not learn from the British experience, or was not allowed to do so as a result of the British and American influence, and recommended a partition plan similar but worse than the one suggested by the Royal Commission in 1937. According to the U.N. Partition Plan the Zionist settler minority, (about 30 % and owning about 7 % of the lands of Palestine) were awarded more than half the country, including almost all the fertile and citrus land, and taking under their rule about half a million Arabs to live as a permanent minority.

The Palestinians rejected this Plan for the same reason they had rejected a similar previous plan, namely: because the Plan was not based on the principles of justice, equality and the right to self determination. The Arabs, however, demanded the establishment of a single state but at the last moment they suggested the establishment of a Federal State consisting of Arab and Jewish Cantons but both demands were rejected.

The Zionists, in contrast, accepted partition because it gave them almost all what they wanted.

The U.N. decision to partition Palestine without consulting its inhabitants gives us a clear indication of the extent of the big powers' influence in the organization. This influence was so great that the U.N. recommended a solution which in fact violated its own Charter which implies the right of every people to self determination and the establishment of the type of government which best represents their interests and aspirations.

By failing to carry out its obligation of preserving peace and order, by preventing the Arab regular armies and the Palestine Commission from entering Palestine, from establishing the required militias and local governments, Britain indeed shared a great responsibility for the occupation, by the Zionist forces, of large territories allocated to the proposed Arab state and the uprooting of the majority of its Arab inhabitants before the end of the Mandate. It stood watching thousands of them being killed, terrorized and uprooted from their cities and villiages without doing anything to assist them or allowing others to do so.

"Israel", against the general belief, was not established as a result of the implementation of the U.N. Partition Plan, but rather she was declared unilaterally by the use of force and over areas far larger than those allocated for the proposed Jewish state. Although "Israel" claimed that she had no choice in the way which she was born, the fact still that the Arab rejection of the establishment of a Jewish state did not give "Israel" the right to occupy those areas allocated to the Arabs nor did that the Arab position justify her uprooting of the Arab civilian population from their homes and lands and preventing them from returning to those areas. This "Israeli" position, however, suggests that the

Zionists had accepted partition not as a final solution but rather as a first step in achieving a larger state in the whole country. As one Zionist leader explained to his son: "A partial Jewish state is not the end but the beginning... We shall organize a modern defence, select army, and then I am certain that we will not be prevented from settling in other parts of the country, either by mutual agreement with our Arab neighbours, or by some other means. Our ability to penetrate the country will increase if there is a state."⁹²

Britain and the U.N. shared a great responsibility for the tragedy of the Palestinians because they failed to provide the required protection for the innocent Arabs and failed to implement the Partition Plan, which after all was imposed by the U.N. upon the Palestinians against their will. Having said that it is perhaps constructive to point out that the Arabs also committed some mistakes during their handling of the matter before the U.N. The fact remains that the Arabs knew that the only way to prevent partition was to side with one of the super powers, the U.S.A. or U.S.S.R. Once the Americans openly declared their support for partition the Arabs should have coordinated their plans and position with the Russians who were capable of blocking such solution by the use of their veto. The Arabs not only rejected a federal scheme suggested by the Russians⁹³ but also did not suggest their federal scheme until it was too late. They refused to offer any significant concession which might have won them some of the support of the many United Nations members who were not completely satisfied with Partition as the proper solution. Most members finally voted for the Partition resolution solely because they saw no other acceptable alternative course of action available and because they believed that the Zionists had been more reasonable and cooperative than the Palestinians.⁹⁴

Khoury explained these Arab mistakes as follows: "Had the Arabs, over the years, presented their case more effectively before the world and had they been willing to seek or accept compromise solutions in the earlier stages of the second and special sessions of the General Assembly, as they were in the last few days of each session when their situation had become desperate, the result might not have been so disastrous for them. By adamantly insisting on all or nothing, they ended up with practically nothing."⁹⁵

One of the serious problems which arose during the United Nations handling of the Palestine problem and before the end of the mandate was the occupation of large areas allocated to the Arabs and the displacement of 200,000 civilian Arabs from their homes and land under Zionist threats and terror. Those refugees were uprooted while Britain was officially still in charge of law and order in the entire country and in some cases the British Forces participated in transferring them to other areas inside and outside Palestine. The Palestinian refugee tragedy had a serious implication not only for the relationship between Arabs and Jews in Palestine itself, but also for any future settlement of the Palestine conflict as a whole. Therefore, it seems to me that it is perhaps worthwhile examining the origin of the Palestinian refugee problem in the next Chapter.

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12. UNSCOP Report op.cit. vol.2. annex, 5. p.5.
13. Ibid p.5.
14. For more details see UNSCOP Report op.cit. vol.1.
15. See UNSCOP Report op.cit. Chapter VI pp.48-58.
16. Ibid p.12.
17. For more details about the landownership see Ad Hoc Committee On Palestine, Official Records of the G.A. (General Assembly) Ad Hoc Report pp.292-294. and Appendix, v.
18. UNSCOP Report, op.cit. Chapter VII, pp.60-65.
19. Ad Hoc Report to the U.N. G.A. Document (A/516) pp.2-19.
20. Comprising Canada, Czechoslovakia, Guatemala, Poland, South Africa, the USA, Uruguay, the USSR and Venezuela.

21. Khouri op.cit. p.54.
22. Official Records of the second session of the General Assembly vol.2 New York, 1947, p.1632.
23. U.N. Resolution of Partition No. 181 (11) of 29 November 1947.
24. Official Records of G.A. vol.2. ann.33. pp.1633-1637.
25. Ibid.
26. For more details about Palestinian responses see UNSCOP Report, vol.1 pp.33-35. and Ad Hoc Committee Report pp.5-12. and pp.116-123. For more details about the Arab Countries responses see UNSCOP Report op.cit vol.III Ann.A.pp.240-246. and ann.25. pp.270-307.
27. For their arguments against the U.N. competence to impose partition on Palestine see Ad Hoc Committee Report pp.276-277.
28. For Arab arguments against the validity of the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate see Ad Hoc Report pp.273-275.
29. The Arabs argued that most of the European Jews were descended from Khazars who had converted to Judaism between the Seventh and Tenth Centuries. See Ad Hoc Report op.cit.p.116. This view was also advanced by Koestler in his book, The Thirteenth Tribe Hutchison, London, 1976.
30. Ad Hoc Committee's Report p.290 also p.280.
31. official Records of the second session of the G.A. vol.2. p.1377.
32. Khouri, F.J. The Arab -Israeli Dilemma Syracuse university Press, 1976. New York p.46.
33. Minute by Burrows 15-9-1949. F. O. 371-75206-E8857. Burrows was Middle East expert at the British Embassy in Washington.
34. UNSCOP Report op.cit. pp.12-13.
35. Ad Hoc Report pp.290-293.
36. Ibid p.122.
37. Khouri op.cit. p.46.
38. This was from Dr. Weizmann's statement before the Ad Hoc Committee see Ad Hoc Report op.cit. p.114.
39. For more details about the land ownership in Palestine see Ad Hoc Report, op.cit. pp.292-294. and Appendix, V.
40. Ad Hoc Report op.cit. p.293.
41. Ibid p.296 and p.293.
42. UNSCOP Report op.cit. p.13.
43. Ad Hoc Committee Report op.cit. p.297.
44. For more details about the unitary state see Ad Hoc Committee

Report op.cit. pp.297-303.

45. For more details about the federal state as suggested by the Lebanon Delegation, see Official Records of the G.A. second session vol.2. pp.1421-1413. For other solutions such as, Unitary State, Federal State and Trusteeship which later in March 1948 was accepted by the Arabs see FRUS (foreign Relation of the United States) vol.v. 1948, pp.448-49.
46. For more details about the Americans position on this issue see Second Session of the G.A. vol.II pp.1415-1417.
47. Khouri, op.cit. p.43.
48. Hurewitz, op.cit. p.287.
49. Khouri, op.cit. p.43.
50. FRUS vol.5. 1948, p.548. memo from director (Kennan) of the policy planning staff to the secretary of state.
51. FRUS vol.7 1946, p.703.
52. For more details about the statistic of population land ownership in both areas see Ad Hoc Committee Report pp.307-309. For citrus and other plantation in both suggested states see pp.291-293.
53. For more details about resolution 181 (11) of the G.A. see, official records of the second session of the G.A., Resolutions, 16 September 29 November pp.131-136.
54. The British Government's general policy had been not to take any measure which might be construed as involving it in the implementation of the G.A. Resolution 181(II).
55. The member states were, Bolivia, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Panama, Phillipines. For more details about the commission's different reports and conclusions see, U.N. Palestine commission suppl. No.1 1948.
56. Resolution 181 (11) op.cit. p.133.
57. Official Records of the United Nations G.A. second session Resolutions 16-September 29 November 1947 p.131.
58. Palestine Commission Report, op.cit. suppl. No.1 p.1.
59. Palestine Commission wrote two monthly reports S-663 and S-695 and a special Report 5-676. also see Ibid p.2.
90. Palestine Commission Report op.cit. suppl. No.1 pp.6-12.
61. Ibid p.8.
62. Ibid p.9.
63. Statement made by the United States representative at the U.N.

