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“PALESTINIAN – ARAB RELATIONS: A STUDY  
OF THE POLITICAL ATTITUDES AND ACTIVITIES  
OF THE PALESTINIANS IN THE ARAB HOST -  
STATES: 1949 – 1967”.

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## ABSTRACT

This study seeks to establish the general nature of the relations between the Palestinians and their respective Arab Host-States during the period 1949-1967. The political attitudes and activities of the Palestinians constitute our central concern and those of the Arab Host-States are analyzed only in as much as they are related to the Palestinians.

The theoretical framework of this study incorporates the hypothesis which, while examining the status of the Palestinians relative to various definitions of minorities, stateless persons and refugees, gives basic importance to Pan-Arabism as a common-bond. It is also of great significance that the dual character of nationalism and Pan-Arabism is shared both by the Palestinians and the Arab states at large.

This study is broadly divided into three major eras: the era of formation, the era of transition and the era of revival. In addition, this study undertakes two cases studies of the Palestinians in Jordan and in the Gaza Strip.

The era of formation which covers the period 1949-1952 had witnessed the dispersion of the Palestinian Arabs. The roots of the relations between the Palestinians and their respective Host-States were laid down during this era.

The era of transition which covers the period 1952-1963 was characterized by a Palestinian drive towards educational and academic attainment. Moreover, this era saw an increase in Palestinian political activism which was mainly manifested through political parties and political literature.

The era of revival which covers the period 1963-1967 brought a shift in the political attitude of the majority of the Palestinian Arabs from major stress on Pan-Arabism and Arab unity to one of recognition of a Palestinian identity and the revival of Palestinian entity which culminated in the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization and the emergence of Al-Fatah: Palestine National Liberation Movement.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

On July 22, 1968, a Boeing 707 EL AL airplane in flight from Rome to Tel-Aviv was hijacked by Palestinians and forced to land in Algeria. That incident marked the beginning of what has been known since as acts of ‘international terrorism’. Many similar incidents followed suit and involved many countries. The effect was stunning. People all over the world started wondering and asking, “why?”, and, “who are those Palestinians?”. One could answer the first question by suggesting that it could be a Palestinian shock treatment to dispel what they considered to be the apathy of the world to their problem and sufferings. The question remains, however, “who are the Palestinians?”. A simple question perhaps, but the answer is far from that.

It is customary for any researcher to encounter the initial difficulty of choosing the topic of his or her research, yet, more difficult indeed is the ability to succeed in that undertaking which should combine the originality, the academic criteria, and the stimulation needed to satisfy both the writer and the reader.

This research is no exception. The choice of this topic which deals with the relations between the Palestinians and the Arab Host-States during the period 1949-1967 was determined by the following factors. There appears to be no comprehensive study

readily available of the relations between the Palestinians and the Arab Host-States which treats this topic as one unit and which deals with the various social, demographic, political, economic, educational and military aspects of this relationship. This research was, therefore, conducted with the aim of shedding some light on the nature of Palestinian-Arab relations during the period of our study. Furthermore, it is contended that the Palestine Problem, and consequently the Palestinians, were at the core of the politics of the Arab Host-States since 1949, and that the understanding of Palestinian-Arab relations constitutes, therefore, an important contribution to the understanding of the politics of the Arab states in general, and the Arab Host-States in particular, during the period of our study. Finally, this study was conceived as being a broad study which cuts across almost all important aspects of Palestinian relations with the Arab Host-States during the period 1949-1967. In this sense, this study neither undertakes an intensive elaborate analysis of specific aspects of Palestinian relations with Arab Host-States during the period 1949-1967, nor does it claim to be a complete study of that relationship. Rather, the intention is to portray more broadly the relations between Palestinians and the Arab Host-States during the period 1949-1967.

The choice of the period 1949-1967 was determined by the fact that in 1949, the armistice agreements between Israel, on the one side, and Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan on the other side were

signed. This marked the de facto acceptance by these Arab Host-States of the demarcation lines of Israel, thus ending a period of uncertain hope for a quick settlement and the return to the homeland by the dispersed Palestinians. The year 1967, with its June War and its clear-cut results in terms of the undisputed Arab defeat and loss of territory, which included the remaining part of Mandate Palestine under Arab control as well as parts of the territories of Egypt and Syria, had a drastic impact on the Arab political scene, thus marking the end of an area in Arab politics and the beginning of a new one.

During the process of preparing for this research, the writer was confronted by a variety of problems which were mainly related to the last four chapters. Most of these problems emanated from the nature of the topic itself. The topic of this research is largely considered by both the Palestinians and the Arab Host-States as being a sensitive issue which is usually not discussed directly in public\*.

This was clearly reflected in the absence of reliable data, statistics and information on the topic, whether on the official governmental level or on the academic level in the form of research projects or serious books. The reasons behind this sensitivity varied from one Host-State to another. Jordan, for example, which houses the majority of the Palestinian

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\* See Chapter Seven, pp. 346-347.

people considered the Palestinians in Jordan as Jordanian citizens and did not, therefore, undertake or even permit the publication or otherwise of any data, statistics or information which pertains solely to the Palestinians or which account for the Palestinian origin of its Jordanized Palestinian population. In the case of the Gaza Strip, which comes next to Jordan in the number of its Palestinian population, Egypt, as the administrative power, restricted its published information to official decrees. The same applies to Syria. As for Lebanon, the government published practically nothing. Some United Nation agencies– especially UNRWA and UNESCO, are the main source of statistics on Palestinians in the Arab Host-States.

In order to overcome this lack of data, statistics and information, the writer of this research relied, among other things, on interviews with people who participated, either directly or indirectly, in the shaping of Palestinian relations with their respective Host-States during the period of the study. This was not an easy undertaking. Locating these people who were dispersed in various countries was itself a problem. More difficult, however, was the task of convincing them to talk freely about information they have. Some refused, some talked frankly and other reservedly. Most of them, however, insisted that their identity remain anonymous. The gathering of information about the emergence of the Al-Fatah: Palestine National Liberation Movement was most difficult and daunting.

Nonetheless, circumstances played a great helping role in giving the writer the chance to interview two of Al-Fatah's prominent leaders who revealed some very interesting information. In addition to interviews, the writer of this research relied on some unpublished documents, local newspapers, books written by Palestinian thinkers as well as United Nations documents and publications.

This study consists of six chapters in addition to the introduction and the conclusion. Chapter one sets out the conceptual framework. It attempts a theoretical analysis of the concepts of minorities, stateless persons and refugees according to which the analysis of the status of the Palestinians in the Arab Host-States is based. An analysis of the dual-character of nationalism and Pan-Arabism which is enjoyed by the Palestinians and the Arabs at large is then undertaken to point out the common bonds between the Palestinians and their respective Arab Host-States. This is followed by the hypothesis which suggests that the Palestinians in the Arab Host-States constitute the intruding-element and the Host-States the existing-elements. The hypothesis is spelled out in detail in the remaining part of this chapter.

Chapter two, which covers the period 1949-1952, begins with a brief historical background of the Arab Palestinians as well as the political organization and the pan-Arab attitude of the Arab Palestinians before 1948. This chapter covers the

demographic dispersion of the Palestinians in the aftermath of the 1948 War, and is followed by an analysis of the responses of each of the Arab Host-States to the influx of Palestinian refugees. The latter part of this chapter spells out the basic political taboos of the Palestine Problem as seen both by the Palestinians and the Host-States. The chapter, ends up with an analysis of the Palestinians' attitude towards the solution of the Palestine refugee problem, as well as that of the Arab states.

Chapter three covers the period 1952-1963, and deals with the impact of the dispersion of the Palestinians on their political views and activities. The chapter begins with an assessment of the Palestinians' educational and academic potential combined with an analysis of their achievements in this field. A survey of Palestinian political activities during the same period is then undertaken by means of an examination of Palestinian political literature and the role of the Palestinians in political parties in the Host-States.

Chapter four and five give detailed case studies of the Palestinians in Jordan and in the Gaza Strip respectively. The purpose of these two case studies is to give a detailed account of the relations between the Palestinians and the Jordanian regime and the Palestinians and the Egyptian regime. These two case studies also undertake an elaborate analysis of the political attitudes and activities of the

Palestinians in Jordan and the Gaza strip and on the ways and means which were adopted by both Jordan and Egypt in dealing with the Palestinians.

Chapter six covers the period 1963-1967 which saw the revival of Palestinian entity<sup>\*</sup>. The chapter begins with an analysis of the factors behind the revival of Palestinian entity from the point of view of both the Palestinians and the Arab states. This is followed by an account of Arab states – sponsored attempts to revive Palestinian entity during the period 1949-1964 which serves as a prelude to the analysis of Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as an Arab States – sponsored form of Palestinian entity. The analysis of the PLO includes a consideration of the attitudes of the Palestinians towards the establishment of the PLO, the Palestinian conception of the PLO compared with the Arab states conception of the PLO, and, finally, the analysis of PLO ideology, political and military strategy. The last part of this chapter is devoted to an analysis of the Al-Fatah: Palestine National Liberation Movement as a Palestinian – sponsored form of Palestinian entity. This analysis of Al-Fatah provides a background to the origin of Al-Fatah and it owes much to interviews with Yasser Arafat (Abu Ammar)<sup>\*\*</sup> and Khalil El-Wazir (Abu Jihad)<sup>\*\*\*</sup>.

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\* The term “Palestinian entity” is the one officially used by the Palestine Liberation Organization.

\*\* He has been Head of Al-Fatah and Chairman of the PLO since 1968.

\*\*\* He is one of the original founders of Al-Fatah and a member of its central committee.

The remaining part of this chapter is devoted to an analysis of the political and military strategy of Al-Fatah.

Finally, one should reiterate that this study was conducted against a background of numerous limitations and difficulties which were beyond the control of the writer. A reader might come across points which are not sufficiently explored or some statistics which are either incomplete or go beyond the scope of our period of study. If and when this takes place during the course of this study, it is simply due to the non-availability of any authentic information despite the efforts of the writer to obtain or generate such information. Nevertheless, the writer fully acknowledges his responsibility for the study's unavoidable imperfections.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

The rise of nationalism in Europe, which followed the French Revolution and was stirred up by the Napoleonic wars, led to the decline of religious fervour and the destruction of the traditional dynastic poly-ethnic or multi-national empires as the basis of the political system. The latter were replaced by the nation-state as basic unit of the European political system.

The destruction of poly-ethnic or multinational empires in Eastern and Central Europe, and their transformation into nation-states, took place through a series of regional, continental and world wars, the outcome of which was to lead to the emergence of the problems of minorities, statelessness and refugees in their contemporary setting. The forceful destruction of multi-national empires subjected the emergence of the successor nation-states to a complexity of factors. Amidst these factors, the consideration of ethnic homogeneity in planning the boundaries of the successor nation-states received, by and large, relatively secondary consideration in practice although in theory ethnic homogeneity and nationalism were their very *raison d'être*. Accordingly, a situation developed where the territories of some new 'nation-states' engulfed part of parts of the populace and historical territories of other nations, which paved the way for the emergence of both the minority problem and

the refugee problem. In other instances, some distinct groups, who had been able to live and to identify themselves within the broad boundaries of the poly-ethnic or multi-national empires, became stateless in the new world of supposedly nation-states. This gave rise to all the limitations imposed on such groups by the very nature of nationalist ideology which, when there is a contradiction between “the interests of one’s own nationality and those of other nationalities” may become “a movement bent externally on aggression and internally on domination, discrimination, forcible assimilation or total exclusion of other ethnic groups”<sup>1</sup>.

Nationalism, which reflects “the conscious will to be a nation” is often linked with the ethnic phenomenon of the nation rather than with the political phenomenon of the state<sup>2</sup>. Although the ultimate aim of nationalism is to be translated politically into the form of a state which represents the nation, it is the rule rather than the exception that, in the process of achieving this goal, nationalism, in an hetero-ethnic state, acts in contradiction to the interests of the state as a whole to the extent that it reflects only the nationalism of the dominant ethnic group<sup>3</sup> in that state. Such a situation is most likely to develop in

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<sup>1</sup> Benjamin Akzin, State and Nation (London: Hutchinson University Press, 1964), pp.52-53.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp.7, 49.

<sup>3</sup> The term “dominant ethnic group” does not necessarily indicate numerical majority, in as much as it indicates political influence and domination of the political institutions of the state.

an hetero-ethnic state when ethnic integration of the majority of the people in the state is incomplete, or when there is a concentration of a large number of “a non-dominant ethnic group” especially if such a concentration is confined to a part of the state’s territory which is a border area<sup>1</sup>. Under such conditions when an ethnic group or groups in a poly-ethnic state “have been aroused to present claims of a political nature bearing on the basic values or organizational structure of the state concerned”, and which are consequently in contradiction to the dominant ethnic group in that state, then such an ethnic group or groups must be considered as “nationalities”<sup>2</sup>. In pursuing their nationalist goals, the non-dominant nationality or nationalities in the state frequently attempt to change the existing political status quo. The dominant argument is that,

“.... should contradictions develop between the interests of one’s own nationality and those of other nationalities, the latter may and should be sacrificed to the former irrespective of their relative merits”<sup>3</sup>.

This is very likely to invite the resistance of the “forces of the status quo” in the machinery of the state, and a confrontation would seem, under the circumstances, to be inevitable. Alternatively,

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<sup>1</sup> Benjamin Akzin, *op.cit.*, p. 43.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.43-44.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.52-53.

and on the basis that “ethnic and national consciousness is the first ingredient of nationalism”, a solution could come through the integration or assimilation of the non-dominant ethnic group or groups which could take place through “a toning down of their identifying group characteristics in favour of those of the dominant ethnic group, leading to their gradual submergence in the latter”<sup>1</sup>. The same process could take place on a larger scale if all or most of the ethnic groups in a poly-ethnic state ‘tone down their identifying group characteristics’, thus giving birth to a new nationality; new in the sense that its characteristics do not resemble any one of the ethnic groups concerned. Thus the state begets a nation in a certain sense.

On these lines, the status of the Palestinians in the Arab Host-States<sup>2</sup> provides a different insight into the general line of analysis regarding the transformation of ethnic groups into nationalities on the one hand, and the relationship between the ethnic groups in a hetero-ethnic state on the other hand. However, before we proceed in analyzing these aspects, it is important to clarify the legal status of the Palestinians in the Arab Host-States, as this constitutes the legal basis governing the legal relationship between the Palestinians and their respective Host-States,

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 45-54.

<sup>2</sup> The term “Arab Host-States” refers to the Arab States in which the Palestinians took refuge, en masse, during and after the 1948 War in Palestine. These States are Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Egypt (including the Gaza strip which, after 1948, was administered by Egypt).

hence, the mutual rights and obligations of the Palestinians and their Host-States.

The literature on human rights provides three categories under which the status of non-dominant nationalities could be classified. These are: minority status, refugee status, and stateless person status.

a. The Palestinians as a minority

The literature on minorities accepts the existence of certain characteristics as being the bases which govern the existence of a minority status. These are cultural, ethnic, religious and linguistic<sup>1</sup>. In the context of these characteristics, a minority can be defined<sup>2</sup> as a group of people who live in a state as lawful citizens and who preserve either ethnic, linguistic, cultural, or religious characteristics,

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<sup>1</sup> Inis L. Claude, National Minorities: An International Problem (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955), pp. 2 and 203.

James Frederick Green, The United Nations and Human Rights (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1956), pp. 93-94.

A.H. Hourani, Minorities in the Arab World (London: Oxford University Press, 1947), pp. 1-14.

Oscar I. Janowsky, Nationalities and National Minorities (New York: The Macmillan company, 1945), pp. XII – XIII.

<sup>2</sup> For other definitions see: Inis Claude, *op. cit.*, pp. 208, 210. Also see: United Nations Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, Report of the Fourth Session, Doc. E/CN.4/641 (Oct. 25, 1951), p.43.

in any combination, which are different from those enjoyed by the majority of the people living in that state. Given the above mentioned characteristics, the crystallization of a minority status might sometimes be based, on a group of people, regardless of its being a majority or a minority in numerical terms, conceiving of itself as being a minority. In other words, the element of minority-consciousness, whether self-developed or imposed by other distinct group or groups in the state, might serve, regardless of the size of the group concerned, as a basis for the crystallization of a minority status<sup>1</sup>. The existence of a minority in a state becomes a problem in two cases. First, if the majority, whether in size or influence, adopts or practices any sort of policy or action that might be interpreted by the minority, whether in size or in influence, as being hostile to its right of practicing and preserving any of its distinctive characteristics. Second, if the minority, whether in size or in influence, translates its distinctive characteristics into political terms, with political objectives that are ultimately in contradiction to those of the majority.

Any attempt to apply minority status to the Palestinians in the Arab Host-States would reveal

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<sup>1</sup> For example, the situation in Pakistan prior to the Indo-Pakistan war of 1971, when the majority in East Pakistan was dominated by the minority in West Pakistan.

that the Palestinians in Egypt and Syria do not meet the basic criterion which govern the status of a minority since they do not hold the citizenship of either of these countries. As for Lebanon, the majority of the Palestinians residing there do not have Lebanese citizenship, and, therefore, cannot be classified as a minority. A certain number<sup>1</sup> of the Christian Palestinians residing in Lebanon were granted the Lebanese citizenship however. This was a significant development during the period 1952-1958. The motive behind this was an attempt by the Lebanese Government to maintain the critical sectarian balance on which the Lebanese political system is based and according to which the Christians enjoy a slight majority of 53% (according to the only census in the history of Lebanon which took place in 1943). Since 1943, the Christian majority had been decreasing due to the higher birth rate the Lebanese Muslims.

The Christian Palestinians in Lebanon who acquired Lebanese citizenship do not fall within the minority status because of two main factors. First, Lebanon is a minority-based country. It

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<sup>1</sup> No official figures were released by the Lebanon Government, and no estimates, according to my knowledge, were made of the number of Palestinians who were granted Lebanese citizenship. However, based upon private talks with some Lebanese and Palestinians in Lebanon, this figure could range between 20 000 – 70 000.

consists of different minorities with none of them constituting an absolute majority and who, in various degrees, conceive of themselves as minorities. The Lebanese political system is based on the continuous existence of an accepted balance between these sectarian groups. Second, in case of any disruption of the existing order in Lebanon, the Lebanized Christian Palestinians belong, according to the rules of the sectarian game, to the Christian sect, which is, hypothetically, in the majority status.

The Palestinians in Jordan pose a different problem. On constitutional grounds<sup>1</sup>, the Palestinians in Jordan are Jordanian citizens. In this capacity, the Palestinians have constituted, all the time, an absolute majority of the populace of Jordan<sup>2</sup>. Thus, they cannot, theoretically and in numerical terms, be classified as a minority. In practice, however, the Palestinians in Jordan, conscious of their actual inferior status, conceive of themselves as a minority<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> According to the Jordanian Constitution of 1950, which was drafted after the unification of the West Bank and Trans-Jordan in December 1949. For more information see Chapter 4, pp. 170-186.

<sup>2</sup> In 1950, the population of Jordan was 1 337 000 with 506 000 Trans-Jordanians, and 864 000 Palestinians. See Chapter 4, p.191.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter 4.

b. The Palestinians as Refugees

The status of the refugee is governed by the 1951 Convention Relating to the status of Refugees. According to this Convention, the term ‘refugee’ applies to “any person who owing to well founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence, is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it”<sup>1</sup>.

This international definition of the refugee, which was essentially devised to deal with post-Second World War refugees, was not applied to the Palestinians, nor was the care of the Palestinians entrusted to the International Refugee Organization. This, in itself, reflects an appreciation, by the world community, of the peculiar nature of the Palestine refugees, as a problem not of individual refugees, but rather of a whole people. Instead, a special agency, under the name United Nations Relief and Works Agency for the Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), was created by the United Nations to take care of the basic humanitarian needs of the Palestine refugees<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Ian Brownlie (ed.). Basic Documents on Human Rights (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), pp. 136-137; Also see, Louise W. Holborn. The International Refugee Organization: Its History and Work, 1946-1952 (London: Oxford University Press, 1956) pp. 584-587.

<sup>2</sup> For more information on UNRWA see Chapter 2, pp. 63-66, 70-72, 84-90, 94-97.

No definition of the ‘Palestine refugee’ was made by the United Nations. However, UNRWA devised its own definition which, for practical reasons, related to facilitating the work of UNRWA, defines a Palestinian refugee as being “a person whose normal residence had been Palestine for a minimum of two years preceding the 1948 conflict and who, as a result, had lost both his home and his means of livelihood”<sup>1</sup>.

The UNRWA definition of the Palestinian refugee, which was devised with the sole aim of laying-down a criterion for eligibility to UNRWA assistance and which therefore stresses economic need rather than political status, cannot, for this reason, be taken as a basis for determining the refugee status of the Palestinians in the Arab Host-States. It is thus far from the international definition of the refugee, as laid-down by the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, which gives basically a political definition. Accordingly, the analysis of the refugee status of the Palestine refugees, which is an essentially political as well as an economic analysis, will be conducted on the basis of the political definition, that is, the international definition of the refugee, and not on the basis of the working definition as laid down by UNRWA.

The majority of the Palestinians in the Arab Host-States are normally referred to as being ‘refugees’.

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<sup>1</sup> UNRWA. Information Paper No. 6. The Problem of the UNRWA Rolls: 1950-1962 (Beirut: UNRWA, 1962), p. 10; for more information see Chapter 2, pp. 63-72.

In principle, this might be true of all the Palestinians who left their homes and lands and who took refuge in the neighbouring Arab States, with the exception of the original inhabitants of the West Bank<sup>1</sup> and the Gaza Strip who did not leave their homes and lands. In theory, however, the situation differs. On April 24, 1950, the West Bank ceased to exist, at least officially, as part of Palestine, and became a part of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan<sup>2</sup>, with all its inhabitants, whether refugees or not, becoming Jordanian citizens. Thus, all the Palestinians residing in the West Bank and Transjordan, refugees and non-refugees alike, became Jordanian citizens living in their country - Jordan<sup>3</sup>. In practice, the situation was also different from all the above. According to UNRWA, a Palestinian is considered as being a refugee only if he is registered by UNRWA as such<sup>4</sup>. This, of course, covered the Palestinian refugees in Jordan (including the West Bank) who hold Jordanian citizenship. As for the Arab States themselves, the use of the term

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<sup>1</sup> In this study, the term West Bank refers to the Arab-held central part of Palestine which became part of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan after 1949. For more information, see, Chapter Four.

<sup>2</sup> For more information on this unification, see Chapter Four, pp. 170-186.

<sup>3</sup> See the international definition of the term “refugee”, p. 22.

<sup>4</sup> In accordance with UNRWA definition, see Chapter Two, p.66.

‘refugee’ differed. In Jordan, for example, although all the Palestinians residing there were Jordanian citizens, the term ‘refugee’ was normally used to refer to the Palestinians who live in UNRWA ‘refugee camps’. In Lebanon, the term ‘refugee’ had a wider application, and covered all those Palestinian refugees residing in Lebanon who did not hold Lebanese citizenship. While in Lebanon the term ‘refugee’ connoted a markedly inferior status in the society, such connotations were absent from the Syrian application of the term<sup>1</sup>. In the Gaza Strip the application of the term ‘refugee’, with reference to both the international definition and UNRWA definition of a refugee, poses more controversy than anywhere else in the Arab Host-States. According to the international definition of a refugee, all those Palestinians who took refuge in the neighbouring Arab States during and after the 1948-1949 hostilities in Palestine qualify, at least theoretically, for being considered as refugees. However, those Palestinians who took refuge in the Gaza Strip are still on Palestinian land and hence, at least theoretically, are still living inside their “country of former habitual residence”<sup>2</sup>. Nevertheless, the majority of the original inhabitants of the Gaza Strip, although they did not leave their homes, lost their lands and their means of livelihood<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information, see Chapter Two, pp. 78-80.

<sup>2</sup> See p.22.

<sup>3</sup> U.N. Doc. A/1905, para. 24, p.4.; For more information see Chapter Two, p.66

Accordingly, they have a case as refugees in the economic sense, or as “economic refugees”<sup>1</sup>. Thus, the term ‘refugee’ as applied to the Palestinians in the Arab Host-States is rather controversial and diversified in its connotations. However, the fact remains that some of the Palestinians in the Arab host-States, whether they are called refugees or not, meet the universally accepted criteria governing the status of refugees.

c. The Palestinians as Stateless Persons

‘Stateless persons’ are defined by the 1954 Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons. According to this Convention, the term ‘stateless persons’ applies to “a person who is not considered as a national by any state under the operation of its law”<sup>2</sup>.

An application of the status of stateless persons to the Palestinians in the Arab Host-States reveals that all the Palestinians residing in Jordan cannot be considered as stateless because they hold Jordanian citizenship, and are considered by the Jordanian Government as being nationals “under the operation of its law”. As for Lebanon and Syria, the majority of the Palestinians there are stateless because they are not considered as nationals by the Lebanese and Syrian Governments respectively, or by any other government. A more controversial situation exists in the Gaza Strip where the Palestinians live on ‘Palestinian land’, yet are considered stateless due

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Ian Brownlie (ed.), op.cit., p.154.

to the following factors. First, there is no Palestinian state. Second, the Gaza Strip has never been an independent state as it was under the Egyptian Military government from 1948-1967<sup>1</sup>. Third, the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, whether refugees or not, were not considered by the Egyptian Government, or by any other Government, as being nationals 'under the operation of its law' during the period of our study.

The status of the Palestinians in the Arab Host-States is not clearly defined. Although they are partly minority, partly refugees and partly stateless, yet, as a whole, they are none of these. Moreover, the existence of Pan-Arabism<sup>2</sup> as an accepted political ideology by the Arab States and the Arab masses, provides a unique aspect to the status of the Arab Palestinians, as minorities or refugees or stateless persons, and their relationship with their respective Arab Host-States. The reason for this is that, Pan-Arabism provides a general framework which includes every Arab State and all the Arab people, including the Palestinians. Some might suggest that this Pan-Arab framework is theoretical and cannot be taken seriously when it comes to the

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<sup>1</sup> With the exception of the period November 1956 – March 1957, when the Gaza Strip was under the Israeli occupation.

<sup>2</sup> Pan-Arabism is a political doctrine which stresses the unity of the Arab people and the Arab land, and calls for integration of the Arab people into one state. The League of the Arab States which was founded in 1945, was the first official expression, by the Arab regimes, of Pan-Arabism. The merger of Egypt and Syria, in 1958, into the United Arab Republic, was another example of Pan-Arabism. For a discussion of the Pan-Arabism attitude of the Palestinians prior to 1948, see Chapter Two, pp. 52-53.

actualities of politics. It might be true that Pan-Arabism is as theoretical as Pan-Africanism or Pan-Europeanism. However, one basic difference between Pan-Arabism and the other two-isms is the fact that Pan-Arabism is not optional. Since 1948, no Arab regime, irrespective of its colour or nature has dared to reject Pan-Arabism and to dissociate itself from it, at least in declaratory policy. Besides, during periods of major crises between one or more Arab State and a non-Arab State, for example, Israel, Pan-Arabism has proved to be a viable framework for rallying Arab support and promoting solidarity among the Arab States.

“... the Arab World has as its objective a broader nationalism which, while preserving the integrity of the various Arab States, looks towards the eventual amalgamation of them into a larger whole. In fulfilling this aim, we cannot logically ignore the area formerly known as Palestine, where an unresolved issue, involving a million displaced persons, remains as a living illustration of a grave injustice and of the Zionist threat in the heart of the Arab World”<sup>1</sup>.

The token military participation of many Arab States which do not neighbour Israel, in the war effort against Israel during and after the 1956, 1967 and 1973 Wars, in Egypt and Syria, was a manifestation of this Pan-Arab framework. Moreover, the reaction of the Arab masses to the 1956 attack on Egypt, and the merger of Egypt

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<sup>1</sup> H.M. King Hussein of Jordan. Uneasy Lies The Head: an Autobiography (London: Heinemann, 1962) p. 105.

and Syria into the United Arab Republic in 1958, are but two examples of the strong bonds of Pan-Arabism among the Arab masses.

In the context of this Pan-Arab relationship, an analysis of the nature and objectives of Palestinian political attitudes and activities in the Arab Host-States during the post-1948 period requires a full understanding of the Palestinian conception of the nature of the relationship between themselves as Arab Palestinians and the Arab States, and the Arab people at large. The importance to understanding the nature of this relationship stems from the fact that, during the post-1948 period, the Palestinians were operating neither in a purely Palestinian atmosphere, nor in a vacuum, but rather from within the broad framework of the Arab world in general, and the Arab Host-States in particular. However, it should be pointed out that this study concentrates on the Palestinian views, and only considers those of the Host-States to the extent that they are important from the Palestinian point-of-view. While one cannot be understood without the other, it is the Palestinians who are our central concern. Accordingly, an analysis of the Host-States' conception of the relationship between themselves and the Palestinians residing on their respective territories will only be conducted through an analysis of the responses and reactions of the Host-States to the political attitudes and activities of the Palestinians, as this constitutes an important contribution to the understanding of the general relationship between the two sides.

The general bases governing this theoretical approach are as follows:

- First, the Palestinians in the Arab Host – States constitute the intruding-element and the Host-State the existing-element.
- Second, the actions and policies of any existing-element, which are a reflection of the various national interests of that element, do not require, irrespective of the rationality or moral bases of such actions or policies, legitimization or justification because they simply reflect the legitimate existence and sovereignty of the existing-element. The Palestinians in the Host-States, as the intruding-element, do not enjoy such legitimacy or sovereignty because they operate, in their intruding – capacity, from within the framework of one or more of the existing-elements. To this, the Palestinians in Jordan are a theoretical exception<sup>1</sup>.

Accordingly, the intruding-element's conception of the nature of the relationship between itself

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<sup>1</sup> In theory, and on constitutional grounds, the Palestinians in Jordan are lawful citizens of the State: accordingly, they constitute an integral legitimate part of the existing-element. In practice, the situation might not be a true reflection of the theoretical constitutional status of the Palestinians in Jordan. However, the situation of the Palestinians in Jordan will be dealt with extensively in Chapter Four.

and the existing-elements requires a full understanding as it constitutes the basis on which the intruding-element legitimizes and justifies operating from within the framework of the existing-elements. Within the context of the Arab world, this analysis must take account of the problem of the dual-character which is shared by the Arab peoples and the Arab States. The two sides of this dual-character are Pan-Arabism and nationalism. Within the framework of Pan-Arabism, all the Arab peoples are fellow citizens and brothers who are bound together by the strong bonds of Pan-Arabism and its ultimate goal of Arab unity. This is on theory. In practice, however, the dual-character produces different attitudes in different contexts. In the context of the relationship between the different Arab existing-elements, the national aspect prevails over the Pan-Arab aspect. In the context of a confrontation between any number of Arab existing-elements and non-Arab existing elements, the Pan-Arab aspect prevails over the national aspect. In the context of the relationship between an Arab intruding-element and an Arab existing-element, the national aspect prevails. However, when an Arab intruding-element is confronted by a non-Arab existing-element, the Pan-Arab aspect in the relationship between the Arab intruding element and the Arab existing-element prevails over the national aspect. Similarly, when an Arab existing-element is confronted by a non-Arab intruding-element, the Pan-Arab aspect in the relationship between the Arab intruding-element(s) and the concerned Arab

existing-element(s) prevails over the national aspect. Therefore, as applied to the Arab World, and within the context of the relationship between the Arab intruding-element and the Arab existing-elements, a confrontation between any of the Arab elements and a non-Arab element(s) results in the prevalence of the Pan-Arab aspect of the dual-character in the relationship between the Arab intruding-element and the Arab existing-elements. Similarly, the absence of a non-Arab confrontation results in the prevalence of the national aspect of the dual-character in the relationship between the Arab intruding-element and the Arab existing-elements. Accordingly, the study of the Palestinian-Arab relations, which is the subject matter of this research, necessitates the exclusion of any confrontation with non-Arab elements as a central theme due to the neutralizing effects of such confrontations on the realities of Palestinian-Arab relations, since any confrontation between an Arab element and a non-Arab element results in the prevalence of the Pan-Arab aspect in the relationship between the Arab intruding-element and the Arab existing-element(s). This study concentrates on Palestinian relations with the Arab Host-States, although it does not ignore the effects on these relations of the triggering of Pan-Arabism by the frequent confrontation with non-Arab elements.

We can elaborate the following general hypothesis about the relationship between the Palestinians, as the Arab intruding-element, and the Arab Host-States, as the Arab existing-element.

First, the intruding-element attempts to establish as many common bonds with the existing-element as possible. Furthermore, the intruding-element seeks to stress most among those common-bonds the ones which suit its cause and needs best.

Second, following the establishment of the common-bonds, the intruding-element acts with the aim of linking its cause to that of the existing-element. In doing so, the intruding-element attempts to identify its cause in terms of the broad national interests of the existing-element. The intruding-element thus seeks legitimacy through identifying its interests with those of the existing-element.

Third, intruding-element tends to advocate, create and support extra-national tendencies and movements in the existing-elements. Through the existence of such tendencies and movements, the intruding-element hopes to be able to fit in and to find a legitimate place for itself within the framework of the existing-elements and to favour its own specific interests.

In the Arab case, the existence of Pan-Arabism as an extra-national framework which is broadly accepted by the Arab peoples and the Arab States, facilitates the attempts of the Arab intruding-element towards promoting and creating extra-national tendencies and movements within and across the boundaries of the Arab existing-elements.

It is, however, to be observed that although the intruding-element advocates extra-national tendencies, it, nevertheless, exhibits a high degree of national self-consciousness which serves as a means towards preserving its own national identity as a substitute to the non-existent political entity<sup>1</sup>. The achievement of the nationalist goals of the intruding-element constitutes, in fact, the essence of its extra-national attitude in its relations with the existing-elements.

In pursuing these goals, the intruding-element can follow three main courses:

1. The penetration of the masses of the existing-elements. This penetration could be attained through various channels, the most important of which are the popular political parties, the professional associations, literature (which also includes the Press) and inter-marriage. In the case of Jordan, the situation is different because the intruding-element is in itself an integral part of the masses of the existing-element. Thus by definition the need on the part of the intruding-element, for

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter Two, pp. 92-101.

penetrating the masses does not arise. However, when such a situation exists, the intruding-element finds itself in the favourable position of having the right, as a lawful part of the existing-element, to penetrate the ruling elite as a substitute for penetrating the masses in other existing-elements, where the intruding-element does not enjoy the status of being a lawful part of the indigenous population. When, for any reason, the penetration, by the intruding-element of the ruling elite of the existing-element concerned fails, then the intruding-element may move in the direction of attempting to overthrow that regime in its capacity as a lawful part of that existing-element<sup>1</sup>.

A similar attitude towards the ruling elite is likely to develop if the intruding-element succeeds in penetrating the ruling elite of the relevant existing-element but persistently fails in achieving what it seeks after such penetration.

2. The penetration of important non-political institutions of the existing-elements which cover primarily the educational and economic

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<sup>1</sup> For example, if the Palestinians in Jordan, who are Jordanian citizens, attempt to overthrow the regime, such a move could be interpreted by the inhabitants of Jordan and the outside world as well, as being a domestic issue. But if the same thing were to happen in Lebanon and Syria, where the Palestinians are not Lebanese or Syrian citizens respectively, then such a move could be interpreted by the Lebanese or Syrian people, and by the outside world, as a foreign intervention in the domestic affairs of either Lebanon or Syria.

sectors. The penetration of the educational sector would bring the intruding-element into direct contact with the masses, and would enable it to influence the thinking of the new generations of the existing-elements through the process of education. By having an influence on the economy of the existing-elements through such sectors as trade, industry and management, the intruding-element hopes to indicate to the regimes and peoples of existing-elements the importance of its role in economic development. Moreover, this educational and economic build-up can provide the intruding-element, as a productive force, with more chances of acceptance within the existing-elements. It is, however, to be observed that such a policy is basically two-edged. While such a penetration might improve the position of the intruding-element and enhance its chances of acceptance by the existing-element, equally it could damage the position of the intruding-element and hinder its chances of being accepted by the existing-element on the grounds that penetration by the intruding-element, of the educational and economic sectors of the existing-element, takes place at the expense of the indigenous population. It could be argued that the occupation of jobs by members of the intruding-element (with perhaps the exception of specialized jobs and those requiring expertise) constitutes deprivation of and competition with the indigenous population, and that all profits made by the members of the intruding-element are made at the expense of

the indigenous population. This state-of-affairs is most likely to come about if the intruding-element has different characteristics from those of the indigenous population such as race, language, religion, and culture. In the case of the Arab World, such differences are basically insignificant since the intruding-element has similar ethnic, linguistic, religious, and cultural characteristics to those of the existing-elements. Accordingly, in this case, the reaction of the existing-elements to the intruding-element's penetration of such sectors as education and the economy is likely to be minimal because the intruding-element operates under the Pan-Arab umbrella. Yet, it is important to point out that this minimal-reaction by the existing-elements is very much dependent upon, among other things, which side of the dual-character in the relationship between the Arab intruding-element concerned and the Arab existing-element(s) concerned, prevails at that period of time. In other words, the prevalence of the national aspect of the dual-character in the relationship between the Arab intruding-element and the Arab existing-element over the Pan-Arab aspect tends to affect the minimal-reaction negatively, and vice versa.

3. After succeeding in having its cause identified by the masses and the regime of the relevant existing-element as being the nationalist cause of the existing-element itself, the intruding-element could then acquire an important role as the political-conscience of the people of the existing-element as far as the cause is concerned. In other words, the attitude of the intruding-element,

vis-à-vis any policy or political attitude adopted by the regime(s) of the existing-element(s) with regard to the new joint-cause, could serve as an indicator to the masses of the existing-element as to whether they should accept and support that particular policy or attitude or not. This would be due to the fact that such policies or attitudes would affect the intruding-element directly and to a higher degree than the existing-element, because the realization of the joint cause would mean national restoration and political survival for the intruding-element, which is not the case for the existing-elements. Accordingly, the masses of the existing-elements would regard the intruding-element as the vanguard of the joint-cause. Subsequently, and in this capacity, the attitude of the intruding-element vis-à-vis any regime of the existing-elements would play a significant role in affecting the attitude of the peoples of this or that existing-element towards its own regime. Most important, it would determine the degree of a regime's popularity among its own masses and the masses of the other existing-elements who would share together the same joint-cause<sup>1</sup>. This, however, does not necessarily mean that the lack of the intruding-element's support for this or

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<sup>1</sup> The Economist, (London: February 20, 1960), p. 698. In a commentary entitled "discord" (p. 698), The Economist says "Whether stateless people, displaced persons, or dwellers under the cloudy sovereignty of Egypt (at Gaza) or Jordan (east of Jerusalem), the Palestinians appear to hold the key to supremacy over the entire Arab world. He who can capture the loyalty of these poor people will automatically become the savior of the Arabs – or so it seems to be assumed by President Nasser, King Hussein and General Qasim alike".

that particular regime of the existing-elements would lead to the downfall of that regime, although it might eventually have a bearing on it.

This model is a tentative framework for examining the empirical relationship between the Palestinians and their respective Arab Host-States. With the aid of this framework, we shall now examine that relationship.

## CHAPTER TWO

### PALESTINIAN-ARAB RELATIONS: THE ERA OF FORMATION, 1949 – 1952

#### **The Arab Palestinians: A Brief Historical Background**

As a province of Ottoman Empire<sup>\*</sup>, Palestine was no exception in acquiring the diseases suffered by the aging Empire. Arab Palestinian society was an extension of traditional Ottoman society where the peasants and rural population made up its wide base, and the administrative effendis<sup>\*\*</sup>, landed-gentry, clergymen, tribal chiefs and important merchants, constituted its social elite. Economically, Palestine gained momentum through its universal religious importance and its strategic location as a transit area. “with its fertile coastal plain, its mountains, streams and springs, its ancient cities and places of pilgrimage, it continued through the centuries to be one of the most prosperous, most highly cultivated and most densely populated parts of the Arab World.”<sup>1</sup>

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\* Under Ottoman rule, Palestine was divided into the Sanjak (governorship) of Jerusalem which was under the jurisdiction of the ottoman Asetanah (Istanbul); and the Sanjak of Acre and Nablus which formed part of the vilayat (state) of Sham (Syria) and was, in 1883, incorporated which the vilayat of Beirut.

\*\* An Ottoman social title for upper middle class.

<sup>1</sup> UNRWA. Why Are They Still Refugees? A general brief on the origins of the Palestine refugee problem and the reasons why it remains unsolved. (Beirut: UNRWA, 1964), p. 1 (for internal distribution only).

In accordance of Ottoman feudal tradition, a few Arab Palestinian families were elevated to the social strata of the class of notables. In order to preserve its social privileges, the Palestinian class of notables allied itself, politically, with the Ottoman regime, thus, dominating the senior governmental and religious ranks in Palestine. Numerically, members of this class constituted an insignificant proportion of the total Palestinian population.

According to the 1922 census, the population of Palestine was composed of<sup>1</sup>:

430 000 rural population (both peasant and countrymen)

264 000 urban population (including 68,500 Jews and other minorities)

60 000 Bedouins

The Palestinian rural population enjoyed a high average income per capita compared with the prevailing Middle Eastern standards. A Palestinian peasant could earn up to 400 dollars per annum. Most of the Palestinian peasants owned a house and a plot of land<sup>2</sup>.

The Society of the Arab Palestinian village was basically highly patriarchal. An average Palestinian village would normally shelter a few

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<sup>1</sup> A Survey of Palestine. Vol. I (Palestine: the Government printer, 1946), p. 50.

<sup>2</sup> U.N. Doc. 16(A/1905), para 1, p. 1.

thousand inhabitants, who, in totality, could be reduced to a few big families (hamouleh)\*. A total of two or three prominent members of each hamouleh, in the village, would constitute the council of elders which ran that village. The most prominent among the members of the council of elders would be the Mukhtar\*\* of the village. In such society, the hamouleh was “the highest unit that commanded any great loyalty”.<sup>1</sup>

The small Palestinian urban population had at its apex a very numerically restricted class of notables. The core of the remaining urban population was middle class. The Palestinian middle class was composed of professional people, merchants, small landlords, skilled artisans and craftsmen. As for industry, it was traditional and manual. The number of Palestinians working in industry was relatively small, and most of the workers had family ties with their employers.

In the rural-dominated Palestinian society, the absence of a strong and influential middle class was evident. This was due to the weakness of the class-structure of the essentially merchant Arab Palestinian middle class. Although it had emerged early, yet, the Arab Palestinian middle class was emasculated by social and economic relations prevailing within Arab Palestinian society at that time. The supremacy of family and personal

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\* Hamouleh means a big family whose members might could up to a few hundreds.

\*\* Mukhtar means literally “the selected man”. He is the Mayor of the village.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

loyalties in the traditional Palestinian society, and the subsequent absence of class-consciousness contributed much to the weakness of the Arab Palestinian middle class. The Agricultural-based Palestinian economy, the backwardness and illiteracy of the Arab Palestinian rural population, the absence of a central planning and development body, and well-developed Jewish competition in the fields of trade and industry, had all weakened, still further, the Arab Palestinian middle class. This, in turn, paralyzed the social mobility within Palestinian society, and prevented the middle class from playing its historic role as the natural successor to the traditional feudal elite.

When the British forces entered Palestine in 1917, Arab Palestinian society was still organized in the Ottoman tradition, and inevitably the social and political hegemony of the class of notables continued. However, with the transformation of the British occupation of Palestine into a mandate, as from July 24, 1922, Article Four of the Mandate formalized a new element. It recommended that:

“An appropriate Jewish Agency shall be recognized as a public body for the purpose of advising and co-operating with the Administration of Palestine in such economic, social and other matters as may affect the establishment of the Jewish national home and the interests of the Jewish population in Palestine...”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> J.C. Hurewitz. Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East: A. Documentary Record, 1914-1956, Vol. II (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Co., 1956), p. 235.

In the context, the Mandate had profound impacts on Arab Palestinian society and its traditional leadership. First, the recognition of the Jewish right to a national home in Palestine, which was in fulfillment of the goals and aspirations of Zionist ideology\*,

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\* Zionist ideology took its first organized form in 1897 when, during the period August 29-31, The First Zionist Congress was held in Basle, Switzerland. In this congress, the Zionist Organization was created. The Organization adopted a programme known as the Basle Programme. According to this programme, "Zionism strives for the establishment of a publically and legally secured home in Palestine for the Jewish people". (See, Walid Khalidi (ed.). From Haven to Conquest: Readings in Zionism and the Palestine Problem Until 1948 (Beirut: The Institute for Palestine Studies, 1971), p.89). This end-goal of the Zionist Organization, as stated explicitly in the Basel Programme, was virtually the Zionist solution to the problem of preserving the Jewish identity "which was imperiled by emancipation and assimilation". (Nahum Goldman, The Genius of Herzl and Zionism Today (Jerusalem: Zionist Executive, 1955), p.19).

The colonization of Palestine was essential for the achievement of the Zionist goal, and until the establishment of a Jewish national state in Palestine, immigration and land settlement constituted the core of the Zionist Organization's day-to-day activities. This, in itself, was in contradiction with the interests of the Arab Palestinians who, in 1922, represented 88% of the total population of Palestine, as compared to 11% Jews. In the same year, the Arab Palestinians owned about 96% of the total land of Palestine, while the Jews owned only 2%. By 1946, as a result of the Zionist policy of immigration, the population of Palestine more than doubled with the Arabs representing 64% of the population as compared to 34% Jews. Nevertheless, the Jews owned only about 7% of the land while the Arab Palestinians owned about 92% (see UNRWA: why Are They still Refugees? op.cit., p.2.)

constituted a blow to the Arab Palestinians aim which was “not to drive the Jewish community out of Palestine but to make the Jews realize that they formed part of a predominantly Arab area and that they would have to live there”<sup>1</sup>. Second, the traditional Arab Palestinian leadership was forced to shoulder the responsibility of leading the Arab Palestinians in their struggle against the Mandate which stipulated, among its goals in Palestine, that the British should help in the achievement of the Zionist goals. The traditional Arab Palestinian leadership, however, was destined to face the sophisticated Zionist machinery which enjoyed the backing of the majority of world Jewry and its vast resources.

The political activities and mode of struggle of the Arab Palestinian community, prior to 1948, were determined, to a great extent, by its culture and social structure. The persistence, of the class of notables on the top of the social and political pyramid of Arab Palestinian society had served to preserve the existing order. The traditional Arab Palestinian leadership, in order to preserve its privileges, did not allow any change in the status quo, as this could have shaken the very basis of the social system which sustained it.

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<sup>1</sup> Ann Mosely Lesch. “The Palestine Arab Nationalist Movement Under The Mandate”, in, William B. Quandt, Fouad Jabber, Ann Mosely Lesch, *The politics of Palestinian Nationalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), p. 17.

This was the basic premise underlying the political attitudes and modes of struggle that were endorsed by the traditional Arab Palestinian leadership. The family remained the basic unit of the social and political system. Family loyalty reigned supreme over any other loyalty. Since Arab Palestinian society was patriarchal, it was, therefore, inevitable that political difference would be expressed through family polarizations and rivalries. Thus, the rivalry between the Husseini family and the Nashashibi family resulted in the splitting of the country into two loose, rival political groups: the Majlisiyyin (Councilites) who supported the Husseinis and the Husseini-dominated Islamic Council<sup>\*</sup>; and the Mu'aridin (Oppositions) who supported the Nashashibis and who, consequently, were opposed to the Islamic Council. The traditionalism and family-factionalism reflected themselves very much on the form of political organization and mode of struggle pursued by the traditional Arab Palestinian leadership.

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<sup>\*</sup> The election of Islamic council (Al-Majlis Al- Islami) took place in 1922. The electoral body covered all adult Palestinian Moslem males. The holding of such a large-scale election, in order to choose four persons to supervise the endowment property and institution, caused serious splits in the country. The importance attached to the Islamic council came from the Arab Palestinians conception of the council, in the absence of an independent state, as some form of an Arab 'self-government' within the state. The Islamic Council, therefore, transcended its religious functions and became loaded with political duties. The Husseinis won the elections, hence became Majlisiyyin or (Councilites), and the Nashashibis lost them, hence, became Mu'aridin or (Opposition).

## **Reflection on the Arab Palestinian Political Organizations Before 1948:**

The Muslim-Christian societies were the first form of political organization introduced by the traditional Arab Palestinian leadership. The ‘struggle against Zionism’ was the stated purpose of these societies. Apparently, such a struggle was to take place through a Moslem-Christian coalition. The large number of such societies was not a sign of health however as their membership was confined to a limited class, the class of notables<sup>1</sup>, the mode of struggle of these societies was limited to organizing rallies, delivering speeches and sending telegrams of protest to the British authorities and international organization<sup>2</sup>. Most of these societies were short-lived. Nonetheless, they led to the emergence of the Palestinian congress as a new form of political organization, through sending delegates to represent the Moslem-Christian societies in various cities, at the congresses.