- before the Security Council on March 19, 1948, FRUS, vol.v. 1948 p.743.
64. These Reports were S/663, and s/695.
 65. Palestine Commission Report, op.cit. suppl. No.1 p.12.
 66. Ibid p.1.
 67. The security council was not able to provide such forces because U.S.A. did not see any threat to peace in Palestine as long as the Zionists were on the winning side. occupying Arab land by Zionist forces and uprooting the Palestinians were not considered as threat to peace.
 68. Hurewitz, op.cit. p.306.
 69. Khouri, op.cit. pp.50-51.
 70. The Russians now support some Arab countries and the P.L.O. against Israel's aggression and expansionism. The Russians, however, recognise the existence of "Israel" but they wanted her to return to the 1967 borders in return fo peace.
 71. FRUS vol. v. 1948 p.690.
 72. Ibid p.695.
 73. Ibid pp.694-695.
 74. Ibid p.695.
 75. Truman, H. Memoirs Garden city, New York 1956 Part 11 p.135. And Khouri, op.cit. p.51.
 76. Draft Report prepared by the National Security Council, Washington 17, February 1948, FRUS, vol.v. 1948 p.632.
 77. Report by the Central Intelligence Agency, Washington 28 February, 1948, FRUS vol. v. 1948 p.673.
 78. This conference was suggested by king Hussein and Yasser Arafat in their last agreement 11-2 1985. For more details see Aruri, N. The P.L.O. and the Jordan option Third world Quarterly, vol.7 no.4. October, 1985, pp.896-898.
 79. These forces were costing 30-40 million pounds a year, Cohen, op.cit. p.246.and Times London, 5-8-1947.
 80. Statement made by the U.S. Representative at the U.N. before the Security Council on 19-3-1948, FRUS, vol.v. 1948 p.743.
 81. For more details about the draft Trusteeship for Palestine see FRUS 1948, pp.778-798.
 82. Draft letter from President Truman to the British Prime Minister Attlee, undated, FRUS, vol.v. 1948. p.772.
 83. American Consul at Jerusalem to the Secretary of State, March, 22 1948 FRUS, vol.v. 1948, p.753.

84. Quoted by Cohen, op.vit. p.273. F.O. 371/61878, E 8346.
85. See Marlowe John, op.cit. pp.240-241.
86. Zaiter op.cit. p.208 and Hurewitz op.cit. p.312.
87. At least 30,000 Zionist had participated in World War Two within the British forces this is in addition to about 50,000 Haganah members who were trained and armed with the help of British to guard the Zionist settlement especially during the Palestine Revolt of 1936-1939.
88. Hadawi Sami, Bitter Harvest The New World Press, New York, 1967, p.109.
89. Truman to the Secretary of State, 22 February 1948, FRUS vol.v. 1948, p.645.
90. Cohen, op.cit. p.271.
91. Department of State to President Truman top secret, FRUS vol.v. 1948, p.640.
92. In a letter from Ben Gurion to his Son, quoted by Bar Zohar, Ben Gurion Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1978, pp.91-92.
93. The Russian were prepared to accept the establishment of a federal state and they announced this in the beginning of the U.N. on Palestine on September 1947. But in November they changed minds and supported partition. They blamed the Arabs for rejecting such scheme in the beginning of the debate.
94. For example the French representatives at the U.N. said during the debate on Partition that "If we do not vote in favour of partition there will be no decision at all. We must choose between the plan of partition with its obvious difficulties, and the absence of any plan which may mean chaos."
The Netherlands representative gave similar view. See U.N. official Records, 2nd. Session, 1948, p.1403 and 1355.
95. Khouri, op.cit. P. 66.

CHAPTER NINE

The origin of the Palestinian Refugee Problem

Introduction

As we have seen in Chapter Eight the Arabs rejected the U.N. Partition Plan not only because they were opposed in principle to the establishment of an alien state in their midst, but also because the Plan was not based on the principles of equality and self-determination. The Palestinians argued that while the Zionist settlers formed only about one third of the population and owned less than 7 % of the lands of Palestine the U.N. awarded them more than half the country, including almost all the fertile and citrus land and allowed them to take under their rule about half a million Arabs to remain as a permanent minority. However, despite this Arab opposition the U.N. established the Palestine Committee and charged it with the duty of gradual take over of the responsibilities of the Mandatory Government and the establishment of local governments and militias and to draw up definite borders between the proposed Arab and Jewish states.

The Committee, however, failed to carry out its duties, firstly, because the British Government prevented it from entering the country and carrying out its duties. Secondly, the failure of the Security Council to provide the Committee with the International Police Force needed to carry out the responsibility of law and order when the Mandate ended. This failure was due to American objections to such an idea, since it might have given the Russians an opportunity to penetrate this strategic area.

Against this background and due to the uncertainty about what would happen at the end of the Mandate, both Arabs and Zionists resorted to military means to achieve their goals. The Zionist forces, however, got the upper hand in the fighting and during the last six months of the Mandate they succeeded not only in occupying areas allocated to the proposed Arab state but also uprooted the majority of its native population. It is important to stress here that this Zionist action had not only taken place while the British were still officially responsible for law and order in the whole country but also that many of those

refugees were transported to other areas inside and outside the country by British military vehicles. The British not only did nothing to stop this Zionist action and prevent this mass exodus, but also prevented the Palestine Committee and the regular Arab armies from entering Palestine to do so. The significance of the Palestinian refugee problem lies in the fact that it is a unique and fast-growing problem. It is unique because there is no precedent in modern history whereby a majority of the population of a country has forcibly been displaced by a militant minority of alien settlers. Yet this is what happened in Palestine in 1948. Nearly 700,000 Palestinians then fled or were expelled from their homes, towns and villages and became refugees without any means of livelihood.

John Glubb, a British officer and a former commander of the Arab Legion of Transjordan, supports this view and states that: "It is quite essential vividly to grasp the unique conditions of the struggle in Palestine. We have witnessed many wars in this century, in which one country seeks to impose its power on others. But in no war I think, for many centuries past, has the objective been to remove a nation from its country and to introduce another and entirely different race to occupy its lands, houses, cities and live there. This peculiarity lends to the Palestine struggle a desperate quality which bears no resemblance to any other war in modern history."¹

The other important aspect of the Palestinian refugee problem is that it is a fast growing problem. The number of refugees has increased from about 200,000 before the end of the Mandate in 15 May 1948, to reach 2,706,486 in 1976.²

The basic factors which doubled the dimensions of the refugee problem were the occupation by the Zionist and later the Israeli forces of various areas of Palestine in excess of the territories allocated to the Jewish state by the U.N. and the displacement of almost all its Arab inhabitants. In terms of population the territories seized by the Israeli forces in excess of the Partition plan were: Western Galilee 123,000 inhabitants, the Jaffa enclave 114,000 and Ludda, Rameleh, Acre, Shafa Amer 195,000.³

Cattan argued that the majority of the refugees came from those areas allocated to the proposed Arab state but occupied by Zionist and Israeli forces during the local war in Palestine between 1947 and 1948. "Israel's seizure of territories, towns and villages reserved for the

proposed Arab state resulted in the expulsion or flight of more than 600,000 persons. In other words, almost two-thirds of the refugees who were displaced in 1948 came from the areas seized by Israel in excess of the territorial boundaries fixed by the Partition resolution."⁴

The second important factor which has aggravated the refugee problem is the refusal of "Israel" to comply with the United Nations resolutions and recommendations in regard to the Arab territories and the refugees' right to return or compensation. Those Palestinian rights were incorporated in the General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948. With respect to the refugees, the Assembly resolved in paragraph II that those: "Wishing to return to their homes and live in peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or in equity, should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible."⁵

It is not, however, within the scope of this study to discuss the Palestinian refugee problem as a whole, but rather to discuss its origins, causes and size before the end of the Mandate and mainly to highlight the Arab point of view.

The origin of the Refugee Problems⁶

The first interesting question here is: How did the problem start?

Immediately after the general Assembly passed the Partition resolution on November 1947, serious clashes broke out between the Palestinians and the Zionist forces in Palestine. On the one hand the Palestinians tried to take over the whole country and preserve the Arabic nature of Palestine through the establishment of a unitary government representing the wishes of the majority and safeguarding the rights of the Jewish minority. On the other the Zionists employed their superior military forces firstly, to achieve control over those areas proposed for the Jewish state and secondly, to extend their control to the rest of the country.

Against this background a local civil war started in Palestine during the last six months of the British Mandate, the result of which, according to the Palestinians, was determined by the Zionist military superiority and the position and policy of the British Mandatory

Government.

The Mandatory Government, as we have seen in Chapter Eight, insisted, in the one hand, that they would continue to be responsible for law and order in Palestine as a whole until 15 May 1948. On the other hand the British refused to provide the necessary forces to protect the Palestinian unarmed population and at the same time prevented others from doing so. This British position was seen by some Arabs as a conspiracy with the Zionists. "Britain was a principle party to the vast conspiracy whose aim was the establishment of Israel in accordance with a carefully prepared plan."⁷

The Palestinians in fact did not have any regular army or semi-military organization similar to those possessed by the Zionists especially the Haganah (Jewish para-military organization) and the Sturn Gang (terrorist organization). The Palestinians "were not in a position to put up a sustained defence of their hearths and homes, let alone to take the offensive against the Israelis. But at the time few western observers fully realised this."⁸

There are no reliable sources about the number of Palestinian irregulars and guerrillas who participated in the local conflict during this period. But according to different estimates their numbers varied from 2,000 to 5,000 persons. They were supported by similar numbers of Arab volunteers from Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Transjordan.⁹

The great majority of Palestinian and Arab irregulars were untrained and as for their arms "most of them were ancient and of dubious reliability and there was an acute shortage of ammunition for numerous varieties of fire arms. The majority had only a handful of ammunition, some only half a dozen rounds or so, with little prospect of their supplies being replenished."¹⁰ The other important factor in the Palestinian military handicap was British interference in their operations against Zionist forces. On several occasions British forces intervened and attacked the Palestinian and Arab guerrillas and prevented them from achieving their goals.¹¹

In contrast, the Zionists had between 60,000 and 80,000 troops including 300 British trained officers and 4,000 other ranks who had formed part of the Jewish Brigade raised by the British Army at the end

of World War Two.¹² In addition to this there were between 20,000 and 30,000 others who served in the ranks of the various Allied Armies.¹³ They were supported by 800 armoured cars, 21 aircraft and small arms including 2-inch mortars. Most of the armoured cars, mortars and other small arms and ammunition were locally made in Palestine in Zionist-owned factories.¹⁴ Moreover, all Zionist settlements were provided with self-defence units, ammunition and arms stocks encircled with barbed wire, mine-fields and ditches. They were guarded with search lights, observation posts, and connected through a radio network with the Palmach, the Zionist mobile forces. These settlement fortifications proved very effective against guerrilla raids during the local war.

Against this background the best hope for the Palestinians was to hold onto their areas until the end of the Mandate when the Arab armies could come to protect them. But the Zionists exploited their military advantage and started a series of large offensive operations especially from the beginning of April 1948. The Zionists were encouraged to do so after they realized that Britain was not going to interfere in their offensives and after they received the first large arms shipment from abroad.¹⁵

The Causes of the Exodus

The interesting question here is: Why did the Palestinian leave? There are two versions and explanations of this Palestinian exodus. A general theme running through Zionist accounts of the events between November 1947 and May 1949 is that "Arab mass flight from within "Israel" and Israeli occupied areas is a direct effect of Arab aggression from outside"¹⁶ and therefore the Zionists and later "Israel" disclaim any responsibility for that problem. In other words "Israel" alleged that the refugee problem was created as a result of the Arab invasion of Palestine after 15 May 1948 and after the proclamation of "Israel."

Palestinians reject this Zionist claim and argue that the origin of the refugee problem was already established in the last months of the Mandate when between 200,000 and 300,000 Palestinians fled or were forced to leave the country as a result of Zionist terror or occupation of Arab territories including hundreds of villages and the two largest Arab cities of Haifa and Jaffa. The Arabs argued that this Zionist action had taken place in front of the Mandatory's eyes.¹⁷ The

Palestinians argued that the displacement of the Palestinians was in accordance with a deliberate Zionist policy of establishing a pure Jewish state in Palestine: "The Zionist racist objective of building up an exclusive Jewish state by displacing the existing population and dispossessing it of its lands and homes was the underlying cause of the Palestine refugee problem and is at the root of the Palestine Question."¹⁸ The displacement of the Palestinians was not only within the overall Zionist policy but also intended to achieve the following immediate aims:¹⁹

1. Lessen the danger of Palestinian espionage in the proposed Jewish state.
2. Provide lands and homes for new Zionist settlers.
3. Give the Arab countries a vast refugee problem to cope with, which they lacked the material or administrative requirements to deal with.
4. Give the Zionists a strong bargaining position or "trump card", which could be used in future negotiations for a final settlement.

The direct causes of the mass exodus were: Zionist terrorism and occupation of Arab territories, expulsion and the breakdown of security. First I will discuss Zionist terrorism.

Zionist Terrorism

After 29 November 1947 the Zionists turned their terrorist campaign against the Palestinian population instead of the Mandatory Government. The Zionists used every possible means to frighten the Arabs and force them out of their homes and lands. This included: mortar shelling, demolishing houses, bombing crowds in public places, raids and calculated massacres. However, since the chronology of these events is given in other works²⁰ it seems to me that it is perhaps sufficient for the purpose of this Chapter to shed some light upon the most important events which had direct effect upon the mass exodus of the Palestinians.

The local war between the Palestinians and the Zionists started almost immediately after the U.N. passed the Partition Resolution in November 1947. On 30th December a large Haganah force attacked the Arab village Balad al-Shikh killing more than 60 villagers including women and children.²¹ On January 4th 1948, 14 Palestinians were killed and 98 wounded when a bomb planted by the Zionists exploded in the centre of Jafa. Another 20 were killed and 12 wounded in a similar incident in

Jerusalem.²² On 25th January 1948, the Haganah forces demolished 17 Arab houses in an Arab village near Rahavot and expelled their inhabitants evidently to spread the message to their fellow citizens.²³ On 14th February 1948, the Zionists shelled many villages with mortars and in the village of Sasa alone 11 civilians were killed and 14 houses were demolished or damaged.²⁴ On 3rd March 14 Arabs were killed and 26 wounded in the centre of Haifa when the Zionists "detonated an army truck filled with explosives in the centre of the city."²⁵ In Samaria District the Zionists blasted 13 houses onto the heads of their residents killing 30 Arabs and wounding 10 others.²⁶

This terrorist campaign was accompanied by psychological warfare intended to create panic and spread fear among the Palestinian civilians, which would achieve the double object of subduing their opposition to the creation of a Jewish state and causing their eventual flight from the country. The most outstanding incident among the outrages committed by the Zionist terrorist organization (Irqun) in Palestine against the Palestinian civilian population and which accelerated their panic flight, was the massacre of 250 men, women and children in the village of Deir Yassin on 9 April 1948.²⁷ This village had shown no special animosity to its Jewish neighbours, yet it was attacked by Zionist terrorist, in order to demonstrate their military strength and to force the rest of the population in the chain of Arab villages on the main road between the coast and Jerusalem to flee the area, and make that route safe for Jewish supplies to Jerusalem. Here is John Kimche from the "Jewish observer" commenting on the incident: "There was no obvious occasion for them to do so. What happened afterwards has been subject of conflicting versions, explanations and excuses by the terrorists but nothing they have said has explained, or can explain away, the murder of some 250 innocent Arabs, among them more than a hundred women and children."²⁸

Although the Haganah and the Jewish Agency denied any knowledge of the Irqun's planned operation, Menachim Begin, the Irqun leader at the time, argues that the Haganah knew about the operation and warned about committing such a massacre. Such warnings and fore-knowledge were revealed in the following letter from the Haganah commander to the Irqun commander and quoted by Begin: "I learn that you plan an attack on Dir Yassin. I wish to point out that the capture of Dir Yassin and holding

it is one stage in our general plan. I have no objection to your carrying out the operation provided you are able to hold the the village."²⁹

Begin argues that the value of the massacre "Was worth half a dozen battalions to the forces of Israel."³⁰ Indeed the Zionists made no excuse for it "as it was all part of their plan for the reconquest of their "promised land", in which there was no room for large hostile alien groups."³¹

The Dir Yassin massacre and the publicity which accompanied it from Arabs, Zionists and foreign media correspondents, had tremendous effects upon the Palestinian civilians. Here is Begin: "Panic overwhelmed the Arabs of Evetz Israel (Palestine). Kolondia village, which had previously repulsed every attack of the Haganah, was evacuated over night and fell without further fighting. Beit -Iksa was also evacuated. These two places over looked the main road, and their fall, together with the capture of Kastel by the Haganah, made it possible to keep open the road to Jerusalem."³²

Begin describes the effect of the massacre on the civilian population of Haifa as follows: "All the Jewish forces proceeded to advance through Haifa like a knife through butter. The Arabs began fleeing in panic, shouting Dir Yassin."³³ The immediate result of Dir Yassin on the Palestinians according to Bethell: "Was the headlong flight from the allocated Jewish area of two thirds of its Arabs, about 300,000 people, who even more than thirty years later are not allowed to return to the homes and lands they left behind."³⁴

The other important incident was the attack and occupation of Haifa.³⁵ On 21st April, 1948, the British suddenly evacuated the city and after two days of continuous Zionist attacks on the city, the majority of its Arab population fled the city leaving everything behind. The Zionists denied that they planned to displace the Arab population and claimed that the Arabs voluntarily chose to leave rather than to surrender. Here is Herzog describing the Arab position and choice: "The Arabs were torn by doubts and beset by an atmosphere of panic. Rather than risk what they believed might occur. After the collapse of the Arab resistance, they decided in most cases to take advantage of the presence of the British Forces and to be evacuated under their aegis."³⁶

The Arabs claimed that the Zionists had not only put unacceptable conditions for Arab surrender, but also that there was no guarantee for their safety if they did so, since the Mandatory Government had abandoned its responsibilities towards the Arabs. Other Arabs, however, argued that the Palestinians in fact had fled the city, losing all their material belongings, rather than taking the risk of staying and facing possible death.³⁷

The state of panic and disorder which prevailed during the Palestinians flight indicates that the refugees indeed felt that their lives were in great danger. Here is David Kimche, from the "Jewish Observer", describing the Arab condition immediately after the city was occupied by Zionist forces: "I walked later in the Suk (the Bazar) and saw the state of disorder in which they had left their houses often not bothering to pick up silver, and valuables which they could easily have carried in their hands."³⁸

The logical explanation for such a state of panic and disorder among the Palestinians is the clear evidence that: the Palestinians felt that there was an immediate danger to their lives and instinctively they escaped with their lives and forgot about any other material belongings. This state of panic and disorder refutes Zionist claims that it was a "voluntary evacuation".

This Arab flight, however, is not different from the flight of other populations under the same circumstances. In almost every war many civilians fled the battle area but they were allowed back at the end of war. Therefore it seems to me that the real issue here is not whether the Palestinians fled by themselves or were expelled by the Zionists, rather the real issue is: Did their flight, for what ever reasons, invalidate their rights?

The U.N., which was responsible for the partition of the country, resolved that the Palestinians did not lose their rights and recommended their repatriation in resolution 194 (III) of 1948.

On 25th April Jaffa was attacked and occupied by the Zionist forces. The story of Haifa was repeated yet again in Jaffa. The majority of its 70,000 Arabs fled the city in a state of fear and panic leaving everything behind them to be looted or destroyed by the Zionists. "Everything that was movable was carried out from Jaffa, furniture, carpets, pictures, crockery, and pottery and jewellery... What could not

be taken away was smashed. Windows, pianos, fittings and lamps went in an orgy of destruction."³⁹

Other Palestinian villages were occupied and destroyed by the Zionist forces and later by the Israeli forces. Here is the account of Bernadatte, the mediator on Palestine, to the United Nations: "After intensive investigation by observers, who succeeded in locating more than 8,000 of the villagers and in establishing that less than 130 were killed or missing, the Central Truce Supervision Board found that the villages were attacked by the Jews between 18 and 25 July by air and land, and the inhabitants had been forced to evacuated; after the evacuation the villages Ein Ghazal and Jaba were destroyed by the Israeli forces. The attack could not be excused as a police action... and that the measure taken involving the systematic destruction of two villages, were excessive and constituted a violation of both the spirit and letter of the terms of the truce."⁴⁰

The significance of this report lies in the fact that the massacres, destruction and shelling of Palestinian people and villages were means deliberately employed by the Zionists and Israeli forces to serve a policy of establishing a pure Jewish state on Arab lands after the displacement of its inhabitants. Here is Dr Stephen Penrose: "There is no question but that frightful massacres such as that which took place at Dir Yassin in April 1948 were perpetuated for the major purpose of frightening the Arab population and causing them to take flight."⁴¹

According to Bernadatte, U.N. mediator on Palestine: "The exodus of Palestinian Arabs resulted from panic created by fighting in their communities, by rumours concerning real or alleged acts of terrorism, or expulsion."⁴² John Davis, argued that: The extent to which the refugees were savagely driven out by the Israelis as part of a deliberate master-plan has been insufficiently recognized. He went on to explain how the Zionist concept of an exclusive Jewish state called for the ousting of the Arabs from their homes and lands, and the manner in which this was achieved by means ranging from "expert psychological warfare to ruthless expulsion by force."⁴³

Expulsion

Another cause of the Palestinian exodus was the actual expulsion of people from their villages and towns by the Zionist and Israeli forces.