During the period March 1919 – June 1928, seven Palestinian congresses were held. These congresses were dominated by the traditional Arab Palestinian leadership. The composition and resolutions of

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<sup>1</sup> Abdul Wahhab Kayyali. Tarikh Falistin Al-Hadith (The Modern History of Palestine). Beirut: The Arab Institute for Research and Publishing, 1970), pp. 108-109.

<sup>2</sup> Abdul Wahhab Kayyali (ed.) Documents of Arab Palestinian Resistance to British Occupation and Zionism: 1918-1939. (Beirut: The Institute for Palestine Studies. 1968), Doc. No. 1, pp.1-3. Also see: Kayyali, Tarikh, op.cit., pp. 115-121.

these congresses were, thus, a reflection of the interests, attitudes and rivalries of the Arab Palestinian leaders. Although the Palestinian congresses were a new form of political organization, they, nevertheless, were doomed to failure due, mainly, to the following reasons:

First, these congresses did not represent the Arab population of Palestine, but rather one class of it. This narrow representation, which was due, among other things, to the prohibition, by the mandate authority, of holding general elections to elect delegates to the various congresses, imposed severe limitations on the effectiveness and viability of the Palestinian congresses. Personal and family rivalries had to be solved through compromise resolutions. The Seventh Palestinian congress, held in Jerusalem in June 1928, had to elect an executive committee of 48 members in order to satisfy all family groupings and blocs represented in the Congress<sup>1</sup>.

Second, these congresses lacked a social or political programme, or even a tentative plan of work, that might have served as guideline for the conferees in their political or organizational activities. The absence of such a programme was partly a result of the limited representative capacity of the congresses, where the enlightened Arab Palestinian middle class

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<sup>1</sup> Abdul Wahhab Kayyali, *Tarikh, op.cit.*, p. 228.

was in the minority; but mainly it reflected the ‘conservative, ‘disorganized’, ‘incapable’, weak’, and ‘disunited’ leadership<sup>1</sup>. Besides, it was not in the interests of the traditional Arab Palestinian leadership to pave the way for any basic change in the status quo in Palestine through the adoption of political programme with social content<sup>2</sup>.

Finally, the Palestinian leadership failed to transform these congresses into a framework for organizing the masses of the Arab Palestinian people. Once more, this failure was caused by the limited representative capacity of the Palestinian congresses, and the absence of a coherent political or social programme.

The failure of the Palestinian congresses gave way to the emergence of political parties as a new channel for political work and political organization. During the first half of the 1930’s six Arab Palestinian political parties were formed. These were: The Arab Palestinian (Arabi) Party, the National Defence (Difaa’) Party, the reformation (Islah) Party, the Arab

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<sup>1</sup> Ahmad Al Shukairy. Arab’un Amma Fi Al-Hayat Al-Arabiyyah Wa Al-Dawliyyah (Fourty years in Arab and International Life). Vol. 1 (Beirut: An-Nahar House for Publishing, 1969), pp. 105-114.

<sup>2</sup> Don Peretz. “The Palestinian Arabs: A National Entity” in Michael Curtis (ed.), People and Politics in the Middle East (New Jersey): Transaction Books, 1971), p. 73

Independence (Istiqlal) Party the Youth (Shabab) Party and Liberal (Ahrar) Party.

The last three parties were found by middle class Arab Palestinian intellectuals, in an attempt to take the lead from the traditional Arab Palestinian leadership. The first three parties were founded by the traditional leadership, and were practically, family-parties. The Husseini family formed the Arab Palestinian Party, the Nashashibi family formed the National Defence Party, and the Khalidi family formed the reformation Party. In no time, the family-parties were able to drive the middle class parties out of the market. The current of events, in the second half of the 1930's, proved the ineffectiveness and futility of the Palestinian Political parties. This was due to a variety of factors:

First, the Palestinian political parties did not reflect a change in the substance of the Palestinian leadership. They were just a new innovation by the same old traditional leadership. In this context, the Palestinian political parties were merely political-titles for the different and rival leading Palestinian families.

Second, all Palestinian political parties, without exception, lacked an ideological, social or political programme. They only proclaimed broad slogans, which did not even reflect the actual line of policy adopted by the party concerned. The policy of a party was always designed to meet the personal or

family interests of the leaders of that party. Such interests differed in time and circumstances and were reflected in the policy of the party.

Third, all the political parties in Palestine had to be licensed by the British authorities, and this imposed severe limitations on their behavior vis-à-vis British policy in Palestine, and the information they had to provide affected the secrecy of their work, and thus, their room for maneuver.

Fourth, the Palestinian political parties failed to mobilize the Palestinian masses. This was in the nature of things, since the Palestinian political parties lacked the two basic requirements needed for building a proper party; namely, a coherent programme, and a proper party organization.

It was, therefore, inevitable that the Palestinian political parties should run behind events in Palestine, instead of initiating them. Popular upheavals in Palestine of then surprised Palestinian party leaders as much as they surprised an outsider. The Major test for the viability of the Palestinian political parties took place in 1936, when the Arabs all over Palestine decided to go on nation-wide strike\*. The Palestinian party-leaders who,

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\* The nationwide strike started on April 20, 1936 and lasted for six months. It was called off at the request of some Arab Heads of State. See: Kayyali, Tarikh, op.cit., pp.303-323.

neither planned the strike, nor called it<sup>1</sup>, combined their efforts to control it by forming the Arab Higher Committee (AHC)<sup>2</sup> which included leaders from the six parties under the chairmanship of Haj Amin Husseini.

The Arab Higher Committee (AHC) was the last formula for political work introduced by the traditional Arab Palestinian leadership. The rivalry among the members of the AHC pushed them towards the practice of brinksmanship as each sought to outdo the other which hindered the effectiveness of the AHC as the leader of the Arab Palestinians.

The “all-or-nothing” policy which always characterized the attitudes of the traditional Arab Palestinian leadership<sup>3</sup>, was also a major characteristic of the AHC.

### **The Political Attitudes of the Palestinians before 1948, a brief account:**

The political attitudes of the Arab Palestinians before 1948 reflected their Pan-Arab orientation and their strong belief in being part of the Arab

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<sup>1</sup> Abdul Wahhab Kayyali. Tarikh, op.cit., pp.303-304.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. pp. 305-306.

<sup>3</sup> Walid Kamhawi. Al-Nakbah Wa Al-Binaa' Fil-Waten Al-Arabi (The Catastrophe and the Construction In The Arab World), Vol. 1, (Beirut: Dar-Ilm Lil-Malayeen, 1962), pp. 54-64.

people at large. This Pan-Arab orientation of the Arab Palestinian people prior to 1948 had its roots in the state-of-affairs which prevailed in the Arab World under the Ottoman rule. During that period, the political boundaries which defined what were known after the First World War as Syria, Lebanon, Transjordan and Palestine, were non-existent. All these countries were one area known as bilad Al-Sham (Greater Syria) which was subdivided, administratively rather than politically, into different vilayats or districts\*. With the collapse of the Ottoman empire, Greater Syria was divided between the British and the French, which in turn ultimately led to its political division into four countries of which Palestine was one.

The political division of Greater Syria was not accepted by the Palestinians who kept on stressing that they were part of the Syrian people and that Palestine was nothing more than “South Syria”. The General Syrian Congress which was held in 1919 and which had representatives from Palestine, stated that, among other things, “there should be no separation of the southern part of Syria, known as Palestine, nor of the littoral western zone which included Lebanon, from the Syrian country”<sup>1</sup>. The same Congress stressed that “the unity of the country (Greater Syria) should be guaranteed against partition under whatever circumstances”. A similar

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\* See p.40.

<sup>1</sup> As quoted in, Marie Syrkin. “The Palestine Refugees: Resettlement, Repatriation, or Compensation?” in Irving Howe and Carl Gersham (eds.). Israel, The Arabs and the Middle East (New York: Bantam Books, 1972), pp. 172-173.

attitude to that of the General Syrian Congress was expressed by the Arab Palestinian Congress which was held in Jerusalem during the period January 27- February 10, 1919. In its resolutions, the Arab Palestinian Congress stated, inter alia, that “Palestine is a part of Arab Syria”<sup>1</sup> and that “South Syria or Palestine must not be separated from the independent Arab Syria”<sup>2</sup>.

On April 4, 1920, during the Easter and Nabi Musa\* festivals in Palestine, Muslim and Christian Palestinian leaders addressed the Palestinian masses calling for “Arab Unity” and “independence”, and saluted King Feisal\*\* as “the King of Syria and Palestine”<sup>4</sup>. In September 1920, the announcement, by the British Government, of the separation of Palestine from Syria produced an immediate reaction which was reflected in both the Syrian and Palestinian press when both called for resistance to this move even if “more sacrifices were required”<sup>5</sup>. This Palestinian attitude was not a calculated step, reflecting some sort of political maturity, but was,

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<sup>1</sup> Abdul Wahhab Kayyali. *Tarikh*, op.cit., p. 127; also see, Don Peretz. “The Palestine Arabs: A National Entity”, in Michael Curtis (ed.), op.cit., p. 70.

<sup>2</sup> Abdul Wahhab Kayyali, *Tarikh*, op.cit., p.128.

\* Nabi Musa is a Muslim religious occasion.

\*\* The second eldest son of Sherif Hussein of Mecca. He was C. in C. of the Arab armies which fought against the Ottomans in the First World War. He was declared King of Syria in March 1920, but was soon overthrown by the French Army in July 1920.

<sup>4</sup> Abdul Wahhab Kayyali, op.cit., pp. 147-148.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp. 144-145.

rather, a natural continuation of a long historical process which had extended over many centuries and under which the Palestinians had not enjoyed a political entity of their own, but were always either related to or part of a larger political entity. This contributed to the non-development, among the Arab Palestinian people, of a nationalist consciousness of their own<sup>1</sup>. Consequently, when the Palestinians were faced with the Zionist “threat” whose immediate target was a Jewish national home in Palestine, the Arab Palestinians reacted in two ways. First, to preserve and assert the links which bind Palestine, as “South Syria”, with the Arab World and the ‘Arab National Movement’. In so doing, the Palestinians have consistently argued that while the Zionist ‘colonial threat’ was confined to Palestine alone, it was, nevertheless, also directed at the very ‘heart’ of the ‘Arab national movement’ and the goal of Arab unity through the lifting of the Arab character of Palestine and its transformation into a state with Jewish majority<sup>2</sup>. Second, the development of a Palestinian national character was a counter-measure to Zionist national claims in Palestine which called for “the establishment of a publically and legally secured home in Palestine for the Jewish people”<sup>3</sup>. This Palestinian national

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<sup>1</sup> Ahmad Shukairy. *Forty Years*, *op.cit.*, p.48.

<sup>2</sup> Adnan Abu-Ghazaleh. “Arab Cultural Nationalism in Palestine During the British Mandate”, in, *Journal of Palestine Studies*. Vol. 1, No 3 (Beirut: The Institute of Palestine Studies and Kuwait University, 1972), p.38.

<sup>3</sup> The Institute for Palestine Studies (trans.). “The Basle Programme: 30 August, 1897”, in, Walid Khalidi (ed.). *From Haven to Conquest: Reading in Zionism and the Palestine Problem Until 1948* (Beirut: The Institute for Palestine Studies, 1971), p. 89.

response did not necessarily contradict the original Pan-Arab attitude of the Palestinians, but was rather designed, as we will see later, to refute Zionist national claims in Palestine on the grounds that Palestine, although originally part of 'Greater Syria', which is in turn part of the Arab World, nevertheless, he always been inhabited by the Palestinians, the majority of whom are Arabs, and that Palestine is, therefore, not a country without an indigenous population. In this sense, the development of the Palestinian national character was not meant to refute the Pan-Arab character of the Palestinians, but rather to refute Zionist national claims in Palestine. In other words, when the Arab Palestinian conceived an increase in the level of the Zionist 'colonial threat' to Palestine, they tended to assert their national character more than their Pan-Arab character. A brief analysis of the Palestinian political literature during the British Mandate would provide many illustrations of the Palestinians' two responses to the Zionist 'colonial threat'.

The Palestinian literature during the British Mandate reflects a major tendency towards Pan-Arabism. This Pan-Arab tendency overshadowed the call of some Palestinian nationalist writings for the assertion of the Palestinian national character.

“It must be acknowledged, naturally, that the number of Palestinian Arabs who were immersed in the cultural nationalist climate was small in comparison with the total Arab population of

the country and was generally limited to the towns”<sup>1</sup>.

In tackling the nationalist issue, the Palestinian writers adopted a combined theme which envisaged the Palestinian nationalist idea within the framework of the ‘Arab national movement’, and the “threat” of Zionism was subsequently linked, not to Palestine as such, but to the ‘Arab national movement’ as a whole. In his book, Filastin wa al Urabah (Palestine and Arabism) which was published in Jerusalem in 1929, Mohammad Izzat Darwazah called for Arab unity as a solution to the Zionist “threat”. Darwazah also stressed that the “threat” to Palestine should serve as a unifying force among the Arabs, and that the “loss” of Palestine would constitute a big blow to the ‘Arab national movement’<sup>2</sup>. A similar line to that of Darwazah was advocated by the joint work of Amin Aql, Ibrahim Najm and Umar al-Nasr under the title Jihad Filastin al-Arabiyya (The Holy War of Arab Palestine)<sup>3</sup>, which stressed the need for “Arab solidarity” as a means of “saving Arab Palestine”.

In the period following the 1936-1939 rebellion in Palestine and the subsequent publication by the

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<sup>1</sup> Adnan Abu-Ghazaleh, op.cit., p. 38.

<sup>2</sup> Filastin wa al Urabah (Palestine and Arabism), (Jerusalem: 1929), as mentioned in Abu-Ghazaleh, op.cit., p.52.

<sup>3</sup> Jihad Filastin al-Arabiyya (The Holy War of Arab Palestine), (Beirut, 1939), as mentioned in Abu-Ghazaleh, op.cit., p. 53.

British Government of the White Paper which envisaged, among other things, an independent Palestine, with an Arab majority, within ten years, there was a relaxation of tension and a feeling of security among the Palestine Arabs who “began to feel that the Arab character of Palestine had become secure, as the Arabs would be a majority in the proposed state”<sup>1</sup>. Consequently, the Arab Palestinian intelligentsia began discussing the future place of Palestine within the ‘Arab national movement’<sup>2</sup>. This reflects how the degree of assertion, by some Palestinian writers, of the Palestinian national character was very much determined by the Arab Palestinians’ Zionist “colonial threat” to Palestine.

The Arabism of the Palestinian historians was evident in their writings. Although there were some Palestinian historians, like Arif el-Arif, who wrote about the local history of Palestine and who “demonstrated a desire to spread Palestinian national consciousness”<sup>3</sup>, it is clear that the majority of such historian emphasized the ‘Arab character’ of Palestine rather than advocated the Palestinian national character vis-à-vis Pan Arabism. However, in the introduction to his book Tarikh al-Quds (History of Jerusalem)<sup>4</sup> Arif el-Arif explains his motives as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> Abu-Ghazaleh, op.cit., p. 54.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Published in Cairo, 1947.

“My acquaintance with the line of argument used by the Jewish writers to assert the Jews’ historical links with Palestine makes it my duty to try to refute their claims by examining the history of Jerusalem, their links with which the Jews have stressed most, and to make it clear that the history of the Holy City reveals its Arab character....”<sup>1</sup>.

Nevertheless, most of Palestinian historians adopted a different approach from that of el-Arif. In his book, Turath al-Arab al-Ilmi (The Scientific Heritage of the Arabs<sup>2</sup>), Qadri Tuqan tries to impress on new generations the greatness of Arab scientific contributions to world civilization, and to inspire the Arab people to revive the glory of their past. On the other hand, Nicola Ziyadeh’s Wathbat al-Arab (the Rise of the Arabs to Power<sup>3</sup>) reflects “the pride which Palestinian Arabs, Christian and Muslim alike, felt in the rise of the Arabs under the banner of Islam to the status of a world power”<sup>4</sup>. A stronger stress on Pan-Arabism prevailed in the historical writing of Mohammad Izzat Darwazah who treated the history of the Arab World as one indivisible unit<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> As quoted in, Abu-Ghazaleh, op.cit., p. 60.

<sup>2</sup> Published in Cairo, 1941.

<sup>3</sup> Published in Jerusalem, 1945.

<sup>4</sup> As quoted in Adnan Abu-Ghazaleh, op.cit., p. 59.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

The Palestinian Press<sup>1</sup> adopted similar themes to those of the Palestinian writers and historians. Before the British occupation of Palestine, the main theme expressed by the Palestinian Press was “the call for Arab independence and a stress on the greatness of the Arab heritage”<sup>2</sup>. Under the British Mandate, however, Palestinian Press, being a reflection of the daily problems confronting the masses, projected all sorts of themes and views, but always with Pan-Arab tendencies prevailing<sup>3</sup>. As the situation deteriorated in Palestine in the last year of the Mandate and with the proposal of the Partition Plan, the stress in the Arab Palestinian Press “shifted from unity to survival of Palestine”<sup>4</sup>.

The Pan-Arab manifestations of the Palestinians were not only limited to political mass rallies and literature. Throughout the period of the British Mandate, the Palestinians manifested a deep popular interest and concern with the domestic political developments in other Arab countries, especially

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<sup>1</sup> The press had an important role in Palestine before 1948. During the period 1876-1948, 114 Arab newspapers and 25 magazines were published in Palestine. These were distributed as follows: 61 newspapers and 25 magazines in Jerusalem, 32 newspapers in Jaffa and 21 newspapers in Haifa. For more information see: Ahmad Khalil Akkad. Al-Sahafa al-Arabiyyah fi Filastin: 1876-1948. (Arab Press in Palestine: 1876-1948) Vol. 1. (Damascus: al-Waffa' Printhouse, 1966), pp. 32-33, 44-52.

<sup>2</sup> Adnan Abu-Ghazaleh, op.cit., p. 55.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 55-56.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 56.

Egypt. In his memories, Ahmad Shukairy describes vividly how the Palestinians used to follow the activities of the Egyptian nationalist movement and how they used to react in accordance with its achievements and setbacks.

“The actions and mass rallies of the Egyptian nationalist movement and the speeches of its leaders used to stimulate our hearts and dominate our clubs and meetings”<sup>1</sup>

In addition, Shukairy sheds light on the deep personal interest with which the Palestine Arabs observed the details of domestic politics in Egypt.

“What we knew about Egyptian affairs, parties, leaders and the conflicts among Egyptian leaders was more than what we knew about our own affairs and our own leaders, as if we were part of the Egyptian people”<sup>2</sup>.

In his article, “The Palestine Arabs: A national Entity”, Don Peretz gives yet another dimension to the Pan-Arab orientation of the Palestine Arabs. Peretz argues that in 1943 a Lebanese, rather than Palestinian cause, served as a unifying force for the Palestinian leadership.

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<sup>1</sup> Ahmad al-Shukairy, Forty Years in Arab and International Life, *op.cit.*, p. 95 (This quotation was translated by the writer of this research. In the remaining part of this study, all quotations translated by the said writer will be referred to as. (trans. L.K.).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 96.

“By 1943 leaders of the former Istiqlal Party\* sought to revive the national movement and to unify Palestinian Arab leadership. Half-hearted attempts were made to rally the local Arab community at the end of 1943 through the Arab Chambers of Commerce at their 15<sup>th</sup> national conference in Jerusalem. Fortunately for the nationalists, they were able to unite national sentiment around a new cause, the ‘defence of Lebanon’, for at this moment the French arrested the President and cabinet of Lebanon. Committees on their behalf sprang up throughout Arab Palestine”<sup>2</sup>.

This shows that, even at this advanced stage of the Arab-Jewish conflict in Palestine in 1943, an Arab cause provided a stronger impetus for Palestinian nationalist unity than the Palestinian cause itself.

The pre-1948 history of the Arab Palestinian people reflects a deep-rooted belief in Pan-Arabism and Arab unity. This belief, which was basically a result of a long historical process under which Palestine had not been a separate entity, gained a new dimension after the publication of the Balfour Declaration, the British occupation of Palestine and the subsequent Zionist thrust into Palestine.

Pan-Arabism had become not only an ideal goal, but also a means of rallying Arab support to ‘save’

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\* See pp. 49-50.

<sup>2</sup> Don Peretz. “The Palestine Arabs: A National Entity”, in Micheal Curtis (ed.), op.cit., pp. 79-80.

Palestine from the Zionist 'threat'. In addition, Pan-Arabism was used as a means by which the Palestinians could affirm the Arab identity of Palestine by relating it to a larger Arab political entity (Syria).

Finally, the development of the Palestinian national character which, in itself, was a reaction to the Zionist national claims in Palestine, was not in contradiction with the Pan-Arab orientation of the Arab Palestinians. One can rightfully say that the development of the Palestinian national character before 1948 was supportive to the Pan-Arab orientation of the Palestinian because it aimed at preserving the Arab character of Palestine through confirming the existence of an indigenous Palestinian population, the majority of which were Arabs.

### **The Exodus: 1948**

The proclamation of the State of Israel on May 15, 1948, brought two dramatic changes: the emergence of the Arab Palestinian refugee problem, and the disappearance of the Arab Palestinian political entity as a result of the transformation of the major part of the territory of Mandatory Palestine into the state of Israel, as the smalls of Jewish people. These two facts constitute the essence of what is known nowadays as the 'Palestine Problem'.

It would be impossible to give an accurate figure of the number of Arabs who left Palestine during the hostilities of 1948-1949. This is due, in part, to the absence of any previous adequate

and accurate register of the Arab population of Palestine. Added to this are the grave humanitarian problems which had to be solved during that chaotic period, which gave no time for “checking meticulously the bona fides of all who came ..... in search of help”<sup>1</sup>.

In December 1949, the number of Palestinian refugees was estimated, by the United Nations Economic Survey (Clapp) Mission for the Middle East, at 726 000, of whom 652 000 were believed to be in need<sup>2</sup>. The Arab States have claimed the number to range between 750 000 and 800 000, while Israel has put it at 550 000. Arab League sources, however, state it differently<sup>3</sup>:

- a) Between February-April 23, 1948, 60 000 Arabs left Palestine.
- b) Between April 23 – May 15, 1948, 390 000 Arabs left Palestine.
- c) In the winter of 1949, when the Rhodes armistice agreements were completed, the Palestinian refugees numbered 940 000.

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<sup>1</sup> UNRWA. Information Paper No. 6. The Problem of the Rectification of the UNRWA Rolls: 1950-1962 (Beirut: UNRWA, 1962), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> U.N. Doc. A/AC. 25/6 (Dec. 28, 1949): U.N. Conciliation Commission for Palestine, Final Report of the U.N. Economic Survey for the Middle East, Part 1. The Final Report and Appendices, pp. 18-20, 22-23.

<sup>3</sup> Yacoub Khouri. Al-Laji'aun Al-Falastiniyyun: Bayanat Wa Ihsa'at (The Palestinian Refugees: Statements and statistics) (Cairo: League of Arab States), pp. 15-16.

When UNRWA took over responsibility for relief, on May 1, 1950, the number of refugees on relief rolls was 957 000, and the number of refugees in need of relief assistance was ‘arbitrarily’ set up at 940 000<sup>1</sup>. By June 1951, as a result of the 1950-1951 census conducted by UNRWA\*, the total number of Palestinian refugees registered on UNRWA relief rolls was 852 491\*\*, distributed as follows<sup>2</sup>:

Lebanon.....	106 753
Syria.....	80 499
Jordan.....	465 450
Gaza.....	199 789

For purposes of conducting the 1950-1951 census which was designed to rectify UNRWA relief rolls, a definition of a refugee was necessary as a criterion for judgment. To this effect UNRWA formulated a working definition which defines a refugee as “a person, normally resident in Palestine, who has lost his home and his livelihood as a result of the hostilities, and who is in need”<sup>3</sup>. As a result of

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<sup>1</sup> U.N. Doc. A/1060, para. 53, p. 20.

\* In Jordan, the census had to be suspended before its completion owing to disturbances in some of the refugee camps in protest against the whole process. Consequently, UNRWA imposed a ceiling on the number of rations to be distributed in Jordan. Also see: UNRWA. Information Paper No. 6, op.cit., p. 9.

\*\* The original figure in UNRWA official records is 875 998, of which 23 507 refugees reside in Israel. The number of refugees residing in Israel was deducted from the original total number of refugees, since the scope of this study is limited to Palestinian refugees in the Arab Host States.

<sup>2</sup> General Assembly Official Records: Sixth Session, supp. No. 16 (A/1905), para 16, p. 3

<sup>3</sup> U.N. Doc. A/1905, para 16, p. 3.

this, UNRWA sources state that in 1951, there were approximately 67 000 persons in Jordan and 60 000 persons in Gaza who “are in genuine need”, but who did not qualify for assistance because, although they had lost their ‘means of livelihood’, they were still living in their homes. In real terms, these ‘economic refugees’<sup>1</sup> raised the number of refugees in 1951 to 979 491\*.

In 1952 the definition of a refugee was refined to read as follows: a refugee is “a person whose normal residence had been Palestine for a minimum of two years preceding the 1948 conflict and who, as a result, had lost both his home and his means of livelihood”<sup>2</sup>. This refinement, however, did not contribute to solving the problem of the ‘economic refugees’. Clearly, the definition of a refugee did not aim at establishing the total number of refugees who had left Palestine as a result of the 1948-1949 hostilities, but rather the number of those among them who were in need\*\*.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., para. 24, p. 4.

\* This figure is the sum of 67 000 and 60 000 economic refugees in Jordan and Gaza Strip respectively, added to the total number of refugees (852 491) according to the 1950-1951 UNRWA Census.

<sup>2</sup> UNRWA. Information Paper No. 6, op.cit., p. 10.

\*\* It should be borne in mind that UNRWA definition, elaborated for working purposes and tacitly accepted but never formally approved by the General Assembly, is designed solely for the determination of eligibility for UNRWA assistance. There are persons who, under resolution 194 (III), of 11 December 1948, may be eligible for “repatriation or compensation”, but not all of these may be eligible for relief under the UNRWA working definition. In other words, a person who is not or has ceased to be a refugee for the purpose of receiving relief from UNRWA, may still be a refugee within the meaning of the General Assembly Resolution 194 (III).

## **The Dispersion of the Palestinians: 1948-1949**

As a result of the 1948-1949 hostilities in Palestine, the majority of the Arab Palestinian population fled to the Arab-controlled areas of Palestine and to the surrounding Arab States. All parties to the conflict gave different accounts of the motives underlying the flight of the Palestinians. The Israelis claim that the Palestinians were induced to leave by their own leaders and the Arab governments. The Arabs, on the other hand, claim that the Palestinians were terrorized and forced to leave by the Zionist military organizations such as the Irgun, Stern Gang, and Haganah. In this context, the widely publicized massacre of the entire population of the Arab village of Deir Yassin is often referred to as an example of Zionist terrorism.

Whatever the motive, the Palestinian exodus was not a peculiar phenomenon, but rather a universal one which has accompanied all wars. The uniqueness, however, comes from the total annihilation of the Arab Palestinian political entity and its substitution by a Jewish political entity. In addition, the substitution of the native Arab population by Jewish immigrants from different parts of the world, irrespective of their country of origin, is in itself an unusual phenomenon.

“Many of the refugees, as they go about their daily affairs, can look back across the borders of what is now Israel and see the towns and villages, sometimes the very homes and farms, where

they and their forefathers lived and worked. Their cup of bitterness is filled to overflowing by the knowledge that while they are prevented from returning home, the door is opened wide for immigrants from else where in the world to come and settle in their native land, and that their homes, their lands and property are being used to facilitate the resettlement of these newcomers and thus to consolidate their own extrusion from their homes.”<sup>1</sup>

### **The Demographic Dimension**

The Palestinian exodus took place in many waves and in different directions. The population of Northern Palestine (which covers the Haifa, Safad, Acre districts and the Galilee area) took refuge in Lebanon and Syria. The flow of refugees to Syria started towards the end of 1947, and to Lebanon shortly before the termination of the British Mandate on May 15, 1948. This flow reached its peak in the aftermath of the 1948 War, when the refugees increased the population of Syria by 3% and that of Lebanon by 10%<sup>2</sup>.

The population of Southern Palestine moved to the Egyptian-held territory of Palestine, which was reduced in 1949 to the narrow 3-6 km. wide and 40 km. long Gaza Strip. The flow of refugees to Gaza Strip more than tripled the original population

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<sup>1</sup> UNRWA. Why Are They Still Refugees? op.cit., p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> U.N. Doc. 16(A/1905), paras. 7 and 8, pp. 1-2.

which jumped from 80 000 to 280 000, and the density of population per square mile thus jumped to 2000<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, the Strip, which was deprived of its agricultural lands by the armistice line, has one third of its total area as desert.

This means that more than triple the original population of Gaza Strip were supported by only two-thirds of the area originally inhabited by 80 000 people. In addition, the Gaza Strip was isolated from the rest of the Arab-held territories of Palestine, and its only links with the outside world were the sea and Egypt, which was accessible only after a 300-mile drive through the desert. This situation placed the original population of the Gaza Strip in as much need of relief as the refugees themselves.

The population of coastal Palestine, including those of Lod, Ramlah, Jerusalem and some inhabitants of Jaffa and Haifa, took refuge in the Transjordanian-held territory of Palestine and in Transjordan itself. The impact of this influx of refugees was immense, as it raised the density of population per square mile of cultivable land in Transjordan from 80 to 107, and in the West-Bank from 200 to 580<sup>2</sup>. The influx of these refugees reached its peak during the period April-August 1948.

During the period June 1951 – June 1962, the distribution of the Palestine refugees in the Arab

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, para. 10, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, para. 12, p. 2.

Host-States was as follows:

June 1951<sup>1</sup>

Lebanon.....	106 753
Syria.....	80 499
Jordan.....	465 450
Gaza Strip.....	199 789

June 1955<sup>2</sup>

Lebanon.....	103 600
Syria.....	88 179
Jordan.....	499 606
Gaza Strip.....	214 601

January 1960<sup>3</sup>

Lebanon.....	134 569
Syria.....	112 949
Jordan.....	604 236
Gaza Strip.....	251 976

June 1962<sup>4</sup>

Lebanon.....	144 774
Syria.....	122 227
Jordan.....	639 145
Gaza Strip.....	268 614

This growth in the numbers of Palestinian refugees in the Host-States was a result of the high rate of birth among the Palestinian refugees.

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<sup>1</sup> U.N. Doc. 16 (A/1905), para. 16, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> U.N. Doc. 15 (A/2978), Annex. 1.2 and 1.3.

<sup>3</sup> U.N. Doc. 14 (A/4478), Appendix 2.

<sup>4</sup> UNRWA. UNRWA: A Background Information Series. Information Paper No. 1. A Brief History of UNRWA: 1950-1962. (Beirut: UNRWA, September 1962), p. 6.

“During the nine years which have elapsed since UNRWA established its own lists, the number of registered refugees has steadily increased owing principally to the excess of births over deaths: since June 1952 the total has risen by approximately 238 000 to a current total of 1 120 889 – an average annual net increase of some 30 000”<sup>1</sup>.

The plight of the Palestine refugees raised grave humanitarian problems, the most important of which was to secure the basic needs of life for hundreds of thousands of “homeless”, “penniless” and “distracted” Palestinians. To these problems there was an immediate response by the United Nations and some other independent international organizations.

During the period November 1948 – April 1950, relief work for the Palestinians was conducted under the supervision of the United Nations Relief for Palestine Refugees (UNRPR). The participants in this relief work were the International Committee of the Red Cross, the League of Red Cross Societies, and the American Friends Service Committee. The activities of each of these organizations were limited to certain areas. The International Committee of the Red Cross operated in Israel, “Israel – occupied areas of Palestine”<sup>\*</sup>, and Transjordanian-held territories of Palestine. The League of

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<sup>1</sup> U.N. Doc. 14 (A/4478), para. 3, p. 1.

<sup>\*</sup> This means the areas of Palestine which were accorded to the Arab Palestinians according to the 1947 – Partition Plan approved by the General Assembly on November 29, 1947.

Red Cross Societies operated in Lebanon, Syria and Transjordan. The American Friends Service Committee operated in the Gaza Strip and Acre<sup>1</sup>.

On December 8, 1949, the General Assembly of the United Nations passed its resolutions No. 302, under which it established the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). According to the same resolution, UNRWA was “to carry out in collaboration with local governments the direct relief and works programme as recommended by the Economist Survey Mission”, and “to consult with the interested Near Eastern Governments concerning measures to be taken by them preparatory to the time when international assistance for relief and works projects is no longer available”. Resolution 302 specified, inter alia, that UNRWA should commence its operations on April 1, 1950 (para. II), and should terminate them “not later than 31 December 1950 unless otherwise determined by the General Assembly at its fifth regular session” (para. 6). However, the mandate of UNRWA has been regularly renewed<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> UNRWA. UNRWA: A Background Information Series. Information Paper No. 6. The problem of the Rectification of the UNRWA Relief Rolls: 1950-1962. (Beirut: UNRWA, September. 1962), p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> To this effect, see General assembly resolutions: Resolution 393 (V) of 2 December 1950; Resolution 513 (VI) of 26 January 1952; Resolution 614 (VII) of 6 November 1952; Resolution 720 (VIII) of 27 November 1953; Resolution 818 (IX) of 4 December 1954; Resolution 1456 (XIV) of 9 December 1959; Resolution 1856 (XVII) of 20 December 1962; and Resolution 2002 (XIX) of 10 February 1965.

## **The Socio-Economic Dimension**

The flow of the Palestinian refugees to the neighbouring Arab States was dictated, to a great extent, by geographic and military factors. The Arab Palestinians, in flight, sought the safest route to the nearest Arab country. This flight of the Palestinians should be understood with two basic premises in mind. First, the panic which characterized their flight and which, consequently, resulted in most of the Arab Palestinian population fleeing in all directions with the sole aim of saving their lives and, if time and circumstances permitted, taking whatever money or valuables they could manage with them. Second, many of the Arab Palestinians, especially those who left early, believed that their flight was a temporary one, and that it would be only a matter of days or weeks before “they could go back home”<sup>1</sup>. This unfulfilled belief had a serious economic impact on the Palestinian refugees because, with this belief in mind, the Palestinians who left before the outbreak of hostilities did not bother to take with them all they could have done, nor did they attempt to save or invest the money or valuables which they did take with them<sup>2</sup>. In addition, the majority of the Palestinian refugees, whose flight took place during and after the 1948 – hostilities,

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<sup>1</sup> Arif El-Arif. Al-Nakbah: 1947-1955. (The Tragedy In Palestine: 1947-1955), Vol. V, (Beirut: The Modern Library for Printing and Publishing, 1960), p. 1121; also see, UNRWA. Why Are they Still Refugees? op.cit., p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> U.N. Doc. 16 (A/1905), para. 12, p. 2; also see, Arif El-Arif. op.cit., pp. 1121 and 1109.

barely managed to save the clothes they were wearing. These refugees desperately needed the kind of immediate help that would meet the very basic needs of life. In dealing with this situation, the Arab Host-States did not adopt a unified policy or a coordinated plan. Each of the Host-States devised its own policy according to its own internal economic and political circumstances.

The panic which had characterized the flight of the Arab Palestinians was accompanied by a similar panic in the attitudes of the Arab Host-States vis-à-vis the flow of Palestinian refugees into their respective territories. This mutual panic which characterized the period 1948-1950 (which will be identified in this study as the immediate-stage) is of particular importance due to the diversity to which it led in the responses of the Host-States governments to the Palestine refugees. These responses, which ranged, as we will see later, from the most unaccommodating response of the Lebanese government to the most accommodating response of the Transjordanian government, had little effect on the rate of flow of Palestine refugees. However, the responses of the Host-Governments during the immediate-stage, had a clear impact on shaping future Palestinian-Arab relations. The foundations of the status of the Palestine refugees in the Host-States were laid during the immediate-stage. This status covered, inter alia, the rights and obligations of the Palestinians in the Host-States.

In this sense, the immediate-stage had a basic impact on shaping  
Palestinian-Arab relations during

the following two decades. This impact derives its importance from the great effect which Palestinian relations with each of the Host-States has on the total concept of Palestinian-Arab relations. In other words, the nature of the relationship between each Palestinian community and its respective Host-State cannot be fully understood if it is analyzed in isolation from the rest of the Palestinian communities and the rest of the Host-States. This is due, mainly, to the totality of the 'Palestine problem' in the sense that each particular aspect of it concerns not only one Palestinian community but all of them. Besides, any solution of the 'Palestine Problem' is bound to affect all the Palestinians in the Host-States. Hence, any step or steps towards effecting any solution to the 'Palestine Problem', to be taken by any Palestinian community, or similarly, by any Host-Government will definitely have its bearing on the rest of the Palestinian communities and their respective Host-States. In this respect, it is important to point out that the Host-States have also a legitimate interest in the form and nature of any solution to the 'Palestine Problem' because they shelter vast numbers of Palestinians on their respective territories, and the destiny of those Palestinians, in the event of any solution, will definitely be a matter of concern to the Host-States. Moreover, the adoption, by the Arab States and the Arab League, of the 'Palestine Problem' and its classification as an "Arab Problem" does limit the freedom of action of any single Arab state, to the extent that such action requires the approval of the majority of the Arab states, and above all, the consent of the

Palestinians themselves. The latter part of this chapter will be devoted to analyzing the attitudes of the Arab Host-States and the Palestinians to the nature of the most acceptable solution, to the ‘Palestine Problem’.

### **The Immediate Stage: The Lebanese Response**

The confessional basis of the Lebanese political system, where the delicate sectarian balance is scrupulously observed, determined the unaccommodating Lebanese attitude towards the flow of Palestinian refugees into Lebanon. The presence of more than 100 000 Palestinians, the majority of whom are Muslims, would have upset the tenuous sectarian balance if those refugees had become Lebanese citizens. The Palestinian wealth which eventually poured into Lebanon did not help to soften the unaccommodating attitude of the Lebanese Government. The majority of the wealthy class of Palestinians who fled from Palestine went to Lebanon<sup>1</sup>. It is estimated that those wealthy Palestinians took with them into Lebanon part of their movable wealth which consisted of 27 million Lebanese Lira (L.L.) worth of jewellery, 153 million L.L. worth of commodities and in cash, 13 million L.L. in cash withdrawn from Palestinian accounts in Arab and foreign banks, in addition to £1 million (sterling) in cash which flowed into Lebanon after the Israeli Government agreed to release

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<sup>1</sup> M.N. Al-Hawwari. Sirr Al-Nakbah (The secrets of the Catastrophe in Palestine) (Nazareth, 1950), p. 338; also see, Fred J. Khouri. “Arab Refugees and the Arab-Israeli Dilemma”, in Michael Curtis (ed.), People and Politics in the Middle East (New Jersey: Transaction Books, 1971), p. 145.

Arab Palestinian accounts in banks under its control<sup>1</sup>. This means that total of around 185 million L.L. (equivalent to approximately 20 million pounds sterling) was taken into Lebanon, by the Palestine refugees, during the period 1948-1949. In later years, an additional 15 million L.L. or more were sent every year to Lebanon by Palestinians who found work abroad (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Libya) and sent the money to their families residing in Lebanon<sup>2</sup>. Furthermore, UNRWA, whose headquarters are in the Lebanese capital, provided another source of income for the Lebanese Government. The total expenditure of the Lebanese Government on relief work<sup>3</sup> amounted by 1951, to 5.2 million L.L., in addition to another one million L.L. which was raised by a private organization called the Palestine Bureau<sup>4</sup>

The Palestine refugees are regarded in Lebanon as foreigners. They enjoy no political rights and have no military obligations. As foreigners, they are expected to observe the laws of the country and also to abide by the various regulations which were enacted to regulate their presence in the Lebanon. By law, they are neither allowed to work nor to open a

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<sup>1</sup> Arif El-Arif. op.cit., pp. 1090-1091.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> The Lebanese Government conducted its relief work through a committee which was established in April 1948, and was composed of representatives from the ministries concerned and headed by the Director – General of the President’s Office. See, U.N. Doc. 16 (A/1905), para, 9, p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> U.N. Doc. 16(A/1905), para, 9, p. 2.

private business. Unlike foreigners in Lebanon, the Palestine refugees are subject to some extra restrictions that are justified on the ground of “public order, security and health as well as on grounds of policy”<sup>1</sup>. Such restrictions cover, inter alia, the movement of the Palestine refugees inside Lebanon, as well as their return to Lebanon from abroad, although there are no such restrictions on refugees wishing to leave Lebanon who do not want to come back<sup>2</sup>.

### **The Immediate-Stage: The Syrian Response**

Syria was very accommodating. The Palestine refugees in Syria, the vast majority of whom were penniless<sup>3</sup>, were promptly helped both by the people and by the Government.

By the end of 1947, when small numbers of Palestinian refugees began arriving in Syria, the Association For The Liberation of Palestine was established to provide assistance for the refugees.

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<sup>1</sup> U.N. Doc. 13 (A/2171), p. 46.

<sup>2</sup> Refugees who find employment with Arab governments or with certain international companies operating in the Arab World are exempted from this law. See, U.N. Doc. 13 (A/2171). p. 46.

After 1967, all such restrictions were not observed, though legally they were still valid.

<sup>3</sup> M.N. Al-Hawwari. The Secrets of the Catastrophe in Palestine, op.cit., p. 336.

However, as the situation in Palestine deteriorated, the number of refugees arriving in Syria grew so rapidly that the Association For The Liberation of Palestine, whose funds came from voluntary contributions, could no longer cope with the situation. In May 1948, the Syrian Government, in response to an appeal from the Association, took over the responsibility for the relief of the Palestine refugees in Syria. Until the establishment of UNRWA, the Syrian Government assumed the sole responsibility for the relief of all Palestinian refugees on its territory. During 1948, the Syrian Government spent between 7.2 and 8.4 million Syrian Lira (S.L.) on its relief operations<sup>1</sup>.

On January 25, 1949, by virtue of Law No. 450, the Syrian Government established the Palestine Arab Refugee Institution. According to the Legislative Act No. 70 of 16 May, 1949, the same Institution was empowered to manage the affairs of the Palestine refugees in Syria in such a manner that they enjoy all the privileges\* of the Syrian subjects<sup>2</sup>. For example, the Palestinians in Syria are allowed to work, to open private businesses, and to practice their professions such as lawyers or doctors. They are also recruited into the Government and civic service. Many of the Legislative Decrees which were

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<sup>1</sup> U.N. Doc. 16 (A/1905), para. 8, pp. 1-2.

\* With a few “technical exceptions” which will be mentioned as we proceed.

<sup>2</sup> U.N. Doc. 13 (A/2171), pp. 46-48; also see, Arif El-Arif. The Tragedy In Palestine, Vol. V, op.cit., pp. 1130-1131.

passed by the Syrian Government during the period 1950-1952 were aimed at facilitating the possibility of work for the Palestine refugees. However, the Palestine refugees in Syria are not allowed to acquire Syrian citizenship and, accordingly, are neither entitled to vote in elections nor to be nominated. Equally, the Palestine refugees in Syria are exempted from military service, although they are allowed to join the Syrian Army, as regulars, if they wish to do so\*.

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### **The Immediate-Stage: The Egyptian Response**

The flow of Palestine refugees into Egypt reached its peak in mid-1948<sup>1</sup>. The immediate response of the Egyptian Government to the flow of Palestine refugees reflected its unwillingness to have any substantial number of refugees residing on its territory. Most of the Palestine refugees who took refuge in Egypt proper, were put in huge “detention-camps” which were specially erected near the Suez Canal<sup>2</sup>. They were not allowed to leave these “camps” into Egypt, except under the rare condition when a refugee proved that he was financially capable of supporting himself and had very influential Egyptian friends to vouch for this. Inside the

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\* With the exception of Jordan (see Chapter Four) the Palestine refugees are not allowed to enlist in any other of the Host-States’ or Arab States’ armies.

<sup>1</sup> See pp.68-69.

<sup>2</sup> Arif El-Arif, op.cit., pp. 1091-1092; also see, M.N. Al-Hawwari, op.cit., pp. 316-324.

“camps”. Palestinian refugees were “suspected” and “mistreated”. They were “exploited” in the sense that they were made to exchange their Palestinian currency for Egyptian currency at a very unfavourable rate. In addition, Palestinian refugee women were “forced” to sell their jewellery at very low prices<sup>1</sup>. During the early period of their refuge until February 1950, the Palestine refugees in Egypt were not allowed to work or open a business. A fine of 500 Egyptian Pounds or six - months imprisonment, or both, were decreed by the General military Governor of Egypt\*, for any Egyptian who employed a Palestinian refugee<sup>2</sup>. On February 1, 1950, the Egyptian Government allowed about 10 000 Palestinian refugees residing in Egypt, to earn their living there<sup>3</sup>. This decision came, however, after the bulk of the Palestine refugees who went to Egypt had been transferred, en masse, to the Gaza Strip.

The bulk of the Palestine refugees in the Gaza Strip were those who had fled directly from their homes into the Strip. In the Gaza Strip, the Egyptian military authorities, who took control there, imposed no restrictions in terms of work on the Palestine refugees there. However, any movement into the Strip or out of it was subject to the prior approval of the Egyptian military authorities. No Palestinian from the Gaza Strip, for

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

\* The Egyptian Prime Minister at that time was, also, the General Military Governor.

<sup>2</sup> M.N. Al-Hawwari, op.cit., p. 321.

<sup>3</sup> Arif El-Arif, op.cit., p. 1109.

example, was allowed to enter Egypt unless he obtained written permission from the Egyptian authorities in Cairo. It was “only in few instances” that such permission was granted<sup>1</sup>, and only after the applicant had proved that he had paid all his tax, and that he was not wanted for any crime or offence. The applicant, then, paid a set amount of money as a guarantee that he would return to the Gaza Strip and not remain in Egypt<sup>2</sup>.

The Palestine refugees in the Gaza Strip enjoyed the same rights and obligations as the original inhabitants of the Strip. Mandatory Laws, in addition to other laws introduced by the Egyptian Military Government, were enforced in the Gaza Strip and applied to everyone indiscriminately. This included restrictions on association and movement which were justified on security grounds<sup>3</sup>.

### **The Immediate-Stage: The Transjordanian Response**

The bulk of the Palestine refugees went to the Transjordanian-held part of Palestine (the West Bank) and to Transjordan. An estimated 350 000 refugees settled there. The impact of this flow of refugees was more far-reaching on Transjordan, economically, socially and politically, than on any other state in the Arab World. Although the bulk of the refugees were in wretched situation, yet, “some of the

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<sup>1</sup> U.N. Doc. 13 (A/2171), p. 48.

<sup>2</sup> Arif El-Arif. *op. cit.*, pp. 1091-1092.

<sup>3</sup> U.N. Doc. 13 (A/2171), p. 48.

refugees brought with them money and purchasing power (estimated at 10 million Palestinian pounds in cash alone) which initially generated a considerable economic activity in building, transport and consumers' goods industries, especially in Amman; but this tended to fall off later as funds ran out and exile was seen to stretch indefinitely into the future"<sup>1</sup>. This "un-coordinated spending" of refugee wealth failed to contribute to the country's real productivity in a way that matched the sudden huge increase in the population.

The Palestinian refugees in Jordan enjoy the full rights and duties of any Jordanian citizen. They enjoy, in addition to freedom of movement and travel, the right to vote, to run for elections, to work, and the like<sup>2</sup>. The Palestinian refugees residing in Jordan acquired this status pending the unification of the West Bank and Transjordan under the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan which came into affect on 11 April, 1950<sup>3</sup>.

### **Palestinian-Arab Relations: The Basic Political Taboos**

Notwithstanding the existence of the State of Israel, Palestine refugees provided the only tangible physical outcome of the 1948 War in Palestine. Since then, there have been many attempts to solve the Palestine refugee problem as a means of settling the

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<sup>1</sup> U.N. Doc. 16 (A/1905), para. 12, p.2.

<sup>2</sup> U.N. Doc. 13 (A'2171), p.48.

<sup>3</sup> This unity was approved by the Transjordan Parliament on 13 December 1948. On 7 May 1949 three Palestinians joined the Jordanian Cabinet accordingly. See, Chapter 4.

“Palestine Problem” once and for all. In this context, the attitude of the Palestinians vis-à-vis the solution of the Palestine refugee problem provides an important element in the understanding of Palestinian thinking concerning what would for them be an acceptable solution to the “Palestine Problem”. Equally important are the attitudes of the Arab Host-States regarding the solution of the Palestine refugee problem. Such attitudes are bound to have a great influence on the relations between the Palestinians and their Host-States, whether individually or collectively, whether or not the Host-States are in agreement with the Palestinians. During the immediate-stage, and in the years until 1967, there were three solutions suggested for the Palestine refugee problem. These centred on assimilation, emigration and resettlement. The remaining part of this Chapter will be devoted to analyzing the views of the Palestinians, and those of the Host-States, on the issue of assimilation and the alternatives. This analysis, however, must be seen against the complexity of the “Palestine Problem” of which the Palestine refugee problem is a part<sup>1</sup>.