This expulsion was not confined to the areas allocated to the Jewish state but also included those areas allocated to the Arab state after its occupation by the Zionist forces. Here is Bernadatte: "As a result of the conflict in Palestine, almost the whole of the Arab population fled or was expelled from the area under Jewish occupation, this included the large Arab population of Jaffa, Haifa, Acre, Remleh and Ludda. Of a population of somewhat more than 400,000 Arabs prior to the outbreak of hostilities the number presently estimated as remaining in Jewish controlled territory is approximately 50,000."⁴⁴

George Kirk argued that the Zionists used advanced methods of psychological warfare side by side with actual terror and expulsion: "The Jewish combatants made skillful use of psychological warfare to break their opponent's moral, and the effect upon the civilians was only as to be expected. The Israeli forces did not confine their pressure on the Arab civilian population to playing upon their fears. They forcibly expelled them: for example the population of Acre (including refugees from Haifa), in May, the population of Ludda and Rameleh (including refugees from Jaffa) in July, and the population of Beersheba and Western Galilee in October."⁴⁵

The Break down of Security and Government Machinery

After the outbreak of violence following the United Nations Partition resolution, the Mandatory Government was neither able to maintain law and order in Palestine nor willing to commit its forces to provide protection for the Palestinian civilians. From December 1947 the British Government started to withdraw its forces from some areas and concentrated British personnel in enclosed and guarded zones inside the main cities. What happened outside the guarded zones ceased to be of concern to the Mandatory Government. In so far as law, order and security were concerned, the people were left to fend for themselves.⁴⁶

Although Article 2 of the Mandate had required from the Mandatory Government the establishment of self-government in Palestine, no administrative machinery of any kind existed or was envisaged for the preservation of law and order upon the termination of the Mandate. Moreover, the British Government refused to allow the U.N. Palestine commission to come to the country to prepare for the peaceful transfer of the administration of the local governments of the proposed Arab and

Jewish states, through the establishment of militias, local government, borders etc. The Palestinians argued that this British position served Zionist objective: "This was precisely what the Zionists wanted, for de jure authority claimed by Britain over Palestine acted as a shield protecting the Zionists from the regular Arab armies. This gave the Zionists time to create by 15th of May 1948 a new status quo in the country which would be beyond the means of the regular Arab armies to reverse."⁴⁷

However, despite the warnings of the U.N. Palestine Commission about the possibility of a collapse of security and a widespread strike and bloodshed at the end of the Mandate, there were no successor authorities and a security vacuum was immediately created. The complete state of chaos into which the country was plunged impelled many Palestinians to seek temporary refuge in relatives' or friends' homes or in caves and tents. Some of them (the more wealthy) crossed the border to the neighbouring Arab States. This refugee movement was further encouraged by the absence of any communal organization or leadership for the protection of the Palestinian civilians from Zionists attacks or of the provision of elementary public services.

The Palestinians possessed no shadow government, no proper military organization, no institutions for the discharge of governmental functions or the maintenance of public services. Don Peretz has observed that the absence of organized Arab authorities had contributed to the confusion of the Arab population and the decline of their morale: "With the breakdown of all functions of government necessary to maintain law, order and well being - water, electricity, posts, police education, health, sanitation and the like - Arab moral collapsed."⁴⁸

In contrast, planning and organization to meet the situation which arose during this period were far more developed among the Zionists than the Palestinians. For years the Zionists had been organizing politically, military, financially and administratively for this situation. Indeed during the Mandate period there was always a Zionist shadow government which easily converted into a Jewish state immediately at the end of the Mandate.

One might ask: Why did the Zionists resort to terrorist tactics to drive the Palestinians out of their homes? The answer is to be found in the underlying Zionist racist objective of creating in Palestine an exclusive Jewish state. This objective was in contradiction with the demographic facts in Palestine. As we have seen in chapter Eight the number of Palestinians within the areas allocated to the Jewish state was 497,000 against 498,000 Zionists. More over, the Palestinians owned about 75 % of the land in those territories.

Therefore, it can be argued that the realization of the Zionists' objective necessitated the displacement of the Palestinians and dispossession of their lands. The other reason behind the Zionist policy of displacing the Palestinians was to deprive the Arabs from their strong argument, namely the rejection of the idea of establishing a Jewish state in part of Palestine on the grounds that there was an equal number of Arabs living there and most of the land was owned by Arabs. The clearance of those areas of their inhabitants would completely devalue such an Arab argument.

The Jewish character of the state had been a corner stone of Zionist policy since the appearance of the movement at the end of the 19th century. Professor Maxime Rodinson observed that the Jewish character of the state is "The prime aim and postulate of Zionist ideology."⁴⁹ For more than a quarter of a century during the Mandate the Zionists exerted all efforts and used all kind of inducements in order to purchase the lands of Palestine. They exerted every possible pressure on the British government to allow more Zionist settlers to enter Palestine in the hope that they would form a majority and could declare Palestine as a Jewish state. The policy of segregation, expulsion of fellaheen and tenants from their lands after they had been purchased by Zionists and the dismissal of Palestinian labour from Zionist firms had already been in operation since 1930s.

But despite all Zionist efforts they could not dramatically alter the demographic composition of the country since they formed only one third of the population in 1947, and could not acquire more than 7 percent of the total land of Palestine at the end of the Mandate, as we have seen in Chapter Three. The Zionists therefore "undertook to remove this contradiction. Accordingly, the Arab population of the territory of Palestine seized by Israel in 1948 was reduced to less than one tenth of

its original number."⁵⁰

To sum up here is a list of the major attacks, occupation and expulsion which took place while Britain was still officially responsible for law and order in the whole country:

a. In the area allocated to the Arab state. The village of Qazaza was attacked and occupied on December 1947, Salamah village in March 1948, Saris, Qastal, Byar Adas and the town of Jaffa in April 1948. The town of Acre in May 1948, together with about 200 villages in the whole country.

b. In the area allocated to the Proposed Jewish state.

The towns of Tiberias and Haifa in April 1948, Safad and Beisan in May 1948.

c. In Jerusalem International Zone.

The village of Dir Yassin and a chain of villages on the main road between the coast and Jerusalem and the Arab Quarter of Katamon in Jerusalem were occupied in April 1948.

It can be argued that the displacement of the Arabs was within the Zionist overall and longstanding policy to create an exclusive Jewish state. "It was the Jewish policy to encourage the Arabs to quit their homes, and they used psychological warfare extensively in urging them to do so. Later, as the war worn on, they ejected those Arabs who clung to their villages. This policy which had amazing success, had two advantages. First it gave the Arabs a refugee problem to cope with and secondly, it ensured that the Jews had no fifth column in their midst."⁵¹

The Number of Refugees⁵²

During the first three months of 1948 the number of refugees was relatively small. The exodus reached great proportions as a result of the massacre of Dir Yassin on April 9, 1948 and the occupation, expulsion and flight of the Arab inhabitants of Tiberias (April 19), Haifa (April 22), Jaffa (April 29), Safad (May 10), Remeleh and Ludda (July 12), Beersheba and western Galilee during October 1948.

Early figures for the number of refugees were in the nature of rough estimates made while most of the population were on the move and during a continuing flow. Edward Buehring, acknowledges the difficulty of knowing the exact numbers of refugees and noted that: "The number of

Palestinian Arabs displaced in 1948 is not known with certainty and will always remain a controversial question."⁵³

Since there are no Government or official statistic about the number of refugees, during the period under discussion, we are left with the only alternative of examining all the available resources. Count Bernadotte's estimate as of September 10 1948, was 330,000.⁵⁴ A month later the acting Mediator's estimate was 500,000. According to the Arab estimate, which was submitted to the acting mediator, the number of refugees was between 740,000 and 780,000.⁵⁵

When a more precise estimate could be made, it was found that the real number was much higher than Bernadotte's estimate. In December 1949, the United Nations economic survey mission for the Middle East estimated the number of refugees at 726,000.⁵⁶ At the time when UNRWA (U.N. Relief And Work Agency) was established (May 1, 1950) to assist the Palestine refugees, their number was estimated at 960,000.⁵⁷

Prittie (pro-Zionist) argues that the maximum number of Palestinians who were living in the areas controlled or incorporated by the Israeli forces was 750,000 about 160,000 remained in those territories and only 590,000 were displaced.⁵⁸ Don Peretz⁵⁹ estimated that out of the 700,000 to 900,000 Arabs who lived in territories controlled by the Zionist and Israeli forces only 170,000 remained the rest had become refugees.

The number of refugees who were displaced before 15 May 1948 was estimated at between 200,000 and 300,000.⁶⁰ This means that the number of refugees before the end of the Mandate constituted about one third of the total refugees up to 1949. The other significant aspect of the Palestine refugee problem is that 500,000 or 60 percent of the total refugees had come from those areas allocated to the Arab state but occupied by the Zionist and Israeli forces in the course of the conflict and war between 1947 and 1948.