### **The Option of Assimilation**

The basic premises underlying any attempt towards a successful implementation of a policy designed to

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<sup>1</sup> UNRWA has consistently stressed the impossibility of isolating the Palestine refugee problem from the “Palestine Problem” which is basically a political problem. See, U.N. Doc. 14 (A/3212), paras. 100 and 101, pp. 12-13.

assimilate the Palestine refugees are two-fold: first, the approval, by the Palestine refugees, of the principle of assimilation and their willingness to co-operate with any scheme to that effect; second, the approval by the states concerned, mainly the Arab Host-States, of the principle of assimilation, and the degree of their preparedness to assimilate and integrate, en masse, the Palestinian refugees residing on their respective territories.

The Palestine refugees have at all times expressed their refusal of any solution short of their return to 'Palestine'.

“Today, as one year ago, the strongest feeling, vocally and bitterly expressed by the great mass of the refugees, is the demand to return to their old homes.”<sup>1</sup>

This attitude was reflected in the insistence, by the Palestine refugees, on the implementation of the General Assembly 194 (III) Resolution of 11 December 1948. This resolution resolved that:

“.... the refugees 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....” (Para. II).

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<sup>1</sup> U.N. Doc. 14 (A/3212), paras. 101 & 102, pp. 12-13; also see, Sami Hadawi. Bitter Harvest: Palestine between 1914-1967 (New York: The New York Press, 1967), pp. 170-173.

According to this Resolution, the Palestine refugees were given the choice between ‘repatriation’ and ‘compensation’. On the basis of this Resolution, the Palestine refugees who chose not to be ‘repatriated’ after they were given such a choice, were to be ‘compensated’ and assimilated. This solution which met the Palestinian refugees demand for return to their homeland necessitated the full implementation of the 194 (III) Resolution<sup>1</sup>. The full implementation of this Resolution would only have been possible with the agreement of the Israeli Government to ‘repatriate’ all those Palestinian refugees who wished to “return to their homes”. In this respect, the attitude of the Israeli Government has consistently been negative on the grounds that “the mass return of the refugees would endanger the security of the State of Israel”<sup>2</sup>. The persistent refusal of the Israeli Government to implement the 194 (III) Resolution, and the persistent adherence of the Palestine refugees to the necessity of its implementation had led to a state of deadlock. This state of deadlock induced the promotion of emigration and resettlement as alternatives to assimilation.

### **The Option of Emigration\***

Emigration did not constitute, at any time, a primary undertaking by UNRWA in the form of a major scheme as a means of solving the Palestine refugees problem<sup>3</sup>. The role played by UNRWA in the field of

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<sup>1</sup> U.N. Doc. 14 (A/4478), para. 4, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> UNRWA. Why Are They Still Refugees? op.cit., p. 10.

\* Emigration to countries outside the Arab World.

<sup>3</sup> U.N. Doc. 14 (A/3232), paras. 100 & 101, pp. 12-13.

emigration was positive, although they did not take the initiative. UNRWA would provide all the encouragement and assistance needed for facilitating the emigration of those refugees who were willing to emigrate and who asked for the help of UNRWA<sup>1</sup>.

In 1953, the United States Congress passed a special law under which 2 000 Palestinian refugees were allowed to emigrate to the U.S.A. On 4 April, 1954, the Council of the Arab League approved, in principle, that decision<sup>2</sup>. In spite of this, UNRWA records show a generally hostile attitude to emigration among the Palestinian refugees. During the period 1951-1962, only 4 294 Palestinian refugees emigrated, with UNRWA assistance, to countries like the United States, New Zealand, Canada, Australia and some Latin American countries<sup>3</sup>. There are no records of those who emigrated without the help of UNRWA, although their number is “presumed to be small”<sup>4</sup>.

There were two major factors which helped to inhibit the emigration of the Palestinian refugees: first, the quantitative and qualitative restrictions imposed by the recipient countries; second, and most important, the strong belief among the Palestinian refugees that they “would shortly be

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<sup>1</sup> UNRWA. Why Are They Still Refugees? op.cit., p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Ad-Difaa: Newspaper, Vol. XX, No. 5513 (Jerusalem, 5 April, 1954), p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> UNRWA. Information Paper No. 1, op.cit., p. 10.

<sup>4</sup> UNRWA. Why Are They Still Refugees? op.cit., p. 10.

returning to their home”<sup>1</sup>, and the absence of any intention on their side of “uprooting themselves for good from their native land”<sup>2</sup>. Thus, the Palestinian refugees “did not consciously break with their past and seek a new life in a new land”<sup>3</sup>. This reflects a uniqueness in the attitude of the Palestine refugees compared to the attitude of other international refugees. While those refugees who are classified as such by the UN High Commission for Refugees often flee with the conscious intention and determination of finding a new life and a new homeland, that is, completely dissociating themselves from their past, the conduct of the Palestine refugees reflects an entirely different picture. They have resisted any move to dissociate them from their country of origin, and have consistently expressed their desire to ‘return’ even with the full knowledge that they will be living under the rule of their ‘enemy’<sup>4</sup>.

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### **The Option of Resettlement**<sup>\*</sup>

The economic rehabilitation of the Palestine refugees provided for in the UNRWA mandate<sup>5</sup> has

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4; also see, U.N. Doc. A/5813, pp. 1-4; U.N. Doc. A/6013, pp. 4-5; U.N. Doc. A/6313, para 5, p. 3; Sami Hadawi, *op.cit.*, pp. 169-173.

<sup>2</sup> UNRWA. *Why Are They Still Refugees?* *op.cit.*, p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> U.N. Doc. A/1905, para. 37, p. 5; U.N. Doc. 14 (A/3212), paras. 101 & 102, pp. 12-13; U.N. Doc. A/5813, pp. 1-4; U.N. Doc. A/6013, pp. 4-5; U.N. Doc. A/6313, para. 5, p. 3.

<sup>\*</sup> Resettlement in the Arab World only.

<sup>5</sup> See, General assembly Resolution 302 (IV), of 8 December 1949.

often been linked to the resettlement of the Palestine refugees<sup>1</sup>. The resettlement of the Palestine refugees through their integration in the economic life of the Arab States has often been stressed, especially by Israel, as the most suitable solution to the Palestine refugees problem<sup>2</sup>. The experience of UNRWA in this field however suggests to the contrary. On the economic level alone, ignoring the political and psychological problems involved, the talk, during the early stages of the Palestine refugees problem, about the feasibility of resettlement through economic integration did seriously under-estimate the difficulties involved.

The original resettlement plan, suggested in 1952, envisaged a 200 million dollar reintegration fund under UNRWA administration “to be expended on a three-year programme of development projects”<sup>3</sup>. Although only 48.3 million were actually received by UNRWA, it still holds true that, even if the entire 200 million had actually been put at the disposal of UNRWA, and even if it had proved possible to spend it on useful resettlement projects, “this would certainly not have solved the refugee problem”<sup>4</sup>. A more realistic and accurate assessment of the investment needed for carrying out a viable resettlement scheme was made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations,

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<sup>1</sup> U.N. Doc. 14 (A/3212), para, 102, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> UNRWA. Why Are They Still Refugees? *op.cit.*, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

Dag Hammarskjold, in his June 1959 Report to the General Assembly, in which he estimated that approximately 13.7 billion dollars of new investments were needed, during the decade ending in 1970, to absorb the surplus labour force in the Arab World. 1.7 billion out of the original 13.7 billion would be required to absorb the surplus labour force among the Palestine refugees<sup>1</sup>.

### **The Solution of the Palestine Refugee Problem: The Arab Attitude**

The basic premise underlying the official Arab attitude to the Palestine refugees problem stressed the acceptance, by the Arab States, of anything which was acceptable to the Palestinian refugees, and their rejection of anything short of that. In this context, the meeting of the Council of the Arab League, held in Cairo during the period March 25 – April 14, 1950, decided, inter alia, to allow all those Palestinian refugees who wished to work and to resettle in the country in which they were residing to do so and to be able to acquire, if they so wished, the citizenship of that country<sup>2</sup>. Besides which Syria and Jordan expressed their willingness to integrate all those Palestinians who chose not to be ‘repatriated’ after the implementation of the 194 (III) Resolution<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The Institute For Palestine Studies (ed.). The Palestine Refugees: A Collection of United Nations Documents (Beirut: The Institute For Palestine Studies, 1970), pp. 466-482.

<sup>2</sup> El-Arif. The Tragedy In Palestine, op.cit., p. 1110.

<sup>3</sup> U.N. Doc. GA/AN/356, of 22 Nov. 1955; also see, Fred Khouri, op.cit., p. 146.

In practice, however, the attitude to the Arab Host-States to the issue of Palestine refugees residing on their respective territories was determined by the delicate combination of the domestic political and economic circumstances of each of the Host-States on the one hand, and the non-violation of the taboos of the 'Palestine Problem' on the other hand. These taboos, basically self-imposed, and with the passage of time gaining sanctity, covered, inter alia, the non-recognition of the existence of the State of Israel, and the adherence to Arab rights in Palestine as the homeland of the Arab Palestinians, to which they have the right to return in accordance with the 194 (III) Resolution. By and large, there was no basic contradiction between the domestic requirements of the Arab Host-States and the taboos of the Palestine Problem. This homogeneity has saved two of the Host-States, namely Egypt and Lebanon, the embarrassment of the formidable task of assimilating hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees into their ranks – Egypt for economic reasons and Lebanon for politico-sectarian reasons<sup>1</sup>. As for Syria, the assimilation of some 100 000 Palestinian refugees posed no social, economic or political problems. Its attitude to assimilation was therefore not based on any domestic requirements, but rather on strict adherence to the taboos of the Palestine problem. As for Jordan, the situation was completely different. On December 1948, the Jordanian Parliament approved the unification of the West Bank and Transjordan which came officially into effect on 24 April 1950<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Fred Khouri, op.cit., p. 146.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter 4.

As a result of this unification, the Palestinians in Jordan acquired the status of Jordanian citizens. This, however, did not lead to the lifting of the refugee status of the Palestinians in Jordan who continued to meet the criteria laid down by the UNRWA in its definition of Palestine refugees<sup>1</sup>.

### **The Solution of the Palestine Refugee Problem: The Palestinian Attitude**

The total failure in implementing the 194 (III) Resolution led to a situation under which the bulk of the Palestine refugees were denied the right to “repatriation” or “compensation” since only 40 000 Palestine refugees were repatriated, during the period 1948-1950, under the family-reunion scheme<sup>2</sup>. This failure paved the way for the development of a complex feeling of frustration, bitterness and suspicion amongst the Palestine refugees<sup>3</sup>.

“The desire to go back to their homes is general among all classes; it is proclaimed orally at all meetings and organized demonstrations, and, in writing, in all letters addressed to the Agency and all complaints handed into the area officers.”<sup>4</sup>

This was clearly reflected in the attitude of the

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<sup>1</sup> See, pp. 65-66.

<sup>2</sup> John H. Davis. The Evasive Peace: A Study of the Zionist-Arab Problem (London: John Murray, 1968), p. 62.

<sup>3</sup> U.N. Doc. 14 (A/4478), para. 4, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> U.N. Doc. A/1905, para, 37, p. 5.

Palestine refugees towards UNRWA and its development schemes. Such feeling were translated into a set of convictions, adopted by the Palestinians, which, as time passed, became an essential component of the Palestine refugees' general conception of their status and the relationship between this status and the solution of the "Palestine Problem".

The importance attached by the Palestine refugees to the 194 (III) Resolution stems from their belief that it was a major document, in which the world community, recognized Palestine as being their homeland, to which they had the right to return, or if they did not wish to do so, the right to compensation<sup>1</sup>. In this context, integration would not reflect a situation whereby Palestinian refugees would endorse their "defeat" by the Israelis and "surrender" their rights in Palestine, but rather a situation whereby the Palestinians, who chose not to "return" to Palestine and live under the Israeli rule, would be accordingly integrated. The price, therefore, of Palestinian refugees acceptance of integration, in principle, was the acknowledgement by Israel of Arab Palestinians rights in Palestine and the implementation of such an acknowledgement in the form of repatriation. It was within this framework that the attitudes of Palestine refugees towards any plans for integration, emigration and resettlement were held.

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<sup>1</sup> The 194 (III) Resolution was the only resolution to this effect, passed by the U.N. after the State of Israel was proclaimed on May 15, 1948. A reference to this resolution had consistently been made by the General Assembly in all its resolutions dealing with the Palestine refugee problem.

In retrospect, the non-implementation of the 194 (III) Resolution put the Palestine refugees in the difficult position of choosing between giving in and adapting to the new realities through assimilation, emigration and resettlement or not giving in and resisting the new realities by preserving their refugee-status as the only means towards preserving their right to “repatriation”. The Palestine refugees clearly embarked on the second alternative and chose to preserve their refugee-status. In doing so, the Palestine refugees were very careful to preserve not just the refugee-title, but also all the characteristics of their state of refuge.

These characteristics include: the preservation of refugee camps, the preservation of the misery in refugee camps, the enrolment on UNRWA ration rolls and the preservation of the memory of the homelands in Palestine in the mind and “hearts” of the occupants of the refugee camps<sup>1</sup>. As a result of this, the Palestine refugees viewed with suspicion, and violently resisted, any UNRWA plans to improve the conditions inside the refugee camps, such as the substitution of tents by concrete houses, as being a move towards “permanent resettlement”<sup>2</sup>. Similarly,

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<sup>1</sup> To this effect, refugee camps were given the names of the place in Palestine from which the refugees had originally come, for example, Jaffa, Haifa, Ramleh etc., see, Don Peretz. “The Palestine Arabs: A National Entity”, in Michael Curtis (ed.) People and Politics in the Middle East. (New Jersey: Transaction Books, 1971), p. 84.

<sup>2</sup> U.N. Doc. 16 (A/1905), para, 38, p. 5; also see, Erskine B. Childers. “The Other Exodus”, in Walid Khalidi (ed.). From Haven to Conquest: Reading in Zionism and the Palestine Problem until 1948 (Beirut: The Institute For Palestine Studies, 1971), p. 796.

the provision of rations, although essential for meeting the basic needs of life, nevertheless, was not viewed by the Palestine refugees as an act of charity which humiliated human dignity, but rather as a recognition of their refugee-status<sup>1</sup>, and as a “right” which they had acquired by virtue of their refugee-status. The world community was seen as having failed to redress this status through the enforcement of the 194 (III) Resolution<sup>2</sup>. To this effect, the Commissioner – General of UNRWA says:

“In their (the Palestine refugees) own eyes they are not refugees at all in the sense in which that term is used to describe persons who have uprooted themselves and broken with their own past in order to seek a new life in a new surrounding and in a new country. The Palestine refugees regard themselves rather as temporary wards of the international community whom they hold responsible for the upheaval which resulted in their having to leave their homes. As they see it, the international community has a duty to enable them to return to their homes and meanwhile, to provide for their maintenance and welfare”<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> U.N. Doc. A/5813, para, 21, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> U.N. Doc. 16 (A/1905), paras. 35, 36, 37, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> U.N. Doc. A/5813, p. 4.

In another instance, the Commissioner-General of UNRWA drew attention to the feelings and attitudes of the Palestine refugees when he said that, “From their standpoint, a nation has been obliterated and a population arbitrarily deprived of its birthright. This “injustice”, he point out, “still fosters in their minds and they hold the United Nations responsible for their lot and for extending assistance to them until a solution can be found to their problems. Their longing to return to their homes, encouraged by the General Assembly’s declaration on repatriation and compensation in paragraph II of Resolution 194(III) and referred to in many subsequent resolutions, remains unabated.”<sup>1</sup>

Time was not a softening force to this hard-line attitude. It acted, rather, as a consolidating force. As time passed, the Palestine refugees clearly observed that the only issue which was keeping “the Palestine Problem” alive, and acting as a reminder to the world community of the existence of something called “The Palestine Problem” was the issue of the Palestine refugees. Accordingly, the Palestine refugees developed the conviction that if they allowed the refugee problem to be solved in any way other than that stated by Resolution 194 (III), they would, then, be endorsing the status quo in Palestine, and legitimizing it too, as they would in practice be surrendering their right to “repatriation”. This conviction gave a special importance to the preservation of the refugee-status of Palestine refugees.

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<sup>1</sup> U.N. Doc. A/6013, pp. 4-5.

Thus, the preservation of one status quo served, in this case, as a delegitimizing force of another status quo. It was within this framework that the Palestine refugees were always careful not to surrender, formally and collectively, to any government, political organization, or political party, the right to represent them and to act on their behalf. Although they did not exercise this right themselves<sup>1</sup>, they, nevertheless, felt that by preserving their refugee-status and by not surrendering their rights of representation they were safeguarding their cause and keeping it alive.

The refusal, by the Palestine refugees, to accept any plans for solving the ‘Palestine refugee problem’ through integration<sup>2</sup>, emigration<sup>3</sup>, or resettlement<sup>4</sup>, did not reflect the development and flourishing of a “refugee mentality”, but rather reflected the political

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<sup>1</sup> There are many factors behind the failure of the Palestine refugees to take the initiative. These factors include the dispersion of the Palestinians, the status of the Palestinians in the Arab Host-States and the absence of a national Palestinian leadership. This issue will be dealt with in Chapter 6.

<sup>2</sup> Outside the context of the 194 (III) Resolution.

<sup>3</sup> Emigration to countries outside the Arab World.

<sup>4</sup> Resettlement, in a permanent sense, in the Arab World, mainly in the Host-States.

nature of the Palestine refugees problem<sup>1</sup>.

“The work of the Agency (UNRWA) must, in the very nature of things, be considered against the political background of the Palestine question, to which the refugee problem is inextricably linked. As has been demonstrated by events, the passage of time has not been a healing force. Quite to the contrary. Today, as one year ago, the strongest feeling, vocally and bitterly expressed by the great mass of the refugees, is the demand to return to their old homes. The refugees are, in general, supported in this claim by the Arab Governments.

In the absence of acceptable solution to the Palestine question, the great mass of the refugees has remained opposed to the development of large-scale projects for self-support, which they erroneously link with permanent resettlement and the abandonment of hopes for repatriation.”<sup>2</sup>

It is true that the Palestine refugees problem has humanitarian and economic elements, but these are merely aspects of the problem and do not constitute its essence.

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<sup>1</sup> Sami Nadawi. Bitter Harvest: Palestine Between 1914-1967 (New York: The New World Press, 1967), p.186; also see, U.N. Doc. 14 (A/3212), para. 101, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> U.N. Doc. 14 (A/3212), paras. 101 & 102, pp. 12-13.

“Although the Agency’s (UNRWA) mandate is strictly humanitarian, the refugee problem is at the core of the Palestine question, which is one of the most explosive political issues in the host countries and in the whole Near East.”<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, the preservation of the refugee-status of the Palestine refugees serves two other major goals for the Palestinians.

First, it acts as a constant daily reminder to the world community and to the Arab people and governments of the “tragedy” which befell the Palestinians, and which can only be solved through their return to their homeland in Palestine<sup>2</sup>. Furthermore, the preservation of refugee-status<sup>3</sup> serves as a destabilizing element in the Host-states, due to the daily frustration it causes to the Palestine refugees.

“This sense of injustice, frustration and disappointment has made the refugee irritable and unstable. There are occasional strikes, demonstrations and small riots.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, para. 76, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> See, pp. 94-98.

<sup>3</sup> Including the characteristics of the state of refuge, see, pp. 93-94.

<sup>4</sup> U.N. Doc. 16 (A/1905), para. 38, p. 5.

This was bound to reflect itself on the relations between the Palestinians and their respective Host-Governments. In other words, the Host-States' Governments, in seeking to solve the Palestine refugee problem peacefully, must secure the consent of the Palestinians. Hence, the Host-Governments can only solve the Palestine refugee problem peacefully through Resolution 194 (III), that is through "repatriation" or "compensation". But, since the Israeli Government refused to "repatriate" the Palestine refugees<sup>1</sup>, the only way which remained open for the Host-Governments to solve the Palestine refugee problem, and consequently the "Palestine Problem", was through war. Thus, the preservation of the refugee status of the Palestine refugees serves as an element of tension and instability in the area<sup>2</sup>.

Second, in its capacity as an indicator of the origin of the Palestine refugees and consequently of their right to return to their homelands, the preservation of the refugee-status, when translated politically, means the ultimate aim of having a political entity which would represent the physical components of a state – that is, the land and the people. Accordingly, the "return" of the people (the Arab Palestinians) to the land (Palestine) indicates the ultimate goal of establishing a political entity which would

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<sup>1</sup> See, pp. 86-89 and 92-93.

<sup>2</sup> As we will see in Chapter 6, the Palestinians were to introduce, in the early 1960's, the concept of "involvement", i.e. forcing the Arab States into War with Israel.

represent both the people and the land- a state-in-image. In this sense, the Palestinians view the preservation of their refugee-status as a guarantee of the continued existence of their state-in-image. This view stems from the conviction that with the transformation of the “homeland”, and the subsequent non-existence of an Arab Palestinian political entity in Palestine, or an internationally recognized substitute for this entity, such as an internationally-recognized government-in-exile, the Palestine refugees remain as the only physical component of the state-in-image whose legitimate right to “return” to the “transformed homeland” is internationally recognized. Accordingly, the lifting of the refugee-status of the Palestine refugees through emigration, resettlement or integration\*, or any other solution short of “repatriation”, is destined to deprive the state-in-image of its legitimacy through depriving it of its only legitimate component – the Palestine refugees.

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\* Outside the framework of the 194 (III) Resolution.

## CHAPTER THREE

### PALESTINIAN-ARAB RELATIONS: THE ERA OF TRANSITION, 1952-1963

This Chapter deals with the impact of the dispersion of the Palestinians on their political attitudes and activities during the period 1952-1963. A brief socio-economic analysis of the Palestinians in the Host-States constitutes a logical prelude to the main themes of this Chapter. An understanding of the economic and social status of the Palestinians in the post-1948 period may also help in comprehending the circumstances and factors affecting their political attitudes and activities.

The analysis of the socio-economic status of the Palestinians in the post-1948 period will be conducted through an assessment of Palestinian educational and academic potential, which, in the Palestinian case, serves as the best and most viable means of effecting any radical changes in the economic and social status of the Palestinians. This is due to the fact that the absence of a Palestinian state and the dispersion of the Palestinian people had deprived the Palestinians of the services normally provided by the nation-state\*. Such services would mainly affect the social and economic conditions of the population through such processes or schemes as industrialization, state-sponsored economic development plans, or state-

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\* With the exception of the Palestinians in Jordan.

sponsored social and educational services. In the Palestinian case, the nation-state, as a medium through which social and economic changes could be effected, was non-existent. Consequently, the Palestinians had to compensate for the absence of this medium through education and hard work which were largely based on personal rather than state initiative.

### **An assessment of the Palestinian Educational and Academic Potential**

The transformation of Palestine on May 15, 1948, and the subsequent dispersion of the Arab Palestinian people had catastrophic impacts on all aspects on the life of the Palestinian people. Originally “one of the most prosperous and highly cultivated in the Arab World”<sup>1</sup>, the Palestinians had become the political and economic burden of the world community. The Palestinian people suffered all the agonies and miseries which normally accompany the life of refugees<sup>2</sup>. Such agonies and miseries were long-term ones for the majority of the new generations of Palestinians who lacked either appropriate funds to start a new life, or educational and technical skills which would have provided them with the possibility of decent work and

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<sup>1</sup> UNRWA. Why Are They Still Refugees? op.cit., p.1.

<sup>2</sup> See, Chapter 2, pp. 73-82.

employment<sup>1</sup>. It was, therefore, the state of being refugee which taught the Palestinians, as early as 1948, that material wealth and social prestige without education served a Palestinian no good in his refuge<sup>2</sup>, and that it was only those who were educated, and who thus, carried their knowledge with them, were able to start, almost immediately, a new and decent life. This must not be seen as in contradiction with the Palestinian determination to preserve their refugee-status and the characteristics of the life of a refugee. On the contrary, in seeking education, the Palestinians were not aiming at relinquishing their refugee-status, but rather at making their children – the new generation of Palestinians, better equipped to meet hardships than their fathers who lacked education, and who, consequently, suffered most after 1948.

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<sup>1</sup> There are no statistics regarding the number of Palestinian refugees who had enough funds to start a new business. Equally, there are no statistics on the number of educated and skilled Palestinians who left Palestine in 1948. It is, however, generally accepted that a high percentage of the non-indigenous Arab employees in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Libya and the Gulf States in the early 1950's were Palestinians.

<sup>2</sup> This is due to the fact that, by and large, the wealthy class of the Palestinians in the pre-1948 period, did not derive its wealth from trade or industry, but rather from its ownership of land and groves, though some of them, especially those who left early, managed either to sell some of their land or take some cash or valuables with them. For more information, see pp. 76-80.

## **Palestinian Pre-University Education**

The early Palestinian understanding of the importance of education based on the need to secure a high degree of qualifications, in order to compensate for the competitive disadvantage of being a refugee competing with the native population for scarce opportunities to work, sparked a massive move among the Palestinians towards education.

“Deprived of the economic and social base of a home and a country, Palestine refugees start out at a disadvantage in seeking to support themselves in the highly competitive conditions created by expanding population and surplus manpower in the Middle East”<sup>1</sup>.

In addition, there were other factors which played an important role in promoting the Palestinian thirst for education. First, the post-1948 period witnessed a general demand for education in the Arab World. This demand was largely due to the exposure of Arab societies to the achievements of Western civilization, and the emergence, for the first time in many centuries, of independent Arab states who needed an increasing number of educated people to help in running the different institutions of the state. The Palestinians, who lived in the

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<sup>1</sup> UNRWA. UNRWA/UNESCO Educational Services for Palestine Refugees (Beirut: UNRWA, 1970), p. 1.

Midst of the Arab World, benefited from this educational drive and the subsequent expansion in the educational facilities of the Arab World<sup>1</sup>. Second, the eviction of the majority of the Palestinians had led to a basic alteration in their milieu and norm of life, as the Palestinians were settled in urban rather than rural environments<sup>2</sup>. In this sense, the urbanization of the majority of the Palestinian people contributed to shifting their outlook and work opportunities and expectations from being basically rural-orientated to being basically urban-orientated. Consequently, the importance of education in the life of the Palestinian individual increased, in as much as it provided the indispensable base of his survival

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<sup>1</sup> Ibrahim Abu-Lughod. "Educating A Community in Exile: The Palestinian Experience", in, Journal of Palestine Studies. Vol. II, No. 3 (Beirut: The Institute for Palestine studies and Kuwait University, 1973), p. 104.

<sup>2</sup> The majority of the Palestine refugee camps are situated in urban environments in and around the following major cities:

- In Lebanon: Beirut, Sidon, Tyre, Tripoli and Beqa'a.
- In Syria: Damascus, Homs, Hama, Deraa and Aleppo.
- In Transjordan: Amman, Zerqa and Irbid.
- In the West-Bank: Nablus, Jericho, Jerusalem and Hebron.
- In Gaza Strip: Gaza, Deir El-Balah, Khan Yunis and Rafah.

For more information see: U.N. Doc. 15 (A/2978), annex. 1.2 and 1.3; Also see, U.N. Doc. 13 (A/5513), the Appendix.

In his new urbanized environment<sup>1</sup>. Furthermore, the urban environment in which they were placed provided the Palestinians with the chance to make use of educational facilities which were normally more available and more advanced than those of the rural environment<sup>2</sup>.

The responsibility for educating the Palestine refugees – in terms of finance and location – was largely shared by some Arab states and UNRWA. The degree of this responsibility depended on two factors – the concentration of Palestinian population<sup>3</sup>, and the level of education.

In addition to UNRWA, the Arab states of Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the Gulf States, Egypt and Iraq assumed the major responsibility for educating the Palestinians<sup>4</sup>. The extent of this responsibility was, generally speaking, determined by three major factors:

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<sup>1</sup> It is true that the Palestinian drive towards education was initially motivated by job opportunities. However, those among the Palestinians who went early to other Arab countries and found job, because they happened to be educated discovered that they could penetrate and influence their respective societies and thus serve their cause. This became an important motive for later generations of Palestinians in their pursuit of education.

<sup>2</sup> Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

<sup>3</sup> This does not apply to UNRWA whose mandate covers the Palestine refugees irrespective of their country of residence.

<sup>4</sup> Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

first, the degree of willingness and preparedness of the Arab States concerned to participate in educating the Palestinians; second, the number of Palestinians residing on the territory of each of the Arab States concerned which indicated its share of the burden in teaching the Palestinians (see Table I); finally, the level of educational attainment sought by the Palestinians. In the latter case, the Palestinian refugees who were eligible for UNRWA educational services were cared for, on the primary level, solely by UNRWA. For higher levels of education, the responsibility of UNRWA tended to decrease as that of the Arab States concerned increased. In this respect, a brief discussion of the educational cycle of the Palestinians would reflect the degree of responsibility shared by UNRWA and each of the Arab States in educating the Palestinians during the period 1949 – June 1967.

Before we proceed, it is important to point out that a thorough and accurate analysis of the education of the Palestinians remains handicapped by the absence of reliable and comprehensive data. While UNRWA records provide us with an accurate register, the rest of the Arab States have either totally neglected to publish such data or have only recently done so, thus forcing the use of data beyond the limits of our period of interest. As for Jordanian data, a different problem is posed since the Jordanian government figures do not distinguish between Palestinian and non- Palestinian origin of the Jordanian school population. While this is easy to trace in terms of the

Table I

Distribution of Palestinian Population: 1970<sup>1</sup>

Country	No. of Palestinians
Transjordan (East Bank).....	900 000
West Bank.....	670 000
Gaza Strip.....	364 000
Lebanon.....	240 000
Syria.....	180 000*
Kuwait.....	140 000
Egypt.....	33 000
Saudi Arabia.....	20 000
The Gulf States.....	15 000
Iraq.....	14 000
Libya.....	5 000
U.S.A.....	7 000
Latin America.....	5 000
West Germany.....	15 000
Israel.....	340 000
Total	2 948 000

<sup>1</sup> Nabeel Shaath. "High Level Palestinian Manpower", in, Journal of Palestine Studies. Vol. 1, No. 2 (Beirut: The Institute For Palestine Studies and Kuwait University, 1972), p. 81.

\* The number of Palestinians in Syria was put by Nabeel Shaath, *Ibid.*, as being 155 000. However, this number was revised and updated by Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, *op.cit.*, p. 97. Accordingly, the total number of the Palestinians in this table reflects the increase in the Palestinian population of Syria.

school population of the West Bank, which is almost totally Palestinian, it is, however, extremely difficult to attempt an accurate assessment of the number of Palestinian pupils on the East Bank (Transjordan).

Throughout, the Arab World pre-university education is divided into three cycles: six years of primary education, three years of preparatory education and three years of secondary education.

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### **Primary Education**

The majority of the Arab States in which the Palestinians reside provided for the primary education of the Palestinian children. This provision, by the Arab States, did not overlap with that of UNRWA, rather it was complementary to it. In this sense, the Arab States concerned provided only those Palestinian children with primary education who were not eligible to benefit from UNRWA educational services.

In terms of finance and space, Jordan was the principal authority for educating Palestinian children at the primary level, followed closely by UNRWA then Syria, Lebanon, Kuwait, the Gulf States, Egypt and Iraq<sup>1</sup>. “This distribution essentially reflects the geographic distribution of the Palestinians themselves as well as the financial requirements to defray the costs of educating this population”<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibrahim Abu-Lughod. *op. cit.*, p. 102.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

UNRWA educational services were mainly centered on providing primary education, following the decision in 1950 by the UNRWA Director and the Advisory Commission to authorize “six years of elementary education for every refugee child”<sup>1</sup> . Shortly after UNRWA commenced its activities in 1950, there were 35 700 pupils in its schools<sup>2</sup>. In 1955, the number of pupils at UNRWA schools jumped to 104 751, and to 123 883 in 1960<sup>3</sup>. In 1967, the number of refugee pupils attending UNRWA schools was 186 967<sup>4</sup>.

This amazing growth, especially in the first five years of UNRWA activities, was “neither a steady process nor the result of detailed long-range planning”<sup>5</sup>. It was rather in response to the Palestine refugees’ demand for education.

“Bit by bit, an integral system has taken shape, offering a wide range of education and training opportunities to match the Palestine refugees’ eagerness to learn”<sup>6</sup>.

This eagerness to learn rated very high among the Palestine refugees’ priorities. In appreciation of the importance of education many Palestine

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<sup>1</sup> UNRWA. Information Paper No. 3, op. cit., p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> U.N. Doc. 13 (A/7213), p. 68.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> UNRWA. UNRWA/UNESCO Education Services, op. cit., p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

refugees spent the very little money which they managed to raise not on improving their livelihood but rather on providing their children with school needs.

“In some of the refugee camps, the refugees themselves managed to sell the sacks, wooden cases and tin cans in which food and other supplies had come, to purchase school equipment with the proceeds”<sup>1</sup>.

After two decades, this eagerness showed in the statistics for the ratio of Palestinian pupils to the total Palestinian population which proved to be among the highest in the Arab World. (See Table 2)

Table 2  
Comparative Percentage of Pre-University Pupils to the total  
Population in some Arab States: 1969-1970\*

Country	% of Primary pupils to the total pop.**	% of Prep. & Sec. pupils to the total pop.	Total
Egypt	11.3%	3%	14.3%
Syria	13.6%	3.8%	17.4%
Iraq	11.1%	3.3%	14.4%
Palestinians	14.4%	5.6%	20%

<sup>1</sup> UNRWA. A Brief History of UNRWA: 1950-1962, op.cit., p. 15.

\* Based on the information provided in: Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, op.cit., pp. 105-106.

\*\* The distribution of population by age does not vary significantly in the Arab World.

## **Preparatory and Secondary Education**

Unlike primary education, preparatory and secondary education are not compulsory in the Arab World. Accordingly, the rate of enrolment in these two categories drops sharply both in the Arab World generally as well as among the Palestinians. However, in comparison with most of the Arab States, the Palestinians enjoy one of the highest ratio of pupil to population enrolments in these two categories in the Arab World. (See Table 2).

The responsibility, shared by the Arab States, for educating the Palestine refugees at the preparatory stage, reflected the same order as that of the primary stage with one exception. This exception was UNRWA which, while providing refugee children with six years of primary education, had failed, for a variety of reasons, the most important of which were financial and technical , to offer a similar programme of preparatory education. Accordingly, there had been an arrangement under which Jordan, Syria and Lebanon assumed responsibility for providing refugee children residing on their respective territories with preparatory education, and UNRWA paid a small subsidy to the educational budgets of these three States.

Since secondary education is optional in the Arab World, Palestinians wishing to complete this stage of education were not entitled to any UNRWA educational services or subsidies. The burden was, therefore, completely shouldered by the Arab States

with Palestinian communities through their national system of education, and the Palestinians themselves through financing their own children who failed to enroll themselves in the national schools of the Arab States for whatever reason. Jordan however was the principal Arab State which assumed the major burden of educating the Palestinians at the secondary level, followed by the Egypt (with its supervision of secondary education in Gaza), Syria, Lebanon, Kuwait, Iraq and the Gulf States<sup>1</sup>.

### **The Palestinian Academic Potential: University Education**

Until 1969<sup>2</sup>, there had not been a study of the Palestinian University population and graduates. In 1969, the Institute for Palestine Studies sponsored and conducted a project with the aim of assessing the Palestinian High Level Manpower. The findings of this HIGH LEVEL MANPOWER ASSESSMENT PROJECT (HLMA)<sup>3</sup>, tentative and inconclusive as they might be, constitute the best available source of statistics and data on Palestinian University population and its trends until 1970.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, op.cit., p. 102.

<sup>2</sup> Although these are later results, yet they are based on previous accomplishments which took place during the period of our study.

<sup>3</sup> For more information on this Project see: Nabeel Shaath, op.cit., pp. 80-95.

The finding of the HLMA Project were based on 10 000 responses to HLMA questionnaires. The sample results which cannot alone give “direct conclusions... as to the total numbers or quality of Palestinian manpower”<sup>1</sup>, serve as an indicator of “important trends among the educated Palestinian population”<sup>2</sup>.

A comparison between the ratio of Palestinian University students to the total Palestinian population and that of the Arab States show that in 1969-1970, the Palestinians, and the Lebanese enjoyed the highest rates in the Arab World. (See Table 3)

Table 3

Comparative Percentage of University Students to total population in some Arab States: 1969-1970<sup>3</sup>

Egypt.....	0.57%
Syria.....	0.57%
Iraq.....	0.4 %
Lebanon.....	1.1 %
Palestinians.....	1.1 %

According to the findings of the HLMA Project, there was a general tendency, among Palestinian students, towards the study of Humanities and

<sup>1</sup> Nabeel Shaath, op.cit., p. 82.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Based on information provided in: Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, op.cit., p. 109.

Social Sciences rather than the study of Science. This tendency reflects the general pattern in the Arab World. (See Table 4) However, the Palestinians showed a higher tendency than their fellow Arab students, towards the study of Natural and Medical Sciences, an equal tendency to study Engineering and a lesser tendency to study Agriculture. (See Table 4) At the post-graduate level, HLMA findings reflect an increase in the ratio of Palestinian students who study scientific subjects. While only 30% of Palestinian first degree students study science, the ratio increases at the Masters level to 46%, at the Doctoral level to 48% and at the Post-Doctoral level to 93% (See Table 5)

Table 4

Comparative Percentage Distribution of Student Enrolment according to Field of Study<sup>1</sup>.

Field of Study	Arab Countries	Palestinians
Humanities	19.7%	25.4%
Social Sciences	19.0%	25.6%
Education	9.8%	8.0%
Law	13.3%	2.0%
Total	61.8%	61.0%
Natural Sciences	7.3%	9.5%
Engineering	12.3%	12.0%
Medical Sciences	8.5%	10.1%
Agriculture	7.8%	4.5%

<sup>1</sup> Based on: Nabeel Shaath, op.cit., p. 84.

Table 5

Percentage Distribution of Palestinian Graduates into Arts and Sciences.<sup>1</sup>

Degree	Arts	Sciences
Bachelors	70%	30%
Masters	54%	46%
Doctoral	16%	84%
Post-Doctoral	6.6%	93.4%

HLMA finding also show that 80% of Palestinian University students graduated from Arab countries and the remaining 20% from other countries mainly the U.S.A. and Europe<sup>2</sup>. As regards the distribution of students in the Arab countries, Egypt ranked first (with 34% of the total Palestinian students), followed by Lebanon, Syria<sup>\*</sup>, and Jordan<sup>3</sup>.

What professions are most popular among Palestinian University graduates? HLMA finding show that 46.83% of the respondents work in the field of education, 16.74% in engineering, 14.87% in management and 10.09% in the medical profession<sup>4</sup>. Legal and clerical professions rated 3% only, while other occupations such as farming accounted for 2.5%<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Based on: Ibid., p. 85.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 88.

<sup>\*</sup> Until 1962, when Jordan took the lead over Syria with the opening of the university of Jordan.

<sup>3</sup> Nabeel Shaath, op.cit., pp. 88-89.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 90.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

The respondents to HLMA questionnaires included many distinguished people in various fields. The 10 000 respondents included “27 ambassadors, 7 cabinet ministers and 16 top-ranking government officials, as well as 30 judges. On a lower level can be counted 100 full-professors, and 30 associate and assistant professors, 154 senior researchers and 327 graduate research-assistants. The list also includes 59 consultants/experts, 100 general managers of large business concerns, 369 other managers, and 376 vice-president, assistant managers, and heads of departments”<sup>1</sup>. On the basis of these figures, one can compute that out of a sample of 10 000 graduate Palestinians, 15.43% occupied very distinguished posts in their respective fields of work. (See Table 6)

Table 6

Percentages of Top-Ranking Palestinians According to their Fields of Work  
based on the 10 000 HLMA Sample

Profession	Percentage
Civic Service(including cabinet ministers and ambassadors)	0.08%
Academic Profession (full, associate and assistant Professors)	1.3%
Senior Researchers	4.81%
Management (including general managers, consultants and vice-presidents)	9.24%
Total	<u>15.43%</u>

<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

Finally, this analysis of the Palestinian educational and academic potential, which was based primarily on UNRWA and UNESCO data and on HLMA findings, suggests, somewhat broadly and inconclusively, the following findings:

1. The Palestinian people enjoy a high degree of positive-reaction and constructive-response. The dismemberment of Palestine, the subsequent absence of a political entity and the dispersion of the Palestinian people, neither led to the dissolution of the Palestinians into the Host-States' societies nor to their moral and psychological despair. Rather they constituted a motive for self-development, reconstruction and fulfillment through education and hard work.
2. The Palestinians, despite the disadvantages of being refugees, dispersed, and lacking a national state with its services, planning and facilities, have succeeded, with UNRWA and Arab assistance, and above all with self-determination and eagerness in becoming among the highest educated peoples in the Arab World. This potential has contributed to increasing the usefulness and credibility of the Palestinians in their respective Host-Communities.
3. The younger generations of Palestinians enjoy a high degree of mobility. This is due to the fact that, being highly educated, dispersed and lacking a national state, the young generations of Palestinians, motivated by economic reasons and governed by work opportunities,

transcended the political boundaries of the Arab World and pioneered the idea of the movement of Arab labour across the Arab World<sup>1</sup>.

4. The Palestinians were able, through their educational attainment and mobility, to infiltrate many important and potentially influential fields in various Arab States, especially the Host-States, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf-States. These fields cover, in addition to the rank-and-file of the various governmental departments and private enterprises, political, managerial and academic fields. This helped to enhance the influence of the Palestinians in those States.
5. The Palestinian intelligentsia has been able through its educational attainment, mobility and hard work, to elevate its economic and social status to the rank of the middle and upper-middle classes.
6. The elevation of the economic and social status of the Palestinian intelligentsia was bound to affect its political thinking and mode of struggle. In this context, the views of Johan Galtung on the relationship between the “rank-

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<sup>1</sup> The movement of the Palestinians in the refugee camps is not restricted for those working or wishing to work in the Arab countries, especially Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the Gulf States and Libya. For more information see Chapter 2, p. 55. Also see: U.N. Doc. 13(A/2171), pp. 46-48.

disequilibrium” and “revolution” are of special importance<sup>1</sup>. According to Galtung’s hypothesis about rank-disequilibrium<sup>2</sup> there are three ‘social types’ in any society which are most likely to accumulate and express ‘aggression’\*. These are: “the elements equilibrated at the top (the complete topdog)”; “the elements equilibrated at the bottom (the complete underdog)”; and “the elements in rank-disequilibrium, i.e., the elements with some positions high and some position low”<sup>3</sup>. When this categorization is applied to the Palestinians, we notice that the majority of the Palestinian refugees, who were before 1948 either ‘topdogs’, ‘rank-disequilibrated’, or ‘underdogs’, became after 1948, mainly ‘underdogs’. Accordingly, there was an element of built-in aggressiveness in their attitudes as they had, in sociological terms, used their relatively good past status as a reference point to their miserable present as refugees or in other words suffered from ‘relative deprivation’. However, as time passed, and as the new generation of Palestine refugees gained a relatively high educational and academic

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<sup>1</sup> Johan Galtung. “A Structural Theory of Aggression”, in, Journal of Peace Research, Vol. I (Oslo: Peace Research Institute, 1964), pp. 95-119.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 96-101.

\* Galtung defines ‘aggression’ as “drives (towards change, even against the will of others” (p.95). Galtung, however, stressed that he uses the term ‘aggression’ in the sense of ‘self-assertion’, with the view that this ‘self-assertion’ “implies an effort to change social relations, i.e. no longer to comply with the existing conditions” (footnote No. I, p. 114).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 97.

status, and relatively few educational and professional jobs to match their qualifications, the Palestinian intellectuals were bound to become an ‘intellectual proletariat’<sup>1</sup>. Under normal conditions, the crystallization of the ‘intellectual proletariat’, as projected by Galtung, results when the state makes “few positions available so that the high educational status will not be translated into the kind of instrumentality that gives power. Regardless of the economic situation, this ‘intellectual proletariat’ is a proletariat in the sense of not having access to the machinery they know (or think they know) how to turn. They are forced into other positions, and these positions will call for subsidiary capacities (accounting, typing, low administration) and the disequilibrium is created”<sup>2</sup>. In the Palestinian case, the emergence of the ‘intellectual proletariat’ was not the result of a state policy which made ‘few positions available’, but rather the result of the absence of the state itself – a Palestinian state. This made educated Palestinians a commodity in the Arab and international market, subject to the rules of supply and demand, and more important, subject to the competitive disadvantage of seeking employment in countries in which the Palestinians are not nationals, in the face of a legitimate preference for employing local nationals. Accordingly, the Palestinian

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 108.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

‘intellectual proletariat’, in suffering from this ‘disequibrated-rank’, the existence of which would normally serve “as a source of revolutions”<sup>1</sup>, was likely to attempt to sponsor and lead a revolution which would aim at establishing a Palestinian political entity, or a Palestinian state, as a means of neutralizing the negative impact resulting from the absence of such a state. Moreover, this drive towards creating a Palestinian national entity or a Palestinian state was not in contradiction with the nationalist aims of the Palestinian people at large. On the contrary, it was in conformity with such aims. Accordingly, the Palestinian ‘intellectual proletariat’ had the strongest motives of personal fulfillment and nationalist fulfillment for sponsoring and leading the struggle against Israel.

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### **The Palestinian Pan-Arab Attitude After 1948: Manifestations and Motives**

The after-math of the 1948 – War witnessed basic changes in the political, social and economic status of the Arab Palestinian people<sup>2</sup>. Such changes were bound to affect the mode of life and political attitudes of the Palestinians. In this respect, a study of the impact of these changes on the traditional Palestinian Pan-Arab attitude<sup>3</sup> is of particular importance as it leads to a better understanding of the Palestinian conception of Pan-Arabism

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 109.

<sup>2</sup> See, Chapter 2.

<sup>3</sup> See, Chapter 2, pp. 55-63.

and Arab unity in the post-1948 period. Such an understanding serves as a guide for analyzing the philosophy on which the Palestinians in the Host-States based their political attitudes and justified their political activities. Accordingly, the remaining part of this chapter will be devoted to a thorough examination of the Pan-Arab attitude of the Palestinians in the Arab Host-States, its manifestations and motives.

### **Manifestations**

The Pan-Arab attitude of the Palestinians during the period 1949-1963 can best be seen in two major areas:

First: Palestinian political literature which serves as an indicator of the general current of political thinking among Palestinian intellectuals during the period concerned.

Second: Palestinian political activities which deal with the nature, means and orientations of political activities of the Palestinians in the Host-States.

## **Palestinian Political Literature**<sup>\*</sup>

Palestinian Political Literature during the period 1949-1963 projected, by and large, a Pan-Arab approach in its analysis of the various problems confronting the Arab countries, including the “Palestine Problem”. In dealing with the “Palestine Problem”, Palestinian Political Literature was

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\* This part will be dealing with four selected works by Palestinian thinkers. The choice of these works was arbitrary, but having read a good lot of the literature in the field, I have selected those works taking the following points into consideration:

1. These works were written by distinguished Palestinian intellectuals who were not affiliated to any political party or political groupings.
2. These works undertake a general analysis of the “Palestine Problem”, and are not limited, in their scope and analysis, to one particular aspect of the “Palestine Problem”.
3. These works provide, as closely as possible, a rue reflection of the developments in the current of Palestinian political thinking during the period 1949-1962, as these works were published during the years 1950, 1953, 1955 and 1962.
4. These works were distinguished, at the time, for the originality of their information and analysis, and the courageous and often harsh, though scientific, self-criticism which they contain.

However, in a later part of this Chapter, a broad analysis of partisan political thinking will be undertaken through an analysis of the extra-national political parties in the Arab World, see, pp. 143-169.

more concerned about what should be done than about what had happened. This reflects an early Palestinian move towards practical realism rather than indulging in the painful and sterile activity of separating the guilty from the innocent in causing the Arab “catastrophe” in Palestine. One of the earliest Palestinian political books which reflects both these tendencies is Takiyyidin al-Nabahani’s book Inkaz Filastin (Rescuing Palestine)<sup>1</sup>. This book was published in January 1950, almost immediately after the Arab defeat in Palestine. Al-Nabahani devoted the major part of his book to an analysis of the means of “liberating” Palestine. The major theme running through al-Nabahani’s plan for the “liberation” of Palestine stresses that the responsibility for “liberating” Palestine is “not confined to one particular individual”, but is rather the responsibility of “all the Arab peoples”<sup>2</sup>. Al-Nabahani justified his call for an all-Arab responsibility on the grounds that the Zionist victory and the establishment of the State of Israel posed an imminent ‘threat’ to the security of “Egypt, Transjordan, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen”<sup>3</sup>. This ‘joint-threat’ was to be met , according Al-Nabahani, by a “joint Arab response”, and in so responding, the Arab States must act as “one country”<sup>4</sup>.

Al-Nabahani was not the only Palestinian writer to address himself to the Arab people at large. In his two books Ba’d al-Nakbah (After The

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<sup>1</sup> Takiyyidin al-Nabahani. Inkaz Filastin (Rescuing Palestine), (Damascus, Ibn Zaydoon Printhouse, 1950).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 169. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 175-176. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 177.

Catastrophe)<sup>1</sup>, and Wa'y al-Mustakbal (Comprehending The Future)<sup>2</sup>, Qadri Tuqan addressed himself, too, to the Arab people at large. In the introduction to his book Ba'd al-Nakbah, Tuqan stated that:

“My sole aim is to convince the Arab reader of this book that science and scientific means are the only salvation for the Arabs; that the Arabs will enjoy no entity of their own unless they follow the path of civilization and surrender their lead to scientifically-oriented people who appreciate the importance of science, organization and scientific-methods”<sup>3</sup>.

In his book, Al-Nakbah Wa Al-Binaa' Fil-Watan Al-Arabi (The Catastrophe and Construction in the Arab World)<sup>4</sup>, Dr. Walid Kamhawi adopts a similar attitude to that of al-Nabahani when he argues that “the defence of the Arab character of Palestine was the first manifestation of the strong-bond of Pan-Arabism in the twentieth century”<sup>5</sup>. Unlike al-Nabahani and Tuqan, Kamhawi devotes the first volume of his

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<sup>1</sup> Qadri Tuqan, Ba'd al-Nakbah (After the Catastrophe)(Beirut: Dar al-Ilm Lilmalayeen, 1950).

<sup>2</sup> Qadri Tuqan, Wa'y Al-Mustakbal (Comprehending The Future)(Beirut: Dar al-Ilm Lilmalayeen, 1953).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 3. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>4</sup> Walid Kamhawi. Al-Nakbah Wa Al-Binaa' Fil-Watan Al-Arabi (The Catastrophe and Construction in the Arab World), Vols. I and II, 2<sup>nd</sup>. ed., (Beirut: Dar Al-Ilm Lilmalayeen, 1962).

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 147. (trans. L.K.)

work to the pre-1948 period in an attempt to reveal the essence of the factors which had contributed to the Arab ‘catastrophe’ in Palestine. In attempting his study, Kamhawi, being a strong advocate of Pan-Arabism, felt obliged to justify his choice of the ‘catastrophe’ in Palestine as a prelude to his general study of the Arab World.

“The catastrophe in Palestine which hit a small part of the homeland (the Arab World) constitutes the best prelude to the study of the catastrophes which had hit the different parts of the Arab World over the past hundreds of years. This does not mean a negligence of other catastrophes like those which hit Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco or Libya, and made these vast countries parts of alien states.....

In rather means that, in the chain of Arab catastrophes, the catastrophe in Palestine constitutes a better case for analyzing Arab catastrophes at large because its impact transcended Palestine to most parts of the Arab World”<sup>1</sup>.

In analyzing the factors behind the Arab ‘catastrophe’ in Palestine, Kamhawi attributes these factors not only to the “external-elements” such as “British colonialism” or “the Zionist invaders”, but also to the inherent diseases in Arab society which, by themselves, “were enough to bring about the catastrophe, without the added help of British colonialism and the capable Zionist invaders”<sup>2</sup>. These inherent

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 35. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 70. (trans. L.K.)

diseases which, according to Kamhawi, characterized Arab society, of which the Arab Palestinians were part, included such things as “traditionalism”, “absence of scientific organization”, “ignorant and selfish leadership”, “lack of willingness to sacrifice”<sup>1</sup>, and the “wrong values” and “misconceptions” which the Arab individual had “inherited generation after generation”<sup>2</sup>.

While Kamhawi followed the path of pointing out the weaknesses in the Arab World which had led to the Arab ‘catastrophes’ in Palestine and other parts of the Arab World, Qadri Tuqan adopted the opposite approach. He stressed the glory of Arab history and the greatness of Arab contributions to world civilization as an attempt to restore the confidence of the Arab masses which had been shattered by the defeat in Palestine, and also to encourage them to revive their past glories. In this respect, Tuqan argued for the need to rewrite Arab history in such a way as “to transform the heritage of the Arabs and their past glories into a source of power which would push the Arabs forward”<sup>3</sup>.

This difference in approaching the ‘catastrophe in Palestine’ between Kamhawi and Tuqan does not derive from any basic difference in conviction between two writers. It rather represents an appreciation of the different

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, (trans. L.K.)

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 289. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>3</sup> Qadri Tuqan. Ba’d al-Nahbah, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

circumstances which existed in the Arab World when these two thinkers published their works. Tuqan published his book in January 1950 at a time when the Arab people were still shattered by the ‘catastrophe in Palestine’, while Kamhawi published his book\* in August 1955, that is, seven years after the Arab defeat in Palestine. Accordingly, one can assume that while Tuqan, on the one hand, felt the need to inject more confidence into the Arab masses as a means of neutralizing the serious impact of the defeat on the morale and psychology of the Arabs, Kamhawi, on the other hand, must have felt the need, seven years after the defeat, to hit hard at the Arab people, as a means of awakening them through shock treatment. Tuqan seems to have felt, five years after the ‘catastrophe’ that the confidence-injection which he attempted in his first book had failed. Consequently, in his second book Wa’y al-Mustakbal, which was published in 1953, Tuqan adopted a different treatment, hitting hard at the Arab past and present state-of-affairs.

“The catastrophe in Palestine which hit the Arab people as a whole was an inescapable result of the ways and means adopted by the Arabs in their struggle and in their life. Such ways and means were not based on science or need, but were rather an extension of the past and its standards and values...The situation in Palestine was very gloomy, and although the threat to the Arab countries in general and to

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\* The first edition of Kamhawi’s book was published in August 1955, and the second edition in June 1962.

Palestine in particular was immanent, yet, what did the Arabs do? They did not take account of the future or of their inherent problems”<sup>1</sup>.

None of the four works attempted to accuse or criticize any particular person or state as being the sole or major cause of the ‘catastrophe in Palestine’. Although the emphasis and priorities in their analyses varied, yet all four works projected a Pan-Arab approach in the sense that their analyses cut across the Arab World and dealt with the problems inherent in Arab society at large. This Pan-Arab approach in analyzing the weaknesses suffered by Arab society was also evident in their suggestions of ways and means of solving Arab problems and reforming Arab society.

The three Palestinian writers agreed on the need for reforming Arab society as the first step towards curing the ‘diseases’ in Arab society, and ultimately leading to its total ‘liberation’. This call for a reformation of Arab society was given different substantive forms with varying degrees of emphasis. Al-Nabahani argued that the ‘liberation’ of Palestine through the sole use of force “will not safeguard the Arab people from imperialism and Zionism”, unless a basic change in the Arab society took place at the same time through “a complete and total change in the way of thinking, beliefs, work, transactions, internal and external relations, economics, science, knowledge, and every other aspect of life”<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Qadri Tuqan. Wa’y Al-Mustakbal, op. cit., p. 7. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>2</sup> Takiyyidin al-Nabahani, op.cit., p. 307. (trans. L.K.)

Tuqan, on the other hand, being a career educationalist and a scientist, called for “reform of the Arab mode of thinking and way of life” through education and science<sup>1</sup>. To this effect, Tuqan suggested a plan through which education and science could be utilized as means towards reforming Arab society. In the field of education, Tuqan, who attributed the Arab defeat in Palestine among other things, to the absence of proper guidance and schooling in the Arab World as a result of the “colonial policy” and which aimed at using the schools in the Arab World as a means of “inhibiting the gifted and halting any progress”<sup>2</sup>, suggested a plan for reforming the educational system in the Arab World as a means towards reforming Arab society in general. This plan rested on three main bases.

First, the use of schools not only for teaching, but also for guidance. Schools, according to Tuqan, must be used as a medium for producing the “enthusiastic citizen”, the “soldier”, “the civic servant” and the “administrator”. Schools must also be used as a medium for transmitting the “good” aspects of Western civilization to the new Arab generations<sup>3</sup>.

Second, the reform of the curricula of the schools in the Arab World. Tuqan says that the curricula of the Arab schools must have

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<sup>1</sup> Qadri Tuqan, *Ba'd al-Nakbah*, *op.cit.*, p. 21 (trans. L.K.)

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

their “own philosophy which derives its content and strength from Arab history and the Arab present, and from the spirit of this age which is characterized by rapid development and mobility”<sup>1</sup>.

Third, the promotion of the teaching profession and according the teachers due respect and financial support in appreciation of the great responsibility which they bear in educating future generations of Arabs<sup>2</sup>.

In his second book, *Wa’y al-Mustakbal*, Tuqan’s approach to the reform of Arab society centers on the importance of science and the necessity of adopting scientific means in order to liberate themselves from the “strains of the past” and as a means of “development” and “progress”<sup>3</sup>.

Kamhawi’s ideas for reforming Arab society are based on his belief that the “real catastrophe was not in the loss of Palestine only”, but also “in the Arab World substituting the pooling of all its resources and efforts on development projects in every field and on the largest possible scale, with a concentration on propagating the misfortunes of the Arab refugees, calculating the amount of money needed from Israel in the form of compensation, and mobilizing all resources for a military adventure

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<sup>1</sup> Qadri Tuqan, *Ba’d al-Nakbah*, *op.cit.*, p. 26. (trans. L. K.)

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 31-34.

<sup>3</sup> Qadri Tuqan, *Wa’y al-Mustakbal*, *op.cit.*, pp. 5-9.

against Israel”<sup>1</sup>. This reflects Kamhawi’s conviction, as well as that of al-Nabahani and Tuqan, that the ‘real’ defeat of Israel would not come about through an Arab military victory, but rather through an Arab scientific, technological, industrial and social leap forward enabling the Arabs to neutralize the most ‘powerful weapon’ in the Israeli arsenal, that is Israeli industrial, technological and social advance over the Arabs<sup>2</sup>.

The means by which to reform Arab society are covered in the major part of the second volume of Kamhawi’s book. Kamhawi’s ideas for reforming Arab society involve social, economic, cultural, and political aspects of Arab life. Kamhawi calls for the abolition of sectarianism, class-stratification, tribal-identification, and sex-discrimination as a step towards social unity and coherence in Arab society at large<sup>3</sup>.

On the economic level, the basic principle underlying Kamhawi’s analysis is that the Arab World is the economic unit whose wealth is “complementary”<sup>4</sup>. The reformation of the Arab economy, as seen by Kamhawi, would come about through industrialization, economic planning, and a socialist economy based on the four principles of “equality in opportunity”, “personal freedom”, “co-operation” and “self-realization”<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Walid Kamhawi, op.cit., Vol. 1, pp. 149-150. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 306-308.

<sup>3</sup> Walid Kamhawi, op.cit., Vol. II, pp. 262-266.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 299.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp. 288-299. (trans. L.K.)

On the cultural level, Kamhawi attempts a diagnosis of the diseases in Arab society before prescribing the remedies. Arab society, according to Kamhawi, suffers from illiteracy, absence of any sense of the value of time, impulsive responses, a sterile and backward educational system, injustice and discrimination in the opportunities between the rich and the poor, the urban and the rural, and the male and the female<sup>1</sup>. Besides, Kamhawi stresses that Arab thinking and culture (including the Arabic language) are “traditional” and “stagnant” and should be adapted and changed to meet the requirements of ‘modern civilization’<sup>2</sup>. The cure to these diseases would come about, according to Kamhawi, through the abolition of illiteracy in the Arab World; spread of social consciousness through a stress on the value of the human life as a productive one, and similarly, on the value of time; the adoption of scientific methods in Arab thinking, actions, and projects; the modification and simplification of the Arabic language in order to adapt it to the “changing spirit of our age”; the freedom of thought, speech and expression for everybody; and, finally, the reformation of the Arab educational system and curricula in accordance with “the spirit of modern civilization” and the needs and priorities of Arab society<sup>3</sup>.

On the political level, Kamhawi spelled out three basic principles which, according to him, constituted

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 328-333.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 335-336.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 337-353. (trans. L.K.)

the bases for reforming the Arab political system.

First, the inevitability and importance of Arab unity as a means towards Arab strength and self-fulfilment. Such unity must be “unconditional” and must come into being as a result of “popular strife and enthusiasm”, and not as a result of an arrangement between two or more governments<sup>1</sup>. In pursuance of this goal of Arab unity Kamhawi argues for the importance of encouraging Pan-Arab political movements and professional associations. Such movements and associations would “help in strengthening and promoting the goal of Arab unity<sup>2</sup>”.

Second, Kamhawi stressed the need for democracy in Arab domestic politics. In this prospect, Kamhawi argues that it is “absolutely necessary, for the achievement of the goal of true democracy, that the Arab individual be taught that he is the only authority capable of establishing a good and efficient government machinery through the careful practice of his right to select his representatives”<sup>3</sup>.

Third, Arab foreign policy should be based on the principle of non-alignment and neutrality between the East and the West<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 376 & 381.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 378. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 386. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 411-418.

Kamhawi was neither the first nor the only Palestinian thinker to call for neutrality in Arab foreign policy. A much earlier call for Arab neutrality was voiced in 1950 by Takiyyidin al-Nabahani. Two years before the rise of Nasser and five years before the Bandung Conference was held, Takiyyidin al-Nabahani preached and defended the principle of Arab neutrality in his call for the “termination of all sorts of treaties” between the Arab World and the West, and the adoption of a policy of “neutrality between the Soviet Bloc and the Western Bloc” as this would put the Arabs “in a good bargaining position at the time of crisis between the East and the West”<sup>1</sup>. In addition, al-Nabahani pioneered the call, also stressed by Tuqan and Kamhawi, for the use of the vast oil resources as an Arab weapon. In this context, al-Nabahani demanded that “if the Western countries refuse to respect the Arab will and if they persist in protecting Zionism..... the Arab leaders must, then, terminate Western oil capitulations in the Arab World”<sup>2</sup>.

The views of these Palestinian thinkers on the way the Arabs should deal with Israel are of particular importance because their analyses of the problems confronting the Arab World, and their proposals for solving such problems were those of Palestinians who had witnessed and lived through the ‘catastrophe’ in Palestine. Besides which,

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<sup>1</sup> Takiyyidin al-Nabahani, *op.cit.*, pp. 199, 202-204. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 204. (trans. L.K.)

their views indicate the nature of the response of Palestinian intelligentsia, in the early and late 1950's, to the 'challenge' posed to them by the mere existence of the State of Israel, and as such provide a test of the degree of realism and objectivity in the Palestinian response.

The views of Takiyyidin al-Nabahani on the way Arabs should meet the 'challenge' posed to them by the existence of the State of Israel are reflected in a set of suggestions:

- a. "That the Palestine Problem – as a political problem – must not be solved. Consequently, Arabs must not allow any world power to solve the Palestine Problem, irrespective of the circumstances"<sup>1</sup>.
- b. "That the remaining parts of Palestine must remain in Arab hands and under Arab administration. Moreover, these parts must remain in a state-of-war and the restoration of civilian life must be minimal. These remaining parts of Palestine would then serve as bases for defence, and in due time as bases for attack and liberation. Accordingly, all efforts towards rehabilitation, development and normalization, in the remaining parts of Palestine, must be stopped, and all public resources dedicated to these objectives must be immediately transferred to promoting the military effort"<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 178 (trans. L.K.); Also see, Chapter Two pp. 92-101.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 178-179. (trans. L.K.)

In calling for this, al-Nabahani did not limit himself to the remaining parts of Palestine, but he also said that the adjacent parts to Palestine of the territories of Transjordan, Syria, Lebanon and Egypt, must also be put in a state of war, in order to serve as bases for ‘defence’ and later as bases for ‘attack’. In saying this, al-Nabahani specifically defined the Egyptian Sinai Peninsula, the Syrian Golan heights, the Transjordanian Jordan Valley, and South Lebanon, as being adjacent Arab territories which must be proclaimed military zones and must be equipped accordingly<sup>1</sup>.

- c. “That all the Palestine refugees must be concentrated in the remaining parts of Palestine... as a first step towards forming a liberation army whose spearhead would be the Palestine refugees themselves”<sup>2</sup>. In addition, al-Nabahani demanded that “the refugee problem should be dealt with, by the Arab governments, as the problem of the Arab Palestinian nation rather than as the problem of the Palestinian refugees<sup>3</sup>.”
- d. That the Arab States must declare “a general mobilization of all resources for the benefit of the military effort”<sup>4</sup>. In this context, al-Nabahani pointed out the importance of ‘economic’,

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 180. (With the exception of South Lebanon, these parts were occupied by Israel in the 1967 War).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 182-183. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 182. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 186. (trans. L.K.)

‘scientific’, and ‘industrial’ projects to the war effort. He specifically stressed the importance of creating an Arab arms-industry<sup>1</sup>.

Al-Nabahani’s militant plan which, while stressing the importance of pooling all resources for the benefit of the military effort, acknowledged four other important principles.

First, the importance of industrialization, technology and science in the ‘Arab battle against Israel’.

Second, that any future battle ‘against’ Israel must be an Arab battle in which, at least, all the adjacent Arab States must participate.

Third, that the battle against Israel would not be an easy one and would need preparation.

Fourth, that the mobilization of the Palestinians and their resources was important to the future Arab battle against Israel.

In his two books, Qadri Tuqan does not give any plans or suggestions to the Arabs on how to deal with Israel. He, nevertheless, expresses his belief, which is also shared by Kamhawi<sup>2</sup>, that “the defeat in Palestine had led to the Arab awakening”<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Walid Kamhawi, op.cit., Vol. II, p. 159.

<sup>3</sup> Qadri Tuqan. Ba’d al-Nakbah, op.cit., pp. 22-23. (trans. L.K.)

Kamhawi's suggestions to the Arabs on how to deal with Israel rested on his evaluation and assessment of the effectiveness of the three policy-options normally debated in the Arab World. These are:

First, the policy of cold war and economic boycott: This policy, Kamhawi argues, would not be effective because, although it might "harass Israel, and hinder its economic growth and stability", yet, such a policy would never lead to the "collapse" of the State of Israel. Besides, the successful implementation of this policy requires the Arab States' "consent and agreement on one thing, hatred of Israel". There is no guarantee, Kamhawi says, of the continuation of Arab agreement and conformity due, inter alia, to the fact that Arab politics are "mainly motivated by personal interests"<sup>1</sup>.

Second, the policy of war: Kamhawi argues that the adoption by the Arab states of the policy of war would lead to "total failure", because "the Zionist invasion in as much as it is an invasion of an alien civilization whose main weapons are science, economics, politics and organization"<sup>2</sup>. Accordingly, "our (the Arabs') struggle against Israel must not be confined to the military aspect, but rather to building ourselves up in the economic, scientific and social fields"<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Walid Kamhawi, op.cit., Vol. II, p. 1419. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 420. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. (trans. L.K.)

Third, the policy of peace: Kamhawi attacks this policy-option and warns against its adoption even “if Israel were to surrender half its land and wealth” in exchange for peace. Such peace, according to Kamhawi, would lead to the Arabs losing “their primary motive for unity, development, reformation and building their own strength”, while the Israelis would have all the time “to develop themselves and to prepare for a new offensive against the Arabs”<sup>1</sup>.

The alternative to all these policies lay, according to Kamhawi, in Arab unity and the emergence of a united Arab state “backed by an Arab civilization”. This would be “the ideal solution to all the Arab problems”, including that of the “Zionist invasion”<sup>2</sup>, because such a state would have all the potential and resources of the Arab World at its disposal, in addition to the political strength and influence which this one Arab state would eventually muster.

Al-Nabahani’s and Kamhawi’s views on the policy to be adopted by the Arab States in dealing with Israel reflect a deep and thorough understanding of the real sources of the problems and weaknesses confronting the Arab world. However, in suggesting solutions, they both failed to appreciate the political realities of the Arab World. Al-Nabahani, Tuqan and Kamhawi, while correctly diagnosing the need for the development, scientification and industrialization of the Arab World, projected solutions which were very demanding and idealistic. The three of them based their solutions on the principle of

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 421. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

Arab unity. For them, the achievement of the goal of Arab unity was so important and obvious, that they seemed to take it for granted. Although the details of their plans for reforming Arab society and for dealing with Israel might have been practicable, yet, their belief in and devotion to the idea of Pan-Arabism and Arab unity restricted the possibility of implementing their ideas to the prior achievement of Arab unity.

To conclude, Palestinian political literature, during the period 1949-1963, portrays the Pan-Arab orientation of Palestinian political thinking. In addition, it projects a Pan-Arab approach to the analysis of the causes of the ‘catastrophe’ in Palestine and to solutions offered to the ‘Palestine Problem’. Moreover, Palestinian political literature, during the period concerned, did not attempt to deal with any aspect of the ‘Palestine Problem’ in isolation, but rather in a Pan-Arab framework.

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### **Palestinian Political Activities: 1949 – 1962**

The political vacuum which the Palestinians experienced in the aftermath of the 1948-War, which was the result of the transformation of the Palestine and the subsequent absence of a Palestinian state, meant that the conventional channels for political activity normally provided by, or available in a state, such as government, parliament, political and professional associations, trade unions and social clubs were, in the Palestinian case, non-existent\*.

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\* Except in the case of the Palestinians in Jordan. See, Chapter 4.

Accordingly, the Palestinians compensated for the absence of these channels of political activity by joining political parties in the Host-States as a medium through which they could satisfy their political needs and take part in political activities. The great majority of the activist Palestinians joined the extra-national political parties\*, rather than the local political parties. This was due to the following factors:

1. With the exception of Jordan, the Palestinians in the Arab states are not citizens<sup>1</sup>. Accordingly, if the Palestinians had joined the local political parties in such states, this would have amounted to direct Palestinian intervention in the domestic affairs of those states, since all such local political parties deal purely with the domestic politics of their respective states.
2. The Palestinians in the Arab Host-States, and elsewhere in the Arab World, were suffering from a lack of political identity, which they therefore sought to establish by joining extra-national political parties. This happened in two different ways. First, the Palestinians joined and created Pan-Arab political parties as a means of promoting Pan-Arabism. Pan-Arabism, as a general political framework and as a form of broad identity accepted by both the Arab

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\* These are the Pan-Arab, the religious (Muslim), and the communist parties.

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter Two, pp. 76-82.

people and the Arab states, provided a legitimate framework for Palestinian participation and enabled them to operate within and even to establish Pan-Arab political parties. The spread of such parties it was hoped would eventually serve as a means of overshadowing the local identities of the Arabs – Egyptian, Syrian, Libyan and the like – to the benefit of the Pan-Arab identity where all the Arab people are considered Arabs rather than Egyptians, Syrians or Libyans. If this were the case, the Palestinians would not suffer from the absence of their own political regime and would easily fit in as Arabs. Moreover, the prevalence of Pan-Arab political parties would eventually promote the cause of Arab unity, which the Palestinians consider to be an important pre-requisite for the “liberation of Palestine”<sup>1</sup>. Second, the Palestinians joined and created extra-national political parties which did not recognize national identity, but instead religious or class identity, such as the Muslim parties and the Communist parties respectively. In so doing, the Palestinians seemed to be motivated by their lack of a political identity.

3. The scope and the nature of any solution to the ‘Palestine Problem’ transcends the local politics of any Arab state as it touches on more than one Arab state<sup>2</sup>. Consequently, the nature of the

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<sup>1</sup> See, Chapter Three, pp. 125-143.

<sup>2</sup> See, Chapter Two, pp. 76-101; and Chapter Three, pp. 125-143.

Political activities of the Palestinians, which ultimately aimed at the ‘liberation of Palestine’, could not, by definition, have been productive, unless they cut across the boundaries of Arab states. Hence, the Palestinians joined and created extra-national political parties as a medium for their political activities.

During the period 1949-1962, the mainstream of Palestinian political activities was channeled through extra-national political parties, with the emphasis being on the Pan-Arab ones. Indeed, the Palestinians had an active presence in almost every extra-national political party operating in the Arab World. These included the Arab Ba’th Socialist Party, the Syrian Nationalist Party (al-Qawmiyyun al-Suriyyun)<sup>1</sup>, the Muslim Brotherhood Movement, and the Arab communist parties. Moreover, the Palestinians created, in the early 1950’s, two extra-national political parties: the Arab Nationalist Movement (al-Qawmiyyun al-Arab) and the Islamic Liberation Party (Hizb al-Tahrir al-Islami). The presence and the influence of the Palestinians in all these parties varied. It was selective rather than imposed on the Palestinians, in the sense that the presence, and consequently the influence, of the Palestinians in any of these extra-national political parties was governed, not by the willingness of the party to accept the Palestinians among its ranks, but rather by the willingness of the Palestinians to join the

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<sup>1</sup> The platform of the Syrian Nationalist Party calls for the unity of the “Fertile Crescent” which covers Syria, Palestine, Transjordan and Iraq. In this sense, it was in contradiction with Pan-Arabism which calls for the unity of all the Arab states. This party played no significant role in Arab politics during the period of our study.

party – which might not necessarily have been the case for local political parties. This Palestinian willingness was dictated, among other things<sup>1</sup>, by the evaluation by individual Palestinians of the best means of serving their ‘cause’. Thus, some Palestinians saw Islamic solidarity and the revival of Islamic culture and civilization which had led to past Arab glory to be the best way to rebuild Arab strength and eventually to “liberate the homeland”. Hence, these Palestinians joined and created extra-national religious (Islamic) parties. Other Palestinians believed that communism would provide the best means of effecting any basic change in the various Arab states and hence joined the communist parties in the various Arab states. Others, and by far the majority of the Palestinians, believed that Arab unity would provide the best means of building up Arab strength in the economic, political and military spheres, and eventually transform the weak and disunited Arab states into a strong Arab state capable at “liberating Palestine”.

### **The Palestinians and the Extra-National Religious (Islamic) Parties:**

The clear Palestinian preference for the Pan-Arab political parties, though it had historic roots and nationalist bases<sup>2</sup>, was also motivated by the attitudes of the other extra-national political parties towards the ‘Palestine Problem’.

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<sup>1</sup> See, pp. 143-146.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter Two, pp. 52-63; and Chapter Three, pp. 124-143.

The attitude and the degree of Palestinian support for the various extra-national political parties (with the exception of the Pan-Arab ones) was mainly dependent on the circumstances which, during the early 1950's, accompanied and engulfed Palestinian life in 'exile', and consequently their political experience. In this context, as mentioned earlier, some Palestinians reacted to the Arab defeat in the 1948-War by preaching the need to return to the pure and original spirit of Islam as a means of rebuilding Arab society and purifying it of the "sins" and "immoralities" imported from the West. Besides, this move towards Islam was also a reaction to the role that the Western European countries, the United States and the Soviet Union had played in the creation of the State of Israel.

Until the end of 1952, the only Islamic party operating in the Arab World was the Muslim Brotherhood Movement (MBM) which originated in Egypt. Thus, the bulk of the Palestinian members of the MBM were drawn from among those residing in Egypt, studying at the Egyptian universities, as well as from the inhabitants of the Gaza Strip, which was under Egyptian administration. The increasing popularity of the Muslim Brotherhood Movement among the Palestinians was noticeable during the period 1949-1954. During that period, the MBM was the strongest party in the Gaza Strip<sup>1</sup>. The MBM was also the strongest

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<sup>1</sup> An interview with Zuhair el-Rayyes: Gaza, 14-11-1972; also see, interviews with, Hamdi Hussein, Hayder Abedl-Shafi. (for more information on these people see, Chapter Five, p. 246).

party among the Palestinian students studying in Egypt during the same period – 1949-1954<sup>1</sup>. The Palestinian members of the MBM played an active role in the Egyptian struggle for the evacuation of the British from Egypt. During the period 1950-1953, many Palestinian members of the MBM, among them Yaseer Arafat<sup>\*</sup>, joined the MBM commandos and took part in many of the sabotage operations which were carried out inside the British bases in the Suez Canal Zone<sup>2</sup>. The popularity of the MBM among the Palestinians in Egypt and the Gaza Strip was not paralleled among the Palestinians in the other Arab States, including the West Bank. This was mainly due to the fact that, with the exception of the Egyptian Communist Party, the MBM was the only extra-national political party in Egypt. Furthermore, the MBM had been founded and had its headquarters in Egypt, and it was not surprising that the MBM should enjoy its maximum power and support from there. More important, however, was the attitude of the MBM towards Palestine before and after 1948. The MBM had consistently adopted the attitude that it was the duty of all Muslims, wherever they were, to fight for the “liberation of Palestine”. Many members of the MBM therefore volunteered, before and during 1948, to fight in Palestine. Although the attitude of the MBM was motivated by religion, on the grounds

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<sup>1</sup> An interview with Shawkat Zaid Kailani: Nablus, 30-11-1972. S.W. Kailani: born in Nablus in 1929. Studied in Egypt from 1946-1958. One of the founders of the Union of Palestine Students and member of its Executive committee until 1957. Member of the Palestine National congress of the PLO from 1964-1967.

<sup>\*</sup> Leader of Fatah Organization since its emergence in 1965. He is also President of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

<sup>2</sup> An interview with Shawkat Zaid Kailani, op.cit.

that Palestine was a holy Muslim country, nevertheless, this attitude had the obvious effect of attracting Palestinian support. In spite of the existence of the MBM, however a new extra-national religious party was founded by some Palestinians.

In November 1952, the Islamic Liberation Party (ILP) was founded in Jordan by a Palestinian – Takiyyidin al-Nabahani<sup>1</sup>. The platform of the ILP called for “the return to the Islamic way of life” and “the establishment of an Islamic state”<sup>2</sup>. It also called for “the struggle against imperialism, in all its forms, as a means of liberating the Arab nation from the imperialistic political and cultural domination”<sup>3</sup>. The means of achieving these aims were laid down by the party platform in the form of three stages. The first stage was called “Dar al-Arkam”, during which members of the Party were to meet weekly “to study the Islamic culture and to comprehend the true spirit of Islam”<sup>4</sup>. The second stage was called “the interaction with the people”. During this stage, each member, having passed the first stage, “started to preach the general principles of the Party among the people”<sup>5</sup>. The third and final stage was called “acquisition of power”. This stage begins when the Party has grown to such an extent that its representatives in Parliament have become the majority,

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Awdah Newspaper. Vol. 1, No. 5 (Amman, 27/11/1952), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 4. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. (trans. L.K.)

and form the government of the country. The Party would then be the political organization which would supervise the government's implementation of the principles and policies of the Party<sup>1</sup>. The spread of the Islamic Liberation Party, although it was an extra-national political party, was mainly confined to Jordan. Besides, it was a short-lived party. The reasons for this were two-fold: some were related to the factors and circumstances behind the Palestinian move, in the early 1950's, towards extra-national religious parties, and the rest were related to the timing of the emergence of the Islamic Liberation Party and its programme. These reasons, however, were not limited to the Islamic Liberation Party, they also involved the Muslim Brotherhood Movement.

Before 1948, the Palestinians did not have a religious party of their own<sup>2</sup>. This was because the Palestinian Pan-Arab attitude was based on nationalist rather than religious grounds<sup>3</sup>, because the political struggle of the Arab Palestinians was directed against Zionism as a political doctrine, rather than against the Jews as such and Judaism as a religion<sup>4</sup>. The political nature of this struggle and that against the British Mandate as well meant that religious differences among the Arab Palestinians were of secondary importance. In the aftermath

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>2</sup> See, Chapter Two, pp. 48-50.

<sup>3</sup> See, Chapter Two, pp. 52-63.

<sup>4</sup> See, Chapter Two, pp. 43-45.

Of the 1948-War, some Palestinians joined the Muslim Brotherhood Movement and others created the Islamic Liberation Party as mediums through which they could carry out their political struggle within an Islamic framework. This current of political thinking was doomed to failure, or more precisely, did not constitute a viable framework for securing the consent of the majority of the Palestinians. This was due to three major factors. The ‘Palestine Problem’ is a political and nationalist problem<sup>1</sup>. It is, therefore, far from being a religious problem, though it may be considered a political problem with a religious basis<sup>2</sup>. However, Pan-Arabism, rather than Islam, constitutes the broad political and nationalistic reference point for the Arab people and the Arab states. Thus, Palestinian attempts to rally Arab support could not have been successful through an Islamic frame of political reference, since the Arab Palestinians were always aware of the important role of the Arab states in any future battle with Israel, and in the “liberation of Palestine”<sup>3</sup>. It was, therefore, inevitable that the early move by some Palestinians into the extra-national religious parties was bound to halt, and eventually to recede. Finally, there is a circumstantial factor which was not the result of certain political convictions in which the majority of the Palestinians believed nor was it tied to the nature of the ‘Palestine Problem’. Instead it was the result, on the one hand, of the

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<sup>1</sup> See, Chapter Two, pp. 90-101.

<sup>2</sup> For example Zionism.

<sup>3</sup> See, Chapter Three, pp. 125-143.

Palestinian adoption of Nasser as the leader of the Arab World, and as the only Arab leader capable of leading an all-Arab struggle against Israel, and, on the other hand, of the conflict between Nasser and the Muslim Brotherhood Movement. This state of affairs between Nasser and the MBM meant that the Palestinians had to choose between Nasser and the MBM. The choice was an easy one for the Palestinians to make, and the year 1954 witnessed a very sharp decline in the popularity of the MBM among the Palestinians. This was also reflected on other extra-national religious parties<sup>1</sup>. Accordingly, the growth of the Islamic Liberation Party (ILP), which was established in November 1952, was restricted to the short span of time which elapsed between November 1952 and mid 1954. The attitude of Nasser towards the MBM thus led, among other things to the collapse of the recently established ILP.

### **The Palestinians and the Extra-National Communist Parties:**

The move, in the early 1950's, by some Palestinians towards the extra-national communist parties, though it did not match that towards the extra-national religious parties, was also, partially, a reaction to the outcome of the 1948-War in Palestine. The Palestinian Communist Party before 1948 had called for Arab acceptance of the Partition Plan, and this had resulted, at the time, in a sharp reaction among the Arab Palestinians against

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<sup>1</sup> The impact of Nasser's attitude on political parties on the general attitude of the Palestinians will be dealt with on pp. 162-169.

the communist parties and the communists. The Arab Palestinian communists were even labeled as “collaborators with the Zionists”<sup>1</sup>. The outcome of the 1948-War however, when compared to the Partition Plan, was very disadvantageous to the Arab Palestinians, and it thus supported the arguments of the Arab Palestinian communists, and strengthened the shaky political position from which they had suffered before 1948. However, some Palestinians believed that had the Arab Palestinians accepted the attitude of the Palestinian Communist Party in endorsing the Partition Plan, then things would not have been as bad for the Arabs as they turned out to be. Thus, this Palestinian reaction led, in the early 1950’s, to a number of Palestinians joining the Arab communist parties, or at least supporting them. In Jordan, for example, a group of 22 persons – 16 Palestinians and 6 Transjordanians – applied to the Jordanian government, on May 9, 1954, for a license to form a party under the name of the National Front. “The majority of the applicants were drawn from among the communists or their supporters”<sup>2</sup>. Although this application was denied, “the Communists and their supporters continued to preach their doctrine and to operate under the umbrella of the National Front”<sup>3</sup>. In the Gaza Strip, the Palestinian communist Party, like its Jordanian counterpart, was also in continuous illegal underground operation. However, the strength of the communist parties in both Jordan and the Gaza Strip was never as substantial as that of the other types of extra-national

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<sup>1</sup> An interview with Hamdi Husseini; Gaza, 17/9/1972.

<sup>2</sup> Munib Madi and Suleiman Musa, op.cit., p. 599.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. (trans. L.K.)

political parties - the religious and the Pan-Arab<sup>1</sup>. In spite of this, the Palestinian communist were able to play some important roles in the Arab communist parties. During the period 1950-1953, some of the Palestinian communists residing in Egypt were able to start a dialogue among the three conflicting Egyptian communist groups and eventually to unite them under the Egyptian Communist Party<sup>2</sup>. Although the Palestinian support for the communist parties was never substantial, such support as there was fluctuated in accordance with the political developments in the Arab World. Before analyzing some of these political developments and their impact on Palestinian support for the communists, however, the factors behind the absence of substantial support for the extra-national communist parties should be pointed out. Once more, the essence of the 'Palestine Problem' as a nationalist problem, contributed very much to the lack of substantial Palestinian support for the communist parties, which were class, rather than nationalist oriented. Moreover, the awareness among the Arab Palestinians of the need for Arab support in any effort towards the 'liberation of Palestine'<sup>3</sup>, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the anti-communist attitude, at that time, of all the Arab States, meant that the extra-national communist parties were the wrong choice if the Palestinians wanted to secure Arab support.

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<sup>1</sup> Interviews with Hamdi Hussein, Hayder Abdel-Shafi, Farid Abu-Wardah, and Walid Kamhawi.

<sup>2</sup> An interview with Shawkat Zaid Kailani, op.cit.

<sup>3</sup> See, Chapter Three, pp. 125-143.

Until 1958, Palestinian support for the extra-national communist parties, insignificant as it was, fluctuated very much in accordance with political developments in the Arab World. It increased in the aftermath of the 1948-War, partly as a reaction to the outcome of the war, and partly as a reaction to the role which the Western European countries and the U.S.A. played in the creation of the State of Israel<sup>1</sup>. This continued until 1953, when the new Egyptian regime banned all political parties. The impact of this ban was confined to the Palestinians in Egypt and the Gaza Strip. After 1955, with the Czech Arms Deal with Egypt and Soviet support for Egypt during and after the Suez War of 1956, the communists, in the Arab world at large, gained momentum. This continued until the merger of Egypt and Syria into the United Arab Republic in February 1958. This merger seemed, at the time, to be the climax of the struggle for Pan-Arabism and the first step towards Arab unity. Thus, the nationalist Pan-Arab feeling among the Arabs seemed to sky rocket leaving all other doctrines behind, including Communism. The final blow to Communism in the Arab world, and especially among the Palestinians, came at the end of 1958, when the communists in Iraq gained influence under the regime of Abdel Karim Qassem, and massacred all the nationalist forces in

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<sup>1</sup> Although the Soviet Union played a role in the creation of the State of Israel, Arabs, at that time, were either unaware of this role, or gave it secondary importance to the role played by the West, whom they considered to be their friend, and with whom they officially sided during the Second World War, and under whose mandate and supervision, the process of creating the State of Israel was initiated and completed.

Iraq, including members of the Ba'th Party, the Arab Nationalist Movement and the pro-Nasser elements. These massacres, which invited Nasser's bitter attack and strained his relations with the Soviet Union, had an immense impact on the Arabs, and in particular the Palestinians, and Palestinian support for the extra-national communist parties diminished quite considerably and has not revived. Moreover, the banning, in 1957, by the Jordanian regime, of all political parties, and its persistent liquidation of the remnants of the Jordanian Communist Party, which was predominantly Palestinian, greatly contributed to the collapse of Palestinian support for the communist parties, which came about by the end of 1958.

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### **The Palestinians and the Extra-National Pan-Arab Political Parties:**

Given their Pan-Arab tradition, the majority of the Palestinians who were quick to comprehend the importance of the role which the Arab States and the Arab people could play in the 'liberation of Palestine'<sup>\*</sup>, found the adoption of Pan-Arabism the most logical and viable framework for their political activities. The existence of the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party<sup>\*\*</sup>, which was established in 1947, and

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\* See, Chapter Three, pp. 125-143.

\*\* Originally, it was called the Arab Ba'th Party. However, it came to be known as the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party after its merger with the Arab Socialist Party in 1954.

which was the only Pan-Arab political party operating in the Arab world in the aftermath of the 1948-War, facilitated the expression of this Palestinian conviction.

The Al-Ba'th Party came into existence in 1947, that is, before the Arab defeat in the 1948-War in Palestine had taken place, and before the emergence of the State of Israel. The emergence of the Al-Ba'th Party was therefore neither a result of the 'Palestine Problem', nor was its ideology conditioned by it. However, the 'Palestine Problem' had two major effects on the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party. First, the occurrence of the Arab "tragedy" in Palestine served as "a live example of the credibility and the correctness of the new line of political thinking and analysis which was initiated by the Al-Ba'th Party, and which constituted a rejection of the state of affairs prevailing in the Arab World at that time. This rejection was mainly directed at the phony independence of some Arab States who were still tied to the colonial powers by all sorts of treaties, and who had to pay for this phony independence the high price of endorsing the

division of the Arab world into different states”<sup>1</sup>. Secondly, “the tragedy in Palestine showed what a serious effect the lack of Arab unity could have. The tragedy in Palestine thus enhanced the importance of Arab unity among the Arab masses. This promoted the spread of the Al-Ba’th Party, with its great emphasis on Pan-Arabism and Arab unity, among the Arab masses”<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> An interview with Abdel Muhsen Abu Maizer: Jerusalem, 12/11/1972. (trans. L.K.) A.M. Abu-Maizer; Born in Hebron in 1931. Joined Al-Ba’th Party while studying for his Law Degree in Cairo in 1951. Graduated in Law in 1954 and was elected a member of the Municipal Council of Jerusalem in 1955. In 1956 he was the Secretary of the Al-Ba’th Party branch in the Jerusalem District. In 1957-1958 he went underground because he was wanted by the Jordanian security forces. Eventually he went to Syria. After the merger of Egypt and Syria in February 1958 he worked as editor of the “Al-Wahda” Newspaper. During the period 1960-1962 he was editor-in-chief of the Party’s daily newspaper in Lebanon “Al-Sahafah”. During the period mid 1963-1965, and after Al-Ba’th came to power in Syria through a military coup, he became the editor-in-chief of the Party’s official newspaper in Syria “Al-Ba’th”. During the same period, he was the Chairman of the Syrian delegation of the Congress of Arab Journalists and he was elected Assistant Secretary-General. He was also a member of the Syrian delegation to the Conference of Non-aligned States held in 1964 in Cairo. Since 1963 he has participated in all the regional and national congresses of Al-Ba’th Party. In 1964, he was a member of the committee which drafted the temporary constitution of Syria. In 1965 a general amnesty for political criminals was declared by the Jordanian regime and he returned to Jerusalem. In December 1973, he was deported from the West Bank by the Israeli authorities. Shortly afterwards, he was elected a member of the Executive Committee of the PLO.

<sup>2</sup> An interview with Abdel Muhsen Abu-Maizer. (Trans. L.K)

In this context, the ‘Palestine Problem’ had an indirect, though positive, impact on the Al-Ba’th Party. The Palestinians themselves had a more direct impact on the Al-Ba’th Party. The Palestinians, in their search for a political catalyst and shelter, found one (among others) in the Al’Ba’th Party which, as a newly emerging party, was pure of the “sins” committed by the other older political parties and Arab regimes which had witnessed and participated, whether directly or indirectly, in the making of the Arab ‘tragedy’ in Palestine. Moreover, the emergence of Al-Ba’th Party “as the spearhead of the new rejection-front of the existing political order in the Arab World”<sup>1</sup> was received positively by the Palestinians. This was in conformity with the Palestinian outlook – both the Palestinians’ traditional Pan-Arab attitude<sup>2</sup> and their condemnation and rejection of the political, social and economic order in the Arab World at the time of the “catastrophe”<sup>3</sup>.

The political vacuum which the Palestinians experienced in the aftermath of the 1948 – War was partially filled by their early move into the Al-Ba’th Party. The Party, until 1952, provided, in terms of its ideology and orientation, the only organized popular Pan-Arab channel through which the Palestinians could freely, without any legal or other obstacles such as those imposed by some Host-States<sup>4</sup>, express themselves and take part in

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter Two, pp. 52-63.

<sup>3</sup> See, pp. 125-143.

<sup>4</sup> See, Chapter Two, pp. 76-82.

political activities.

By the end of 1952, a new extra-national Pan-Arab political party was formed by some Palestinian and Arab intellectuals under the name of Harakat al-Qawmiyyin al-Arab (The Arab Nationalist Movement), with a Palestinian – George Habash – as its Secretary General. The motto of the Arab Nationalist Movement (ANM) was “Unity, Liberation and Revenge”, and needless to say its platform stressed the ideals of Arab unity and the ‘liberation’ of Palestine as exhibited in the motto. The ideology and the strategy of the ANM was not as coherent as that of Al-Ba’th Party, and it also lacked a broad programme of action. The approach of the founders of the ANM in formulating the strategy of the Party was “selective”: “they chose the best attribute of the Al-Ba’th Party, i.e., politics; the best attribute of the communists, i.e., organization; the best attribute of the armed struggle, i.e., militancy, and they made out of all these the strategy of the Arab Nationalist Movement. In doing so, the founders of the Arab Nationalist Movement did not introduce basic solutions to the problems confronting the Arab World, including the ‘Palestine Problem’”<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> An interview with Ghassan Kanafani: Beirut, 19/5/1972. (trans. L.K.). Ghassan Kanafani: Born in Acre in Palestine. Joined the ANM in 1954. Worked as teacher in Kuwait and was in charge of the Party newspaper Al-Fajr. Between 1961-1964, the Party assigned him to work for its official newspaper in Beirut – Al-Hurriyyah. From 1964-1967, the Party assigned him to supervise a Nasserite newspaper in Beirut called Al-Muharrer. After the formation of the PFLP, he became editor – in-chief of its magazine Al-Hadaf and its spokesman. He was assassinated in Beirut in July, 1972.

The founding of the ANM in 1952 at a time when another Pan-Arab party, namely the Al-Ba'th, was operating raised many questions as to the wisdom of having more than one Pan-Arab party, leading to the fragmentation of the Pan-Arab forces in the Arab World. In answer to such questions, the ANM leaders argued that the 'Palestine Problem' was not the central and most important issue in the Al-Ba'th thinking and strategy, and that the ANM, with its primary daily preoccupation with the 'Palestine Problem' thus provided "the right approach to the Arab struggle for liberation and unity"<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, the founders of the ANM stressed that, "unlike the Al-Ba'th Party, the organizational aspect of the (ANM) Party hierarchy enjoyed a primary importance"<sup>2</sup>. As a result, the ANM was "more capable of attracting Palestinian support than the other political parties"<sup>3</sup>. However, the "selective" nature of ANM strategy resulted in many radical changes in its political colour – from a nationalist Pan-Arab anti-socialist party from 1952 to 1958, to a nationalist Pan-Arab socialist party from 1958 to 1967, and to a Marxist-Leninist party since 1967.

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### **The Palestinians, Nasser and The Arab Ba'th Socialist Party, A Brief Case Study**

This section will be devoted to a study of the attitude of Nasser towards political parties, the attitude of the Palestinians to Nasser, and the

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. (trans. L.K.)

triangular relationship. This study will be conducted through a brief case-study of the relationship between the Palestinians and the Ba'th Party, the Palestinians and Nasser, and Nasser and the Ba'th Party.

The Arab Ba'th Socialist Party, which officially came into being on April 4, 1947 in Damascus, was the first organized translation of Pan-Arabism into the form of a political party<sup>1</sup>. The Party motto was: "Arab unity, freedom and socialism"<sup>2</sup>. The party constitution spelled out the nature and the aims of the Al-Ba'th Party as being "an all-Arab nationalist party" with branches in every Arab country, which called for the unity of Arab land into "one indivisible political and economic unit", and "the unity of Arab nation into one cultural unit"<sup>3</sup>.

The period 1949-1958 witnessed the zenith of the spread of Al-Ba'th Party membership among the Palestinian masses. Indeed, the Palestinians had a profound impact, both positively and negatively, on the growth and influence of the Al-Ba'th Party. On many occasions they were able to move the entire Party policy in one direction or the other. The earliest and one of the most important initiatives in this direction took place in 1953. During that year, the first contact between the new Egyptian regime and the Al-Ba'th Party took place. No such contact had been made before although "the Al-Ba'th Party had taken a great interest in the Egyptian coup because

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<sup>1</sup> Interviews with Abdel Muhsen Abu-Maizer; also see, an interview with Iyad Alami: Nablus, 10 October 1972.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> An interview with Abdel Muhsen Abu-Maizer. (trans. L.K.)

of its declared six principles, which had indicated that the Egyptian coup was no ordinary coup like that, for example, of Husni El-Zaim's coup in 1949 in Syria, but rather one with the potential of a revolution. Moreover, the Al-Ba'th took a deep interest in the Arab-face of the Egyptian coup as projected by Nasser in his book "the Philosophy of the Revolution"<sup>1</sup>. The initiative in arranging for the first meeting between the Al-Ba'th leadership and the new Egyptian leaders was taken by the Command of the Cairo Branch of the Al-Ba'th Party. At that time, the Cairo Branch of the Al-Ba'th Party was composed of students who came mainly from Palestine, Syria and Jordan, with only two or three Egyptian students<sup>2</sup>. The Command of the Cairo Branch was composed of five persons – three Palestinians\*, one Transjordanian and one Syrian; the leader of the Command being one of the Palestinians\*\*<sup>3</sup>. The meeting took place in 1953, when Mohammad Naguib was still serving as the figurehead of the new Egyptian regime. At the meeting, which took place at the headquarters of the Al-Gamhuriyyah Newspaper in Suleiman Pasha Street in Cairo, the Egyptian Regime was represented by three of its senior members. They were: Gamal Abdul Nasser, Anwar Sadat and Salah Salem. The Al-Ba'th Party was also represented by three of its senior leaders. They were: Michel Aflaq (Secretary General of the Party – a Syrian), Munif Razzaz (a Transjordanian), and Abdallah Rimawi (a Palestinian)<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> An interview with Abdel Muhsen Abu-Maizer. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

\* They were Hassan El-Wazayfi, Abdel Muhsen Abu-Maizer and Iyad Alami.