"Israel" neither agreed to withdraw from the occupied territories nor allowed the refugees to return back to their homes despite the call of the mediator on Palestine, Bernadatte, who observed that: "It would be an offense against the principles of elementary justice if these innocent victims of the conflict were denied the right to return to their homes while Jewish immigrants flowed into Palestine, and indeed,

at least offer the threat of permanent replacement of the Arab refugees who have been rooted in the land for centuries."⁶¹

On the day of British withdrawal a war broke out between the Arabs and "Israel". The 1948 War,⁶² however, is not within the scope of this study, which is concerned mainly with the conflict during the Mandate period. However, the impact of this war on the prospect of the settlement was so great that a few comments perhaps are required. The Arab view in regard to this war was expressed in a telegram from the Arab League to the General Secretary of the U.N. The Arab states, "were compelled to intervene for the sole purpose of restoring peace and security and of establishing law and order in Palestine which with the British departure had no legal authority." The Arabs justified their intervention on the ground that they wanted to "prevent the spread of disorder and lawlessness into their countries and to fill the vacuum created by the termination of the Mandate."⁶³

The Arabs argued that their intervention was a result of British failure to fulfill their duties, to maintain law and order up to the end of the Mandate and the failure of the U.N. to establish any alternative authority to take over the responsibility of security from the British: "Had the U.N. from then on (end of the Mandate) undertaken its responsibilities of ensuring peace and security for the the Arab inhabitants, Arab states' intervention would have been unnecessary."⁶⁴

Others saw Arab intervention as the only way to prevent the Zionist forces from occupying the whole country. "Had the Arab states not intervened during the crucial period when the British administration withdrew, the whole country would have been overrun by the Zionist forces."⁶⁵

David Gilmour, argued that "the entry of the Arab armies into Palestine on 15 May did, however, bring an end to the first Zionist offensive."⁶⁶

The Zionists on the other hand claimed that the Arab aim in sending their regular armies to Palestine was to destroy the newly-born Jewish state and not protect their fellow Arabs. Consequently, the Zionists put the responsibility of the war and the refugee problem on the Arabs. "If the Arab states had not waged open war on Israel on the morrow of its re-establishment in May 1948, the Arab refugees issue would never have

arisen."⁶⁷

The interesting thing here, in my view, is that the people in the West believed the Zionist version of the story, namely that the exodus of the Palestinians was a result of Arab "invasion" and a response to their leaders' call to leave the country to pave the way for the advanced Arab armies who came to destroy "Israel" and "throw the Jews into the sea."⁶⁸

The evidence presented in this Chapter, however, support the Arab view especially in regard to the origin of the refugee problem. "On the day Israel proclaimed its independence there were already 300,000 Palestinian refugees, and Zionist forces had occupied large chunks of territories designated for the proposed Arab state as well as parts of Jerusalem International Administration."⁶⁹

The important thing here is not whether the Palestinians left of their own free will, as the Zionists claim, or whether they were expelled as the Arabs claim, but rather to take practical steps to solve this human tragedy in accordance with human rights and international laws and the respective U.N. resolutions. The fact of the matter is that "Israel" had refused to allow those refugees to return despite the continuous call of the U.N. for their repatriation. It does not serve the cause of peace if the Arabs and "Israel" continued to talk about who was responsible for the refugee problem instead of doing something to solve it. There is no excuse for either side to use political differences as a pretext for not solving this human tragedy which must take precedence over any political gains or consideration.

It is my considered opinion that the solving of the refugee problem not only must take precedence over any material or political gains, but also that it is a prerequisite and pre-condition for any real progress towards solving the conflict as a whole.

Concluding Remarks

Immediately after the United Nations General Assembly passed the Partition Resolution in November 1947, serious clashes and civil war broke out between the Palestinian people and the Zionist forces. About 300,000 Palestinian civilians had been uprooted from their homes during the last six months of the Mandate, constituting about one third of the total Palestinian refugees until the end of 1948. The causes of this exodus were three fold:

Zionist terrorism, expulsion and the breakdown of security and government machinery during the last six months of the Mandate. The basic factors which had doubled the dimensions of the refugee problem were the occupation by the Zionist and Israeli forces of various areas of Palestine in excess of the territories allocated to the proposed Jewish State by the Partition resolution and the refusal of "Israel" to allow them to return to their homes. In terms of population about 60 percent of the total refugees had come from areas seized by the Zionist forces in excess of the areas allocated for the Jewish State.

The Zionists resorted to terrorist and intimidation tactics to drive the Palestinians out of their homes and villages in order to achieve the Zionist long standing racist objective of creating in Palestine an exclusive Jewish State. Therefore, it can be argued that the realization of the Zionists' objective necessitated the displacement of the Palestinians, who formed at the time of Partition, about 49 percent of the total population of the proposed Jewish state and about 70 % of the total population of Palestine. The Palestinians also owned about 75 % of the land allocated to the proposed Jewish state and about 90 % of the total land of Palestine, as we have seen in Chapter Three.

At the end of the war of 1948 the Arab population of the territory of Palestine seized by "Israel" was reduced to less than one tenth of its original number. The refugee problem, however, was and still is the heart of the conflict and it is inconceivable that a lasting settlement can be achieved without solving this human tragedy. Bernadatte rightly argued that: "It is, however, undeniable that no settlement can be just and complete if recognition is not accorded to the right of the Arab refugee to return to the home from which he was been dislodged by the hazards and strategies of the armed conflict between Arabs and Jews in Palestine."⁷⁰ Despite this warning from Bernadatte and the United Nation Resolution 194 (111) of 11 December 1948 which recognized the Palestinian refugees' right to return or to be compensated, "Israel" has refused to allow the refugees to return right up to the present day.

In conclusion I would argue that: the Zionist objective of establishing an exclusively Jewish State by displacing the existing population and dispossessing them of their homes and lands was the underlying cause of the Palestinian refugee problem and is at the root

of the Palestine conflict. Unless "Israel" fully recognizes the Palestinians' legitimate rights it is not expected, in my view, that a lasting settlement to the conflict can be achieved.

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Summary And Conclusion

1. The nature of the Palestine conflict in Palestinian eyes.

Palestinians viewed Zionism as a racist movement connected with Western Colonialism which sought the establishment of a Jewish state in their country under British sponsorship and protection. Palestinian responses to Zionist settlement and to the attempts to solve the conflict which resulted from that settlement were therefore a reflection of this concept.

Indeed, the Palestine conflict started with the British occupation of Palestine in 1917 and their declaration to facilitate Jewish settlement in the country without consulting its native population and regardless of the impact of such settlement on the economic conditions and the well-being of the natives. In this sense Zionist settlement in Palestine was, in many ways, similar to white settlement elsewhere in Asia and Africa and especially in South Africa:

- a. Both settlements took place against the will and the wishes of the natives and under the sponsorship and protection of a colonial power.
- b. In both cases the majority of the settlers were European whites who had different customs, and social values and developed their separate political, social, and economic institutions.
- c. In both cases most of the natives' land was confiscated and the majority of the population were displaced, expelled or moved to other areas to make room for the settlers, or for security reasons or in accordance with the policy of the settlers.
- d. In both cases a Plural society emerged as a result of the settlement with direct conflict of interest between the settlers and the natives.

The essence of the conflict lies in the fact that the white settlers came, in considerable numbers, to a country which belonged to others and imposed themselves upon the population with the help of a colonial power. In both cases the native population rejected this foreign occupation, and expressed this rejection with all means at their disposal

The main difference between the settlement in Palestine and the settlement in South Africa is the ideology of the settlers. While in South Africa the aim of the settlement was in the beginning domination

and the exploitation of the economic resources and the cheap native labour for the benefit of the mother country and later for the benefit of the settler regime, the aim of the Zionist settlement was the dispossessing and eventual expulsion of the natives in order to establish their own exclusive state.

During about thirty years of British rule over Palestine the Zionist movement succeeded, with the help of British legislation, in bringing to the country over half a million Zionist settlers, forming about one-third of the total population, and acquired about 1.85 million donums or about 7 percent of the total lands of Palestine. The Palestinian society was transformed, against the wishes of its local population, into a plural society with its main segments the Palestinian Arabs and the Jewish settlers. The great majority of the settlers spoke different languages, had different values, different customs and implemented a policy of complete segregation between them and the natives in almost everything.

This policy of segregation which resulted in evicting Palestinian tenants from the lands which were acquired by Zionists and in dismissing Palestinian labourers from their jobs in the Jewish sector, was employed to achieve the eventual goal of Zionism namely: the establishment of an exclusively Jewish state. This policy in fact had a serious impact on the relationship between the two communities. It increased Palestinian suspicion that the Zionists were going to dominate them and convert their country into a Jewish state. It created landlessness and unemployment among the Palestinians. More important, the Zionists refusal to recognize the Palestinian right to self-determination or to participate in self-government with an Arab majority made the Arabs think that the Zionism was the main obstacle in the way to independence. All these factors played their parts in creating a national demand among all classes of the Palestinian society namely: to oppose and resist Zionist settlement with all means and to demand the establishment of a national government representing all the inhabitants of the country including the Zionist settlers.

I would argue therefore that the Palestinians viewed the Palestine conflict as a struggle of a native population against a foreign occupation and settlement in their country which could not be solved on

a basis other than the application of the elementary rules of justice, equality and self-determination. This in practical terms meant the establishment of a national government with Palestinians in the majority. Therefore, according to this Palestinian view, the causes of the conflict and its continuation without solution for such a long time, lie in the refusal of both the British and the Zionists to accept a settlement based on the previously mentioned principles and not because the Palestinians were not interested in a settlement.

Indeed during the period of British rule it was the Palestinians who demanded a settlement which would guarantee the rights of the Jewish minority and at the same time guarantee the rights of the Arab majority. But it was Britain, the Zionists and later "Israel" that refused to accept the Palestinian demands and insisted on a settlement which would guarantee superior rights for the settlers as has been revealed in the proceeding chapters.

Both the British and the Zionists tried to dissociate themselves from being colonizers in the case of Palestine. They tried to present this settlement as a matter not only of restoring a territory (Palestine) to its Jewish "owners", but also that the return of those civilized Jews to their "promised land" was intended to benefit and bring civilization to its backward Arab "nomads" who lived there and that they had no intention of controlling the Arabs or exploiting them.

Britain used the Mandate as a tool to give international "legal" cover for their role in sponsoring the Zionist settlement and all along she claimed that she was carrying a dual obligation and was an impartial power which was executing a human and civilising mission on behalf of the League of Nations. Both Britain and the Zionists used the earlier Hebrew relation with Palestine in Biblical times to justify the settlement.