\*\* He was Hassan El-Wazayfi.

<sup>3</sup> An interview with Abdel Muhsen Abu-Maizer; also see, an interview with Iyad Alami.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

This meeting marked the beginning of a long relationship between Nasser and the Al-Ba'th Party, a relationship which was destined to play an important role in shaping political developments in the Arab World. Following this meeting, there were frequent visits by Ba'thi leaders to Egypt, and constant contact with the Egyptian leaders through which "the unity of struggle between Al-Ba'th Party and the Egyptian Revolution" was maintained<sup>1</sup>. This "unity of struggle" was manifested in: the various battles which the Egyptian Revolution fought against the Baghdad Pact; the Western Arms embargo; the nationalization of the Suez Canal Company; the Suez War of 1956; the Eisenhower Doctrine; and the fight against colonialism and imperialism<sup>2</sup>. "The successes which were achieved by the unity of struggle between the Egyptian Revolution and the progressive popular movements in the Arab World, which were spearheaded by the Al-Ba'th Party, played a major role in making the leadership of the Egyptian Revolution aware of the importance of the unity of its struggle with the other Arab popular movements. Subsequently, the Pan-Arab orientation of the Egyptian Revolution gained momentum and manifested itself in the many battles which the Egyptian Revolution fought against Arab reactionism and feudalism, and against various imperialist plans such as the Baghdad Pact and the Eisenhower Doctrine. Moreover, the participation of the Arab masses and their massive support of Egypt during the 1956 War promoted the Arab character of Egypt as well as Nasser's belief in the importance

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

of the unity of the Arab struggle against imperialism”<sup>1</sup>.

The Suez War of 1956 was a turning point in Arab politics. The Israeli attack on Egypt and its occupation of the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip provided, for the first time since 1949, “a practical example of Israeli expansionist tendencies and of their colonial ambitions which transcended their boundaries as laid down by the Armistice agreements. This helped to boost the Arab struggle against Israel. The Suez War proved that Israeli ambitions were not confined to Mandatory Palestine alone, but extended to parts of the Arab states neighbouring Palestine”<sup>2</sup>. Thus, the Suez War gave substance to the earlier Palestinian call for an all-Arab struggle against Israel on the grounds that its existence “constitutes a threat to the neighbouring Arab states”, and that any Arab move in that direction was one of self-defence and self-preservation<sup>3</sup>.

The success of Nasser in tackling the Suez War and its outcome made him, not only the undisputed hero of the Palestinians, but also of the Arabs in general. The aftermath of the Suez War was therefore bound to leave its mark on the political developments in the Arab world, and on the political attitudes and affiliations of the Palestinians. For the first time since 1949, the

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<sup>1</sup> An interview with Abdel Muhsen Abu-Maizer. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>2</sup> An interview with Salah Beitar: Beirut, 9/6/1972. (trans. L.K.) Salah Beitar: He was one of the founders of the Arab Ba’th Socialist Party. Minister of Foreign Affairs of Syria in 1957, and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the U.A.R. during the period 1958-1959. He was Prime Minister of Syria between 1963-1965.

<sup>3</sup> See, Chapter Three, pp. 125-143.

Palestinians had a stronger alternative than the Pan-Arab or the extra-national political parties at large, to which they could turn. Nasser was that alternative. In giving their support to any political party, the Palestinians were mainly motivated by the capability of this or that party to serve their 'cause' and to eventually help in 'liberating Palestine'. Such an assessment was based on many factors which included the ideology and political orientation of the party, its size and capabilities, and its prospects of gaining power and consequently of mobilizing, once in power, tools of state in the direction of 'liberating Palestine'. Until the rise in the popularity of Nasser after 1956, Al-Ba'th had provided the best alternative for the Palestinians. After 1956, however, Nasser provided a better choice for the Palestinians. This was due to a variety of factors. First, after 1956, Nasser's concern about the 'Palestine Problem', as a result of the Israeli attack on Egypt, became evident. Secondly, Nasser was the only Arab leader to have fought a war with Israel since the 1948-1949 War. Thirdly, unlike the Al-Ba'th Party, or any other extra-national party, Nasser was already in power. Fourthly, Nasser was the ruler of the largest Arab State, whose leading role in any future 'battle' with Israel was never denied by any Arab, including the Palestinians. It was realistic therefore that the aftermath of the 1956 War should witness a basic shift in Palestinian political support towards Nasser. Thus, the attitude of Nasser towards any political party or issue was of significant importance. It was bound to condition and to affect the attitude of the majority of Palestinians towards such a party of issue.

The negative attitude of Nasser towards political parties was clear from the early days of the Egyptian 'Revolution'. Until 1956, Nasser's negative attitude towards political parties had no significant bearing outside Egypt because his role as the leader of the Arab world had not yet crystallized, or more precisely, had not yet been recognized.

Until 1958, that is, until the merger of Egypt and Syria into the United Arab Republic, (U.A.R.), there was no basic contradiction between Nasser and the Al-Ba'th Party, since both adopted similar political stands on the basic political issues confronting the Arab world at that time; such issues were independence and the struggle against imperialism and colonialism in all their forms, as well as the call for Pan-Arabism and Arab unity. Moreover, the authority of each did not overlap in any area since the Al-Ba'th did not operate among the Egyptians. Furthermore, until 1958, the Al-Ba'th did not form the ruling party in any Arab State. Accordingly, during the period 1956-1958, relations between Nasser and the Al-Ba'th Party were good, or at least were not strained. Hence, the Palestinians were able to combine both, membership of the al-Ba'th Party, and support for Nasser. It was, therefore, this period stretching from 1949-1958, which witnessed no serious obstacles to the spread of the Al-Ba'th Party amongst the Palestinian masses. However, the period 1956-1958, which witnessed the emergence of Nasser as the leader of the Arab World, also witnessed a decrease in the number of Palestinians willing to join any political party, including Al-Ba'th. They preferred to support

Nasser instead<sup>1</sup>. This, however, did not affect, by and large, the attitude of the Palestinians who were already members of the Al-Ba'th Party<sup>2</sup>.

In conducting their political activities, and in rendering their political support, the Palestinians were motivated by their own nationalistic cause of liberating Palestine. Although one can safely say that, in so doing, the majority of the Palestinians embarked on the Pan-Arab approach, yet, there were moves by other Palestinians towards the extra-national religious and communist approaches. Indeed, there were shifts in the Palestinians' attitude during the 1950's, but they were within the Pan-Arab approach and not away from it. The Palestinian move towards Nasser after 1956 was, in fact, the most important development in Palestinian affairs during the late 1950's and early 1960's. However, the majority of the Palestinians did not thereby compromise the Pan-Arab approach, but rather changed the means of struggle within the Pan-Arab approach. In other words, instead of conducting their struggle through popular Pan-Arab political parties, the Palestinians rather preferred to conduct their struggle through Nasser, whose regime was identified after 1956 by the majority of the Palestinians with the 'liberation of Palestine'.

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<sup>1</sup> Interviews with Abdel Muhsen Abu-Maizer and Iyad Alami.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **THE PALESTINIANS IN JORDAN:**

#### **A Case Study, 1949 – 1967**

“and how peaceful Jordan was when I was a little boy. A smiling country, content to be left alone, its people worked hard, worshipped God, obeyed the laws, and asked for nothing more than a life that should end with a blessed place in Paradise”<sup>1</sup>.

(King Hussein of Jordan)

The roots of the Palestinian-Transjordanian relations during the period 1949-1967 can be found in the circumstances which had led to the unification of the West Bank and Transjordan, under the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, during the formative period of 1948-1950. As we shall see, this relationship was characterized by a mutual mistrust<sup>2</sup>.

#### **The Formative Period: the Unification of the West Bank and Transjordan, 1948 – 1950.**

In the period stretching from October 1, 1948 to April 13, 1950 a variety of events took place which led to the unification of the West Bank and Transjordan into the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

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<sup>1</sup> H.M. King Hussein of Jordan. Uneasy Lies the Head: An Autobiography (London: Heinemann, 1962), pp. 2-3.

<sup>2</sup> Munib Madi and Suleiman Musa. The History of Jordan in the Twentieth Century (Amman, 1959), p. 550.

No detailed account has been given about the process of this unity. However, according to the available information<sup>\*</sup>, the first public move towards unity came on October 1, 1948 during a conference held in the Philadelphia Hotel in Amman under the chairmanship of a Palestinian journalist from Jaffa called Sheikh Suleiman Taji Farouki<sup>1</sup>. The Amman Conference was held with the “blessings” of the Transjordanian Government and the Palestinian Ahrar (Liberal)<sup>\*\*</sup> Party<sup>2</sup>. Two months later, on December 1, 1948, a conference was held in Jericho (the West Bank) to discuss the unification of the West Bank and Transjordan. The Jericho Conference, which was “master-minded” and “organized” by the Transjordanian Government with the active support of the Ahrar (Liberal) Party, was attended by approximately 1000 delegates<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>\*</sup> Unless otherwise specified, this information is based on the following interviews:

- An interview with Arif El-Arif: Jerusalem, 12 November 1972.
- An interview with Mustafa El-Taher: Nablus, 20 October 1972.
- An interview with Naim Tuqan: Nablus, 19 September 1972.
- An interview with Hikmat Masri: Nablus, 23 November 1972.
- An interview with Walid Kamhawi: Nablus, 19 December 1972.

<sup>1</sup> Interviews with Mustafa El-Taher and Naim tuqan; also see, Munib Madi and Suleiman Musa, op.cit., p. 535.

<sup>\*\*</sup> See Chapter Two, pp. 48-50.

<sup>2</sup> Interviews with Naim Tuqan and Mustafa El-Taher (both Tuqan and El-Taher were present at the Jericho conference. El-Taher attended only in his capacity as a journalist and as war correspondent for Reuter).

<sup>3</sup> Arif El-Arif. The Tragedy In Palestine, op.cit., Vol. IV, p. 877.

The majority of these delegates were “forced” to attend the Conference “irrespective of their wishes”. The Military Governors of the West Bank received explicit instructions from the Transjordanian Government “to arrange for as many Palestinian village-mayors (Mukhtars) and local notables as possible to attend the Jericho Conference, and to force those who decline”<sup>1</sup>. The Transjordanian Government instructions provided, too, for free transport to Jericho for all the delegates<sup>2</sup>. The conference was presided over by Sheikh Mohammad Ali-Jaabari, Mayor of Hebron\*, and was supervised by Umar Pasha Matar, the then Transjordanian General Military Governor of the West Bank.

On the eve of the same day, December 1, 1948, the delegates to the Jericho Conference voted in favour of a resolution which called, among other things, for “the unity between Palestine and Transjordan as a step towards a total Arab unity”. The Resolution also stressed “the unity of the whole of Palestine”, and “the necessity of speeding up the repatriation or compensation of the Palestine refugees”. The Conference declared that it “acknowledges His Majesty King Abdullah as the King of the whole of Palestine”<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> An interview with Arif El-Arif. (El-Arif was the Military governor of Ramallah in December 1948. He received such instructions and refused to implement them. Subsequently, he resigned from his post); also see, an interview with Mustafa El-Taher. (trans. L.K.).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

\* Sheikh Jaabari was the only Palestinian city mayor to attend.

<sup>3</sup> Ministry of National Guidance of U.A.R. (ed.). Documents And Papers On the Palestine Question: 637-1949 (Cairo: State Information Service, 1969), Doc. No.227, p.965.

On January 1, 1949 another conference was held in Nablus\*. The membership of this conference was confined to the notables of Nablus, and was presided over by the Mayor of Nablus, Suleiman Tuqan. Unlike the Jericho Conference, the Nablus Conference did not claim the right to represent all the Palestinians, but merely the inhabitants of the District of Nablus<sup>1</sup>. The idea behind the Nablus conference was “to counteract the impact of the Jericho Conference which was designed to give King Abdullah a freehand in the West Bank through its pre-fabricated and unconditional endorsement of the unity between the West Bank and Transjordan. Accordingly, we had to speed up the holding of the Nablus Conference in order to put conditions for the unity, and also to overshadow the shameful pre-fabricated resolutions of the Jericho Conference”<sup>2</sup>.

The Nablus Conference expressed explicitly, through both the speeches of its members and its resolutions, that although it approved of the unification, its acknowledgement of King Abdullah as King of Transjordan and “Palestine” was conditional upon “the undertaking by King Abdullah to

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\* Nablus is the biggest city in the West Bank. It is famous for the political activism of its inhabitants.

<sup>1</sup> Interviews with Naim Tuqan and Hikmat Masri. (both were among the participants in Nablus Conference).

<sup>2</sup> An interview with Hikmat Masri (trans. L.K.), also see, interviews with Naim Tuqan and Mustafa Taher.

work for the liberation of the occupied parts of Palestine”<sup>1</sup>. When the Conferees presented their resolution of “conditional acknowledgement” to King Abdullah, he refused it on the grounds that “Kings do not accept conditions”<sup>2</sup>. The conferees did not attempt to withdraw their “conditional acknowledgement” nor did they make a big issue out of it because, one of the conferees said, “although we were aware of the importance of the conditional acknowledgement, we did not want to put obstacles on the road to unity through insisting on certain conditions which, if accepted, might simply remain on paper and never be put into practice”<sup>3</sup>.

The aftermath of the Jericho Conference had occasioned a split in the attitude of the Palestinians. Three schools of thought emerged. The first school expressed its support of the Conference and its resolutions on the grounds that the remaining parts of Palestine under Arab control, “can not stand, alone, on their own feet”, and that the best solution to be immediate difficult problems confronting the Palestinians in the West Bank lay in unity with Transjordan<sup>4</sup>. The second school of thought expressed its resentment on the grounds that the representative capacity of the Jericho Conference was too small to decide “the destiny of the country”. Besides, the Palestinian people, at that time

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<sup>1</sup> An interview with Naim Tuqan (trans. L.K.), also see, interviews with Hikmat Masri and Mustafa El-Taher.

<sup>2</sup> Interviews with Naim Tuqan and Hikmat Masri.

<sup>3</sup> An interview with Naim Tuqan. (trans. L.K.).

<sup>4</sup> Arif El-Arif. The Tragedy In Palestine. op.cit., Vol. IV, p. 878.

dispersed, humiliated and completely lost, were in no position to express their opinion “freely and frankly”<sup>1</sup>. According to this school, although unification was “indispensable”, and provided the “best solution to the problems of the Arab-controlled parts of Palestine”, yet, “such a step did not come from the people as a whole”<sup>2</sup>.

“The representative capacity of the Jericho Conference was so narrow to the extent that it might not have represented even the people of Jericho themselves”<sup>3</sup>.

The third school of thought stressed that “Palestine is for the Palestinians”, and that no one should attempt to decide its destiny through “pre-fabricated” conferences like the Jericho Conference. According to this school, the destiny of Palestine should be decided through a referendum, in which every Palestinian, wherever he might be, could participate. Such a referendum was to be conducted under the supervision of a committee to be selected by the Council of the Arab League, and on which every Arab State, including the Palestinians, should be represented<sup>4</sup>.

In spite of these differences, there was a general feeling among the Palestinians of the non-viability of the West Bank as an independent state<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Walid Kamhawi, op.cit., pp. 131-132. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>3</sup> An interview with Naim Tuqan. (trans. L.K.).

<sup>4</sup> Arif El-Arif. op.cit., p. 878.

<sup>5</sup> Interviews with Arif El-Arif, Mustafa El-Taher, Naim Tuqan, Hikmat Masri and Walid Kamhawi.

This appreciation of the need for unity did not indicate a Palestinian preference for unification with Transjordan. In contradistinction, before the withdrawal of the Egyptian army from Hebron, there was a Palestinian preference for unification with Egypt, rather than Transjordan<sup>1</sup>. The roots of this attitude lay in the poor relations which had existed between King Abdullah and the Palestinians before and in the aftermath of the 1948 War. The Palestinians viewed King Abdullah as a “British puppet”<sup>2</sup>. Besides, the Palestinians had a strong belief that King Abdullah would not hesitate to take any measure which would enable him to annex any Palestinian territory to his Kingdom<sup>3</sup>.

Accordingly, they accused King Abdullah of sending his army to Palestine not to ‘fight’ the Zionists, but rather to gain a foothold in Palestine as a step towards annexing whatever territory in Palestine he might manage to control<sup>4</sup>. In this context, many Palestinians often referred to the responsibility of the Transjordanian regime for “surrendering” some Palestinian territories to the Israeli forces without a fight despite the fact that

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<sup>1</sup> Arif El-Arif: Unpublished Documents; also see, Walid Kamhawi, op.cit., Vol. 1, pp. 131-132.

<sup>2</sup> Interviews with Mustafa El-Taher, Walid Kamhawi and Hamdi Hussein: Gaza, 17 Sept. 1972.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., also see, Nicola Eddurr, Hakaza Da’at Wa Hakaza Ta’ud: Saut al-Naft Wa al-Madfa Fi Tahrir Filastin (How It Was Lost And How It Would Be Regained: The Role of Oil and Arms in the Liberation of Palestine), 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Beirut: Dar al-Hawadeth, 1964), pp. 103-119.

such territories were under Arab control. A reference is often made by many Palestinians to Sir John Bagot Glubb's book "A Soldier With The Arabs"<sup>1</sup>, which confirms the early Palestinian suspicion of the Transjordanian Regime and the role played by that regime in worsening Arab losses in Palestine. In his book, Glubb exposes the Transjordanian Government's deal with the British not to attack the parts of Palestine allocated to the Jews according to the 1947 U.N. Partition Plan, and to occupy only the parts allocated to the Arabs, with the aim of annexing them to Transjordan<sup>2</sup>. Furthermore, Palestinians often refer to King Abdullah's abandonment of the Arab held towns of Lod and Ramleh, and his generous concessions to the Israelis during the Rhodes Armistice Talks, which led to the loss of the fertile Muthallath (Triangle) Area to the Israelis. The Palestinian reaction to what they called "the treason of King Abdullah" was immediate and violent.

"The Director of the Arab Broadcasting Service in Ramallah, Mr. Azmi Nashashibi, described with affection and pain, the scene on that scornful day – the flight of the inhabitants of Lod and Ramleh who were condemning and damning King Abdullah. King Abdullah reacted by ordering that Mr. Nashashibi be cashiered as Brigadier and be sacked from his job as Director of the Broadcasting Service"<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> John Bagot Glubb. A Soldier With The Arabs (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1957), pp. 63-67.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., Also see, Hazza Majali, op.cit., p. 64.

<sup>3</sup> Mohammad Nimr Al-Hawwari, op.cit., p. 258. (trans. L.K.)

The attitude of the Jordanian Regime in the Rhodes Armistice Talks, strained still further the relations between the Palestinians and the Hashemite Regime in Jordan. In this context, Hikmat Masri\* told the writer that in 1950, the Palestinian MPs. raised the issue of Al-Muthallath in Parliament.

“The Jordanian Parliament discussed the Muthallath problem in camera. Tawfiq Abul-Huda\*\* confessed that he was responsible and that he had no other choice but to agree to surrender the area to the Israelis. Abul-Huda confessed too, that King Abdullah had contacts and meetings with the Israeli leaders in Shunah\*\*\* and in other places, which resulted in the signing of the Rhodes Agreement. As a matter of fact, King Abdullah wanted the Palestinians to take part in the Rhodes Talks, but Abul-Huda refused and told the King that they (the Palestinians) were disruptive and would cause the failure of the Talks if they were allowed to participate. However, if the Palestinians were allowed to take part in the talks, things might have not been as catastrophic as they turned out to be.

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\* Hikmat Masri: Born in Nablus in 1907. He was MP for Nablus from 1950-1957; Minister of Agriculture 1953-1954; Speaker of The Parliament: 1952-1953, 56-57; President of The Palestinian National Congress 1964-1967.

\*\* Tawfiq Abul-Huda: He was the Prime Minister of Transjordan during the 1948-War, and during the Rhodes Armistice Talks. He committed suicide in 1956.

\*\*\* A small town in Transjordan. It was the winter resort of King Abdullah.

This is why we, the Palestinians and the Palestinian MPs, were always seeking and fighting those who were behind the Rhodes Agreement, whether it was Abul-Huda or anybody else, in order to punish them for what they did”<sup>1</sup>.

It was, therefore, against this background of Palestinian mistrust, hatred and bitterness towards the Transjordanian Regime, and the determination of the Transjordanian Regime to annex whatever territory in Palestine it had under its control, that the unification of Transjordan and the West Bank took place. From the viewpoint of the Transjordanian regime, the unification of the West Bank and Transjordan constituted the achievement of a long sought after goal<sup>2</sup>. The question which remains to be answered centres on the justifications and arguments behind the agreement of the West Bank inhabitants to this unity, taking into account their attitude towards the Transjordanian Regime.

Interviews with many of Palestinian leaders who were either directly involved or had witnessed this unification, have provided an overview of the arguments of the West Bank inhabitants for consenting to unite the West Bank and Transjordan. These arguments run as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> An interview with Hikmat Masri (trans. L.K.); also see, Hazza Majali, *op.cit.*, pp. 90-93.

<sup>2</sup> Memoirs of king Abdullah, *op.cit.*, pp. 204-282; also see, John Bagot Glubb, *op.cit.*, pp. 62-76; George Lenczowski. *The Middle East In World Affairs*, 3<sup>rd</sup>. ed. (New York: Cornell University Press, 1962), pp. 452-453.

First, with the commencement of hostilities in Palestine and following the termination of the British Mandate , there was a total collapse in Arab Palestine. This collapse was mainly due to the non-existence of an Arab Palestinian government or central authority, similar to the Jewish Agency, which would fill the political and administrative vacuum caused by the withdrawal of the British Mandate<sup>1</sup>. This situation, in the Arab-held territories of Palestine, did not alter after the termination of the hostilities, and it was therefore, inevitable that the Transjordanian Government, as the military authority in the West Bank, would fill the administrative vacuum. In its capacity as the unchallenged authority in the West Bank (due to the non-existence of a Palestinian alternative), the Transjordanian Government embarked on a policy through which it could achieve its goal of annexing the West Bank to Transjordan “as an opening phase of the Greater Syria plan”<sup>2</sup>.

Second, the West Bank was militarily vulnerable and it had no means of defending itself against any “possible Israeli invasion”. The inhabitants of the West Bank thought that their security problem could only be solved through the annexation of the

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<sup>1</sup> Interviews with Arif El-Arif, Mustafa El-Taher, Naim Tuqan, Hikmat Masri and Walid Kamhawi.

<sup>2</sup> George Lenczowski, op.cit., pp. 452-453.

West Bank by another Arab country whose army could help in defending the West Bank. In this context, Transjordan was the only alternative.

“I used to believe that the unification of the West Bank and Transjordan constituted the best way to save the remaining parts of Palestine under the Transjordanian control. This was due to the fact that Transjordan had an army, government, administration and enjoyed the protection of Britain under the terms of the Anglo-Transjordanian Treaty”<sup>1</sup>.

Third, the Transjordanian Government offered senior governmental and administrative posts to some leading Palestinians as a means towards gaining their support for the unification of the West Bank and Transjordan<sup>2</sup>. In this context, a leading role in formulating this unity was played by some Palestinian leaders who could see that the future power in the West Bank would be the Transjordanian regime, and that the promotion of their personal interests and influence necessitated their cooperation with the Transjordanian regime. The incidents which had led to and accompanied the Jericho and Nablus Conferences indicate the importance of the role played by some Palestinian leaders in formulating the policy of unifying the West Bank and Transjordan<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> An interview with Hikmat Masri. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>2</sup> Interviews with Walid Kamhawi and Mustafa El-Taher.

<sup>3</sup> Interviews with Hikmat Masri, Naim Tuqan and Mustafa El-Taher.

Fourth, there was a massive need in the West Bank for food and shelter. This massive need was exploited by the Transjordanian regime as a means of “exerting pressure” and practicing “favouritism” in such a way as to give its supporters among the Palestinians easy access to cheap food and shelter, thus increasing the influence of its supporters among the Palestinians, and consequently promoting the influence of the Transjordanian regime itself<sup>1</sup>.

Fifth, in the aftermath of the Arab defeat and the dismemberment of Palestine, the Palestinian masses were in a state of shock. They were “dominated by a sense of loss and bewildered by the uncertainty of their present or future”<sup>2</sup>. This state-of-affairs resulted in the paralysis of political interest among the Palestinian masses, as their concern centred mainly on securing food and shelter, and consequently they could not afford the luxury of indulging in political questions like unification with Transjordan<sup>3</sup>. This had the effect of giving the Transjordanian regime, with the help of some Palestinian leaders a free hand in carrying out the implementation of unity.

Sixth, under the circumstances of the West Bank whereby Palestinians could neither protect

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<sup>1</sup> Interviews with Mustafa El-Taher, Walid Kamhawi and Naim Tuqan.

<sup>2</sup> An interview with Walid Kamhawi (trans. L.K.)

<sup>3</sup> Interviews with Naim Tuqan, Arif El-Arif, Hikmat Masri, Walid Kamhawi and Mustafa El-Taher.

themselves, nor establish a viable state of their own, and in an environment in which the continued existence of the Transjordanian presence in the West Bank was inevitable, it was better for the Palestinians to be partners with the Transjordanians, than to be administrated by them<sup>1</sup>. However, many Palestinians believed that, in spite of all the circumstances, such unity should not be “unconditional” and that the Transjordanian Regime should undertake, in return for this unification, “to mobilize all its resources for liberating the occupied parts of Palestine”<sup>2</sup>. Hence, King Abdullah was for this reason acknowledged, by the Palestinians, as the King of “whole of Palestine”<sup>3</sup>.

On April 24, 1950, the unification of the West Bank and Transjordan under the Hashemite kingdom of Jordan, was officially declared. This unification was condemned by the Arab States<sup>\*</sup> as a violation of the Arab League’s decision of April 13, 1950, which stressed that the entry of the Arab armies into Palestine was “a temporary arrangement” which did not bear the right to “occupation or partition of Palestine”<sup>4</sup>. Subsequently, Arab recognition of the unity between the West Bank and Transjordan has never been officially extended<sup>\*\*</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> An interview with Walid Kamhawi.

<sup>2</sup> Interviews with Naim Tuqan, Hikmat Masri and Mustafa El-Taher.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>\*</sup> With the exception of Iraq which was under Hashemite rule.

<sup>4</sup> Ministry of National Guidance of U.A.R. (ed.), op.cit. Doc. No. 258, p. 1075; also see, George Lenczowski, op.cit., pp. 452-453.

<sup>\*\*</sup> With the exception of Iraq.

To conclude, the unity between the West Bank and Transjordan did not come about as a result of a popular Palestinian striving for unity with Transjordan in particular, but rather as a convenient solution to the satisfaction of King Abdullah's dream of ruling "Greater Syria"<sup>1</sup>, and at the same time as an "inescapable" outlet for the much bewildered, insecure, hungry and homeless Palestinians. It is situation which constitutes the very important base for understanding the Palestinian attitude towards the Jordanian regime during the period of this study.

The Palestinians in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, whether refugees or not, thought of themselves as equal partners with the Transjordanians. They did not consider that holding a Jordanian passport or participating in the Jordanian government and Parliament were acts of Transjordanian generosity, but rather as rights which they (The Palestinians) acquired in their capacity as partners to the Transjordanians in a unity which gave birth to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. While this was not reciprocated by the Hashemite regime, the Palestinians did not develop an inferiority complex nor did they feel obliged to act and to behave in such a manner which would reflect gratitude, because they felt that the Transjordanian regime needed them as much as they needed it. Besides they felt that the Transjordanian regime 'exploited' their state of confusion, need and loss to 'force' them into 'unconditional' unity. Accordingly, when the confusion ended and the

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<sup>1</sup> Memoirs of King Abdullah, op.cit., pp. 204-282.

need was fulfilled, the Palestinians started a reappraisal of the circumstances which had accompanied the process of unification. The reappraisal, combined with the background of strain and Palestinian mistrust of King Abdullah resulted in a Palestinian apprehension of the possible impact of this ‘unconditional’ unity of the ‘Palestine Problem’ as a whole<sup>1</sup>. Accordingly, when the opportunity arose in late 1950’s, the Palestinians were quick to indicate to the Jordanian regime that the circumstances which had led to the ‘unconditional’ unification were special and limited in time and that the Palestinians did not, therefore, consider the Jordanian regime as the sole representative of the Palestinian people or a principal actor in the Palestine Problem on a permanent basis. It is precisely this Palestinian reappraisal which had led, in late 1950, to the Palestinian rioting against the Jordanian regime. The rioting took place because King Abdullah “who wanted to solve the Palestine refugee problem unilaterally on the grounds that he represented Palestine and the Palestinians, felt that the Arab States were planning to discuss the issue of the Palestine refugees and to declare a joint-plan of action for dealing with it. The King immediately ordered the governors of the various territories in Jordan to convince the refugees, or at least the refugee leaders to inform the Arab League by cable not to interfere with their (the Palestine refugees) affairs. This telegram said:\*

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter II, pp. 92-101.

\* According to Arif El-Arif, who saw it.

‘We, the Palestine refugees, have already given a mandate to His Majesty King Abdullah to seek whatever solutions he might find suitable for solving the Palestine Problem. We regret the interference of the Arab League in such solutions’.

That was in late 1950. The Palestine refugees refused to send such a telegram. They refused in spite of the threats and intimidation by the authorities. In Irbid\* there were demonstrations, by the Palestine refugees, calling for the downfall of any person who attempted to weaken their cause. This situation forced the King to abandon his plan. However, he sacked the Governor of Irbid, Bahjat Pasha Tabbara, because he did not punish the refugees who had demonstrated against him (King Abdullah)<sup>1</sup>.

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### **The Trial Period: The Practice of the Unity, 1950-1967**

Upon the proclamation of the unification of the West Bank and Transjordan under the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Jordanian regime embarked on a three-pronged policy which covered the entire period, 1950-1967. This policy consisted of:

First, Normalizing the life in the West Bank through the restoration of civilian life and the provision of food and the necessities of life.

This policy was meant to

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\* A town in northern Transjordan.

<sup>1</sup> Arif El-Arif, op.cit., vol. V, pp. 1113-1114.

attract the support of the Palestinians, and to show them that the immediate outcome of unity had led to improved living conditions<sup>1</sup>.

Second, Liquidating the remnants of the Palestinian political groups and paramilitary organizations. As part of this drive, the Jordanian regime started, immediately after unification, to “hunt” the supporters of Haj Amin Husseini<sup>2</sup>, and the Jordanian forces “attacked” the headquarters of the Palestinian paramilitary organization Al-Jihad Al-Mukaddas (The Holy Struggle) in Beir Zait, and confiscated their arms, disbanded and banned them<sup>3</sup>. The Jordanian regime also adopted a policy of “tough punishment” and “suppression” against politically-active elements among the Palestinians. Such a policy was meant to serve as an indicator to the Palestinians of the intention of the regime not to tolerate any uncontrolled political activities. Accordingly, when in July 1950, a demonstration against the regime broke out in Nablus, “the regime labeled the demonstrators as Communists. They were arrested and taken, in the heat of July, to Amman by foot (the distance between Amman and Nablus is 120 km). As the prisoners were walking to Amman, the soldiers kept on beating them. One of the prisoners, Mr. Wahid Zaid Kailani, died on the road to Amman”<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Interviews with Mustafa El-Taher and Walid Kamhawi.

<sup>2</sup> See, pp. 50-52.

<sup>3</sup> Interviews with Mustafa El-Taher and Walid Kamhawi.

<sup>4</sup> An interview with Walid Kamhawi; also see, interviews with Mustafa El-Taher and Naim Tuqan.

Third, Adopting a policy of undeclared constitutional, economic, moral and political discrimination against the Palestinians<sup>\*</sup>. The adoption of this policy of undeclared discrimination against the Palestinians in Jordan was the result of various factors which involved both the Palestinians and the Transjordanians, and the relationship that each of them had with the Jordanian regime. These factors were:

- a) The ‘Palestine Problem’ had contributed to the emergence of a politically-conscious people out of the Palestinians. It thereby created an atmosphere of political alertness and sensitivity amongst the Palestinians to any political step taken by the Jordanian regime in relation to the Palestine Problem.
- b) There was mistrust, by the Palestinians, of the Jordanian regime, especially of the founder of the regime, King Abdullah, who was accused by the Palestinians of giving great concessions to the Israelis at the expense of the Palestinians during and after the 1948-War<sup>1</sup>. Thus, the Palestinians in Jordan regarded the Jordanian regime as, at worst, the perpetrator of their “catastrophe” in Palestine, and at best, as an alien regime which did not represent the

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<sup>\*</sup> By definition discrimination against the Palestinians in Jordan implies that there was no such discrimination against the Transjordanians who constitute the other part of the population of Jordan. However, this Chapter, in harmony with the main theme of this research, deals with the situation of the Palestinians in Jordan, and not with a comparative analysis of the attitude of the Jordanian regime towards the Transjordanians and the Palestinians in Jordan.

<sup>1</sup> See, chapter four, pp. 177-179.

hopes and aspirations of Palestinian Arabs.

“Palestine Arabs had no loyalty to King Abdullah, and neither emotional nor ideological attachment to the House of Hashim”<sup>1</sup>.

The Transjordanians, on the other hand, gained a political entity of their own, for the first time in history, through the Hashemite regime. Accordingly, they owed their existence, as a state, to this regime. Thus the Transjordanian developed an attitude of loyalty to the Hashemite regime, and they conceived of this regime as a symbol of their existence, and as the embodiment of their aspirations<sup>2</sup>.

- c) The very recent and artificial creation of Transjordanian in 1921, which had always existed as a “fief under Syrian, Egyptian or Ottoman rule”<sup>3</sup>, and the subsequent non-existence of an autonomous Transjordanian tradition, had resulted in its lacking any “magnetic symbolism for the Palestinians”<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Benjamin Shawdran. Jordan: A State of Tension (New York: Council for Middle Eastern Affairs Press, 1959), p. 300.

<sup>2</sup> Hazza Majali. My Memoirs (Amman, 1960) pp. 52-55. (Majali was the Prime Minister of Jordan in 1955 and 1959-1960. He was assassinated in August 1960, and the Palestinians were accused of his assassination).

<sup>3</sup> Daniel Lerner. The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East (New York: The Free Press), p. 304.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

Transjordan, which until 1948, was “untouched by social change”<sup>1</sup>, with for example, an enrollment rate of 28% of its school0age children, as compared to 52% of the Palestine Arabs, remained culturally “a vassal of the surrounding Arab countries”<sup>2</sup>, and yet it was destined to shelter the majority of the Arab Palestinians, who among the Arab people were “second to none in degree of modernity”<sup>3</sup>.

“During the Mandatory Regime the Arabs of Palestine had become aware of their political power, and they had advanced economically, attaining a fairly high standard of living, and they had good prospects for future development. In education too, they had progressed, and they were actively engaged in a struggle for independence. Suddenly they found themselves annexed to a population inferior to them politically and educationally, and to a country economically backward and without prospects for growth”<sup>4</sup>.

When the unification of the West Bank and Transjordan took place, the Palestinians, who were more advanced politically, economically and educationally, believed that they would be able “to contain the Transjordanians”<sup>5</sup>. The Transjordanians

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 305.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 306; also see, U.N. Doc. 16(A/1905), p.1; C. Issawi, “Labour Relations and Organization”, in R. Patai (ed.) The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (Human Relations Area Files, 1956), p. 429.

<sup>4</sup> Benjamin Shawdran, op.cit., p. 300.

<sup>5</sup> An interview with Walid Kamhawi.

also felt that the Palestinians, who became the (numerical) majority in the state, would eventually contain them and control the State as well. In fact, the only thing which prevented this from taking place was the policy of the Jordanian regime, which “favoured the Transjordanians and gave them the upper hand in running the State”<sup>1</sup>. Thus, the Transjordanians linked the persistence of their influence and hegemony with the existence of the regime itself; hence, the Transjordanians’ loyalty, and the Palestinians’ opposition, to the Jordanian regime.

### **Constitutional Discrimination**

The Jordanian regime’s policy of constitutional discrimination was presented in the guise of constitutional equality. In 1950, the Palestinians accounted for more than two-thirds of the total population of Jordan<sup>2</sup>. The Constitution, however, granted the Transjordanians equal representation in the Parliament. The justification implicit in the argument of the Jordanian regime was that, the division of the State was not based on the Transjordanian-Palestinian composition of the State, but rather on the East Bank and the West Bank, as two equal units, which should, as such, be

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.; also see, an interview with Hikmat Masri.

<sup>2</sup> Daniel Lerner, op.cit., p. 304. (In 1953, the population of Jordan was 1,337,000 of which the Palestinians, both refugees and the original inhabitants of the West Bank, accounted for 864,000 and the Transjordanians accounted for 506,000; see, The Amman Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The Jordanian Economy, 1954: A Special Economic Bulletin, p. 7; for more information see, Munib Madi and Suleiman Musa, op.cit., p. 449.

entitled to equal constitutional rights. If the validity of such an argument is accepted, this equality should have meant that the Palestinians residing in the East Bank were entitled to share the East Bank portion of the representation. In other words, the Palestinians residing in the East Bank were in fact constitutionally entitled to choose a proportion of the 50% of the total members of Parliament allocated to the East Bank, since this allocation was not based on a Transjordanian-Palestinian basis, but rather on East-West Bank basis. In spite of the fact that the Palestinians residing in the East Bank constituted around 50% of the total population of the East Bank<sup>1</sup>, there was hardly any such sharing during the period 1950-1967, and consequently no Palestinians were elected to represent any East Bank constituencies<sup>2</sup>.

### **Economic Discrimination**

During the period 1950-1967, the Jordanian regime adopted a policy of economic discrimination against the West Bank. This policy covered such aspects as communication, transport, industry, health and education. The analysis of this policy of economic discrimination will centre on certain examples which could be supported by comparative data.

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<sup>1</sup> Deniel Lerner, *op.cit.*, p. 304.

<sup>2</sup> The same argument does not apply to the West Bank, because the number of Transjordanians residing in the West Bank was always insignificant. No figures were released by the Jordanian Government. However, apart from the Transjordanian who used to work as government employees in the West Bank, and whose residence in the West Bank was, therefore, temporary, the number of Transjordanians residing permanently in the West Bank was believed to have been insignificant. According to the estimates of many West Bankers, it did not exceed a few thousand.

In the field of communication, Transjordan, before its unification with the West Bank, had no broadcasting Service of its own. After the unification on April 24, 1950, the broadcasting service in Jerusalem became the official broadcasting service of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. On July 1, 1956, the broadcasting service of Amman was inaugurated, and commenced to broadcast for one hour in the morning and two hours in the evening<sup>1</sup>. Eventually, in 1959, the broadcasting service of Amman was developed into the main broadcasting service, with 20 hours service, and a power of 100 kw; while the Jerusalem Broadcasting was reduced to a 6 hours service with its original, pre-1950, power of 20 kw<sup>2</sup>.

The destiny of Jerusalem Airport was similar to that of Jerusalem Broadcasting Service. Until 1962, Jerusalem Airport used to handle 120,000 passengers and 5,000 aeroplanes every year – as compared to the 41,000 passengers and 2,800 aeroplanes every year using Amman Airport<sup>3</sup>. In 1964, 30 foreign (non-Jordanian) flights used to land weekly at Jerusalem Airport – as compared to 11 at Amman Airport<sup>4</sup>. In spite of this, the efforts of the Jordanian regime were directed at developing and expanding Amman Airport and at building a new international airport at Amman, with no similar plans for Jerusalem Airport where there was only maintenance work<sup>5</sup>. This policy

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<sup>1</sup> Jordan Government Yearbook, 1962, p. 59.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 59-60.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 262.

<sup>4</sup> Jordan Government Yearbook, 1964, p. 175.

<sup>5</sup> Jordan Government Yearbook, 1962, pp. 262-267.

reached its climax during the period 1965-1967, when the Jerusalem Airport was more or less closed on the grounds that, inter alia, it was not suitable for receiving large modern aeroplanes.

In the field of transport, and during the period 1951-1961, the Jordanian Government opened a total of 426 kilometers of new asphalt roads in the East Bank – as compared with 56 kilometers of new asphalt roads on the West Bank during the same period<sup>1</sup>. During the period 1961-1971, a total of 363 kilometers of new asphalt roads were opened on the East Bank – as compared to 36 kilometers in the West Bank during the same period<sup>2</sup>.

In the field of industry, the Jordanian regime adopted a policy of discrimination against the West bank as a territory – though not against the Palestinians as individuals. In this regards, any person, whether a Palestinian or a Transjordanian, who wanted to build a factory in the East Bank was allowed to do so and was given all the help and encouragement of the State; while any person who wanted to build such a factory on the West Bank was either not given permission by the authorities, or if given such permission, was not given the governmental help and encouragement accorded to

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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Culture and Information. Jordan in Fifty Years: 1921 – 1971 (Amman, 1972), pp. 466-467.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 467-468.

the factories operating on the East Bank<sup>1</sup>. As a result of this policy, all the major industries in Jordan, with the exception of the olive-oil industry, are located on the East Bank. Moreover, the Jordanian regime did not attempt to undertake any serious exploitation of the natural resources of the West Bank. While, on the one hand being quick to develop the phosphates discovered in Al-Rusayfah on the East Bank<sup>2</sup>, the Jordanian Government made no serious effort to mine the huge natural resources of the Dead Sea on the West Bank, although the value of the minerals in the Dead Sea were estimated, in 1954, as being £200 thousand millions<sup>3</sup>.

There was also discrimination against the West Bank in the fields of health and education. In Nablus, which is the biggest city on the West Bank there was, until June 1967, only one government hospital, which was built during Ottoman rule. In 1964, there were 18 government hospitals on the East Bank, most of them built after 1950, while on

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Mustafa El-Taher and Walid Kamhawi. During my research tour of the West Bank, many Palestinians there raised this issue of industrial discrimination. During my research tour to Amman, I discussed this issue with some Jordanian officials. Some of them denied the existence of such a policy, while others confirmed its existence and justified it on the grounds that the policy of the State aims at making the East Bank the industrial base and the West Bank the agricultural base of the State's economy, thus, each Bank would complement the other. Some of those officials also raised the point that in the event of a war between Israel and Jordan, the West Bank is military vulnerable and it is, therefore, better for Jordan to have all its industries on the East Bank.

<sup>2</sup> Amman Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The Economy of Jordan, 1954: A Special Economic Bulletin (Amman, 1954), pp. 39-40.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 25-26.

West Bank, there were only 10 government hospitals, most of them built either before or during the British Mandate. This must be seen in relation to the population of the various cities and towns in the East and West Banks. In 1963, for example, Nablus, with a population of 50,936 people had only one government hospital with a capacity of 140 beds, while the towns of Salt, Ma'an, Karak and Aqaba on the East Bank, with a total population of 44,765 people<sup>1</sup>, that is, less than the population of Nablus alone, had five hospitals with a total capacity of 213 beds<sup>2</sup>.

In the field of education, the Jordanian regime practiced its policy of discrimination against the West Bank in two major forms. One was the policy of territorial equality by which, for example, the District of Nablus with a population of 333,191 people<sup>3</sup> was given the same share of government scholarship as the District of Balqa with a population of 65,037<sup>4</sup>.

Second was the concentration of most of the government-sponsored institutes of higher education in Jordan on the East Bank. Three out of the five Teachers Training Colleges sponsored by the government are on the East Bank<sup>5</sup> as are two out of the

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<sup>1</sup> The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Department of Statistics. First Census of Population and Housing, 18 November 1961, Interim Reports Nos. 1-9.

<sup>2</sup> Jordan Government Yearbook 1964, pp. 214, 43-45.

<sup>3</sup> The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Department of Statistics, op.cit.

<sup>4</sup> Falastin Daily Newspaper, Jerusalem (31 July 1960), p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Jordan Government Yearbook, 1962, p. 209.

three government-sponsored colleges of industrial vocational training<sup>1</sup>. During the period 1952-1966, the Jordanian Government established 13 divisions of commercial training all over Jordan; 5 on the West Bank and 8 on the East Bank<sup>2</sup>. The five commercial training divisions of the West Bank remained as parts of the secondary-school programme, while 6 out of the 8 commercial training divisions in the East Bank were developed into ‘independent institutes of commercial studies’<sup>3</sup>.

In the field of agricultural studies, the only institute on the West Bank, Khaddouri College of Agriculture, was established in 1930, long before the unification of the West Bank and Transjordan. In contrast, on the East Bank, the Jordanian Government has established two schools of agricultural studies, one in 1964 and the other in 1965<sup>4</sup>.

In the field of university education, Jordan did not have a national university until 1962. And while the East Bank did not have any well-established institutes of higher education which would constitute a suitable nucleus for establishing a university, the west Bank did. The West Bank had

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 214.

<sup>2</sup> Jordan in Fifty Years: 1921-1971, op.cit., pp. 149-150.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> If we accept the arguments of some Jordanian officials with regard to the industrial policy of the Jordanian Regime which aims at making the West Bank the agricultural-base of the State, as compared to the East Bank as the industrial-base of the State, then it would have seemed logical for the Jordanian Government to have made a much more serious effort to promote agricultural studies and institutions in the West Bank.

such nuclei in the form of Beir Zait college, which was established in 1924, and which had offered first-year university education since 1957, and second-year university education since 1962; in addition there was Al-Najah National College which was established in 1918, and Khaddouri College of Agriculture which was established in 1930. In spite of the existence of all these well-established institutes on the West Bank, the Jordanian regime chose to start from scratch and to build the proposed university on the East Bank. Moreover, the Jordanian government did not attempt to build any of the university departments on the West Bank, although Khaddouri College of Agriculture could easily have been developed into a department of agriculture, and Beir Zait College into a department of sciences. During the period 1963-1967, the Jordanian Government denied Beir Zait College permission to transform itself into a university, even though the funds needed for such a plan would not have been taken from the government, since contributions were readily available<sup>1</sup>. A similar attitude was taken by the Jordanian Government when the General Union of Arab Physicians, in its annual conference held in Kuwait in 1964, decided to support and finance the establishment of a school of medicine in Jerusalem<sup>2</sup>. Moreover, when the University of Jordan was established in Amman

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<sup>1</sup> A private conversation with the late Musa Nasser, President of Beir Zait College, and former minister and MP, (July 1971).

<sup>2</sup> An interview with Walid Kamhawi. (Kamhawi was the Head of the Jordanian delegation to that Conference. He was jailed upon his return to Jordan from the Kuwait Conference because he had not recommended Amman, instead of Jerusalem).

in 1962, its Board of Trustees, which comprised 10 persons, had 7 Transjordanians and only 3 Palestinians as its members which the Chairman chosen from among the Transjordanian members<sup>1</sup>.

In retrospect, in talking about individual cases of discrimination, one might find a good reason to justify each case. However, if we look at it collectively, we notice that there is a cause for believing that there is a trend, and that the talk about discrimination against Palestinians in Jordan might be justifiable.

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### **Moral Discrimination**

The issue of moral discrimination against the Palestinians in Jordan centres on the policy of the Jordanian regime with regard to the Palestinian character on the West Bank as a Palestinian territory, and on the identity of the Palestinians in Jordan as part of the Palestinian people.

From the early days of the unification of the west Bank and Transjordan, the Jordanian regime adopted a policy which, though undeclared, was scrupulously practiced and observed by the authorities, with the aim of prohibiting the mentioning of the very word 'Palestine', whether in the form of territory as applied to the West Bank, or in the form of identity as applied to the Palestinians in Jordan. The first implementation of this policy took place shortly after the unification of the West Bank and

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<sup>1</sup> Jordan Government Yearbook, 1962, p. 222.