It has been revealed, however, that although the Hebrews invaded Palestine between 1400 and 1200 B.C., and succeeded to control parts of it until 132 A.D., they were not the original inhabitants of the country and their occupation of Palestine was an episode in the long history of the country like that of other conquerors such as, the Babylonians, the Persians, the Greeks and the Romans. Moreover, it has been revealed also

that not every Jew in the world is a physical descendent of those earlier Hebrews. The Zionist settlers of the twentieth century were Russians, Polish and Germans who might have some form of spiritual connection with Palestine but such connection or association gave them neither political rights nor justified their immigration to the country, least of all to convert it into a Jewish state after dispossessing and uprooting its native inhabitants.

Despite the fact that the native population of Palestine the Canaanites and the Philistines were made subject of consecutive waves of conquerors starting in 1400 B.C. they, nevertheless, preserved their distinctive, language, culture, religion, identity and never assimilated with their conquerors. But in 637 A.D. when the Arab Muslims occupied Palestine the natives perhaps because of similarities, in language, race and culture, soon adopted the Arab language, the majority converted to Islam and from that date the natives not only became Arabized but also identified themselves as Arabs.

The Jews who continued to live in Palestine became known as Arabs of the Jewish faith. There were no serious problems between the Arab Muslims and the Arabized Jews similar to the problem which faced the Jews in Europe. This situation of tolerance continued until the appearance of the Zionist movement at the end of the 19th century and their demands for the establishment of a Jewish government in Palestine. The Zionist movement, after failing to obtain support for their aspiration from Germany and Turkey turned to Britain. The British government proposed three areas for Zionist settlement Cyprus, el-Arish and Uganda. The Zionists accepted the Uganda offer in 1903 to change their minds in the next year in favour of settlement in Palestine which was part of the Ottoman Empire.

During World War One Britain reached an accord with the Arabs whereby Britain promised to recognize Arab independence within certain areas suggested by Sharief Hussein of Mecca in return for Arab revolt against Turkey. Immediately after securing that accord Britain entered into secret agreement, the Sykes-Picot Agreement, with France to divide the Arab countries between themselves. A year later the British government declared its support for the Zionist aspiration and issued the Balfour Declaration which five years later was incorporated in the provisions of

Palestine Mandate and formed the framework of British policy until the end of the Mandate in 1948.

The Palestinians refused to recognize either the Balfour Declaration or the British Mandate on the ground that they were not consulted about them. Consequently they considered these documents null and void and that Britain had no right to promise their country to other people and considered Jewish immigration under British protection and sponsorship illegal. The Palestinians accordingly did not view the conflict as a conflict between two nationalist movements but rather between a native population and foreign settlers.

2. Palestinian responses to Zionist settlement

The process of transforming Palestine into a Plural society faced opposition from all classes of the Palestinian society. The Palestinians' mode of action against Zionist settlement was similar to other natives' reactions towards white settlement and corresponded to the social structure and material power of that society. Despite the fact that the Arabs formed about 90 percent of the total population in 1917 they in fact failed to prevent the process of transforming Palestine into a Plural society for several reasons:

1. The Palestinian society had all the characteristics of a traditional society and suffered mainly from segmentalism, regionalism, tribalism and lacked an able and revolutionary leadership. By 1936, however, the external and double threat of British occupation and Zionist colonization, had gone far towards unifying them. For a full period of three years they revolted against this external threat but even such level of unity and violent action was not enough to stop the process of colonization.

2. In spite of the spread of nationalist consciousness throughout the Mandate period, social segmentalism blocked the rapid mobilization of large groups, and long term political and military organizations.

3. The readiness of the peasants to take up armed struggle was not fully exploited by the traditional leadership which lacked the organizational powers necessary for conducting mass political organization and armed struggle.

These are some of the important factors within the social structure of the Palestinian society which hindered the development of a coherent

national resistance movement strong enough to present itself as an alternative to the Mandatory regime and to stop the process of transforming Palestine into a plural society. But I would argue that it would be incorrect to seek in these societal characteristics the causes of the Palestinian resistance movements' failure or the disaster of 1948. Indeed, the presence of serious internal cleavages and conflict within the Palestinian society based on regionalism, tribalism and segmentalism made the task of a unified opposition to British and Zionist colonization extremely difficult but it was the combined material and military superiority of the British and Zionist forces which defeated the Palestinian resistance and made possible the proclamation of a Jewish state in two thirds of Palestine after displacing the great majority of its inhabitants.

Moreover, the process of land alienation, boycott of Palestinian labourers and the separate development of political, social and economic institutions had a serious impact on the relationship between the two communities and particularly on the economic conditions of the Palestinian peasants. The average size of the peasants' holdings decreased at a time when there was an increase in population. The peasants evicted from lands acquired by Zionists and the workers dismissed from jobs in the Jewish sector could not find alternative jobs and formed a class of landless and unemployed who migrated to the towns and formed the seeds of the social unrest and Revolt of 1936-1939.

The Palestinian responses to Zionist settlement can be divided into two types: political and military.

During the first two decades the Palestinians tried to change the British and Jewish national home policy mainly by political means and through negotiations. Their mode of action included demonstrations, sending petitions and delegations to the British government, one day strike and some outbreaks of violence in 1920, 1921, 1929 and in 1933. The Palestinian leaders, in fact, although they realized early the potential danger of the Zionist settlement, did not make serious efforts to organize a popular military resistance to stop it. This was possible because, firstly they lacked the required infrastructure to organize and lead such a resistance and secondly because the number of Jewish immigrants was low and the amount of land purchased by Zionists was small. In other words as a result of the relatively slow development of the Jewish Home the Palestinian leaders perhaps did not see urgency in

mobilizing a national resistance to oppose it and partly because the majority of the rural populations did not feel yet its negative economic consequences.

Moreover, the Palestinians wrongly assumed that sooner or later they would reach an agreement with the British government, like other agreements reached between Britain and other Arab countries, and once they reached such agreement Zionist activities in Palestine would come to an end and perhaps most of the settlers would leave the country when the British did.

During the first decades it can be said that the Palestinians were busy in their internal disputes and rivalries especially between the two main powerful families al-Husseinis and al-Nashashibis for the control of the Arab Executive and the Supreme Muslim Council, rather than working to stop or to resist the British and Zionist colonization. The Palestinians also maintained a policy of non-recognition of the Zionists as a partner to the conflict and confined their efforts to sending four delegations to London to submit their national demands to the British government. These demands were based on the elementary principle of the right of every people to self-determination. Their main demand was the end of the Mandate and the establishment of a democratic government to represent the wishes of the Arab majority with guaranteed rights to the Jewish minority who could prove to be eligible for Palestine nationality. At this stage the Palestinians considered all Zionist immigration illegal since settlers had entered the country against their will and wishes.

The period between 1930 and 1935 witnessed for the first time the seriousness of the effects of Zionist colonization on the Palestinian society. Zionist immigration increased dramatically to reach in one year -1935- about 62,000 persons. The number of landless and unemployed among the Palestinians increased too, without any prospect of alternative lands or jobs. Worst of all the Palestinians realized that after more than a decade of passive opposition and political negotiations Palestinian independence was not in sight. Most of the Arab countries had attained some sort of self-government and were expected to gain their independence in not a very long time.

Against this background the Palestinians started to think in terms of military struggle, supported by a political organization, as the only way to gain independence. This period indeed witnessed the appearance of several secret military organizations which worked in different regions and half a dozen political parties. Although these organizations did not succeed in forming a cohesive national resistance movement they formed the bases and prepared the ground for the Palestine Revolt of 1936-1939. There were several causes for the Palestinian Revolt of 1936-1939 but the main causes are two:

1. Their genuine desire for independence and
2. Their fear of the potential danger of the Jewish National Home.

The double threat of British colonialism and Zionism brought them together and in May 1936 they declared a general strike which lasted for six months, a unique event not only in Palestine but in the history of the Arab World. The Revolt was not simply a continuation of Palestinian protest against the British Jewish National Home policy. But rather it was a national rebellion against British occupation and their imperialist policy of planting a Zionist settler community in Palestine in the hope of converting the country into a Jewish state. Therefore, and for the first time, a large and more organized Palestinian military struggle was directed mainly against British rule with its main goal as independence. The Revolt was mainly carried out by peasants and workers who had been most affected by the economic policy of segregation which was strictly implemented by the Zionists at that time.

Although the Revolt succeeded in controlling most of the rural areas and occupying some major towns, they, in fact, lacked military experience, modern military techniques and equipment, a communication system and finance. They were not able to transform the Revolt into a popular revolution because they did not possess the material and human infrastructure necessary to lead, organize, finance and carry out the revolution. More importantly the British Authorities in 1937 banned all their national organizations, arrested and deported their leaders and used more than 20,000 British troops, fully equipped with modern military arms, including aircrafts, tanks, and artillery, to quell the Revolt. They used severe measures against the civil population who cooperated with the guerrillas which included detention, blowing up houses, collective fines, and curfews. They also encouraged and helped

arm anti Revolt bands and cooperated with the Zionist forces in order to crush the Revolt. But it was not before the British forces had occupied all the towns and most of the villages in Palestine, cut Palestine off from the rest of the Arab countries, and reached an understanding with the French Authorities in Syria, to suppress the political and military leadership in Damascus, that Britain was able to defeat the Revolt. Therefore, it can be said that it was the combined British and Zionist material and military superiority which made possible the defeat of the Palestinian Revolt and not the lack of will or desire among the Palestinians to resist foreign colonization.

However, the Revolt was not defeated before it had left clear marks in the history of the Palestine conflict and indeed was a turning point in regard to the British approach to solving it. For example it was during that Revolt that the Arab states were brought to play a part in the Palestine conflict, a feature which is still in play up to the present day. It signalled future geographical as well as ideological segregation between Palestinians and Jews to be crystallized in proposals for Partition, bi-national state and a federal state. It also drove the Palestinians, after their military defeat, to rely more and more on the Arab states and less and less on themselves.

3. Palestinian Responses To Attempts To Solve The Conflict

During the Mandate period the attempt to solve the conflict can be divided into three categories: legislative councils, a bi-national or federal state and partition.

a. Legislative Councils

During the first two decades of British rule, no serious attempt was made to solve the conflict permanently. But on two occasions, 1922 and 1935, the Mandatory government suggested the establishment of a legislative council in Palestine which would give both Arabs and Zionists some limited share in the administration of the country without questioning the validity of the Balfour Declaration or the Mandate and without executive power over the two main issues, which were at the heart of the conflict, immigration and land sales to Zionists.