Transjordan when the Jordanian regime substituted the word ‘West Bank’ for that of ‘Palestine’. No mention of Palestine was made when, after the unification, the new state was called the Hashemite kingdom of Jordan. Moreover, the Jordanian regime adopted a hard-line attitude against any attempts to assert the Palestinian character of the West Bank, or the Palestinian identity of its inhabitants, or even their Palestinian origin. Nobody was allowed, for example, to use the words ‘Palestinian’ or ‘Palestine’ in the Jordanian Press when referring to the Palestinians in Jordan or the West Bank respectively. Whenever such a reference was made, the Jordanian censor would substitute the words ‘West Bankers’ or ‘West Bank’<sup>1</sup>. All the professional organizations, unions, and social or cultural associations in the West Bank were forbidden to have a name which would indicate the Palestinian character or origin of the body concerned, but rather a Jordanian name or any other name was to be used provided that it did not mention the words ‘Palestine’ or ‘Palestinian’.

A serious effort was made by the Jordanian regime to cut the Palestinians off from their history and heritage. In schools, the Palestinians were not taught the history of Palestine, but rather the history of Transjordan and the ruling Hashemite family. The ‘Palestine Problem’ was taught in the Jordanian schools as being an issue in the Arab-Israeli conflict, but no allusion was made to the Palestinian role and place in the ‘Palestine

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<sup>1</sup> An interview with Mustafa El-Taher. (El-Taher was the editor-in-chief of Al-Awdah Newspaper which was published in Amman until 1956, when it was closed down permanently by the Jordanian authorities).

Problem’, in the past, present or future. It was as though the problem should have been of no concern to the Palestinians in Jordan.

The destruction of the Palestinian folkloric heritage went hand in hand with the abolition of the Palestinian name and the mention of Palestinian history. The Jordanian regime sponsored and supported the creation of Jordanian folkloric groups which portrayed, through their songs and dances, the folklore of every town in Transjordan – from Aqaba in the south to Irbid in the north. The regime even sponsored and supported the creation of a Circassian folkloric group which portrayed the folkloric heritage of the Circassian minority in Jordan. A Palestinian folkloric group was never allowed to exist in Jordan\*.

### **Political Discrimination**

The analysis of the issue of political discrimination against the Palestinians in Jordan will be conducted through an examination of the participation of the Palestinians in Jordanian governments during the period 1949-1967.

From May 1949 – June 1967, 32 governments were formed and there were 39 government reshuffles in Jordan (see Table 7). In all these government formations and reshuffles, a total of 124 ministers (Transjordanian and Palestinian) occupied 355 ministerial Posts (see Tables 8 and 9).

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\* Palestinian Folklore was revived after the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization, but never in Jordan.

TABLE 7  
Details of Governments Formations and Reshuffles in Jordan on the Bases of Palestinian-Transjordanian Participation: 1949 – June 1967

Government Formation and Reshuffles	Name of Prime Ministers	Palestinian or Jordanian PM	Date	No of Palestinian Ministers	No of Jordanian Ministers	Total No. of the Gov. Members	Ratio of Palestinian Ministers to total Gov. Members	% of Palest. Ministers in the Government
First Government	Tawlik Abul-Huda	Jor.	3/5/1949	3	5	9	3:9	33.3%
Government Reshuffle			11/8/1949	4	5	10	4:10	40%
Second Government	Said Mufti	Jor.	12/4/1950	5	5	11	5:11	45.5%
Government Reshuffle			5/8/1950	5	5	11	5:11	45.5%
Third government	Said Mufti	Jor.	14/10/1950	5	5	11	5:11	45.5%
Government Reshuffle			4/11/1950	5	4	10	5:10	50%
Fourth Government	Samir Rifa'ie	Jor.	4/12/1950	5	5	11	5:11	45.5%
Government Reshuffle(1)			1/1/1951	5	5	11	5:11	45.5%
Government Reshuffle(2)			1/3/1951	5	6	12	5:12	41.6%
Government Reshuffle(3)			4/3/1951	5	6	12	5:12	41.6%
Government Reshuffle(4)			18/4/1951	6	6	13	6:13	46%
Government Reshuffle(5)			12/7/1951	5	6	12	5:12	41.6%
Fifth Government	Tawlik Abul-Huda	Jor.	25/7/1951	4	6	11	4:11	36.3%
Sixth Government	Tawlik Abul-Huda	Jor.	8/9/1951	4	5	10	4:10	40%
Government Reshuffle(1)			20/3/1952	4	4	9	4:9	44.4%
Government Reshuffle(2)			8/4/1952	5	4	10	5:10	50%
Government Reshuffle(3)			30/4/1952	6	4	11	6:11	54.5%
Seventh Government	Tawlik Abul-Huda	Jor.	30/9/1952	4	5	10	4:10	40%
Government Reshuffle(1)			7/10/1952	4	5	10	4:10	40%
Government Reshuffle(2)			24/11/1952	3	5	9	3:9	33.3%
Government Reshuffle(3)			3/12/1952	4	5	10	4:10	40%
Eight Government	Fawzi Al-Mulki	Jor.	5/5/1953	5	5	11	5:11	45.5%
Government Reshuffle(1)			5/11/1953	5	6	12	5:12	41.6%
Government Reshuffle(2)			24/4/1954	4	6	11	4:11	36.3%
Ninth Government	Tawlik Abul-Huda	Jor.	4/5/1954	5	5	11	5:11	45.5%
Government Reshuffle(1)			8/5/1954	5	6	12	5:12	41.6%
Government Reshuffle(2)			21/9/1954	4	6	11	4:11	36.3%
Tenth Government	Tawlik Abul-Huda	Jor.	24/10/1954	5	6	12	5:12	41.6%
Government Reshuffle(1)			17/5/1955	5	5	11	5:11	45.5%

Government Formation and Reshuffles	Name of Prime Ministers	Palestinian or Jordanian PM	Date	No of Palestinian Ministers	No of Jordanian Ministers	Total No. of the Gov. Members	Ratio of Palestinian Ministers to total Gov. Members	% of Palest. Ministers in the Government
Eleventh Government	Said Mufti	Jor.	30/5/1955	5	5	11	5:11	45.5%
Twelfth Government	Hazza'a Majali	Jor.	15/12/1955	5	4	10	4:10	40%
Thirteenth Government	Ibrahim Hashem	Jor.	21/12/1955	4	4	9	4:9	44.4%
Fourteenth Government	Samir Rifa'ie	Jor.	9/1/1956	4	5	10	4:10	40%
Government Reshuffle(1)			1/4/1956	4	5	10	4:10	40%
Government Reshuffle(2)			21/4/1956	3	5	9	3:9	33.3%
Fifteenth Government	Said Mufti	Jor.	22/5/1956	4	5	10	3:10	40%
Sixteenth Government	Ibrahim Hashem	Jor.	1/7/1956	4	3	8	4:8	50%
Seventeenth Government	Suleiman Nabulsi	Jor.	29/10/1956	5	5	11	5:11	45.5%
Eighteenth Government	Hussein F.Khalidi	Jor.	15/4/1957	2	4	7	3:7	42.9%
Nineteenth Government	Ibrahim Hashem	Jor.	24/4/1957	3	3	7	3:7	42.9%
Government Reshuffle(1)			13/7/1957	4	5	10	4:10	40%
Government Reshuffle(2)			17/8/1957	3	5	9	3:9	33.3%
Government Reshuffle(3)			22/10/1957	4	6	11	4:11	36.4%
Government Reshuffle(4)			12/12/1957	3	6	10	3:10	30%
Twentieth Government	Samir Rifa'ie	Jor.	18/5/1958	3	5	9	3:9	33.3%
Government Reshuffle(1)			29/5/1958	3	4	8	3:8	37.5%
Government Reshuffle(2)			10/7/1958	6	6	13	6:13	46%
Government Reshuffle(3)			30/8/1958	6	7	14	6:14	42.9%
Government Reshuffle(4)			15/10/1958	6	6	13	6:13	46%
Government Reshuffle(5)			28/1/1959	6	6	13	6:13	46%
Twenty First Government	Hazaa Majali	Jor.	6/5/1959	4	5	10	4:10	40%
Government Reshuffle			20/9/1959	4	5	10	4:10	40%
Twenty Second Government	Bahjat Talhouni	Jor.	29/8/1960	5	6	12	5:12	41.6%
Twenty Third Government	Wasfi El-Tall	Jor.	28/1/1962	6	5	12	6:12	50%
Government Reshuffle			1/10/1962	4	3	8	4:8	50%
Twenty Fourth Government	Wasfi El-Tall	Jor.	1/12/1962	7	5	13	7:13	58.8%

Government Formation and Reshuffles	Name of Prime Ministers	Palestinian or Jordanian PM	Date	No of Palestinian Ministers	No of Jordanian Ministers	Total No. of the Gov. Members	Ratio of Palestinian Ministers to total Gov. Members	% of Palest. Ministers in the Government
Twenty Fifth Government	Samir Rifa'ie	Jor.	27/3/1963	5	7	13	5:13	38.5%
Twenty Sixth Government	Hussein Ben Nasser	Jor.	21/4/1963	3	4	8	3:8	37.5%
Government Reshuffle			27/5/1963	2	2	5	2:5	40%
Twenty Seventh Government	Hussein Ben Nasser	Jor.	10/7/1963	6	6	13	6:13	46%
Government Reshuffle(1)			31/10/1963	5	8	14	5:14	35.7%
Government Reshuffle(2)			30/11/1963	6	7	14	6:14	42.9%
Government Reshuffle(3)			12/2/1964	7	6	14	7:14	50%
Twenty Eighth Government	Bahjat Talhouni	Jor.	6/7/1964	6	7	14	6:14	42.9%
Twenty Ninth Government	Wasfi El-Tall	Jor.	13/2/1965	7	8	16	7:16	43.8%
Government Reshuffle			31/7/1965	7	8	16	7:16	43.8%

**TABLE 8**

Transjordanian Ministers in Government Formations and Reshuffles In Jordan: Feb. 1949 – June 1967

No	Name	Jordanian Governments 1949 - 1967																																Total No of posts in Govern. Formation	Total No of posts in Govern. Reshuffles				
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32						
1	Mohammad Amin Shankiti	x	x			x	x														x	x														6			
2	Said Mufti	x				x	x	x	x										x				x				x		x								9		
3	Falah Madadha	x	x			x								x	x					x	x																7		
4	Fawzi Mulki	x	x	x										x		x				x																	6		
5	Suleiman Sukkar	x	x	x		x	x		x										x																		7		
6	Mohammad Shariki		x	x																																	2		
7	Abdul-Rahman Khalifa			x		x				x																	x		x								5		
8	Ahmad Tarawneh			x			R	x		x										R	x															4	2		
9	Abbas Mirza				x								x																								2		
10	Umar Matar				x									x			x																				3		
11	Suleiman Nabulsi				x															x																	2		
12	Jamil Tutanji				x	x	x	x		x		x	x				x			R	x	x	x													11	1		
13	Hazza' Majali				x				R		x	x																									3	1	
14	Bishara Ghuseib				R							x	x			x	x			R																4	2		
15	Abdel-Halim Nimr					x	x																														3		
16	Saba Akasheh							x		x	x																											4	
17	Shafiq Irshaidat																																					2	
18	Mustafa Khalifa									x		x																										3	
19	Bahjat Talhouni									x																												1	
20	Wasfi Mirza										x	x																								x	x	6	
21	Abdallah Kulaib										R																											1	
22	Riad Mufleh																																					1	
23	Dhaifallah Humud											x																										2	
24	Farhan Shubailat												x	x																								2	
25	Hamed Farhan																																					1	
26	Ali Hindawi																																					2	2
27	Samir Rifaie																																					2	
28	Ibrahim Hashem																																					1	
29	Mohammad Ali Ajlouni																																					1	
30	Saleh Majali																																					5	
31	Salah Puqan																																					1	
32	Saleh Mua'sher																																					1	

Cont. Table 8

-2-

No	Name	Jordanian Governments 1949 - 1967																																Total No of posts in Govern. Formation	Total No of posts in Govern. Reshuffles		
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32				
33	Akef El-Fayez																		x	x	x	x				x	x							x	7		
34	Salim Bakhit																		R	x									x						2	1	
35	Izziddin Mufti																						x	x							x				3		
36	Mohammad Ismail																						x	x											2		
37	Abdel-Wahhab Majali																						x	x					x	x			x		5		
38	Subhi Amin Amr																						x	x	x										3		
39	Khalil Salim																						x	x	x										3		
40	Hasan El-Kayed																									x	x	x							3		
41	Saleh Burqan																										x	x		R	x	x	x		5	1	
42	Mohammad Ali Rida																											x							1		
43	Abdel-Majeed Murtada																											R								1	
44	Bashir Sabbagh																											R	x						1	1	
45	Abdel-Rahim Sharif																											R								1	
46	Salah Abu-Zaid																											R	x						1	1	
47	Mohammad Nazzal Armouti																												x						1		
48	Ahmad Luzi																												x					x	2		
49	Adel Shamayleh																												x						1		
50	Khaled Haj Hasan																											x							1		
51	Fadel Dalkamouni																																	x	1		
52	Abdel-Rahim El-Waked																																x		1		
53	Ahmad Abu-Qura																																x		1		
54	Zukan Hindawi																															x	x	x	x	4	
55	Jiryas Haddadin																															x				1	
56	Abdel-Hamid Sharaf																															R	x	x	x	3	1
57	Mohammad Tuqan																															R				1	
58	Radi El-Abdallah																																	x	1		
59	Abdel Hajeed Hijazi																																	R		1	1
	Formations	5	5	5	5	6	5	5	5	5	6	6	4	4	5	5	3	5	4	3	5	4	5	5	5	7	4	6	7	7	5	4	7	163			
	Reshuffles				1		1		1	1									5	1								4		3				1		18	

Key: x = post held during a government formation  
R = post held during a government reshuffle







During the same period, an almost equal number of Transjordanian and Palestinian individuals served as ministers in the Jordanian governments. A total of 59 Transjordanian ministers (see Table 8), and 65 Palestinian ministers (see Table 9), occupied ministerial posts.

While it appears that there was more Palestinian participation in Jordanian governments, yet, the distribution and rotation of Transjordanian and Palestinian ministers among ministerial posts reflects the opposite. During the period May 1949 – June 1967, 59 Transjordanian ministers occupied 178 ministerial posts, while 65 Palestinian ministers occupied 171 ministerial posts. These figures, when computed, show that every Transjordanian minister occupied an average of 3.02 ministerial posts, while every Palestinian minister occupied an average of 2.63 ministerial posts during the total period. (see Table 10). These figures must be seen in relation to the composition of the population in Jordan which is almost two-thirds Palestinian and one-third Transjordanian.

Table 10<sup>1</sup>

Comparative Analysis of the Rotation of the Transjordanian and Palestinian Ministers in Jordan: 1949-1976

	No. of Ministers	No. of Posts	Average Ratio
Transjordanian Ministers	59	178	3.02:1
Palestinian Ministers	65	171	2.63:1

<sup>1</sup> Based on the information provided in Tables 8 & 9.

This means that the numerical minority, the Transjordanians, were granted a greater role in running the Jordanian Government than the majority, that is, the Palestinians.

An analysis of the composition of the various Jordanian governments in terms of the Transjordanian or Palestinian origin of the participants, would shed still more light on the degree of inequality between the Transjordanians and the Palestinians at governmental level.

In 27 out of 32 (84.3%) of the governments formed in Jordan during the period 1949-1967, Palestinian ministers accounted for less than 50% of the total government members. In 3 out of 32 (9.4%) of the governments formed, Palestinians accounted for exactly 50%; and in only two out of 32 (6.3%) of the governments formed, did the Palestinians account for more than 50% (see Table 11).

An analysis dealing solely with government reshuffles in Jordan during the period 1949-1967 reflects a similar tendency to that observed in the formation of governments. During the period May 1949 – June 1967, there were 39 government reshuffles in Jordan. Palestinians accounted for less than 50% of the total government members in 34 out of the 39 government reshuffles (87.1%); exactly 50% of the total government members in 4 out of the 39 government reshuffles (10.3%); and more than 50% of the total government members in only one out of the 39 government reshuffles (2.6%) (see Table 11).

Table 11

Comparative Analysis of the Percentages of the number of Palestinians in Government Formations and Reshuffles in Jordan: 1949-1967.

	<u>Less than</u> <u>50%</u>	<u>Exactly</u> <u>50%</u>	<u>More than</u> <u>50%</u>
Government Formations	84.3%	9.4%	6.3%
Government Reshuffles	87.1%	10.3%	2.6%

A general understanding of the degree of equality between the Palestinians and the Transjordanians on the governmental level is clearly reflected through a combined analysis of both government formations and government reshuffles.

During the period 1949-1967, there were 71 government formations and reshuffles, in 61 out of the 71, the Palestinians accounted for less than 50% of the total government members; seven times out of the 71, the Palestinians accounted for exactly 50%; only three times the Palestinians account for more than 50%, the respective percentages were 85.9%, 9.9% and 4.2% (see Tables 12 and 13).

Table 12<sup>1</sup>

Comparative Analysis and Percentages of the Number Palestinian Ministers in Government Formations and Reshuffles in Jordan: 1949-1967.

No. of Govern. Formations and Reshuffles	Less Than 50%	ratio	%	50%	ratio	%	More than 50%	ratio	%
71	61	61/71	85.9%	7	7/71	9.9%	3	3/71	4.2%

<sup>1</sup> Based on Tables 7, 8 and 9.

Table 13<sup>1</sup>

Summary of the Percentages of the Number of Palestinian Ministers in  
Government Formations and Reshuffles in Jordan: 1949-1967

Less than 50% of the total members of Government	85.9%
50% or more of the total members Government	14.1%

Finally, the inequality in the treatment of the Palestinians on the governmental level was not limited to the ministerial posts, but also covered the post of the Prime Minister. During the period 1949-1967, Jordan had twelve Prime Ministers who formed 32 governments. Eleven out of these twelve Prime Ministers were Transjordanian and one was Palestinian. The eleven Transjordanian Prime Ministers formed 31 governments, and the Palestinian Prime Minister formed only one government (see Table 14). In the percentage terms, this means that only 8.3% of the Jordanian Prime Ministers were Palestinians and 3.1% of the governments formed in Jordan during the period 1949-1967 were formed by Palestinians.

Table 14

A Comparative Analysis of the Transjordanian and Palestinian Prime  
Ministers of Jordan: 1949-1967

The Prime Minister	No. of PM's	%	No. of Govs. formed	%
Transjordanian	11	91.7	31	96.9
Palestinians	1	8.3	1	3.1

<sup>1</sup> Based on Tables 7, 8 and 9.

The duration of the period in office of each of the Prime Ministers would shed more light on the degree of inequality between the Palestinian and the Transjordanian Prime Ministers of Jordan. While the shortest duration in office of any Transjordanian Prime Minister was 5 months and 13 days, the duration in office of the only Palestinian Prime Minister was a mere eight days (see Table 15).

Table 15<sup>1</sup>

A Detailed Account of the Prime Ministers of Jordan: 1949-1967

No	Name	Identity	No. of Gov. formed	Total Duration in office
1.	Tawfik Abul-Huda	Trans-jordanian	6	32 months
2.	Said Mufti	“	4	15 months & 14 days
3.	Samir Rifa'ie	“	4	23 months & 14 days
4.	Fawzi El-Mulki	“	1	12 months
5.	Hazza Majali	“	2	16 months
6.	Ibrahim Hashem	“	3	17 months & 12 days
7.	Suleiman Nabulsi	“	1	5 months & 13 days
8.	Hussein F. Khalidi	Palestinian	1	8 days
9.	Bahjat Talhouni	Trans-jordanian	2	26 months*
10.	Wasfi El-Tall	“	4	22 months*
11.	Hussein Ben Nasser	“	3	16 month*
12.	Sa'ad Juma'h	“	1	3 months & 7 days

<sup>1</sup> Based on Table 7.

\* Formed more governments in the period after 1967.

## The Trial Period: The Palestinian Official Opposition<sup>1</sup>, 1950-1967.

Before the unification of the West Bank and Transjordan, official and popular opposition to the Transjordanian regime were non-existent<sup>2</sup>. The development of an articulate opposition to the Jordanian regime began almost immediately after the Palestinians took their seats in the Jordanian Parliament.

The attitude of the Palestinian members of the Jordanian Parliament towards the various Jordanian governments and the policies pursued by such governments provides the best-documented and, in point of fact, the only area of Jordanian politics for the study of the Palestinian official opposition.

In 1950, the Palestinian members of the Jordanian Parliament raised the issue of the 'loss of the Al-Muthallath (Triangle) Area to the Israelis in the Rhodes Talks'<sup>3</sup>, and demanded an investigation into the people responsible for this loss<sup>4</sup>. This debate marked the beginning of the Palestinian Parliamentary opposition to the Jordanian regime.

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<sup>1</sup> Official Opposition stands for opposition on the governmental level which was conducted through the machinery of the State, which in this case is the Parliament – as compared with popular opposition which involves opposition conducted from outside the machinery of the State, whether in the form of disorganized popular upheavals or party-organized upheavals. The latter will be dealt with on pp.240-245.

<sup>2</sup> Daniel Lerner, op.cit., p. 305; also see, Hazza Majali, op.cit., p. 42.

<sup>3</sup> See, pp. 177-179.

<sup>4</sup> An interview with Hikmat Masri.

“The Palestinian deputies, supported by the Press<sup>1</sup>, attacked Abdullah and his policies. Press censorship was reimposed, some political leaders were exiled, others were arrested and tried”<sup>2</sup>.

On May 3, 1951, King Abdullah dissolved the one-year-old Parliament after the Opposition, which was predominantly Palestinian<sup>3</sup>, made it clear that it would vote against the adoption of the 1951-1952 budget proposed by the government of Samir Rifae. At that time, “the underlying issue was British friendship and alliance, which the king told the opposition leaders he could not give up”<sup>4</sup>. The Palestinians, since the beginning, had been keen on liberalizing and modernizing the politics and the political machinery of Jordan. In pursuing this goal, the “comparatively advanced Palestinians” must have thought that they would eventually be capable, through the process of liberalization and modernization, of gaining effective control of the politics of Jordan, especially since they also enjoyed numerical superiority over the Transjordanian. Accordingly, the Palestinian members of parliament started by demanding that the government should be “responsible to the Parliament instead of to the King”<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The Press in Jordan was, at that time, a private sector, and was predominantly owned by Palestinians.

<sup>2</sup> Benjamin Shawdran, op.cit., p. 308.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.; also see, Munib Madi and Suleisman Musa, op.cit., p. 550.

<sup>4</sup> Benjamin Shawdran, op.cit., p. 308.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 309.

“It was inevitable that with the addition of the comparatively advanced Palestinians to his Kingdom, pressure would be brought on Abdullah to liberalize the government. Abdullah in fact had anticipated this, and during the election campaign (of 1949) had promised a constitutional change which would make the cabinet responsible to the House of Deputies instead of the King”<sup>1</sup>.

“Now (the second parliamentary election of 1951) the issue was the royal prerogative. In order to prevent it from becoming a major campaign issue, Abdullah suddenly promised that after the elections, which were to be held on both sides of the Jordan and which were scheduled for August 29, an amendment to the constitution would be introduced making the government responsible to Parliament instead of to the King”<sup>2</sup>.

On July 20, 1951, King Abdullah, while entering the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, was shot dead by a Palestinian. The death of King

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 298-299.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 208-209. (On January 8, 1952, King Talal approved the new constitution of Jordan. According to Article 51 of the new constitution, “The Prime Minister together with the Ministers are collectively responsible before the House of Deputies for matters of the general policy of the state. In addition, each Minister is responsible before the House of Deputies for matters affecting his ministry”. Article 53 stated every Jordanian Government must obtain a vote of confidence from the house of Deputies if it is to survive), Ibid., p. 314.

Abdullah brought the issue of succession to the surface. A fierce struggle between Abdullah's two sons, Talal and Naif, and their supporters broke out. Abdullah's oldest son and Crown Prince Talal, who was constantly ill, was known for his anti-British attitude, and for his intention to eliminate the British presence in Jordan<sup>1</sup>. As a result of this struggle, Jordan was broadly split into two factions: "Abdullah's old pro-British followers, concentrated on Jordan's Eastern Bank, supported Naif; anti-British elements on the Western side of the river backed Talal"<sup>2</sup>.

The accession of Talal to the throne, with the active support of Britain and Iraq, was meant to avoid "antagonizing all the anti-British elements", inside and outside Jordan. It was also designed not to precipitate "the dismemberment of Jordan" which would have been a danger had Naif been proclaimed King instead<sup>3</sup>.

On August 11, 1952, the Jordanian Parliament, upon the recommendation of the Government, passed a unanimous decision whereby King Talal, due to his chronic illness, was dethroned, and his son, Crown Prince Hussein, was declared King of Jordan. A Regency Council composed of one Palestinian and two Transjordanian<sup>4</sup>, was formed to exercise the royal prerogative until the new King reached the age of eighteen.

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<sup>1</sup> Benjamin Shawdran, op.cit., pp. 302-303.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 310.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 313.

<sup>4</sup> Those were Ibrahim Hashem – Chairman (Transjordanian), Abdul-Rahman Irshaidat (Transjordanian), and Suleiman Tuqan (Palestinian).

Shortly after it was sworn in, the regency Council had to face a political row which was instigated by a Palestinian member of Parliament, Qadri Tuqan. Tuqan published an article in the daily newspaper Falastin, under the title “The Crisis of Identity”<sup>1</sup> in which he argued that “Jordan is suffering from a crisis of identity which no other country in the world had experienced, due to Jordan’s total dependence on foreign aid for its existence”<sup>2</sup>. According to Tuqan the solution to the problem of “the crisis of Jordanian identity” would come through “the unification of Jordan with another Arab state”<sup>3</sup>. Tuqan did not specify which state, although he gave an indication that such a state could be either Iraq or Syria<sup>4</sup>. Alternatively, tuqan suggested that close economic, political and military co-operation, with a major stress on economic co-operation, between Jordan and its ‘sisterly Arab states’, could provide a solution to ‘the crisis of Jordanian identity’, as such cooperation would enable Jordan “to utilize the most efficient and modern methods to exploit the potentials of the country and its natural resources with the help of Arab capital”<sup>5</sup>. This, according to Tuqan, would enable Jordan to develop its economy and to get rid of foreign aid, thus enhancing the viability of Jordan as an independent state<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> This article was re-published by Tuqan in his book *Wa’y al-Mustakbal* (Comprehending the Future), *op.cit.*, pp. 70-77.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 76.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 76-77. (trans. L.K)

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77.

Tuqan's article became the central issue in the daily newspapers in Jordan, and also in the Jordanian Parliament when "the majority of the West Bank members of the Jordanian Parliament" argued the necessity of the unification of Jordan with another Arab state, such as Iraq, "whose national wealth would meet the needs of the unified state to be"<sup>1</sup>, moreover, this call received enthusiastic support among the inhabitants of the West Bank "who were afraid of further Israeli expansion at their expense"<sup>2</sup>.

The attitude of the Jordanian Government towards this call was tough and uncompromising. In a closed session of the Jordanian Parliament, Premier Abul-Huda "warned all those who advocate the need for the unification of Jordan with another Arab country"<sup>3</sup>. He also warned that "the Parliamentary immunity will serve the Jordanian Members of Parliament no good because", according to Abul-Huda, "the Defence Law empowers the Prime Minister to imprison anybody"<sup>4</sup>.

"Premier Abul-Huda warned in a radio broadcast against attempts that were being made, at home and abroad, to undermine the kingdom; there was no doubt that he meant Iraq,

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<sup>1</sup> Hazza Majali, *op.cit.*, pp. 122-123. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 123. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, (trans. L.K.)

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, (trans. L.K.)

for the previous December a majority of Parliament, meeting in Amman, had indicated that they favoured a Jordan-Iraq merger. On January 13, in a special secret session of Parliament, the Premier succeeded in getting the deputies to shelve their proposals”<sup>1</sup>.

On November 11, 1952, Premier Abul-Huda, for the first time in the history of Jordan, asked the Parliament for a vote of confidence in his government. The opposition in that Jordanian Parliament, which was “exclusively Palestinian”<sup>2</sup>, took the opportunity to express its opposition to Premier Abul-Huda and to his government<sup>3</sup>. One of the Palestinian members of parliament, Abdullah Nawas, attacked the Prime Minister personally<sup>4</sup>. Some Transjordanian members of parliament spoke in defence of the Prime Minister, and one of them, Sharari al-Bakhit, went a step further by attacking the Palestinians at large when he described them as “cowards who could not

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<sup>1</sup> Benjamin Shawdran, *op.cit.*, p. 314.

<sup>2</sup> Hazza Majali, *op.cit.*, p. 125.

<sup>3</sup> The real motive behind the Palestinian opposition to Abul-Huda was the fact that “he was the Prime Minister during the 1948 War, and that it was during his Premiership that the Rhodes Agreement, which was very disadvantageous to the Palestinians, was signed”. See an interview with hikmat Masri; for more information see, pp. 177-179.

<sup>4</sup> Al-Awdah Newspaper, Vol. 1, no. 3 (13 november 1952), p.1; also see, Hazza Majali, *op.cit.*, p. 125; An interview with Hikmat Masri (Masri was the Speaker of Parliament during that session).

defend themselves”<sup>1</sup>. The Palestinian members of parliament immediately withdrew in protest, and “it became apparent that the Parliament would be divided into East Bank and West Bank”<sup>2</sup>. To prevent this from taking place, two Transjordanian members of parliament<sup>3</sup> joined their dissenting Palestinian colleagues.

All the dissenting members of parliament formed a parliamentary opposition bloc which demanded, inter alia, the resignation of Abul-Huda; that the vote of confidence in any government be a simple rather than two-thirds majority vote; the abolition of the emergency laws and the release or trial of political detainees; the preservation of the rights of the Palestine refugees and the reform of the civil service<sup>4</sup>. Following the publication of these demands, there were demonstrations throughout the West Bank in support of the Opposition and its demands<sup>5</sup>. The government ordered the army to quell the demonstrations on the West Bank<sup>6</sup>. The attitude of the members of the Regency Council reflected the general split in the Kingdom. The Palestinian member of the regency Council, Suleiman Tuqan, supported the Opposition, the Transjordanian member,

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<sup>1</sup> An interview with Hikmat Masri; also see, Al-Awdah Newspaper, op.cit., Hazza Majali, op.cit., p. 125.

<sup>2</sup> Hazza Majali, op.cit., p. 125.

<sup>3</sup> They were Wahid al-Uran and Hazza Majali.

<sup>4</sup> Hazza Majali, op.cit., p. 126.

<sup>5</sup> Benjamin Shawdran, op.cit., p. 318; also see Hazza Majali, op.cit., p. 127.

<sup>6</sup> Benjamin Shawdran, op.cit., p. 318.

Abdul-Rahman Irshaidat, supported the Government, while the Chairman, Ibrahim Hashem, remained neutral<sup>1</sup>.

On May 5, 1953, King Hussein was sworn in as the new King of Jordan. On the same day, a new government was formed by Fawzi al-Mulki. This government, which incorporated in its programme all the demands of the Opposition, was received with enthusiastic support on the West Bank and by the Palestinian members of Parliament<sup>2</sup>.

In April 1954, for the first time in the history of Jordan, the Palestinian members of parliament sponsored and passed, with the help of a few Transjordanian members of parliament, a resolution thanking the Soviet Delegate to the United Nations for his support of the Arab cause<sup>3</sup>. Shortly after that, on May 2, 1954, al-Mulki was asked to submit his resignation.

On May 4, 1954, a new government was formed by Premier Tawfiq Abul-Huda. This caused apprehension among the Palestinian masses and the Palestinian members of parliament. They feared that Abul-Huda might scrap the liberal policies and laws which were passed by the previous government and return to the policy of suppression. The parliamentary opposition, which was predominantly Palestinian, decided to vote against the government of Abul-huda in a vote of confidence, in spite of the attempts of the Transjordanian members of the Opposition to persuade the

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<sup>1</sup> Hazza Majali, op.cit., p. 128.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Munib Madi and Suleiman Musa, op.cit., p. 595.

Opposition to adopt a neutral attitude in the form of an abstention<sup>1</sup>. Consequently, a few hours before the vote of confidence was to take place the government dissolved the Parliament.

“Our brothers, especially our brothers from the West Bank insisted on their opinion (to vote against the government of Abul-Huda). We had to agree. A few hours later, we learned of the government decision to dissolve the Parliament”<sup>2</sup>.

The government of Abul-Huda held elections for a new Parliament. There were demonstrations in Amman and all the major cities of the West bank on five consecutive days (October 16-21) in protest against government intervention in the elections, which had also led to the withdrawal of some Opposition candidates in protest<sup>3</sup>. On October 21, the army was asked by the government to quell the serious rioting in the major cities of the West Bank. In the clashes between the army and the demonstrators, 14 people were killed and 127 were injured<sup>4</sup>.

On May 30, 1955, a new government was formed in Jordan under the premiership of Said Mufti. During the period in office of this government the talks on Jordan's participation in the Baghdad Pact were

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<sup>1</sup> Hazza Majali, *op.cit.*, pp. 144-145.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 145. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>3</sup> Benjamin Shawdran, *op.cit.*, p. 323; also see, Hazza Majali, *op.cit.*, p. 148.

<sup>4</sup> Benjamin Shawdran, *op.cit.*, pp. 323-324.

initiated. The Transjordanians favoured joining the Pact<sup>1</sup>. However, when the talks reached an advanced stage, with the arrival of Sir Gerald Templer, all the Palestinian ministers in the Mufti Government resigned in protest. This led to the collapse of the Mufti Government<sup>2</sup>. On December 15, 1955, a new government was formed by Hazza Majali, a Transjordanian advocate of the Baghdad Pact, with the aim of negotiating the entry of Jordan into the Pact.

“After al-Majali completed his cabinet – not without difficulty in obtaining western bank members – he stated openly that he had undertaken the formation of the government for the purpose of bringing Jordan in the Baghdad Pact”<sup>3</sup>.

One day after the formation of al-Majali Government, on December 16, 1955, demonstrations broke out in West Bank cities and in Amman<sup>4</sup>. Demonstrations continued for three consecutive days, in spite of Premier Majali’s declaration that he had postponed the negotiations for Jordan’s entry into the Baghdad Pact. Although the government of Majali dissolved Parliament and resigned, rioting went on. In Jerusalem, demonstrators stormed the French and Turkish consulate buildings, and attacked the American consulate, which resulted in four demonstrators being killed and

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<sup>1</sup> Hazza Majali, op.cit., pp. 323-324.

<sup>2</sup> Munib Madi and Suleiman Musa, op.cit., pp. 616-617; also see Hazza Majali, op.cit., pp. 170-171.

<sup>3</sup> Benjamin Shawdran, op.cit., p. 327.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

27 injured. “It was estimated that during the five days of rioting, ten persons were killed and 100 wounded”<sup>1</sup>.

On December 21, 1955, a new caretaker government was formed by Ibrahim Hashem for the purpose of holding new parliamentary elections. Campaigning for the elections began in earnest, and the Opposition met in Jerusalem and formed a National Committee. The goals of the Committee were: to keep Jordan out of the Baghdad Pact; the cancellation of the Anglo-Jordanian Treaty; the ousting of General Glubb and all the British officers from the Jordanian army; the inclusion of Jordan in the Arab fold and adherence to the Syrian – Egyptian – Saudi alliance<sup>2</sup>.

These goals, as laid down by the National Committee, prompted the Jordanian regime to reevaluate the wisdom of holding elections on the bases of such issues. The regime found a constitutional escape from this dilemma when it was discovered that the royal decree to dissolve the Parliament lacked the signature of the Minister of the Interior. The Government of Ibrahim Hashem endorsed the ruling of the Supreme Council for the Interpretation of the Constitution, that the dissolution of Parliament was illegal. The decision to call off the elections led to immediate demonstrations and rioting in all the major cities of the West Bank and in Amman. In Jerusalem the American consulate was attacked and the headquarters of the American Technical Aid were stormed and burned. The rioting, which lasted from January 7 to January 11, 1956, led to the

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 328.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 328-329.

resignation of the two-week old government of Ibrahim Hashem, and the formation, on January 9, 1956, of a new government under the Premiership of Samir Rifa'e. Al Rifa'e immediately announced the intention of his government to keep Jordan out of the Baghdad Pact, and at the same time declared a curfew and enforced martial law throughout Jordan in an attempt to put an end to the rioting which had spread to all parts of the country.

“There were violent demonstrations calling for the dissolution of the Parliament. Many citizens were killed. Martial-law and a curfew were enforced. The army searched many cities, villages and refugee camps for arms. Many people were detained and others were exiled to desert prisons”<sup>1</sup>.

The only significant development during the rule of the Rifa'e Government was the dismissal, by King Hussein, on March 1, 1956, of General John Bagot Glubb, Chief of Staff of the Arab Legion (the Jordanian Army). The dismissal of Glubb was, among other things, “one of the inevitable consequences... of the pressures of Egypt and Saudi Arabia on a Jordan dominated by the discontent and agitation of the Palestine Arabs”<sup>2</sup>. Moreover, the presence of Glubb had become “a troublesome factor in the country” due to the fact that he publically advocated “a withdrawal in the event of attack to the East

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<sup>1</sup> Hazza Majali, *op.cit.*, p. 175. (trans.L. K.)

<sup>2</sup> Benjamin Shawdran, *op.cit.*, p. 334.

Bank, pending the arrival of reinforcements to counter-attack. This meant Jewish occupation of the Palestinian territory which Jordan held, a going back to the original frontier”<sup>1</sup>. In advocating such a strategy, “Glubb, knowing that a million Arab had already been thrown out of their homeland by Israel, could not apparently realize that if Israel ever set foot on Jordanian soil, especially on the rich West Bank, we Jordanians might never tread that soil again”<sup>2</sup>.

Shortly after Glubb’s dismissal, a new government was formed, on May 22, 1956, under the premiership of Said Mufti. By the end of June, it became evident that the Parliament would not grant the Mufti Government a vote of confidence. Parliament was dissolved and Mufti resigned on June 30<sup>th</sup>.

On July 1, 1956, Ibrahim Hashem formed a caretaker government with the sole purpose of holding parliamentary elections. On October 21, 1956, the elections were held and the outcome favoured the ‘progressive’ parties. The Nationalist Socialist Party<sup>3</sup> won eleven seats and thereby became the most powerful single party in the House. The leader of the Nationalist Socialist Party, Suleiman Nabulsi, was asked to form the new Jordanian government. Nabulsi formed a government which was labeled, at that time, as being “leftist” and “progressive” as it contained ministers from the Nationalist Socialist Party, the Ba’th Party, the National Front

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<sup>1</sup> His Majesty King Hussein of Jordan. Uneasy Lies the Head, *op.cit.*, p. 112.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 112-113.

<sup>3</sup> For more information see, pp. 237-238.

(Communists and Communist supporters), in addition to other independent individuals<sup>1</sup>.

During the rule of Nabulsi Government, the tripartite attack on Egypt, which commenced on October 29, 1956, took place. On November 20, the Jordanian Parliament recommended to the government that the Anglo-Jordanian Treaty be abrogated. A few days later Premier Nabulsi informed the Parliament that his government would proceed with the act of abrogation and also with the establishment of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. The response by the Nabulsi Government to these two long-standing Palestinian demands brought in sharp reaction from the Jordanian King. On February 2, 1957, the royal Court released the contents of a letter sent by King Hussein to Premier Nabulsi. King Hussein sums up the intention behind his letter by saying:

“I sat down and wrote to the Prime Minister, pointing out in the strongest possible language the dangers of Communism as I saw them and flatly insisting that Jordan must take a different stand”<sup>2</sup>.

This letter was ignored by the Palestinian press in Jordan, and no mention of its content was made<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Munib Madi and Suleiman Musa, *op.cit.*, p. 663; also see, Benjamin Shawdran, *op.cit.*, p. 341.

<sup>2</sup> His Majesty King Hussein of Jordan, *op.cit.*, p. 132, (The content of the letter can be found in the same source, p. 133).

<sup>3</sup> This is based on the observations of the writer, who in consulting Palestinian newspapers published in Jordan during that period, could not find any mention of the contents of this letter.

As scheduled, the negotiations started in Amman on February 3, and although, in due course, King Hussein launched another violent attack against communism, an agreement was reached on February 12, to cancel the Anglo-Jordanian Treaty. The abrogation of the Treaty was received with great jubilation by the Palestinians. The attitude of most Transjordanians with regard to the abrogation of the Treaty is reflected in the following statement:

“Thus, our special relationship with Britain, which had started as early as 1921, has ended. It is but fair to say that relationship was beneficial to both countries, and could be classified as having been successful. In this context, one should point out that the Palestinian Problem had poisoned that relationship”<sup>1</sup>.

On March 20, 1957, a Palestinian member of parliament from Nablus, Fayeq Anabtawi<sup>2</sup>, declared in Parliament that a majority of the members of parliament would request King Hussein to convene the Parliament in an emergency session “to discuss a draft resolution for the federal unification of Jordan with Egypt and Syria”<sup>3</sup>. Earlier, Anabtawi

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<sup>1</sup> Munib Nadi and Suleiman Musa, *op.cit.*, p. 660.

<sup>2</sup> He was a member of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Jordanian Parliament at that time.

<sup>3</sup> *Ad-Difa' Newspaper*, Vol. XXIII, No. 6414 (Jerusalem, 21 March 1957), p. 2. (trans. L.K.)

had presented the Foreign Relations Committee of the Jordanian Parliament with a project for the federal unification of Jordan with Egypt and Syria, but the Committee had decided to postpone the presentation of the project to Parliament until the abrogation of the Anglo-Jordanian Treaty had been completed. Anabtawi had concluded his declaration to Parliament by stressing that “all the Jordanian achievements were in preparation for its federal unification with Egypt and Syria, which constitutes the only guarantee for Arab supremacy in the Middle East”<sup>1</sup>. This call was henceforward adopted by both the Nabulsi Government, as part of its government programme, and by the “progressive” parties in Jordan<sup>2</sup>.

On April 8, 1957, the army, whose commanders supported the Government, surrounded the capital, Amman. On April 9, the Government decided to retire a number of civil servants and the Director of Public Security, and to replace the Head of Amman Police, as well as making other important promotions and changes<sup>3</sup>. On April 10, King Hussein asked, through the Chief of the Royal Court, for the resignation of Nabulsi Government. The government resigned on the same day. Shortly after the resignation of Nabulsi Government, a delegation representing the different beduin tribes in Transjordan<sup>4</sup> met King Hussein and expressed their

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>2</sup> Ad-Difa' Newspaper, Vol. XXIII, No. 6434 (14 April 1957), p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Ad-Difa' Newspaper, Vol. XXIII, No. 6432 (11 April 1957), p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Those included the following tribes: Bani Sakhr, Bani Hamidah, and Bani Ayyad and the tribes of the Balqa District

“unlimited and strong support and loyalty to the Hashemite throne”<sup>1</sup>. The Palestinian reaction to the resignation of Nabulsi Government reflected shock and apprehension that this resignation might mark a return to “suppression of freedom”<sup>2</sup>. The “progressive” political parties, which were largely dominated by the Palestinians<sup>3</sup>, supported the outgoing government, and the collectively passed a resolution to that effect which was published almost immediately after the Nabulsi Government was asked to resign, and was also conveyed to the King<sup>4</sup>. In Jerusalem, there were disturbances in the broadcasting station<sup>5</sup>. Although everything was quiet in the East Bank, there were demonstrations throughout the West Bank in protest against King Hussein’s request for the resignation of Nabulsi Government<sup>6</sup>.

On April 16, 1957, five days after Nabulsi rendered his resignation, a new government was formed by Hussein Khalidi which included three ex-prime ministers, with Nabulsi as Minister of Foreign Affairs and Transport. After the formation of the Khalidi Government, a delegation representing the Transjordanian tribe of Huwaytat and the

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<sup>1</sup> Munib Madi and Suleiman Musa, op.cit., p. 660. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>2</sup> Ad-Difa’ Newspaper, Vol. XXIII, No. 6434 (14 April 1957), p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Munib Madi and Suleiman Musa, op.cit., pp. 597-603; for more information see pp. 238-240.

<sup>4</sup> Ad-Difa’ Newspaper, Vol. XXIII, No. 6432 (11 April 1957) and No. 6433 (12 April 1957).

<sup>5</sup> Ad-Difa’ Newspaper, Vol. XXIII, No. 6436 (16 April 1957), pp. 1-2.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

Transjordanian cities of Ma'an and Aqaba met King Hussein and "expressed to him their loyalty, gratitude and appreciation of his wise policy and heroic stands during this critical period"<sup>1</sup>. The attitude of the Palestinians was different. On the eve of April 22, 1957, more than 200 delegates representing all "progressive" political parties and various nationalist leaders convened what has been known since as the National Conference in the city of Nablus on the West Bank. Among the delegates, there were 23 members of parliament, that is, a majority of the total members of the Jordanian Parliament<sup>2</sup>. The conference was under the chairmanship of a Palestinian member of parliament from Nablus, Hikmat Masri, who was also Speaker of the Parliament. The reasons behind the convening of the National Conference were the apprehensions of the conferees that "the formation of the Khalidi Government might be a transitional phase in preparation for a return, by the Jordanian regime, to a policy of internal suppression and non-cooperation with the progressive Arab regimes in Egypt and Syria. Besides which, the progressive political parties and the nationalist leaders feared a plan by the regime to curb their activities"<sup>3</sup>. The Conference elected an executive committee composed of sixteen members<sup>4</sup>, eleven Palestinians and five Transjordanians, to supervise

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<sup>1</sup> Ad-Difa' Newspaper, Vol. XXIII, No. 6437 (17 April 1957), pp. 1 and 4. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>2</sup> Munib Madi and Suleiman Musa, op.cit., p. 675.

<sup>3</sup> An interview with Hikmat Masri. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>4</sup> They were Said el-Azza, Suleiman Hadidi, Fayek Warrad, Jawdat al-Muhaysen, George Habash, Fayek Anabtawi, Abdel-Kader el-Saleh, Abdel-Kader Yaghmur, Salah Anabtawi, Qadri Tuqan, Adel el-Shaka'a, Abdel-Rhman Shukair, Shafiq Irshaidat, Bahjat Abu-Gharbiyyeh, Issa Mudainat, Nagib al-Ahmad.

the implementation of the resolutions of the National Conference<sup>1</sup>. The resolutions of the National Conference called, inter alia, for the resignation of the Khalidi Government and the formation of a new government based on the Nationalist Socialist, Al-Ba'th and the National Front Parties; the categorical rejection of the Eisenhower Doctrine; the expulsion of the American Ambassador and the American Military Attaché; and a general strike on April 24 in support of these demands. The Conference elected a committee to convey its resolutions to Premier Khalidi. The committee comprised of six members, who were all Palestinians<sup>2</sup>, headed by Mr. Hikmat Masri<sup>3</sup>.

“The resolutions of the National Conference were so extreme that I\* had to hide some of them from Premier Khalidi. The progressive political parties were apprehensive that the formation of Khalidi Government might be the first step on the road to the banning of all political parties and the loss of political freedom in the country. Accordingly, the majority of the member of parliament were against the Khalidi Government and demanded its resignation and the reinstatement of the Nabulsi Government. Premier Khalidi asked me\* for a declaration of support from the Nationalist Socialist Party. He asked me personally, as Speaker of the Parliament

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<sup>1</sup> Ad-Difa' Newspapers, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 6443 (24 April 1957), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> They were Hikmat Masri, Anwar Khatib, Dawood Husseini, Fayek Anabtawi, George Habash, and Bahjat Abu-Gharbiyyeh.

<sup>3</sup> Ad-Difa' Newspapers, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 6443 (24 April 1957), p. 1.

\* Hikmat Masri.

and member of the Nationalist Socialist Party, to write that declaration. There was a strong opposition within the Nationalist Socialist Party to the issuing of such a declaration”<sup>1</sup>.

Next morning on April 24, 1957, in response to the call of the National Conference, there was a general strike and demonstrations in most parts of Jordan. On the West Bank, the strike was total and the demonstrations were more violent than those in the East Bank<sup>2</sup>. The strike and the demonstrations prompted the resignation of Premier Khalidi who refused to order the army to quell the demonstrations<sup>3</sup>.

On April 25, 1957, a new government, under the premiership of Ibrahim Hashem, was formed. On the same day, the government declared a state of martial law, dissolved and banned all the political parties in Jordan, and placed Amman and Irbid<sup>4</sup> and three other major cities on the West Bank, Nablus, Jerusalem and Ramallah, under a curfew<sup>5</sup>.

Parliament, however, was not dissolved. On October 16, 1957, Parliament was convened in order to give a vote of confidence in the government of Ibrahim Hashem. “The Parliament House was surrounded

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<sup>1</sup> An interview with Hikmat Masri. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>2</sup> Ad-Difa’ Newspapers, Vol. XXXIII, No. 6444 (25 April 1957), p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> An interview with Hikmat Masri.

<sup>4</sup> The cities of Amman and Irbid on the East Bank have large concentrations of Palestinians.