Although the council in 1922 would have provided the Palestinians with an opportunity to establish a recognized body which would represent and

talk on behalf of the Palestinians - until that time Britain had refused to recognize the Palestinian leadership as representing the population - and would give them some say in the day to day administration of their country, the acceptance of such a council was seen by Palestinians as an effort from the British Government to legalise Jewish immigration and the Jewish National Home idea. Therefore, they rejected the idea and demanded the establishment of a legislative council or self-government which would truly represent all the inhabitants of the country according to their numbers and with executive powers and control over the administration of the country including immigration and land sales to Jews.

I would argue that the legislative council idea was in fact not intended to solve the conflict but rather it was an attempt by the British Government to bring both sides together in sharing with them the administration of Palestine in the hope that such a thing would make their policy more acceptable and their rule over the country easier. It would have meant the execution of the policy of the Balfour Declaration with Arab approval and consent.

The British used the Palestinian rejection of participation in the legislative council as an excuse not to develop any form of self-government in the country. British propaganda succeeded in giving the impression to world public opinion and to the League of Nations that the Palestinians had refused to participate in the administration of the country and therefore, they were the ones to be blamed.

In 1935 the British Government suggested a similar scheme - to be rejected this time by the Zionists, who hoped to form a majority very soon, and by the British Houses of Parliament but not by the Palestinians.

b. A unitary and bi-national state

After three years of unrest and revolt the British Government realised that its Jewish National Home policy was not only not acceptable in Palestine alone but also throughout the rest of the Arab countries which became officially involved in the problem after 1936. Therefore, during London Conferences in 1939 and in 1946-1947 the British Government for the first time proposed the establishment of a single government in Palestine representing both Arabs and Jews and declared the fulfilment

of their obligation to the Jews. During the London Conference of 1939 the British Government suggested a plan involving the establishment of a single Palestinian state after a ten years transitional period in which the Zionist settlers would remain a permanent minority. The Arabs, including the Palestinians, accepted the Plan in principle but insisted that a definite date for independence must be set.

In contrast, the Zionists rejected the British proposal and even boycotted the official sessions of the conference.

The single item which prevented a complete agreement between the Arabs and the British Government was to set a date for the end of the transitional period. The British Government wanted to make independence dependent on Zionist consent. They feared that if they set a definite date for independence then the Arabs would not make serious efforts to meet Zionist demands for a fair share and participation in the administration of the country. On the other hand, the Palestinians feared that the British Government, under Zionist pressure, might change or reverse their policy at the end of the proposed transitional period, as she had on earlier occasions, and the only guarantee for independence would be through setting a fixed date for independence with or without Zionist consent. That the Palestinians believed to be also the only way to force the Zionists to seek serious negotiations with the Palestinians. But if independence was to be dependent on Zionist consent, it would never happen because the Zionists announced openly that they did not accept such a proposal and they would resist it with all means.

The London Conference ended without agreement with either side and the British Government issued a White Paper in 1939 announcing the policy which she would follow in Palestine. The statement emphasized that it was not the intention of any British Government or even the "framer of the Balfour Declaration" to convert Palestine into a Jewish state. The British Government "Would indeed regard it as contrary to their obligations to the Arabs under the Mandate as well as to the assurances which have been given to the Arab people in the past, that the Arab population of Palestine should be made the subject of a Jewish state against their will." (1939 White Paper p.3).

The White Paper included the following objectives:

1. The establishment within ten years of an independent Palestine state.
2. Both Arabs and Jews would participate in the administration and government in such a way as to ensure the essential rights of each community.
3. That after the admission of 75,000 Jewish immigrants within a five years period, no more immigration would be permitted without Arab consent.
4. Land sales to Zionists were to be prohibited in most of Palestine and should be subject to strict control of the High Commission.

Despite the fact that the Zionists had rejected the White Paper out of hand and that the Palestinians accepted almost all its items, except the length of the transitional period, they failed to sign an agreement with the British Government and therefore, their position was seen as the same as the position of the Zionists namely the rejection of the British proposals.

Although some Palestinians may argue that even if the Palestinians had accepted the British proposals it was not going to make much difference since Britain was deeply committed to Zionism and that the British refusal to set a definite date for independence was intended to give them the pretext to reverse their policy in the future, in my view it was certainly a worthwhile and important opportunity that was wasted.

The Palestinian people had struggled for more than two decades to gain British recognition for their right to establish a government representing all the inhabitants of the country and to refuse such a recognition because of fear of a reversal of the policy at the end of ten years and without any guarantee that independence would be achieved at all, was unwise and mistaken. The significance of the British proposals lies in the fact that Britain, for the first time, gave a clear definition to the meaning of the Jewish National Home and that was definitely not to convert Palestine or part of it into a Jewish state. It condemned the Zionist settlers to be a permanent minority. More importantly, it provided the Palestinians with an opportunity to get a written acceptance by the British Government of their sovereignty over the whole country. It prohibited land sales to Zionists in most parts of

the country and made Jewish immigration after certain numbers dependent on Palestinian consent.

It is hard to tell whether an agreement reached between the Arabs and Britain would have been implemented by the British Government or not but such an agreement would have made it extremely difficult for a British Government simply to abandon unilaterally an agreement and in any case it would have given the Palestinians a stronger negotiation position when the matter was brought before the United Nations.

Although the British Government announced that she was going to implement the policy of the White Paper regardless of Arab and Zionist agreement it was easy for Britain not to implement that policy and they faced no problem when the policy was abandoned altogether in 1948. Arabs' protests against Britain's reluctance to implement the White Paper's policy was not effective because they themselves had refused to accept it.

The Palestinians realized the importance of the British offer only in 1946-47 when they demanded the implementation of that policy. They were then told that the White Paper was no longer on the negotiating table and that it was the Arabs rather than British fault that they had not accepted it when it was offered.

Practically, the Palestinian refusal to sign an agreement with Britain which could secure almost all their demands played into the hands of the Zionists. It facilitated the task of the Zionists in attacking the British policy when they accused the British Government of following a policy which was not acceptable by the Arabs themselves, and consequently the policy was not implemented.

During the Second London Conference in 1946-1947 the British Government suggested a plan involving the establishment of provincial autonomy or a bi-national state consisting of Arab and Jewish cantons. Both Arabs and Zionists rejected the offer and it was during this time that the Zionists announced their desire to establish a Jewish state in a viable area of Palestine, which was accepted by the United States of America in October 1946.

c. Partition

Partition as a permanent solution to the Palestine conflict was first suggested in 1937 by the Royal Commission of Inquiry. According to this partition plan Palestine would be divided into:

1. A Jewish State
2. British Enclaves, to include Jerusalem and Nazareth.
3. The attachment of the rest of Palestine to Transjordan to form an Arab State.

The territories allocated to the proposed Jewish state included the Coastal plain and Galilee. These territories contained 304,900 Jews and 294,000 Arabs. The Arabs owned 75 % of the lands in these territories.

The main aim of this plan was to enable the Zionist settlers to form a secure and exclusive Jewish state in a viable area which included almost all the irrigated, citrus and cereal lands and the water resources. To achieve this aim the Commission suggested a compulsory exchange of land and population between the Arab and the Jewish proposed areas. This meant actually the transfer of the 294,000 Arabs who owned 75 percent of those territories in return for the transfer of less than 10,000 Jews who owned insignificant land in the Arab state.

The Palestinians rejected this proposal on the ground that while it suggested the establishment of a Jewish state for one third of the population on a territories mainly owned by Arabs it withheld such rights from the Palestinians. The Palestinians argued that the Partition solution was not based on the recognized principles of justice and equality and it was neither acceptable nor fair to suggest the transfer of innocent civilians from their homes and lands to make room for foreign settlers to establish a foreign state. They charged that the Commission in suggesting such a plan considered the interests of the Zionist settlers only and completely ignored the Palestinians right for freedom and self determination in their own country.

Indeed the Partition plan did not give much consideration to the economic social and psychological impact of such a transfer of peasant communities from their homes and environment to new and strange areas. The Arab population announced their determination to resist such a transfer by all their means. The Zionists also rejected Partition because it did not give them all that they wanted especially the Negeb

and new Jerusalem.

A Technical Commission which was sent to Palestine in 1938 to draw up a definite scheme of Partition came to the conclusion that the Royal Commission Plan was built on the assumption of transferring the Arab population. Without such a transfer Partition as suggested by the Royal Commission would not be practical. They produced three alternative plans and according to plan C, which they recommended, the proposed Jewish state was reduced to a small area, 400 square miles, consisting of a narrow strip of the Coastal plain along the Mediterranean.

The Palestinians, however, were not united in rejecting Partition. The "moderate" among them actually were prepared to accept Partition since such a solution would confine the Zionist danger into a small area and consequently protect the Arab areas from Zionist potential expansion. Those "moderates" among the Palestinians were also supported by Transjordan. But at the end the nationalists won the argument since they were supported by the Revolt's leaders and rejection of Partition prevailed.

The Zionists too rejected Partition on the grounds that it did not give them all they wanted and in the hope that they would become a majority and establish a Jewish state in the whole country. Against this background the British Government announced their abandonment of Partition on the ground that it was impracticable.

The important point which must be noticed here is this: despite the fact that Zionist opposition to Partition was no less than Palestinian opposition, British and Zionist propaganda succeeded in giving the impression that the Arabs were mainly responsible for the failure of the scheme. It is the contention of this thesis that Partition was not abandoned by the British Government because of Arab objection to it but rather and mainly because of Zionist rejection.

In 1947 the United Nations adopted and recommended a partition scheme as a solution to the Palestine conflict. It was similar to the Royal Commission scheme with the exception of adding the Negeb to the Jewish state and Western Galilee to the Arab state. The United Nations Partition scheme with economic union included:

1. The establishment of an Arab state in the central hill and arid

area of Palestine, including Western Galilee, Gaza strip and an enclave and corridor to Jaffa. The total area of the Arab state was 4,476 square miles or 42,88 percent of the total land of Palestine. It was to contain 725,000 Arabs and 10,000 Jews.