<sup>5</sup> Ad-Difa’ Newspapers, Vol. XXXIII, No. 6444 (25 April 1957), p. 1.

with tanks and troops. The government wanted to intimidate us into giving our vote of confidence. Indeed, we had to give it to the government. Next morning, we resigned from the Parliament”<sup>1</sup>. Six members of parliament resigned – three from the East Bank<sup>2</sup> and three from the West Bank<sup>3</sup>. On December 3, 1957, the Jordanian Parliament voted to expel three of its Palestinian members<sup>4</sup>. On December 17 one Transjordanian and three other Palestinian members of parliament were expelled<sup>5</sup>. On January 28, 1958, the Jordanian Parliament expelled another one of its Palestinians members<sup>6</sup>, and on May 13, 1958, the last in the chain of expulsions took place when another Palestinian member of Parliament was expelled<sup>7</sup>. In total, three Transjordanian members of parliament resigned and one was expelled, and three Palestinian members of parliament resigned and eight were expelled.

On May 18, 1958, Premier Ibrahim Hashem resigned and a new government was formed by Samir Rifa’e.

The resignation of the Hashem Government marked the end of one area and the beginning of another in

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<sup>1</sup> An interview with Hikmat Masri. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>2</sup> They were Abdul-Halim Al-Nimr, Saleh Mua’sher, and Abdel-Kadar Tash.

<sup>3</sup> They were Hikmat Masri, Walid Shakáa, and Naim Abdel-Hadi.

<sup>4</sup> They were Fayek Warrad, Yacoub Zayyadin, and Abdullah Rimawi.

<sup>5</sup> They were Yusef el-Bandak, Kamal Nasser and Said el-Azzah (Palestinians), and Shafiq Irshaidat (Transjordanian).

<sup>6</sup> He was Abdel-Khaleq Yaghmour.

<sup>7</sup> He was Ahmed el-Da’ur.

Jordanian politics and in the attitude of the Palestinians in Jordan towards the Jordanian regime. While the Palestinians in Jordan maintained their suspicion of and opposition to the Jordanian regime, they, nevertheless, adopted, from 1958 onwards, a passive attitude towards it. The majority of the Palestinians in Jordan grew less interested in exercising their political rights through the institutions of the State<sup>1</sup>, and interest in what happened in Amman declined<sup>2</sup>. This apparent apathy masked a rift which was soon manifested in the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization and the emergence of the Fatah Organization. It was in these organizations that many of the Palestinians in Jordan invested their political activism.

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### **The Trial Period: The Palestinian Popular<sup>3</sup> Opposition, 1950-1967**

The opposition of the Palestinians in Jordan to the Jordanian regime was not confined to the Palestinian parliamentary opposition. On the contrary, the Palestinian parliamentary opposition was a reflection of the Palestinian popular opposition.

The Palestinian popular opposition was manifested in two areas – the political parties and the demands of the Palestinians in Jordan which until

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<sup>1</sup> An interview with Hikmat Masri.

<sup>2</sup> Interviews with Hikmat Masri and Walid Kamhawi.

<sup>3</sup> Outside the framework of the government institutions and machinery.

1967, were manifested in petitions published in the press, or sent directly to government officials and to the King, and through demonstrations and rioting. These two areas of Palestinian popular opposition often overlapped, and it is difficult and unrealistic, to draw a clear dividing line between them.

The pattern of analysis in this section will be devoted to analyzing the political parties in Jordan and the role of the Palestinians in these parties. This will constitute a prelude to an analysis of the nature of the Palestinian popular demands to the Jordanian regime during the period concerned, and the responses of the regime to such demands.

### **Political Parties in Jordan: 1949-1957<sup>1</sup>**

Before the unification of the West Bank and Transjordan, the latter had no ideologically based political parties<sup>2</sup>. All the political parties in Jordan were local and were operating from within the political system and not outside it<sup>3</sup>. The unification of the West Bank and Transjordan altered this

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<sup>1</sup> All political parties were banned in Jordan in April 1957, for information see pp. 229-230.

<sup>2</sup> Munib Madi and Suleiman Musa, op.cit., p. 597. (According to information provided by Abdel-Mohsen Abu-Maizer and Iyad Alami, op.cit., there was a small organization of the Al-Ba'th Party in Transjordan. However, this infant organization played no role in the political life of Transjordan until after the unification, when the Palestinians promoted the strength of the Al-Ba'th Party in Jordan to the status of the most powerful popular party which reached its zenith in 1957. For more information see, Kamel Abu-Jaber. The Arab Ba'th Socialist Party: History, Ideology, and Organization (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1966), pp. 16-17.

<sup>3</sup> Munib Madi and Suleiman Musa, op.cit., p. 597.

picture radically. The Palestinians introduced and promoted three other types of political parties into the political scene in Jordan. Those were: the Pan-Arab parties, the religious (Pan-Islamic) parties, and the communist parties. In this sense, the Palestinians introduced the extra-national political parties, some of which, like the al-Ba'th Party, had only a very weak presence in Transjordan until then – as far as active and important actors in the political life of Jordan during the period are concerned. Moreover, the Palestinians did not channel the activities of their political parties from within the political system in Jordan, but rather outside it, with the implicit, and sometimes explicit, aim of overthrowing the Jordanian regime.

During the period 1952 - April 1957, nine political parties were operating in Jordan, at one time or another. Some of these parties were banned by law (like the communist Party), and some others (like the Al-Ba'th Party) were not licensed at all. These political parties could be divided into two major types – the local parties and the extra-national parties.

### **The Local Political Parties**

This type of political party did not advocate any particular ideology and did not have a popular base organized in the form of a party organization. They were mainly a grouping of some political leaders and notables who enjoyed a certain amount of political influence and local support due either to their status as the leaders of their community, or to an accumulation of political influence derived

from the relatively long periods during which they served as ministers or prime ministers. The policies of such parties always conformed with those of the regime, and any conflict amongst them did not reflect a difference in policies or programmes, but rather the conflicting interests of the leaderships of those parties, since the entire existence of each of these parties revolved around the person or persons who founded the party, rather than around a party programme.

The local political parties in Jordan were exclusively Transjordanian, in so far as the chairman of each party and the majority of their executives were Transjordanian. There was some Palestinian participation in most of these parties, but such participation was of a token nature and served either as a symbol of Transjordanian- Palestinian unity, or the personal interests of those Palestinian members involved.

During the period 1952 – April 1957, Jordan had four local parties. Those were:

1. Al-Ittihad Al-Watani (National Union) Party: it was established in Amman and licensed to operate on November 17, 1952. its executive committee was composed of seven persons who were all Transjordanians<sup>1</sup>. The Party executive committee was headed by the frequent ministers and faithful

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<sup>1</sup> They were Falah Madadha, Hasan al-Yusef, Mohammad al-Sa'ad, Suleiman Al-Khalil, Abdullah al-Kulaib, Fahmi al-Ali, Subhi Zaid Kailani. For more information see, Munib Madi and Suleiman Musa, op.cit., p. 597.

supporter of the regime, Falah Madadha. The Party platform called for the promotion of the independence of Jordan, the consolidation of its freedom, and the raising of its social, cultural and economic standards. This Party however, had “no significant impact on the political life of Jordan”<sup>1</sup>.

2. Al-Ummah (Nation) Party: founded in Amman on July 7, 1954. it was headed by the frequent prime minister, Samir Rifa’e. Its executive committee was composed of 15 persons<sup>2</sup>, of which nine were Transjordanians, and six were Palestinians. The Party platform called for the liberation of the entire Arab world from colonialism, the restoration of Arab rights in Palestine, the promotion of personal freedoms as guaranteed by the Constitution and economic independence<sup>3</sup>. Three months later, two Palestinian members of the Party Executive Committee resigned<sup>4</sup>. A month after that, on November 14, 1954, the Executive Committee decided to dissolve the Party on the grounds that “it was unable to fulfill its duties towards the people”<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Munib Madi and Suleiman Musa, *op.cit.*, p. 598. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>2</sup> They were Samir Rifa’e, Abdel-Mahdi Shamayleh, Kamel Uraikat, Abdel-Rahman Siksek, Wahid Uran, Musa Kayyali, Asa’d Kamal, Ismail Bilbaisi, Anwar Nashashibi, Bishara Ghusaib, Said Ala’-Eddin, Subhi Zaid Kailani, Akef Fayez, Umar Matar, and Fawzi Jarrar.

<sup>3</sup> Munib Madi and Suleiman Musa, *op.cit.*, p. 601.

<sup>4</sup> They were Kamel Uraikat and Abdel-Rahman Siksek.

<sup>5</sup> Munib Madi and Suleiman Musa, *op.cit.*, p. 601. (trans. L.K.)

3. Al-Watani Al-Ishtiraki (Nationalist Socialist) Party: founded in Amman on July 7, 1954. the Party originated in the Jordanian Parliament – thirteen members of parliament who belonged to the Opposition decided to form a middle-of-the road political party. This Party was closest among the local parties of Transjordan to the extra-national political parties of the West Bank. There was a noticeable Palestinian participation in the Nationalist Socialist Party. The Palestinians accounted for half of the sixteen members of its executive committee. The first Secretary-General of the Party was a Transjordanian, Hazza Majali<sup>1</sup>, who was shortly succeeded by another Transjordanian, Suleiman Nabulsi<sup>2</sup>.

The platform of the Nationalist socialist Party stressed a belief in the constitution of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the monarchical regime, that the people of Jordan were part of the Arab nation, the need to liberate the people from poverty, illiteracy, illness and fear, the need to guarantee basic freedoms, and the need to liberate the Arab world from foreign influence<sup>3</sup>. Moreover, the Nationalist Socialist Party adopted Arab unity as a primary goal, with the unification of Jordan and Iraq as the first step. The choice of Iraq was justified, by the Nationalist Socialist Party, on the grounds that Iraq, as a wealthy country, would be able to

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<sup>1</sup> Majali resigned in October 1954.

<sup>2</sup> Hazza Majali, *op.cit.*, pp. 143-146.

<sup>3</sup> Munib Madi and Suleiman Musa, *op.cit.*, p. 600.

shoulder the burden of impoverished Jordan, that the ruling families in both countries were the same Hashemite family, and that the well-trained Iraqi and Jordanian armies, when unified, would constitute a very strong army<sup>1</sup>.

4. Al-Arabi Ad-Dusturi (Arab Constitutional) Party: founded and licensed in Amman on April 2, 1956. Its only executive committee consisted of twenty-two members of which eight were Palestinians. The platform of the party included the general political slogans of that time which called for Arab unity, the liberation of the Arab world from colonialism and imperialism, and the restoration of the Arab rights in Palestine<sup>2</sup>. However, “it was known that members of this Party were the supporters of Premier Tawfiq Abul-Huda”<sup>3</sup>. This Party was dissolved with the rest of the political parties in Jordan in April 1957, when the government issued a law dissolving and banning political parties.

### **The extra-National Political Parties**<sup>4</sup>

After the unification of the West Bank and Transjordan, Jordanian politics witnessed the emergence of extra-national political parties as active elements in the domestic politics of Jordan. Jordan had three types of extra-national political parties. These were the pan-Arab, the religious (Islamic), and the communist parties.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid. see also, Hazza Majali, op.cit., pp. 143-146.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 602.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>4</sup> For more information see, chapter Three, pp. 143-169.

With the exception of one pan-Arab party – Al-Ba’th, and one religious (Islamic) party – the Moslem Brotherhood Movement, the remaining extra-national political parties operating in Jordan during the period 1950-1957 were introduced and dominated by the Palestinians. Those were, the Arab Nationalist Movement, the Islamic Liberation Party (both were founded by Palestinians), and the Jordanian Communist Party. In the case of the Moslem Brotherhood Movement, although there were many Palestinians in its leadership in Jordan, the Transjordanians were able to dominate it. This was mainly due to the fact that, with the existence of alternatives, like the pan-Arab and the communist parties, the Moslem Brotherhood Movement was less appealing to the Palestinian in Jordan than, for example, to the Palestinians in Egypt who did not have similar alternatives<sup>1</sup>. In the case of the Arab Ba’th Socialist Party, on the other hand, in spite of the fact that, until 1952, the Transjordanians dominated the leadership and the rank-and-file of the Party<sup>2</sup>, the Palestinians soon outnumbered the Transjordanians and effectively dominated the Al-Ba’th Party in Jordan, the headquarters of which was in the city of Ramallah in the West Bank<sup>3</sup>.

The Palestinians in Jordan used the extra-national political parties as a medium through which to organize their efforts and to voice their demands and opposition to the Jordanian regime. In this

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter Three, pp. 148-150.

<sup>2</sup> Interviews with Abdel-Muhsen Abu-Maizer and Iyad Alami.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

respect, the Palestinian official and popular opposition were inseparable as the political parties were not only able, from time to time, to initiate and to lead demonstrations and rioting in the street, but at the same time to voice demands through their deputies in Parliament. Accordingly, while no specific mention of political parties will be made in the next few pages of this chapter, which will deal with demands of the Palestinians in Jordan. It should be borne in mind that the extra-national political parties in Jordan had always adopted these demands and fought for them both in the parliament and in the street.

### **The Palestinian Popular Demands: Nature and Responses**

During the period 1950-1967, the Palestinians in Jordan voiced certain demands which had both military and political bearings. The means used by the Palestinians to voice their demands varied from petitions and appeals presented directly to the government and the King, and through the press, the demonstrations and rioting, and finally through the passive attitude of non-participation by the majority of Palestinian nationalist leaders in Jordan in the government and in the parliamentary and municipal elections<sup>1</sup>.

The earliest demand voiced by the Palestinians in Jordan was for military training and the arming of the front-line villages<sup>2</sup>. This demand was strongly voiced after every Israeli attack on the front-line villages<sup>3</sup>. The

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<sup>1</sup> This started mainly in 1958; see, an interview with Hikmat Masri.

<sup>2</sup> Ad-Difa' Newspapers, Vol. XXI, No. 5529 (23 April 1954), p. 1;  
Ad-Difa' Newspaper, Vol. XXI, No. 5605 (23 July 1954), p. 1;  
Al-Jihad Newspaper (Jerusalem), Vol. II, No. 350 (18 September 1954), p. 2;  
Ad-Difa' Newspaper, Vol. XXI, No. 5638 (3 September 1954), p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

Palestinians also demanded that a ‘refugee army’ be formed in Jordan. In 1954, the then Jordanian Minister of Defence, Anwar Nuseibeh, argued against the formation of such an army on the grounds that “the refugees in Jordan are citizens”, and that “their status as refugees serves only a political purpose which aims at preserving their rights in Palestine”, according to the United Nations resolution 194 (III)<sup>1</sup>. The Palestinians, however, demanded their schools in Jordan should provide students with military training as part of their curricula. That demand received a limited response from the Jordanian government<sup>2</sup>. Less significant was the demand by the Palestinians that all front-line villages be equipped with medical centres to care for the wounded people. This demand was also a consequence of the frequent Israeli attacks on the front-line villages of the West Bank<sup>3</sup>.

On the political front, the Palestinians in Jordan demanded, most of all, that their status as refugees be protected from any attempts, whether by UNRWA, or by any other organization or state, to solve the Palestine refugee problem<sup>4</sup>. Other demands voiced by the Palestinians had immense political bearings on the foreign policy of Jordan, such as the demand on April 1, 1954, by 43 Palestinian notables from Jerusalem and Ramallah,

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<sup>1</sup> Ad-Difa’ Newspaper, Vol. XXI, No. 5605 (23 July 1954), p. 1. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ad-Difa’ Newspaper, Vol. XX, No. 5519 (12 April 1954), p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Ad-Difa’ Newspaper, Vol. XX, No. 5513 (5 April 1954), p. 4; Al-Awdah Newspaper, Vol.1, No. 3 (13 November 1952), p. 3; Al-Awdah Newspaper, Vol.1, No. 8 (18 December 1952), p. 1.

asking the government to establish diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc countries “as a sign of appreciation for the pro-Arab stands taken by these countries in the United Nations”<sup>1</sup>. In other instances, the Palestinians in Jordan demanded that Jordan be merged with another Arab country such as Syria or Iraq<sup>2</sup>, and that the Arab armies, including the Jordanian army, be united together under a unified Arab command<sup>3</sup>.

In response to these and other demands made by the Palestinians, the Jordanian regime adopted policies which were designed to neutralize or to counteract such demands, rather than to fulfill them wholly or in part. In this context, during the early years of the unification of Transjordan and the West Bank, the Jordanian regime adopted – in addition to its policies of suppression, “tough punishment”<sup>4</sup> and discrimination<sup>5</sup>, a policy which was designed to create a new enemy for the Palestinians in Jordan. The new ‘enemy’ was meant to serve as a means of diverting attention away from the policies of the Jordanian regime. This circumstantial evidence suggests that the Jordanian regime chose to capitalize on the already established Palestinian suspicion and mistrust towards UNRWA, by introducing UNRWA as the enemy of the Palestinians in Jordan. In so doing, the Jordanian regime introduced itself as the

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<sup>1</sup> Ad-Difa’ Newspaper, Vol. XXI, No. 5534 (2 April 1954), pp. 1 & 4. (trans. L.K.).

<sup>2</sup> Ad-Difa’ Newspaper, Vol. XXIII, No. 6414 (21 March 1957), p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Al-Awdah Newspaper, Vol.1, No. 5 (27 November 1952), pp. 1 & 4.

<sup>4</sup> See, pp. 186-188.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

protector of the Palestinians from that enemy-UNRWA. The Jordanian regime blamed UNRWA for any misfortunes or shortages about which the Palestine refugees in Jordan used to complain<sup>1</sup>. In one instance, for example, the Jordanian Minister of Health, Mustafa Khalifa, accused UNRWA of putting obstacles in the road to the opening of a tuberculosis hospital in Nablus, and that the Jordanian Government was losing the annual rent of that hospital as a result of UNRWA's attitude<sup>2</sup>. In addition, the Jordanian governments would support the Palestine refugees in Jordan in any of their complaints or rejections of UNRWA policies. In some instances, such as, the refusal of the Palestine refugees in Jordan, to allow UNRWA to hold a census of the refugees, such an attitude was unjustifiable because the holding of such a census would not have effected the status of the Palestine refugees or the Palestine Problem as such<sup>3</sup>.

The Jordanian regime adopted other policies as a reaction to the Palestinian political attitudes and demands. Such policies included electoral fraud aimed at promoting the chances of pro-government elements, which resulted, on numerous occasions, in demonstrations and rioting in protest as the electoral fraud was often undisguised<sup>4</sup>. In

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Jihad Newspaper (Jerusalem) Vol. II, no. 423 (23 December 1954), p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> An interview with Yusef Rida: Nablus, 2 October, 1972.

Yusef Rida: Born in Tarshina in Palestine in 1923. Had worked with UNRWA since 1953. A senior UNRWA employee and Area Officer in many parts of Jordan since 1957.

<sup>4</sup> Ad-Difa' Newspaper, Vol. XXI, No. 5677 (19 October 1954), p. 1.

other instances, the Jordanian regime adopted a policy of buying-off Palestinian demands. In this context, the Palestinian demand for military training and the arming of the front-line villages was usually accepted by the Jordanian government and preliminary token steps were initiated on a limited scale and for a short duration in order to defuse public agitation. In 1954, for example, under the pressure of the Palestinian demands the government agreed to incorporate military training into the curricula of the high schools in Jordan. The government decided that this programme would begin with the training of 180 students – that was, however, the beginning and the end of the government programme<sup>1</sup>. The promotion of certain local Palestinian leaders, who were loyal to the Jordanian regime, was another tactic which the Jordanian regime adopted in its efforts to control and to curb Palestinian political dissatisfaction. Accordingly, whenever it wanted to adopt an unpopular policy or to take harsh measures against the people, the Jordanian regime would put some of its Palestinian supporters in charge of the implementation of such policies.

To conclude, this case study was conducted with the aim of exposing the situation under which the Palestinians in Jordan lived between 1949 and 1967. The Palestinians in Jordan were often regarded as being in the most favourable position when compared to their Palestinians brethren in the other Host-States, who did not hold the citizenship of their

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<sup>1</sup> Ad-Difa' Newspaper, Vol. XXI, No. 5605 (26 July 1954), p. 1.

respective Host-States, and who, consequently, enjoyed very few rights and often no privileges. This chapter demonstrates that the Palestinians in Jordan, though citizens, were, nevertheless, suppressed and discriminated against all the time. The following chapter will expose, on the same lines, the situation of the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, which was a Palestinian territory administrated by Egypt. These two case-studies should provide in terms of their information and conclusions, an important contribution to the analysis of the factors which led to the emergence of the Palestinian identity, which will be dealt in Chapter Six.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE PALESTINIANS IN THE GAZA STRIP: A CASE STUDY, 1949 – 1967<sup>1</sup>

“If the nine hundred thousand Palestinian Arab refugees are a bomb, the two hundred thousand of them who are languishing in the Gaza Strip are this bomb’s explosive warhead”<sup>2</sup>.

Arnold J. Toynbee

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<sup>1</sup> Very little has been written or published on the Gaza Strip. Moreover, no data or official statistics were released by the Egyptian Government about the Gaza Strip except for their official decrees. Besides, the collections of local newspaper, Al-Tahrir (Liberation) and Akhbar Falastin (Palestine News) were destroyed during the 1956 and 1967 Wars. Accordingly, and unless otherwise specified, the information in this chapter is based on the following interviews:

1. An interview with Munir el-Rayyes: Gaza, 14 November, 1972. Munir el-Rayyes: Born in Gaza in 1915. Studied in Palestine and Lebanon. Member of the city council of Gaza from 1945-1955. Mayor of Gaza from 1955-1965.
2. An interview with Zuhair el-Rayyes: Gaza, 14 November, 1972. Zuhair el-Rayyes: Born in Nazereth in 1933. Graduated in Law from the University of Cairo in 1954. A senior journalist and founder of the Tahrir daily newspaper in Gaza. Member of the Executive Committee of the Palestinian Arab Nationalist Union which was established in Gaza in 1959. Member of the Legislative Council of the Gaza Strip from 1961-1964. Founder of “Akhbar Falestin” daily newspaper in Gaza in 1963. Member of the First Palestinian National Congress held in Jerusalem in 1964, and Assistant Secretary-General of the Union of Arab Journalists until 1967.
3. An interview with Hayder Abdel-Shafi: Gaza, 15 November 1972. Hayder Abdel-Shafi: Born in Gaza in 1919. Graduated in medicine from the American University of Beirut in 1943. Member of the Executive Council of the Gaza Strip from 1957-1960, when he resigned. Chairman of the Second Legislative Council of the Gaza Strip from 1962-1964. Member of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization from 1964-1965 when he resigned.
4. An interview with Farid Abu Wardah: Gaza, 15 November 1972.
5. An interview with Hamdi Hussein: Gaza, 17 September 1972.

<sup>2</sup> Arnold J. Toynbee. East to West: A Journey Round The World (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 207.

The status of the Gaza Strip in the aftermath of the 1948-War was different from that of the West Bank. Unlike the Transjordanian regime, the Egyptians made no attempt to annex the Gaza Strip, and equally, the inhabitants of the Gaza Strip, though welcoming the Egyptian presence on their territory<sup>1</sup>, did not ask that the Gaza Strip be unified with Egypt<sup>2</sup>. They felt rather that “the parts of Palestine under Arab control must not be divided and annexed to other Arab States”, and that “whatever territory of Palestine the Arabs had under their control must be kept as a Palestinian territory”, and that “the Palestinian character of such territories must be preserved as a means towards keeping the name of Palestine alive”<sup>3</sup>.

The Egyptian presence in the Gaza Strip during the period 1949-1967 was a result of the Egyptian military participation in the 1948-War in Palestine. When the war in Palestine came to a halt, and the armistice was signed in 1949, the Egyptian army was in control of a part of southern Palestine which came to be known as the Gaza Strip.

The Palestinians in the Gaza Strip welcomed the Egyptian presence for several reasons<sup>4</sup>. The Palestinians in the Gaza Strip were aware of their vulnerability to any Israeli attack. Accordingly,

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<sup>1</sup> Interviews with Munir al-Rayyes, Zuhair el-Rayyes, Hayder Abdel-Shafi, Farid Abu-Wardah and Hamdi Hussein.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> An interview with Munir el-Rayyes. (trans. L.K.) Also see, an interview with Hamdi Hussein.

<sup>4</sup> Interviews with Hamdi Hussein, Munir el-Rayyes, Zuhair el-Rayyes, Hayder Abdel-Shafi and Farid Abu-Wardah.

they welcomed the Egyptian military presence in the Gaza Strip as a protective measure against any attempt by Israel to occupy the Strip<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, the confusion and the collapse which followed the 1948 defeat, and the chaos which accompanied the influx of thousands of Palestinian refugees into the Gaza Strip was made more difficult with the absence of a local administrative machinery to replace the British Mandate. In this respect, the Egyptian administrative presence provided the only alternative. In addition, the Gaza Strip, with its resources and location<sup>2</sup>, could hardly qualify as a viable state. Furthermore, the inhabitants of the Gaza Strip, both refugees and non-refugees, believed that the outcome of the 1948-War would be a temporary thing, and that the situation in Palestine would shortly be restored to its pre-1948 order<sup>3</sup>. The Egyptian administrative presence on the Gaza Strip would therefore be a temporary arrangement. Finally, the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, “who always expressed their strong belief in Pan-Arabism and Arab unity”<sup>4</sup>, welcomed the Egyptian presence on the Strip as a manifestation of the Pan-Arab bond, and as an Arab commitment to help in defending the Gaza Strip and, eventually, in ‘liberating the occupied parts of Palestine’<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> See, Chapter Two, pp. 68-69.

<sup>3</sup> Interviews with Hayder Abdel-Shafi and Munir el-Rayyes.

<sup>4</sup> An interview with Hayder Abdel-shafi (trans. L.K.); also see, interviews with Munir el-Rayyes, Zuhair el-Rayyes, Farid Abu-Wardah and Hamdi Hussein.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

The remaining part of this chapter will be devoted to an analysis of the Palestinian-Egyptian relations in the Gaza Strip in two major areas: first, the Egyptian administrative changes in the Gaza Strip and the development of the institutions of Palestinian self-government in the Gaza Strip during the period 1949-1967; second, the political attitudes and activities of the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip during the period 1949-1967, which will also cover political parties and para-military activities.

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### **Administrative changes in the Gaza Strip: 1949 – 1967.**

The analysis of the administrative changes in the Gaza Strip which were introduced by the Egyptian Government during the period 1949-1967 will be divided into four periods. The first period starts in 1949 and ends in 1952 with the Egyptian military take-over of 23 July, 1952. The second period starts in 1953 and ends in 1956 with the Israeli occupation of the Gaza Strip in October 1956. The third period starts in March 1957, when Israel withdrew from the Gaza Strip and ends in 1964 with the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization. The Fourth period starts in 1964 and ends in 1967 when Israel occupied the Gaza Strip.

### **The First Period: 1949 – 1952**

During the period 1949-1952, the monarchical regime in Egypt did not fulfill the needs of the Gaza Strip, nor did it give the problems

confronting its inhabitants the necessary attention<sup>1</sup>. No administrative reforms, other than the introduction of the Egyptian Military Government, were made.

Although the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip did not demand that a Palestinian state be proclaimed on the Strip<sup>2</sup>, the Egyptians, nevertheless, made no attempt to establish any institutions of Palestinian self-government on the Strip<sup>3</sup>. All the senior posts controlling education, judiciary, finance and internal affairs in the Gaza Strip were occupied by Egyptians<sup>4</sup>. During this period, the Egyptian administration in the Gaza Strip was “corrupt”, “inefficient” and “suppressive”<sup>5</sup>, and in so being, it was “a reflection of the corrupt, inefficient and suppressive monarchical regime in Egypt”<sup>6</sup>. Under the circumstances, it was inevitable that the inhabitants of the Gaza Strip developed an ‘underdog’ feeling, and that a slave-master image of the relationship between the Palestinians and the Egyptians in the Gaza Strip was established and confirmed<sup>7</sup>. This state-of-affairs invited and received Palestinians disapproval or resentment. Although this

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<sup>1</sup> Interviews with Hayder Abdel-Shafi, Hamdi Husseini, Farid Abu-Wardah and Zuhair el-Rayyes.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. (see Chapter Six, pp. 275-278 for information on the all-Palestine Government which will not be discussed in the chapter because it was neither created by the inhabitants of the Gaza Strip, nor meant to be limited to the Gaza strip. It was also a product of the Arab Cold War at that time).

<sup>3</sup> Interviews with Hayder Abdel-shafi, Farid Abu-Wardah and Hamdi Husseini.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

resentment never reached the level of asking the Egyptians to leave the Strip, nor even wishing them to do so<sup>1</sup>, yet, the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip made their disapproval or objection to certain policies or actions known to the Egyptian administration in the Strip<sup>2</sup>. Such Palestinian attitudes, which were expressed with the aim of effecting a change in certain policies or measures adopted by the Egyptian administration in the Strip\*, were seen by the Egyptian officials in the Strip as acts directed against the Egyptians at large, and as a reflection of the Palestinian hatred of the Egyptians and as a sign of resentment at their presence in the Strip<sup>3</sup>. These impressions, it seems, were always conveyed by the Egyptian officials in the Strip to the Egyptian Government, which resulted in creating a feeling in Cairo that the Egyptian presence in the Gaza Strip was unwelcomed by the Palestinian<sup>4</sup>. This reflected itself in a state of Egyptian uneasiness towards the Gaza Strip, and consequently lack of willingness to devote enough time to solve the problems confronting its inhabitants<sup>5</sup>. During this period, nevertheless, there was always a strong Palestinian belief “that Israel poses a joint danger to all

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<sup>1</sup> Interviews with Munir el-Rayyes, Hayder Abdel-Shafi, Zuhair el-Rayyes, Farid Abu-Wardah and Hamdi Hussein.

<sup>2</sup> Interviews with Hayder Abdel-Shafi, Farid Abu-Wardah and Hamdi Hussein.

\* Such policies and measures will be analyzed as we proceed.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> An interview with Hayder Abdel-Shafi.

<sup>5</sup> Interviews with Hayder Abdel-Shafi, Farid Abu-Wardah and Hamdi Hussein.

Arabs, and that Arab cooperation is essential for achieving the joint goals”<sup>1</sup>. However, the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip hoped that a change in the Egyptian regime might bring improvements in the Egyptian administration of the Strip<sup>2</sup>.

### **The Second Period: 1952 – 1956**

The change in the Egyptian regime which the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip hoped would come about took place on July 23, 1952. The Palestinians in the Gaza Strip welcomed the Egyptian Revolution. Although the new Egyptian regime had numerous domestic problems to solve, there was, nevertheless, an early change in the attitude of the new Egyptian regime towards the Gaza Strip. This change was mainly manifested in the new interest which the Egyptian regime expressed in matters related to the Strip and the problems confronting its inhabitants<sup>3</sup>. This new Egyptian interest was shortly translated into deeds when, on December 12, 1953, a constitution for the Gaza Strip was decreed by the Egyptian Government. In addition to guaranteeing the basic principles of equality and freedom, the constitution provided for the establishment of executive, legislative and judicial authorities in the Gaza Strip<sup>4</sup>. According to the same constitution, the Gaza Strip was to be governed by an Egyptian General Administrative Governor\* to be appointed by the President

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<sup>1</sup> An interview with Hayder Abdel-Shafi. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>2</sup> Interviews with Hayder Abdel-Shafi and Farid Abu-Wardah.

<sup>3</sup> Interviews with Munir el-Rayyes and Hayder Abdel-Shafi.

<sup>4</sup> The full text of this constitution is published in, Arif el-Arif. *The Tragedy In Palestine*, Vol. V, *op.cit.*, pp. 1019-1025.

\* He used to be called General Military Governor.

of Egypt. The constitution also stipulated the formation of an Executive Council to assist the General Administrative Governor in running the daily affairs of the Strip. This Council was to be composed of the General Administrative Governor as chairman, and the directors of the departments of justice, finance, domestic affairs and public security, social affairs and refugees, culture and education, and the department of health. The directors of these departments were to be appointed by the Egyptian Minister of War<sup>1</sup>. The directors of at least half of these departments, especially the important ones like finance, domestic affairs and public security, and justice, were always Egyptians<sup>2</sup>. The constitution granted the Executive council very little powers, and kept most of the executive and administrative powers in the hands of the General Administrative Governor of the Gaza Strip<sup>3</sup>.

The Legislative Council which the 1953 Constitution of the Gaza Strip envisaged was to be composed of the General Administrative Governor as chairman, members of the Executive Council, the Mayor of the City of Gaza and three of the members of its city council to be chosen by the city council itself, the Mayor of the City of Khan Yunis and three of the members of its city council, and finally six persons who represented the professions of medicine, teaching, law, commerce, agriculture and industry

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<sup>1</sup> Arif el-Arif, op.cit., p. 1021.

<sup>2</sup> Interviews with Hayder Abdel-Shafi and Hamdi Hussein.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter II, Articles 26-29 of the constitution, in, Arif el-Arif, op.cit., p. 1022.

to be chosen and appointed by the Executive Council<sup>1</sup>. The Legislative Council was meant to act as the parliament of the Gaza Strip. However, the legislative powers of this Council were severely limited. According to article 21 and 34 of the same Constitution, the General Administrative Governor of the Gaza Strip had the right to veto any of the laws passed by the Legislative Council<sup>2</sup>.

The Constitution also affirmed the independence of the judicial body in the Gaza Strip, and stated (article 41) that the appointment of the High Court Judge (Egyptian) should be by a Presidential decree, and that of other judges in the Gaza Strip by the Minister of War<sup>3</sup>. The constitution also stated that Egypt exercised, through the office of the Egyptian Minister of War, direct control over financial and military matters related to the Gaza Strip<sup>4</sup>.

The Egyptian administration in the Gaza Strip implemented those provisions of the constitution related to the formation of the Executive Council and the judicial body. However, the Legislative Council was not formed until 1958<sup>5</sup>. Moreover, the implementation of the provisions related to guaranteeing the basic individual freedoms were not fully implemented, especially in matters related to freedom of expression,

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<sup>1</sup> See, Chapter III, Article 30 of the constitution, in, Arif el-Arif, op.cit., p. 1022.

<sup>2</sup> Arif el-Arif, op.cit., p. 1022.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 1023.

<sup>4</sup> See, Chapter V and VI, Articles 44-49 of the constitution, in Arif el-Arif, op.cit., pp. 1024-1025.

<sup>5</sup> Interviews with Munir el-Rayyes, Zuhair el-Rayyes, Hayder Abdel-Shafi and Hamdi Hussein.

association, and political activities which was also the case, although less harshly, in Egypt<sup>1</sup>.

In addition to the introduction of this constitution, the new Egyptian regime made other contributions which were meant to facilitate the solution or ease the problems confronting the inhabitants of the Gaza Strip. In other instances, some of these contributions were in response to popular demands in the Gaza Strip. In this context, the biggest contribution made by the Egyptian administration was in the field of higher education<sup>2</sup>. Students from the Gaza Strip were accepted at Egyptian universities and institutes of higher education, and were given special grants to support themselves during their studies in Egypt<sup>3</sup>. In 1954, and upon a request made by the Mayor of Gaza, Munir el-Rayyes, the Egyptian Minister of War agreed to admit some Palestinians from the Gaza Strip into the Academy of War and the Academy of Police. Four Palestinians were admitted into each Academy<sup>4</sup>. In 1955, upon a further request by the same mayor, the number of Palestinians admitted into each academy was raised from four to fifteen<sup>5</sup>.

In spite of all these changes during the period 1952-1956, there were still many areas of disagreement between the inhabitants of the Gaza Strip

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<sup>1</sup> Interviews with Farid Abu-Wardah, Zuhair el-Rayyes, Hayder Abdel-Shafi and Hamdi Hussein.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., also see, an interview with Munir el-Rayyes.

<sup>3</sup> An interview with Zuhair el-Rayyes. (el-Rayyes was among the students who studied at Egyptian universities during the period 1950-1954.)

<sup>4</sup> An interview with Munir el-Rayyes.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

and the Egyptian administration there. Among the major areas of disagreement were those related to association, political freedoms, and the rights and possibilities for the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip to have full control over running their domestic affairs, in consultation with the Egyptian administration<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, the change of regime in Egypt did not bring about a complete change in the Egyptian personnel in the Gaza Strip. Accordingly, the old established impression formed by the Egyptian officials in the Gaza Strip during the period 1949-1952, which translated any sign of Palestinian disapproval or discontent regarding any policy or measure adopted by the Egyptian administration in the Strip as being acts directed against the Egyptian presence there, and as a reflection of the Palestinian hatred and resentment of the Egyptians, remained unabated. It was, therefore, inevitable that the period 1952-1956 should witness a further growth in the Egyptian misunderstanding of the attitudes of the inhabitants of the Gaza Strip, and consequently in the state of uneasiness between the Palestinians and the Egyptians in the Gaza Strip<sup>2</sup>.

### **The Occupation Period: October 1956 – March 1957**

The Israeli occupation of the Gaza Strip during the period October 1956 – March 1957, had two major points of impact on the relations between the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and the Egyptian regime, and consequently the Egyptian administration in the

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<sup>1</sup> An interview with Hayder Abdel-Shafi.

<sup>2</sup> Egyptian-Sponsored raids inside Israel will be discussed later. See, pp. 266-268.

Strip itself.

First, during the occupation period, the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip adopted a pro-Egyptian attitude in the sense that they made every effort to help the Egyptian officials and civilians who were trapped in the Gaza Strip, whether through hiding them in their homes despite the dangers involved, or through sending them food and whatever they might need in their detention camps<sup>1</sup>. This attitude helped, for the first time since 1949, to prove to the Egyptian officials and personnel who were trapped in the Gaza Strip, that the attitude of the inhabitants of the Gaza Strip towards them was not that of hatred and resentment.

Second, the attitude of the inhabitants of the Gaza Strip towards the Egyptian regime during the occupation period left no doubts in the minds of the Egyptians that they (the Palestinians) did genuinely support the Egyptian presence on the Strip. The most striking expression of this Palestinian support to the Egyptian administration of the Strip took place on the eve of the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, when for seven consecutive days, stretching from March 7 – March 14, 1957, the inhabitants of the Gaza Strip demonstrated against the “internationalization”<sup>\*</sup> of the

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<sup>1</sup> Interviews with Munir el-Rayyes, Zuhair el-Rayyes, Hayder Abdel-Shafi, Hamdi Hussein, and Farid Abu-Wardah.

<sup>\*</sup> This meant putting the Gaza Strip under a United Nations administration which was one of the conditions for the Israeli withdrawal from the Strip in 1957.

Gaza Strip, and in support of the return of the Egyptian administration to the Strip<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, the inhabitants of the Gaza Strip called upon President Nasser of Egypt to appoint and send, immediately, an Egyptian Governor to the Strip<sup>2</sup>, who, upon his arrival to the Strip, was wildly welcomed by the Palestinians<sup>3</sup>.

### **The Third Period: 1957 – 1964**

The short period of Israeli occupation of the Gaza Strip had an important impact on improving the relations between the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and the Egyptian administration there. The awareness, by the Egyptians, of the high degree of Palestinian support to the Egyptian administrative presence minimized, to a great extent, the old established complexes, and encouraged the Egyptians to allow more Palestinian participation in the administration of the Gaza Strip. Accordingly, the period 1957-1964 was a period of relaxation in the relations between the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and the Egyptian administration. This relaxation was immediately manifested in a more cordial and flexible attitude by the Egyptian officials in the Strip towards the

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<sup>1</sup> Interviews with Munir el-Rayyes, Zuhair el-Rayyes, Hayder Abdel-Shafi, Hamdi Hussein, and Farid Abu-Wardah.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. (This request was made by the Mayor of Gaza, Munir el-Rayyes and was delivered to President Nasser by an Egyptian journalist, Amin Abdel-Mu'men, who was among the first three Egyptians to enter the Gaza Strip after the Israeli withdrawal. For more information see, interviews with Zuhair el-Rayyes and Munir el-Rayyes).

<sup>3</sup> Interviews with Munir el-Rayyes, Zuhair el-Rayyes, Hayder Abdel-Shafi, Hamdi Hussein, and Farid Abu-Wardah.

Palestinians<sup>1</sup>. This was due to the fact that after the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and the restoration of the Egyptian administration, which was not accompanied by the restoration of the Egyptian military presence in the Strip, it was clear for the Egyptians that their return to the Strip was mainly due to the determination of the Palestinians, and the old established Egyptian belief that the Egyptian presence in the Gaza Strip was resented and hated by the Palestinian, was, therefore, refuted. This led the newly appointed General Administrative Governor of the Strip to declare, for the first time, that he was “the servant of the people of the Gaza Strip”<sup>2</sup>.

On the administrative level, the relaxation in Palestinian-Egyptian relations in the Gaza Strip was manifested in the implementation of the provision of the constitution which stipulated the formation of the Legislative Council<sup>3</sup>. The First Legislative Council of the Gaza Strip was formed in the spring of 1958<sup>4</sup>. All members of the First Legislative Council were appointed: it was composed of the General Administrative Governor as chairman, members of the Executive Council, and twenty other persons chosen and appointed by the General Administrative Governor<sup>5</sup>. Its powers, however, were severely limited

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> An interview with Farid Abu-Wardah (trans. L.K.). Also see, interviews with Zuhair el-Rayyes, Hayder Abdel-Shafi and Hamdi Hussein.

<sup>3</sup> See, pp. 253-255.

<sup>4</sup> An interview with Hayder Abdel-Shafi. (Abdel-Shafi was a member of the First Legislative Council, and Chairman of the Second Legislative Council).

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

and overshadowed by the General Administrative Governor who was both its chairman and the chairman of the Executive Council, and who had the right to veto any of the laws or decisions passed by the Legislative Council<sup>1</sup>. The First Legislative Council was short-lived in that it did not last for more than a year.

In the summer of 1962, the Second Legislative Council was formed. However, between mid 1959 and the summer of 1962, the First Legislative Council was not functioning because the General Administrative governor simply did not convene it<sup>2</sup>. The Second Legislative Council was formed on better constitutional bases than its predecessor. Half the members of the Second Legislative Council were elected by the people of the Gaza Strip and the other half were appointed. Half of the appointed members of the Second Legislative Council were members of the Executive Council, and the other half were chosen by the General Administrative Governor<sup>3</sup>. The chairman of the Second Legislative Council was elected by the members of the Council<sup>4</sup>. The powers of the Second Legislative Council were stronger than those of its predecessor, and the General Administrative Governor did not have the power to veto any of its decisions<sup>5</sup>. The Second Legislative Council functioned from 1962-1964, after which it was not convened by the General Administrative Governor. Among the probable reasons for not convening the Second Legislative Council during the period

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

1964-1967 was the feeling, by the Egyptian Administration, that “the Second Legislative Council exercised its right to question and observe the Executive more vigorously than what was expected, and probably planned for it, by the Egyptian Administration”<sup>1</sup>.

The third and final administrative area in which the relaxation in Palestinian-Egyptian relations was manifested was that of political organization\*. In 1959, after a year of consultations in the Gaza Strip, the Palestinian Arab Nationalist Union was formed on similar lines to that of Egypt and Syria\*\*. The Palestinian Arab Nationalist Union was meant to serve as the only political organization for the Gaza Strip and as a general framework for political activities in the Strip<sup>2</sup>. In 1959, after consultations with the leading personalities of the Gaza Strip, the General Administrative Governor of the Gaza Strip appointed the First Higher Executive Committee of the Palestinian Arab Nationalist Union<sup>3</sup>. This Committee then started to organize the different formations and infrastructure

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid. (trans. L.K.)

\* The inclusion of the Palestinian Arab Nationalist Union (P.A.N.U.) under this part which deals with administrative changes in the Gaza Strip and not under the forthcoming part which deals with political attitudes and activities of the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip was determined by the fact that the Gaza Strip was determined by the fact that the P.A.N.U. was created by the Egyptian Administration, and was, functionally, a part of the institutions of the Egyptian administration in the Strip See, pp. 263-271.

\*\* At that time, Egypt and Syria were merged into the United Arab Republic.

<sup>2</sup> This does not necessarily mean that it was so; see, pp. 265-271.

<sup>3</sup> An interview with Zuhair el-Rayyes. (el-Rayyes was a member of the First Higher Executive Committee of the Palestinian Arab Nationalist Union).

of the Palestinian Arab Nationalist Union<sup>1</sup>. It was, therefore, the reserve of the usual process in that the initiative came from the top rather than from the bottom. However, when the First Higher Executive Committee completed the process of building the infrastructure of the Palestinian Arab Nationalist Union, it was dissolved, and the Second Higher Executive Committee was appointed from among the members of the General Assembly of the Union who constituted the broad elected base of the Palestinian Arab Nationalist Union<sup>2</sup>. Moreover, the elected members of the Second Legislative Council were supposed, by law, to have been members of the General Assembly of the Palestinian Arab Nationalist Union<sup>3</sup>. The Second Higher Executive Committee survived until May 1964, when the First Palestine National Congress of the Palestine Liberation Organization was held, after which the Second Higher Executive Committee decided to dissolve the Palestinian Arab Nationalist Union<sup>4</sup>.

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### **The Period 1964 – 1967**

In May 1964, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was established. Accordingly, the Gaza Strip, as a Palestinian territory administrated by Egypt, was destined to witness some administrative changes such as the dissolution of the Palestinian Arab Nationalist Union, in addition to other administrative changes which were meant to reflect

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

the new realities in the Gaza Strip as a result of the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization as a representative of the Palestinian entity in 1964. Accordingly, no discussion of this period will be attempted now as it will be covered under the activities of the Palestine Liberation Organization in the Gaza Strip, which will be dealt with as we proceed<sup>1</sup>.

### **Political Attitudes and Activities of the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip: 1949-1967**

This part concerns the political parties in the Gaza strip, in addition to para-military activities and the attitude of the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip towards the major political issues which they had to face. Moreover, this part will attempt to shed light on the attitude of the Egyptian administration in the Gaza Strip towards Palestinian political and para-military activities during the whole period.

#### **The Period 1949 – 1952**

During this period, the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, who were shocked and stunned with the outcome of the 1948-War, were preoccupied with securing the basic necessities of life, whether in terms of food or shelter, and no serious political activities were therefore undertaken<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> See, Chapter Six, pp. 299-321.

<sup>2</sup> Interviews with Munir el-Rayyes, Hamdi Hussein, Hayder Abdel-Shafi and Farid Abu-Wardah.

The political forces present in the Gaza Strip at that time were the remnants of some of the traditional Palestinian forces such as al-Arabi (Arab) Party, the Arab Higher Committee<sup>1</sup> and the Palestinian Communist Party. During the period 1949-1952, the Palestinian Communists were repressed by the Egyptian authorities in the Gaza Strip<sup>2</sup>. Many of them were detained on the grounds that the stand of the Palestinian Communist Party in 1947 and 1948, when it endorsed and advocated the partition plan, and adopted, therefore, an anti-war attitude, was considered to be a traitorous stand and a sell-out to the Zionists. This period witnessed, too, the beginning of the spread of the Muslim Brotherhood Movement in the Gaza Strip<sup>3</sup>. However, all through the period 1949-1952, political parties and political activities by the inhabitants of the Gaza Strip, which in any case not surprisingly were very little, were not tolerated and were severely hit by the Egyptian authorities in the Strip<sup>4</sup>.

The most significant political development in the Gaza Strip during this period was the formation of the All-Palestine Government<sup>5</sup>. However, the presence of this Government in the Gaza Strip was very short, and thus, it could not play any role in shaping the events which took place in the Gaza Strip over the subsequent two decades<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> See, Chapter Two, pp. 49-52.

<sup>2</sup> Interviews with Hamdi Hussein, Zuhair el-Rayyes, Hayder Abdel-Shafi and Farid Abu-Wardah.

<sup>3</sup> See, Chapter Three, pp. 147-150, 151-153.

<sup>4</sup> Interviews with Zuhair el-Rayyes, Hayder Abdel-Shafi, Farid Abu-Wardah, and Hamdi Hussein.

<sup>5</sup> For more information on the All-Palestine Government, see, Chapter Six, pp. 275-278.

<sup>6</sup> For more information on the reasons behind the failure of the All-Palestine Government see, ibid.

## **The Period 1952 – 1956**

This period witnessed a general move among the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip towards political activities. This was due to two main factors. First, four years after the ‘catastrophe’ the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip seemed to have absorbed the shock which they experienced immediately after the ‘catastrophe’<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, during those four years, the majority of the Palestinians were, more or less, able to secure their very basic needs of life, a thing which the majority of the Palestine refugees lacked in the period immediately after the catastrophe. Second, the Egyptian Revolution of 1952 provided a relatively more relaxed atmosphere in the Gaza Strip<sup>2</sup>, and the Palestinians there were thus able, though always unofficially and illegally, to undertake some sort of political activity and to join political parties. Besides, the change of regime in Egypt stirred the hopes of the Palestinians that a new era in Arab politics might have started, and that the ‘liberation of Palestine’ could thus be speeded up.