2. The establishment of a Jewish state to include Eastern Galilee, which contain the water resources, the Coastal plain, which contains, most of the Citrus cereal and irrigable lands, and the Negeb with its strategic location on the Red Sea and its mineral and oil potential. An area of 5,897 square miles or 56 percent of the total. It was going to contain 498,000 Jews against a similar number of Arabs 497,000 including the nomads.

3. Jerusalem International Zone. It consisted of 68 square miles or 0,65 percent and contained 105,000 Arabs and 100,000 Jews.

The Palestinians' responses to this plan were almost identical to their responses to the previous Partition plan of the Royal Commission. They rejected the United Nations Partition plan for the following reasons:

1. The U.N. recommended Partition without consulting the people concerned and in doing so the Organization violated the principles embodied in its own Charter, namely the right of every people to self-determination and the establishment of a national government representing the wishes of the majority of its inhabitants.

2. The U.N. used a double standard in dealing with the rights of the Zionist settlers and the rights of the Arab native population. If Partition was recommended in order to solve the problem of Jewish minority under Arab rule then why did the same principle not apply for the large Arab minority which would be subject to Zionist rule?

3. Partition was not fair or just and discriminated against the Palestinians. While it allocated one-third of the population, who owned about 7 percent of the land, over half the country including almost all the Citrus, Cereal, and irrigable lands and water resources, it offered the Arab two-thirds majority who owned 93 percent of the total land less than half the lands of their country and which had not sufficient resources to establish a viable state.

4. Partition was not recommended because it was based on justice, equality and to solve the conflict but rather it was an endorsement of a

Zionist scheme which was supported by the United States of America. Such an unfair plan was not possible without the pressure and influence of the United States and her allies in the U. N.

The Palestinians, however, demanded the establishment of a Unitary State but at the last moment they were prepared to support a federal state.

The Partition Plan actually was not officially implemented because, firstly Britain refused to allow the Palestine Commission to enter Palestine and do the preparatory work recommended in the Partition resolution, such as demarcating boundaries and establishing local government and militias, secondly Arabs' opposition and thirdly the refusal of the U.S.A and their Allies to establish an international force to supervise the implementation of partition because they did not want Russian forces in the Middle East. Consequently, a civil war broke out in Palestine during the last six months of the Mandate. During this local strife the Zionist forces succeeded in occupying Arab towns and territories in excess of the areas allocated to the Jewish state by the Partition Plan. The Zionists used every possible means to force the Arabs from their homes and lands. This included massacres, mortar shelling, time bombs and later actual expulsion. Before the end of the Mandate about 200,000 Palestinians had fled or been expelled from their homes, forming about one third of the total Palestinian refugees until the end of 1948. What aggravated the refugee problem was the refusal of "Israel" to withdraw from those areas occupied, in the course of the 1948 war in excess of the areas allocated to them by the Partition resolution and her refusal to allow the Palestinian refugees to return or to compensate those of them who opted not to return according to the U. N resolution 194 (111) of December 1948.

This "Israeli" attitude on the occupied Arab territories and the refugees supports the argument that the expulsion of the refugees was a pre-determined policy of the Zionists which was intended to make room for more immigrants and make possible the establishment of an exclusively Jewish state. It also supports the Arab argument about the expansionist nature of the Jewish state which up today has refused to withdraw from the Arab territory occupied in 1948 and has annexed other Arab territories such as Arab Jerusalem and the Golan Heights after the 1967 War.

If the Zionists succeeded in giving the impression that the Palestine conflict was a conflict between two nationalist movements and not a conflict between a native population and foreign settlers, "Israel" too succeeded in converting the conflict from one between the Zionists and the Palestinians over the sovereignty of Palestine into a regional conflict between the Arab States and "Israel".

It is the contention of this thesis that the Palestinians are at the heart of the conflict and that there is no hope for any settlement without addressing and solving the Palestinians' economic, social, human refugee and political problems and this is not possible until the Palestinians point of view is properly understood.

I would argue that the imposition of Partition on Palestine against the express wishes of the majority of its inhabitants cannot be justified and can in no way be considered as a respect for or compliance with the U.N.'s Charter especially Article 73, concerning Mandated territories, in which the U.N. undertakes to promote the "well being" of the inhabitants of these territories and to take their "political aspirations" into account. Having said that, it seems to me constructive to stress the following points:

1. The Arabs blamed the United States more than Russia for the adoption by the U.N. of the Partition Plan but practically, without the Russian support for Partition it would not have been possible to pass the General Assembly and therefore, both America and Russia bear equal responsibility for the Partition of Palestine and the creation of the present conflict.

2. That the Palestinians missed a worthwhile opportunity in 1939 when they declined to accept the British White Paper.

3. That the Palestinians followed on many occasions the wrong tactics during their handling of the conflict with the British Government or before the U.N. For example, the Arabs knew that the Zionists would not accept British proposals which were submitted by the Royal Commission, Woodhead Commission or during the London Conference, but they failed to capitalize on this Zionist rejection by reaching a deal with Britain. It was also known to the Arabs that the Zionists, supported by the United States, were determined to get the U.N.'s endorsement for Partition. They knew also that any Partition could not pass the General Assembly

without support from Russia. The Russians at the beginning of the debate were in favour of a federal state. It was the Arabs who refused to discuss the federal proposal until it was too late and after the Russians had made up their minds and voted in support of Partition.

3. Arab rejection of Partition, after it was accepted by both East and West, without possessing their own military forces to resist Partition and without thinking of the consequences, left them not only isolated, politically and militarily defeated but also they lost the logic of the argument and were left without much sympathy. The Palestine tragedy passed almost unnoticed.

This Arab position on the U.N.'s proposal, gave the Zionists a golden opportunity, which they utilized to the maximum, and it made easy their task of influencing world public opinion that the Arabs were "aggressors" instead of the victims, and were uncompromising extremists instead of being unfairly treated and not consulted.

The Arabs, however, did not recover and were not able to correct this image in world public opinion, since after this defeat and humiliation, by the Zionists and "Israelis", they tried to keep some kind of dignity by refusing to recognize "Israel". Although such a position cost the Palestinians most of their lands and dispersed the majority of the Palestinian people all over the Middle East's Arab countries, the Arabs found it difficult to recognize a state which was established by the use of force and still occupied Arab territories just because they were defeated.

4. If the Arabs had accepted Partition, after it became evident that it was not possible to reverse the U. N decision or to prevent its implementation by their own forces, they would have perhaps made it extremely difficult for the British Government to allow the Zionists, as she did, to occupy Arab towns and territories and to displace or expel about 200,000 Palestinians before the end of the Mandate and while Britain was officially responsible for law and order in the whole country.

Palestinians' acceptance of Partition would have made the Zionists action against the Palestinians, if it had happened at all, unacceptable in the eyes of their own allies. It would have deprived the Zionists of

the propaganda advantage which they gained as a result of Arab refusal. It would have confined the Jewish state into recognized borders and with the Palestinians holding on to their homes and lands and through their participation in the administration of the Jewish state, Zionist ambitions to establish an exclusive Jewish state, bringing more immigrants or expansion, would have been unattainable at least because there would always have been a substantial Arab minority and the extra lands would have been unavailable since most of the land was in Arab hands.

5. Although the position of the Palestinians is appreciated and understandable, since they could not accept solutions based on principles other than justice, equality and the right to self-determination, they nevertheless failed to realize that time was not to their advantage and that every proposal or plan was worse than its predecessor. The proposals of the 1939 White Paper were much better than those of 1946; the Partition Plan of 1937 was better than that of 1947 and so on.

The practical implications of this study are obvious. For the Palestinians it has been revealed that although they have a just case and that they were the victims of British and Zionist colonialism they nevertheless followed unsuitable tactics during their handling of the problem during the Mandate both with the British Government and before the U.N. As a result of rivalries, divisions and interference from different Arab countries they failed to present a uniform and clear strategy and to state their goal and the right methods to achieve it.

Even today they still suffer from these symptoms and appear unable to put to the world a clearly defined goal and acceptable ways to achieve this goal. What the Palestinians need to do, in my view, and in the light of this to study is carry out an honest review of their previous position and tactics, to learn from them and then to build their arguments and strategy on the U. N's resolutions which, although these would not give them all they wanted nor compensate them for all their losses and sufferings it nevertheless, would put the conflict in the right context namely: That they were the victims, they were the party who had been denied the right to establish their own state according to the U.N. resolution and that "Israel" is the party which refuses to

withdraw from their lands and to allow the refugees to return to their homes or compensate those among them who do not want to return, according to the U.N. resolution 194 (111) of December 1948.

Such a Palestinian position would not only find support from the rest of the world but also would expose Israel's ambitions and its true nature and consequently would lead to its isolation, something which might push her towards accepting a compromise solution.

For "Israel" it is to their advantage too to show genuine readiness to recognize the rights of the Palestinian people for the establishment of their state which was recommended by the same U.N. resolution which "Israel" claims as the "legal" bases for its existence.

Time and events have proved that the Palestinians were a major factor in the conflict and that there would be no lasting settlement without solving the human and political problems of the Palestinians people. The illusion of the Zionist movement and later "Israel" that the Jewish problem would end once they established an exclusively Jewish state in Palestine, and that the Palestinian problem would cease to exist or at least be reduced to a refugee problem which might be solved through assimilation in the Arab world, have also proved to be wrong.

The insistence of "Israel" on its annexation and occupation of Arab lands, its refusal to comply with U.N. resolutions in regard to Arab territories and Palestinian refugees has led to four major wars up to now and undoubtedly could eventually lead to a nuclear arms race and perhaps a nuclear war with its disastrous consequences on both sides and perhaps on the world.

The refusal of the Palestinians to recognize or accept a settlement based on principles other than justice and equality despite all the losses and suffering which have been inflicted upon them, is a reflection of their bitter feelings and a clear indication that they would not surrender their rights and that they would continue their struggle until a satisfactory settlement could be reached. It is in my view, the duty of the Palestinians, the Arabs and the Jewish leaders to explore all possibilities to find and reach a just solution which is in the interest of all people in the Middle East and the World.

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