During this period, the spread of the Muslim Brotherhood Movement was in earnest, and in 1954, it was the single most powerful party in the Gaza Strip<sup>3</sup>. However, when in the summer of 1954, members of the Muslim Brotherhood Movement (MBM) shot at

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter Two, pp. 68-70, 80-82.

<sup>2</sup> See, pp. 252-255.

<sup>3</sup> For more information on the reasons behind the spread of the Muslim Brotherhood Movement in the Gaza Strip, see, Chapter Three, pp. 148-150.

President Nasser of Egypt, which resulted in the banning of the MBM in Egypt and a hunt for its members, the Egyptian administration in the Gaza Strip followed suit<sup>1</sup>. The hunt for the members of the MBM in the Gaza Strip was, however, milder and slower, although such mildness and delay never happened when other groups, such as the communists, were hunted in the Gaza Strip<sup>2</sup>. In spite of this hunt, the MBM remained, until 1956, the biggest party in the Gaza Strip. However, towards the end of this period, 1952-1956, the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party<sup>3</sup>, and to a lesser degree, the Arab Nationalist Movement<sup>4</sup>, started to gain support in the Gaza Strip.

This period had also witnessed the start of Egyptian-sponsored Gaza – based guerrilla operations inside Israel. The launching of these operations was sometimes portrayed by Egyptian officials as being in response to the demands of the inhabitants of the Gaza Strip<sup>5</sup>. It is, however, believed that these guerrilla operations were meant to contain and to channel Palestinian-initiated raids under Egyptian command, and to use such guerrilla operations as a means of Egyptian retaliation to Israeli raids as well as for intelligence purposes.

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<sup>1</sup> Interviews with Hamdi Hussein, Zuhair el-Rayyes, Hayder Abdel-Shafi and Farid Abu-Wardah.

<sup>2</sup> This was mainly due to the sympathetic attitude of many of the Egyptian officials and army officers stationed in the Gaza Strip towards the Muslim Brotherhood Movement. See, an interview with Zuhair el-Rayyes.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter Three, pp. 157-160, 162-169.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 161-162.

<sup>5</sup> Interviews with Hayder Abdel-Shafi, Farid Abu-Wardah and Zuhair el-Rayyes.

According to available information, the Egyptian decision to start guerrilla operations inside Israel was taken sometime in 1953<sup>1</sup>. The entire command of the guerrillas was Egyptian, while the guerrillas themselves were all Palestinians<sup>2</sup>. The Egyptians exercised strict control over the guerrilla operations, and placed all the guerrillas under observation in an effort to prevent them from launching any operations on their own initiative inside Israel. Moreover, during the same period, the Egyptians searched for, jailed and sometimes shot many Palestinians, who were mainly members of the Muslim Brotherhood Movement, who were either attempting to infiltrate into Israel, or were returning from there after they had completed an operation. Those Palestinian guerrillas who were not under the Egyptian command, if caught by the Egyptians, were often accused of being spies for Israel<sup>3</sup>.

The guerrilla operations from the Gaza strip reached a climax in 1955 when, in retaliation for such operations, Israel launched a major offensive on the Gaza Strip, and was able to advance very deep inside the Strip, without facing any strong Egyptian resistance<sup>4</sup>. This invited an immediate sharp reaction by the Gaza Strip. This reaction, which took the form of violent demonstrations and attacks on UNRWA offices and the offices of the Department of Social Affairs and Refugees<sup>5</sup>, was in protest against the “weakness of the Egyptian forces in the Gaza Strip, which, itself, was a reflection of the weakness of

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> An interview with Farid Abu-Wardah. Also see, Chapter Six, p. 270.

<sup>5</sup> An interview with Farid Abu-Wardah.

the Egyptian army at large”<sup>1</sup>. Those demonstrations which were spearheaded by the Communists and members of the Muslim Brotherhood Movement, were followed by mass arrests among the Palestinians by the Egyptian authorities<sup>2</sup>. The outcome of these demonstrations was most important as they prompted President Nasser of Egypt to look for new sources of arms<sup>3</sup> which eventually resulted in the Czech Arms Deals of 1955, and the subsequent withdrawal by the United States and Britain of their offer to subsidize the building of the High Dam in Egypt, which in turn, led to the nationalization of the Suez Canal Company, which itself instigated the Tripartite attack on Egypt in 1956.

Another important political incident, though less significant, took place in 1954 when the Sinai Peninsula was suggested by the Egyptian Government as the place for resettling the Palestine refugees, and thus solving the Palestine Problem. There were immediate demonstrations in the Gaza Strip against this project<sup>4</sup>, until President Nasser assured the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip that there were no plans to implement such a project<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>2</sup> Interviews with Hamdi Hussein, Zuhair el-Rayyes, Hayder Abdel-Shafi and Farid Abu-Wardah.

<sup>3</sup> Falastine Min Akwal Al-Rayyes Gamal Abdel-Nasser (Palestine In The Speeches of President Gamal Abdel-Nasser), (Cairo: Department of Information, 1965). (See, President Nasser’s speech to the students of the Academy of War on October 2, 1955).

<sup>4</sup> For more information see, Chapter Two, pp. 83-86, 88-101.

<sup>5</sup> Interviews with Hayder Abdel-Shafi, Farid Abu-Wardah and Zuhair el-Rayyes.

## The Period 1957 – 1967<sup>1</sup>

This period witnessed an intensification in the consultations for the revival of Palestinian identity<sup>2</sup>. Although the demand was Palestinian<sup>3</sup>, the initiative to hold such consultations came from Egypt when, in 1958, it encouraged the holding of a conference to discuss the possibilities of reviving the Palestinian identity<sup>4</sup>.

Another important development took place in 1962 when Egypt agreed, in principle, to a Palestinian suggestion to Palestinize the Egyptian administration in the Gaza Strip. The idea, was, then, that all heads of department and members of the Executive Council and Legislative Council be Palestinians, and that the General Administrative Governor of the Gaza Strip (Egyptian) should have an advisory council composed of three Palestinians from the Strip<sup>5</sup>. These changes were supposed to come into force on March 7, 1967<sup>6</sup>. However, the constitutional changes necessary for the implementation of these proposals necessitated a further delay in their implementation. The eruption of the 1967 war marked, nevertheless, the end of these proposals.

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<sup>1</sup> Most of the political activities during this period were related to the revival of the Palestinian identity, which will be dealt with at length, in Chapter Six.

<sup>2</sup> Interviews with Munir el-Rayyes and Hayder Abdel-Shafi.

<sup>3</sup> An interview with Munir el-Rayyes.

<sup>4</sup> For more information on these consultations see, Chapter six, pp. 295-297.

<sup>5</sup> An interview with Munir el-Rayyes, (el-Rayyes, together with Hayder Abdel-Shafi were the Palestinian representatives in these talks and they were the ones who suggested these changes).

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

On the level of political parties, the period 1957 – 1967 witnessed the spread of pan-Arab parties in the Gaza Strip. While both the communist Party and Muslim Brotherhood Movement were still in existence in the Gaza Strip, the tide was, until 1958, in favour of the Arab Ba’th Socialistic Party<sup>1</sup>. However, when al-Ba’th dissolved itself in Syria after the merger of Egypt and Syria into the United Arab Republic in 1958, the popular tide in the Gaza Strip shifted towards the Arab Nationalist Movement which was, on the eve of the 1967-War, the strongest party in the Gaza Strip<sup>2</sup>.

Finally, Palestinian-Egyptian relations in the Gaza Strip during the period 1949-1967 were characterized, when compared with Palestinian-Transjordanian relations during the same period<sup>3</sup>, by the relative ease with which both parties managed to co-exist and to solve their differences. Besides, there was, all the time, a Palestinian conviction that the Egyptian regime had no plans to eliminate the Palestinian character of the Gaza Strip, or to exploit the inhabitants of the Gaza Strip for economic or political gains<sup>4</sup>. Quite to the contrary, the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip appreciated the fact that the Gaza Strip was an economic burden and a military burden on Egypt<sup>5</sup>. Even on issues like the absence of political freedom, banning of

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<sup>1</sup> Interviews with Zuhair el-Rayyes, Hamdi Hussein and Munir el-Rayyes.

<sup>2</sup> An interview with Zuhair el-Rayyes.

<sup>3</sup> See, Chapter Four.

<sup>4</sup> Interviews with Munir el-Rayyes, Hayder Abdel-Shafi, Zuhair el-Rayyes, Hamdi Hussein and Farid Abu-Wardah.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

political parties and associations, suppression and detention of politically active elements among the Palestinians, and the concentration of power in the hands of one individual, (the General Administrative Governor), there was a Palestinian conviction that all these policies were not designed solely for the Gaza Strip, but were simply a reflection of what was implemented in Egypt, and that the Egyptian regime could not afford to grant the inhabitants of the Gaza Strip the right to political freedom, and at the same time deprive the Egyptian people from similar rights.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **PALESTINIAN-ARAB RELATIONS: THE ERA OF REVIVAL,**

**1963 – 1967**

“In the name of the First Arab Palestine Congress..... I do hereby proclaim the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization as a mobilizing leadership of the forces of the Palestine Arab people to wage the battle of liberation, as a shield for the rights and aspirations of the people of Palestine and as a road to victory”.

Ahmad Shukairy

Chairman of the First Arab Palestine Congress

Seven months after the proclamation of the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), on January 1, 1965, Al-Fatah: Palestine National Liberation Movement<sup>1</sup> announced its existence. Ever since that day, all political and paramilitary developments in the Palestinian arena have moved in the direction of reviving the Palestinian entity\* and stressing the Palestinian character of Palestinian-sponsored political and paramilitary organizations. For decades stretching from before 1948<sup>2</sup>, and through the 1950's<sup>3</sup>, the majority of the Arab Palestinians thought of themselves as Arabs rather than as Palestinian, and conducted their political

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<sup>1</sup> In the remaining part of this work, ‘Al-Fatah’: Palestine National Liberation Movement’ will be referred to by its usual abbreviation ‘Al-Fatah’.

\* The term ‘Palestinian entity’ is the one used by the PLO.

<sup>2</sup> See, Chapter Two, pp. 56-63.

<sup>3</sup> See, Chapter Three, pp. 125-169.

thinking and military struggle through a Pan-Arab approach and in a Pan-Arab manner<sup>1</sup>. The shift among the Palestinians, in the late 1950's and early 1960's, towards stressing their Palestinian identity and the Palestinian character of Palestinian-sponsored political and para military organizations, must be comprehended as a manifestation of a basic and far-reaching change in the traditional Pan-Arab political and para military convictions of the majority of the Arab Palestinian people. The reasons behind this change, and its early organized manifestations in the form of the PLO and the Al-Fatah, constitute the subject-matter of this chapter.

This chapter will be divided into three major sections. The first section will deal with the factors which led to the revival of Palestinian entity. The second section will be devoted to an analysis of the Palestine Liberation Organization as an Arab states-sponsored form of Palestinian entity. The third section will similarly be devoted to an analysis of Al-Fatah: Palestine National Liberation Movement, as a Palestinian-sponsored form of Palestinian entity.

### **Factors Behind The Revival of Palestinian Entity: 1949 – 1964**

No single group or political incident or political incident or development can be held primarily responsible for the revival of the Palestinian entity. Similarly, no specific date can be identified precisely as the starting date of the move towards stressing the Palestinian

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

identity. For some Palestinians, Palestinian identity, in the form of political entity, had never existed, since Palestine was always a part of a bigger Arab entity<sup>1</sup>, and since the Palestinians themselves conducted their political activities and para military struggle in a Pan-Arab manner. For others, however, a Palestinian identity, in the sense of political identifications, had always existed, and the revival of a Palestinian entity did not, therefore, need a birth-certificate from the Arab States, but rather it needed their support and cooperation<sup>2</sup>. Nevertheless, the revival of the Palestinian entity which took its first organized form<sup>3</sup> in 1964 and 1965 with the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization and the emergence of the Al-Fatah, respectively, was the product of a diverse combination of factors which were partly related to the Palestinians themselves, partly related to the Arab Host-States, and very much a function of the relations amongst the Arab States themselves, and between the Palestinians and the Arab States. While it is impossible to isolate these factors individually, as they are so much interrelated and interdependent, the attempt to isolate them, for analytical purposes and for purposes of estimating their importance, will nevertheless be attempted.

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<sup>1</sup> Syria.

<sup>2</sup> An interview with Munir el-Rayyes.

<sup>3</sup> After 1948.

## **Factors Related To The Palestinians**

There were four main factors which combined together, created a general feeling among various grouping of Palestinians in the Arab World of the need to revive the Palestinian entity. These factors were:

### 1. Rights and Possibilities for the Palestinians

Between the first armistice of 1948 and the second armistice of 1949, the first and last attempt by the Palestinian traditional leadership<sup>1</sup>, with the help of some Arab states<sup>2</sup>, to introduce a Palestinian political framework, in the form of a Palestinian government, was initiated.

On September 1, 1948, the Arab Higher Committee called for a conference in Gaza, which was attended by eighty five leading Palestinians, to discuss the establishment of a Palestinian administration for “the whole of Palestine”<sup>3</sup>. The conference, which was called the National Congress, declared the independence of the whole of Mandatory Palestine<sup>4</sup>, and the intention to establish “a free democratic” state in the “whole of Palestine”<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The Arab Higher Committee. See, Chapter Two, p. 52.

<sup>2</sup> They were Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Lebanon.

<sup>3</sup> Arif el-Arif, vol. III, op.cit., p. 703.

<sup>4</sup> By that time the State of Israel had already been in existence on a part of the territory of Palestine.

<sup>5</sup> Arif el-Arif, vol. III, op.cit., p. 704.

Thus, the National Congress declared the formation of a government, which has been known since as the All-Palestine Government, with Ahmad Hilmi Abdel Baki as Prime Minister. The city of Gaza was declared as the “temporary” headquarters of the Government. On October 15, 1948, the governments of Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon recognized the All-Palestine Government. With the exception of Transjordan<sup>1</sup>, the attitude of the other Arab states was to grant nominal support to the All-Palestine Government.

As we will see later, short of issuing passports<sup>2</sup>, the All-Palestine Government played no role, whatsoever, in any of the political developments or Arab decisions related to the Palestine Problem.

In 1952, the Arab League decided to reduce the already largely non-functioning government, into a government composed of a Prime Minister, a General Secretary, and four other employees, and all the Ministerial and other posts related to All-Palestine Government were thus abolished<sup>3</sup>. After 1952, the existence of the All-Palestine Government was confined to the person of its Prime Minister, in his capacity as the representative of Palestine at the Arab League.

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<sup>1</sup> Which was later joined by Iraq when Nuri el-Said was appointed as Prime Minister of Iraq later in the year.

<sup>2</sup> During its life-time, the All-Palestine Government issued 11,400 passports which were accepted by all the Arab States (except Jordan) and Afghanistan. See, Arif el-Arif, Vol. III, *op.cit.*, pp. 710-711.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 710-711.

The total failure of the All-Palestine Government was due to several factors. The establishment of the All-Palestine Government was an act of Arab cold war, which was designed by the Arab Higher Committee (in the person of its chairman Haj Amin Husseini) together with Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Syria to pre-empt King Abdullah's plans to annex central Palestine (the West Bank) to his Kingdom, Transjordan<sup>1</sup>. Being an act of Arab cold war, the All-Palestine Government was, therefore, not meant, by the sponsoring Arab States, to be a viable government, but rather a political tool in the hands of Egypt (primarily), Saudi Arabia and Syria in their conflict with King Abdullah of Transjordan. Accordingly, the support granted to the All-Palestine Government was conditional upon the state of relations between Transjordan and Egypt. Hence, when Jordan asked the Arab League in 1952, to withdraw its recognition of All-Palestine Government, the compromise solution was to reduce it to the nominal status of being a government with a Prime Minister, but without Ministers or functions. In addition, the occupation, by Israel, of the Neqab Desert, after the formation of the All-Palestine Government, resulted in separating central Palestine (the West Bank) from southern Palestine (the Gaza Strip). Moreover, the annexation of the West Bank weakened, to a great extent, the prospects of an All-Palestine Government, due to the fact that the majority of the Palestinian people and the greater part of the Palestinian

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<sup>1</sup> For more information, see, Chapter Four, pp. 171-186.

territory under Arab control lie in the part of Palestine which was annexed by Transjordan.

Furthermore, All-Palestine Government did not arise out of a Palestinian popular demand, and it therefore lacked the popular support of the Palestinian masses who had more urgent pre-occupations like securing food and shelter, in addition to their belief that their refuge was temporary and that they would shortly be returning to Palestine<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, the Palestinians quickly realized the non-viability of the All-Palestine Government, and all those Palestinians who took ministerial posts in it, on the eve of its formation, left it very soon and took other posts in the various Arab governments and the Arab League<sup>2</sup>. Among the reasons for this Palestinian attitude towards the All-Palestine Government was the fact that it came out of an arrangement between the traditional Palestinian leadership (Arab Higher Committee) and some Arab states like Egypt and Syria under whose previous leadership the catastrophe in Palestine had taken place.

The failure of the Arab states and the traditional Palestinian leadership in handling the conflict in Palestine in the 1948 – War prompted some Palestinian attempts to try to take the initiative and handle the issue of Palestine independently from the Arab states and

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<sup>1</sup> Interviews with Hamdi Husseini, Munir el-Rayyes, Hayder Abdel-Shafi and Mustafa Taher. Also see, Arif el-Arif, Vol. III, op.cit., pp. 703-711.

<sup>2</sup> Arif el-Arif, Vol. III, op.cit., p. 711.

the traditional Palestinian leadership of the Arab Higher Committee. The earliest move in this direction took place early in 1949 when some Palestinian refugees, with the support of the Transjordanian authorities, established the Office for Refugee Affairs in the city of Ramallah in the West Bank, with the sole aim of assisting the Red Cross to distribute food and clothes to the Palestine refugees in the West Bank<sup>1</sup>. In April of the same year, the organizers of the office for Refugee Affairs called for a general meeting for the Palestine refugees “to decide the destiny of the Palestine refugees and to try and put an end to their sufferings”<sup>2</sup>. The conference was attended by 800 delegates. Its resolutions stressed “the determination of the refugees to return to their homes in Palestine”, and called, among other things, for “the election of an Executive Council of ten persons to represent the Palestine refugees at any talks”. However, this council was not empowered to endorse any solution unless it obtained the prior approval of the general assembly of the Refugee Conference<sup>3</sup>. Moreover, the resolutions of the Refugee Conference asked the Executive Council “to make contacts with all international bodies and governments with the aim of securing the rights of Palestine refugees and solving their problem, independently from the Arab states, the Arab League, and the Arab Higher Committee”<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Mohammad Nimr Al-Hawwari. *op.cit.*, pp. 346-347.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 347. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 347-348.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* (trans. L.K.)

The same refugee conference elected a delegation<sup>1</sup> to represent the Palestine refugees at the Conciliation Talks in Lausanne. The formation of this delegation met with fierce resistance from the Transjordanian government which suggested the inclusion of some Palestinian personalities within the official Transjordanian delegation to Lausanne. The refugees refused the Transjordanian suggestion and insisted on being represented by their own delegation<sup>2</sup>. The Transjordanian government agreed after the refugee delegation gave assurances that its representation of the refugee problem would not be conducted in any manner that might jeopardize the interests of Transjordan<sup>3</sup>. On its way to Lausanne on April 29, 1949, the refugee delegation went to Egypt to give assurances to its government of the independent nature of the delegation, and that the delegation was neither financed nor supervised by the Transjordanian government<sup>4</sup>.

In Lausanne, the Arab states of Egypt, Transjordan, Syria and Lebanon were represented. With the exception of Lebanon, each of the other three delegations had Palestinian members. The Arab

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<sup>1</sup> Members of the delegation were Aziz Shehada, Nasib Boulos, Mohammad Nimr Al-Hawwari and Yahya Hammodeh (the latter declined and was replaced by Zaki Barakat). For more information see, Mohammad Nimr Al-Hawwari, op.cit., p. 351; also see, Arif el-Arif, Vol. 5, op.cit., p. 1095.

<sup>2</sup> Mohammed Nimr Al-Hawwari, op.cit., p. 352.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

delegations, however, did not attempt to cooperate with the refugee delegation<sup>1</sup>.

In Lausanne, too, the refugee delegation took the initiative to meet directly and publically, and for the only time since 1948<sup>2</sup>, with the Israeli delegation, in an attempt to reach a solution to the Palestine refugee problem<sup>3</sup>. The response of the Israeli delegation was very discouraging for the refugee delegation as Israel refused to enter into any discussions of the refugee problem with the refugee delegation on the grounds that Israel was willing to talk only to the Arab States<sup>4</sup>. However, when the talks at Lausanne between the Arab delegations and the Israeli delegation seemed to be moving to a dead end, the refugee delegation asked all the delegations to proceed on the bases of United Nations resolutions 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 recommending the partition of Palestine, and, 194 (III) of 11 December 1948 resolving that the Palestine refugee should be given the choice between 'repatriation or compensation'<sup>5</sup>. This demand by the refugee delegation incited the anger of the Transjordanian government, since United Nations resolution 181 (II) recommended, inter alia, the establishment of an Arab Palestinian state on the part of Palestine allocated to the Arabs, which was in

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 358-359.

<sup>2</sup> Until this time, no Arab government or statesman had confessed to have conferred directly with any representative of the State of Israel.

<sup>3</sup> Mohammad Nimr Al-Hawari, *op.cit.*, pp. 376-387. (Al-Hawwari was the chairman of the refugee delegation, and he gives, in his book, the details of the two meetings which took place with the Israeli delegation in Lausanne).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 377-379.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 388-389.

basic contradictions with the plans of the Transjordanian government to annex central Palestine (the West Bank)<sup>1</sup>. Although this demand by the refugee delegation was not accepted by all the other delegations, Transjordanian forces nevertheless occupied the headquarters of the Office for Refugee Affairs in Ramallah and confiscated its contents and banned its activities<sup>2</sup>. The refugee delegation, then, returned in total failure.

After this first Palestinian attempt in 1949, there were, between 1951 and 1956, many other Palestinian attempts to create some form of organization for the Palestine refugees. Most of these attempts were either insignificant, or, for one reason or another, short lived. However, most noticeable among those attempts were three.

The first attempt took place in 1953 when some former members<sup>3</sup> of the Executive Council of the dissolved Office for Refugee Affairs<sup>4</sup> submitted, through the Lebanese Government, a memorandum to the United States Secretary of State\*, outlining a solution for the refugee problem. This proposed solution covered eight major points<sup>5</sup>:

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<sup>1</sup> See, Chapter Four, pp. 171-186.

<sup>2</sup> Mohammad Nimr Al-Hawwari, *op.cit.*, pp. 389-390.

<sup>3</sup> They were Izzat Tannos, Aziz Shehada, Hasan Habib Hawa, Fayez el-Hajj, Mohammad el-Yahya and Yahya Hammodeh. See, Al-Awdah Newspaper, Vol. I., No. 25 (Amman, 21/1/1953), p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> See, pp. 278-279.

\* John Foster Dulles.

<sup>5</sup> Al-Awdah Newspaper, Vol. I., No. 24 (14/5/1953), p. I. (trans. L.K.)

- 1- “The internationalization of the cities of Jaffa and Jerusalem”.
- 2- “The implementation of the Partition Plan\* and the return of the refugees to the part of Palestine allocated to the Arabs according to the Partition Plan”.
- 3- “The appointment of an international committee to supervise refugee property in the Jewish section of Palestine, with powers to sell, exchange or accept compensations with non-Israeli currencies”.
- 4- “The return of the Arabs to their properties in the internationalized cities”.
- 5- “The payment of a just compensation to all those who wish not to return”.
- 6- “The return of the Arabs to the part of Palestine allocated to them could extend over five years”.
- 7- “The Arab part of Palestine should be put under international supervision for a period of five years, which could be renewed”.
- 8- “Since the Israelis would not accept this solution, the United States has to enforce it on them”.

During his visit to Jordan in June 1953, the Lebanese President, Mr. Camille Chamoun, confirmed, in a press conference, the existence of such a plan<sup>1</sup>. This confirmation led to immediate

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\* U.N. Resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947.

<sup>1</sup> Al-Awdah Newspaper, Vol. I., No. 29 (25/6/1953), p. I.

reactions among the Palestine refugees who attacked the sponsors of this solution on the grounds that their plan constituted a sell-out to “the imperialists who wanted to liquidate the Palestine Problem” and that such a solution would lead “to the destruction of the national unity in Jordan”<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, the refugees declared that the sponsors of this solution did not represent the Palestine refugees and that they only represented themselves<sup>2</sup>. That marked the end of this attempt.

In 1953, there was another attempt to organize the Palestine refugees. This attempt, which was initiated by Aziz el-Dahoodi and Mustafa El-Taher, was meant “to preserve the rights of the refugees and to defend them”<sup>3</sup>. A meeting of some leading Palestinians was held in Amman at the invitation of Aziz Dahoodi, which resulted in the establishment of the Refugee Office<sup>4</sup>. The attitude of the Jordanian government towards the establishment of the Refugee Office was tolerant. This was due to two factors. Firstly, there was no participation by the refugees themselves in the whole process. Secondly, the Refugee Office made it clear that it was a non-political organization and that its sole aim was “to look after the

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., Vol. I., No. 25 (21/5/1953) p. 1. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. For more information on this Palestinian attitude See, Chapter Two, pp. 96-101.

<sup>3</sup> An interview with Mustafa el-Taher. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>4</sup> Aziz Dahoodi was elected as Chairman of the Refugee Office, and Mustafa el-Taher was elected as its Secretary-General. See, an interview with Mustafa el-Taher.

refugees and to protect their social and economic interests”<sup>1</sup>. However, when in 1956, the Refugee Office tried to undertake political activity by calling upon the Palestine refugees in the camps to demonstrate in support of King Hussein’s decision to oust General Glubb from the command of the Jordanian army, the Jordanian government banned this demonstration and accused the Refugee Office of “forcing the refugees to demonstrate”<sup>2</sup>. This incident marked the end of the Refugee Office.

In 1956, the third attempt to organize the Palestine refugees took place. This time the attempt took the form of a refugee conference. The holding of this refugee conference took place under the relaxed political atmosphere which accompanied the formation of the Nabulsi Government in Jordan<sup>3</sup>. Accordingly, there was a partisan participation in this refugee conference. The Al-Ba’th Party, the Communists, the Arab Nationalist Movement and the Nationalist Socialist Party, all participated in the conference<sup>4</sup>. This conference, which was politically oriented, voted against the election of an executive committee because “it did not want to give any person or group of persons the right to represent the Palestine refugees and to talk on their behalf. This was meant to serve as a guarantee against any solutions that might be short of the return

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>3</sup> See, Chapter Four, pp. 223-226.

<sup>4</sup> An interview with Mustafa el-Taher.

of the refugees to their homes and lands in Palestine”<sup>1</sup>. On these lines, the conference elected a preparatory committee which was of an administrative nature. This committee survived until early 1957, when the Nabulsi Government was asked to resign, and the Jordanian regime banned all forms of political organization<sup>2</sup>.

## 2. The Attitude of the Arab Host-States Towards the Palestinians

During the period 1949-1964, the Palestinians in the Arab Host-States were living under disadvantageous conditions<sup>3</sup>. As we have seen in the previous chapters, the Palestinians in each of the Host-States (with the exception of Jordan) did not acquire the status of being citizens in their respective Host-States. As for Jordan and the Gaza Strip, we observed that the Palestinians, although living on a Palestinian territory, also suffered. In Jordan, for example, the Palestinians, although citizens, were treated as second-class citizens and were discriminated against both as individuals and as a territorially based group by the Jordanian regime. This discrimination covered most aspects of life which ranged from constitutional and political discrimination, to economic, educational, cultural and moral discrimination<sup>4</sup>. In the Gaza Strip,

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>2</sup> See, Chapter Four, pp. 230-232.

<sup>3</sup> See, Chapter Two pp 76-78, Chapter Four and Chapter Five.

<sup>4</sup> See, Chapter Four, pp. 170-223.

the Palestinians, who were stateless, also suffered all the limitations and short-comings inherent in the Egyptian regime<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, they also suffered from their lack of any substantial rights to govern themselves or, at least, to have a say in the way they were governed<sup>2</sup>.

The attitude of the Arab Host-States towards the Palestinians was in itself a source of Palestinian resentment and frustration. The conditions under which the Palestinians in the Arab Host-States lived proved far from being a political haven or a source of satisfaction, and the Palestinians had, therefore, a strong motive to try and break out of these conditions through the revival of a Palestinian identity as a political reference point for the dispersed Palestinians and as a means towards organizing the Palestinians and defending their rights<sup>3</sup>.

### 3. The Collapse of the Unity Between Egypt and Syria and the Success of the Algerian Revolution

The collapse of the unity between Egypt and Syria in September 1961 and the success of the Algerian Revolution in July 1962 were

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<sup>1</sup> See, Chapter Five, pp. 249-256, 258-261.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> This does not apply to the Palestinians in Jordan who wanted to preserve the unity of the West Bank and Transjordan, and who struggled for changing the regime in Jordan as a means towards improving the conditions of the Palestinians in Jordan, and, above all, as a means towards re-activating the role of Jordan as a front-line county, in any battle with Israel. For more information on this attitude, see, Chapter Six, pp. 300-301.

two major developments in Arab politics which had an important bearing in promoting the moves by some Palestinians towards the revival of a Palestinian entity and the subsequent emergence of Palestinian-sponsored political and para-military organizations. This development which although it originated from the contrasting experiences of the failure of the unity between Egypt and Syria and the success of the Algerian Revolution, did, however, lead, as far as the Palestinians were concerned, to the same conclusion.

The failure of the unity between Egypt and Syria and the dismemberment of the United Arab Republic in September 1961 constituted a severe blow to the cause of Arab unity in general, and to the Palestinians in particular. This was due to the fact that since 1949, the Palestinians conducted most of their political activities and based their strategy for the 'Liberation of Palestine' on Pan-Arabism and Arab unity<sup>1</sup>. Accordingly, after 1961, the achievement of the goal of Arab unity seemed so remote that it was inevitable that the Palestinians should choose a path other than that of Arab unity for the achievement of their goals<sup>2</sup>.

The success of the Algerian Revolution in July 1962 indicated that the line which was adopted by the Algerian whereby the major burden

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<sup>1</sup> See, Chapter Three, pp. 125-143.

<sup>2</sup> This did not mean, at any time, that the Palestinians denounced Arab unity, but they simply realized that it was impractical for them to wait until Arab unity was achieved before they sought their goal of the 'Liberation of Palestine'. For more information see, pp. 342-343.

of initiating and conducting the struggle for independence should be undertaken by the Algerians themselves, with the role of the Arab states and the Arab people as a supportive one, whether in terms of political and diplomatic support, or military and financial help. The success of this Algerian line encouraged some Palestinians to imitate the Algerian experience and to adopt its line, both in terms of its sponsorship of the struggle, and in terms of its relations with other Arab states<sup>1</sup>.

#### 4. Culmination of Palestinian Frustration

After more than a decade since the ‘catastrophe in Palestine’, the Palestinians had come to realize that very little had been done to bring about ‘liberation’.

The pursuance of the struggle through the cause of Arab unity which had flourished in the early 1950’s and reached its climax in 1958, was severely hit in the early 1960’s with the collapse of the United Arab Republic.

The struggle through extra-national political parties, whether religious, Communist, or Pan-Arab, was also met with set-backs at different times and for various reasons<sup>2</sup>. The extra-national religious

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<sup>1</sup> An interview with Khalil el-Wazir (Abu-Jihad): Beirut, January 6, 1975. (Abu-Jihad, a prominent leader of the Al-Fatah and one of the five original founders of the Al-Fatah: Palestine National Liberation Movement).

<sup>2</sup> See, Chapter Three, pp. 152-153, 156-157, 168-169.

parties proved unsuccessful in the early 1950's because, among other things, of their attitude towards President Nasser of Egypt<sup>1</sup>. The extra-national Communist parties were no better because of their anti-pan-Arab attitude on the one hand, and because of the attitude of the Communist Party in Iraq in 1958-1959, on the other hand<sup>2</sup>. The extra-national pan-Arab parties, although never actually failures, were forced to play a minimal, and for the most part, a subsidiary role to that of Nasser<sup>3</sup>.

The struggle through Palestinian-sponsored para-military activities was partly limited in areas like the Gaza Strip<sup>4</sup>, and was never allowed to exist in other areas like Jordan and Lebanon.

In contradistinction to all these set-backs in the modes of struggle, the Arab States provided no other alternative modes of struggle for Palestinians. Furthermore, the Arab States had no substantial achievements during the period 1949-1964 which would have indicated to the Palestinians that they, whether wholly, partly or individually, were taking serious steps for the 'liberation of Palestine'. All these failures which were related, one way or the other, to the sponsorship, guidance or intervention of one or more of the Arab states, prompted some Palestinians to try and take the initiative in the form of Palestinian-sponsored organizations.

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 152-153.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 156-157.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 168-169.

<sup>4</sup> See, Chapter Five, p. 267.

## **Factors Related to the Arab States**

The 1950's were the era which witnessed the growth of the Arab cold war. After 1949, inter-Arab politics were revolving around shifts in alliances among the various Arab states. Although originally a reflection of old rivalries among the monarchical ruling families in the Arab world, such rivalries and shifts in alliances were, after 1958, revolving around the attitude of Egypt, in the person of its leader Gamal 'Abdel-Nasser, towards other Arab states.

Until 1952, the three main centres of the Arab cold war were the Hashemites in Iraq and Jordan, the Saudis in Saudi Arabia and King Farouk of Egypt. The Saudis and the Hashemites mutual hatred and animosity dated back to the days when the Saudis drove the Hashemites out of Arabia. The Hashemites had a dream of ruling Greater Syria, which the Saudis wanted to frustrate, the Egyptians would never endorse and the Syrians bitterly resisted. Accordingly, the earliest Arab cold war alliance after 1949, took the form of an Iraqi-Jordanian alliance versus a Saudi-Egyptian-Syrian alliance. The issue which stirred this alliance was, then, the plan of King Abdullah of Transjordan to annex central Palestine (the West Bank) to his Kingdom<sup>1</sup>.

In 1952, a coup d'état in Egypt ushered in a new era in Arab politics and political alignments among the Arab states. The Egyptian coup, which was destined to herald a revolution, marked a basic shift in the criteria of alignment in Arab cold war

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<sup>1</sup> See, Chapter Four, pp. 170-189.

to that of ‘revolutionary’ Arab states and ‘reactionary’ Arab states. Such a classification did not, however, immediately take a definitive orthodox form. The beginning of this bipolarization took place in 1955 when the Western arms embargo forced Egypt to buy arms from the communist bloc. In 1955, the signing of the Baghdad Pact led to a bitter Egyptian-sponsored attack on the Pact. In doing so, Egypt was supported by both Saudi Arabia and Syria against the ruling Hashemite family in both Iraq and Jordan. The Suez War of 1956 established Nasser as the undisputed hero of the Arab masses, and the war itself gave rise to a brief period of declared Arab solidarity in support of Egypt. However, the introduction of the Eisenhower Doctrine to the Arab world, and the immediate unqualified acceptance of that Doctrine by Lebanon, Jordan and Saudi Arabia put an end to the truce among the Arab states. This time, the bipolarization was more logical as it contained Egypt and Syria versus Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia. Most important, however, was the fact that the acceptance by Lebanon, of the Eisenhower Doctrine, triggered a civil war in Lebanon with the explicit aim of forbidding the then President of Lebanon, Camille Chamoun, from renewing his term in office, and the implicit aim of re-securing the traditional neutral foreign policy of Lebanon, which Chamoun violated in his strongly pro-American policy. Moreover, the attitude of Syria towards the Eisenhower Doctrine, resulted in an American-inspired move by Turkey to mass her army on the Syrian borders<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Malcom Kerr. The Arab Cold War, 1958-1967: A study of Ideology in Politics, second edition (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 6.

This eventually prompted a call for the unification of Egypt and Syria which actually happened in February 1958. In May 1958, the civil war in Lebanon broke out and ended in the reaffirmation of the neutrality of Lebanon. Two months later, in July 1958, the Iraq revolution put an end to the Hashemite rule there, and the balance seemed to shift radically to the side of the “revolutionary” Arab states. However, the anti-unionist attitude of the new Iraqi leader, General Abdel-Karim Qassem, and the rise of the communists to power in Iraq was destined to force new alliances in the Arab world. This time, the Saudis joined the United Arab Republic in condemning the spread of communism in ‘revolutionary’ Iraq (in August 1959).

On September 28, 1961, the secession of Syria from the United Arab Republic meant the actual isolation of Egypt. The anti-Egyptian alliance included, then, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Iraq. However, the independence of Algeria in July 1962, and the Yemeni revolution in September of the same year boosted the morale of Egypt as the leader of the ‘revolutionary’ Arab states.

On February 8, 1963, Qassem’s regime in Iraq was overthrown by the Ba’th Party branch in Iraq, and a month later, the Syrian secessionist regime was similarly overthrown by the Ba’th Party in Syria, which immediately declared that the aim of the new Syrian regime was to lead Syria back to union with Egypt. Once more, things seemed to go favourably for Egypt and

the Arab ‘revolutionary’ states. However, unity talks between Egypt, Syria and Iraq which commenced on March 14, 1963, ended on April 17, with the Tripartite Union Agreement between Egypt, Syria and Iraq. The collapse of this Agreement was an inevitable consequence of the grave mistrust between Nasser and the Ba’th Party which had its roots in the union period when in 1959, the Ba’th Party withdrew all its Ministers from the Government of the United Arab Republic<sup>1</sup>, in addition to the signing, by some Ba’thi leaders<sup>2</sup>, of the secession manifesto<sup>3</sup>. The final blow to the Tripartite Union Agreement took place exactly three months after it was signed, when, on July 18, 1963, a Syrian Nasserite – sponsored attempt to overthrow the Ba’th regime in Syria failed. In November 1963, the Iraqi President, Abdel-Salam Arif initiated a coup from the top whereby he eliminated the Ba’th presence from the Iraqi regime.

At the end of 1963, the Arab World was in total conflict. The United Arab Republic and Saudi Arabia were fighting each other in Yemen. Syria and Iraq were exchanging propaganda attacks through the media, as were Egypt and Syria. In addition, Egypt and Syria were exchanging propaganda attacks with Jordan. Algeria and Morocco were fighting each other over a border dispute. Similarly, relations between Algeria and Tunisia were cool because of a border dispute. The recognition by Tunisia of the independence of Mauritania, which Morocco claimed as part of its territory, reduced

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<sup>1</sup> Malcom Kerr, *op.cit.*, pp. 15-21.

<sup>2</sup> They were Akram al-Howrani and Salh Beirat, See, *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

relations between Tunisia and Morocco to mere formalities. Only Kuwait, Sudan, Libya and Lebanon were able to maintain more or less friendly relations with the Arab states.

Accordingly, on the eve of the holding of the First Arab Summit Conference the background to the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization was characterized by a grave disarray on the Arab scene, in which most of the Arab states, especially those neighbouring Israel, were at each other's throats. More important, as a consequence of that disarray the period 1949-1963 was characterized by the absence of any Arab states-sponsored steps towards the 'liberation of Palestine'.

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### **Background To The Arab States-Sponsored Attempts To Revive Palestinian Entity: 1949 – 1964**

The earliest official mention of the issue of Palestinian representation was made in the appendix of the Arab League Chapter. It says:

“Considering Palestine’s particular position and until Palestine attains its independence, the Arab League Council is commissioned to select a Palestinian Arab delegate to participate in its proceeding”.

The appointment of a Palestinian Arab delegate was not, however, made until September 23, 1952, when the Arab League Council resolved that, “because the All-Palestine Government has not been able to assume its duties, in view of the circumstances,

the Premier of the Government will represent Palestine in the Arab League”<sup>1</sup>.

The continued symbolic existence of an All-Palestine Government in the person of its Prime Minister, Ahmad Hilmi Abdel-Baki, as the representative of Palestine at the Arab League, until his death in 1963, did not really indicate that no other Arab-sponsored attempts were made to establish some form of Palestinian entity.

In 1958, as a result of earlier demands by the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip<sup>2</sup>, the Egyptian government suggested a meeting to discuss the revival of the Palestinian entity. The first meeting was held in Cairo early 1958. It was attended by six Palestinians from the Gaza Strip<sup>3</sup>, together with two representatives of the Palestine Club in Cairo<sup>4</sup>, one representative of the All-Palestine Government<sup>5</sup>, and two representatives of the Arab Higher Committee<sup>6</sup>. The first two sessions of the meeting were also attended by Haj Amin Husseini<sup>7</sup> and Ahmad Hilmi Abdel-Baki<sup>8</sup>. The Assistant Secretary-General of the Arab

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<sup>1</sup> Adli Hashshad. The Palestinian People and Their Repatriation (Cairo, 1964), p. 103. For more information on the All-Palestine Government, see, pp. 275-278.

<sup>2</sup> An interview with Munir el-Rayyes.

<sup>3</sup> They were Zuhdi Abu-Sha’ban, Mustafa Abdel-Shafi, Qassem el-Farra, Issam Agha, Gamal el-Surani, and Munir el-Rayyes, See, an interview with Munir el-Rayyes.

<sup>4</sup> They were sharif el-Ja’abari and Fadel Zaydan. See, Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> He was Mohmood Najm, See, Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> They were Mohammad Munif el-husseini and Sheikh Sabri Abdin, See, Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> He was the Chairman of the Arab Higher Committee. For more information see, Chapter Two, pp. 51-52.

<sup>8</sup> He was the Prime Minister of the All-Palestine Government. For more information see, pp. 275-278.

League, Sayyed Nofal, was asked to preside over the meeting “in order to give the meeting an official form and in order to indicate that the holding of this meeting was approved by the Arab League”<sup>1</sup>.

A second meeting was, however, held towards the end of 1958. In addition to the participants in the first meeting, the second meeting was attended by a representative of the Palestinians in Lebanon<sup>2</sup> and three representatives of the Palestinians in Syria<sup>3</sup>. This meeting resolved, *inter alia*, that all efforts must be directed towards reviving the Palestinian identity, and that an attempt must be made to establish some form of Palestinian organization which would serve as a medium for organizing the Palestinians and have a leadership role<sup>4</sup>.

The outcome of these two meetings was reflected in the recommendation, suggested by Egypt and approved, in March 1959, by the Council of Arab League, “to reorganize the Palestinian people whose voice would be heard all over the world through representatives selected by the Palestinian people”.

Once more<sup>5</sup>, this recommendation met with the bitter opposition of the Jordanian regime, and as a result, this recommendation was not

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<sup>1</sup> An interview with Munir el-Rayyes. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>2</sup> He was Khaled el-Yashruti, See, Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> One of them was Kamal Tuffana, See, Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> An interview with Munir el-Rayyes.

<sup>5</sup> See the attitude of Jordan towards the All-Palestine Government, pp. 276-278.

discussed seriously and no steps to implement it were taken by the meeting of the Council of the Arab League held in Casablanca in September 1959. In August 1960, a meeting of the Council of the Arab League was held in Chtaura, Lebanon, to discuss, among other things, “the re-organization of the Palestinian people” and “the formation of a Palestinian army in the Arab Host-States”<sup>1</sup>. Two Palestinian delegations, one representing the Gaza Strip<sup>2</sup>, and the other representing the Arab Higher Committee<sup>3</sup>, went to attend the meetings of the Council of the Arab League during its discussions on Palestine, but were not allowed to attend<sup>4</sup>. This was mainly due to the opposition of the Jordanian delegation, which was against the very principle of discussing the revival of the Palestinian identity on the grounds that Jordan was Palestine and Jordan represented the Palestinians<sup>5</sup>. The meeting at Chtaura failed, and all efforts at mediation between the pro-Palestinian entity attitude of the United Arab Republic and the anti-Palestinian entity attitude of Jordan failed<sup>6</sup>. A compromise solution seemed, however, to come about in June 1961, when a Technical Committee, appointed by the Secretary-General of the Arab League and consisting of representatives for

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<sup>1</sup> Falastin Daily Newspaper. (Jerusalem), (23/8/1960), pp. 1 and 4.

<sup>2</sup> Members of this delegation were Munir el-Rayyes, Abdallah Abu-Sitteh, Gamal el-Surani, and Dawwod Sayegh. See, an interview with Munir el-Rayyes.

<sup>3</sup> Members of this delegation were Emil el-Ghuri, Izzat Tannous and Khalil el-Tabari. See, Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> An interview with Munir el-Rayyes.

<sup>5</sup> Falastin Daily Newspaper, op.cit., (27/8/1960), pp. 1 and 4.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

the United Arab Republic, Jordan, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia, held a meeting in Cairo and decided to recommend the continued support of an All-Palestine Government both materially and politically as a substitute for the establishment of a new Palestinian entity<sup>1</sup>.

The death, in 1963, of the representative of Palestine at the Arab League and the Prime Minister of the defunct All-Palestine Government, Ahmad Hilmi Abdel-Baki, and the appointment of his successor, re-activated the issue of the revival of Palestinian entity. With the active support of Egypt, Ahmad Shukairy was chosen in 1963 as the new representative of Palestine at the Arab League.

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### **Palestine Liberation Organization: An Arab States-Sponsored Form of Palestinian Entity, 1964 – 1967**

On January 13, 1964, the First Arab Summit Conference was held in Cairo to discuss ways and means to prevent Israel from diverting the waters of the Jordan River. This Conference resolved, among other things, that the organization of the Palestinian people constituted one way of repelling the threats of Zionist danger<sup>2</sup>. The task of organizing the Palestinian people was entrusted to the newly-appointed representative of Palestine at the Arab League, Ahmad Shukairy.

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<sup>1</sup> Ahmad Shukairy. Min Al-Qimmah Ila Al-Hazimah (From Summit to Defeat), (Beirut: Dar Al-Talia'h, 1971), pp. 57-60.

<sup>2</sup> Arab League, Statement by the Council of the Kings and Presidents of State (17<sup>th</sup> January, 1964), p. 1.

After three months of consultations, the First Palestine National Congress was held in the city of Jerusalem on May 28, 1964, and was attended by 422 delegates representing the Palestinians in the Arab World<sup>1</sup>. The Congress approved the projected covenant and Fundamental Law and declared the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization “as a mobilizing leadership of the forces of the Palestine Arab people to wage the battle of liberation, as a shield for the rights and aspirations of the people of Palestine and as a road to victory”<sup>2</sup>. The Second Arab Summit Conference held in Alexandria on September 1, 1964, welcomed the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

### **Attitudes of the Palestinians Towards the Establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization 1964 – 1965**

The attitude of the Palestinians towards the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization at both the level of the Palestinian masses, and on the level of the Palestinian organizations operating in the Arab world at the time of the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization can be analyzed separately.

On the level of the Palestinian masses there was a general enthusiasm for the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization<sup>3</sup>. This

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<sup>1</sup> Palestine Liberation Organization. The First Palestine National Congress: Its Proceedings and Resolutions, pp. 77-85.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 42.

<sup>3</sup> Al-Jihad Daily Newspaper. Vol. 12, Nos. 3257 & 3258 (Jerusalem, 25 & 26 February 1964). Also see, Al-Kifah Daily Newspaper. No. 1827 (Beirut, 26 February 1964).

enthusiasm derived its strength among the Palestinians in Jordan from the fact that the establishment of the PLO was not meant to separate the West Bank from Transjordan, but rather to allow the Palestinians to play an active, and, if possible, a leading role in any future Arab effort towards the 'liberation of Palestine'<sup>1</sup>. However, as for the Palestinians at large, the establishment of the PLO as a representative body of the Palestinian people was, itself, an act of self-fulfillment for the dispersed Palestinian people who had lacked an identity since 1948<sup>2</sup>. Moreover, the legitimacy endowed on the PLO through its endorsement and recognition by the First and Second Arab Summit Conferences, was a source of comfort for the majority of the Palestinians who did not want to have an entity of their own at the expense of dissociating themselves from the other Arab states, or, more precisely, at the expense of relieving the Arab States from their responsibilities towards the 'liberation of Palestine'.

The attitudes of the Palestinian organizations and Pan-Arab parties with primary Palestinian pre-occupations towards the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization were, generally speaking, less enthusiastic than that of the Palestinian masses at large. Such attitudes, which ranged from complete opposition to procedural opposition and cautious support, were conditional, among other things, upon three factors. Unlike the

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<sup>1</sup> An interview with Walid Kamhawi. (Kamhawi was a member of the First Palestine National Congress and a member of the First Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization). Also see, Al-Jihad Daily Newspaper, op.cit.

<sup>2</sup> An interview with Walid Kamhawi, op.cit.

Palestinian masses, the Palestinian organizations did not feel the self-fulfillment which the dis-organized Palestinians felt upon the establishment of the PLO. Indeed some of the Palestinian – oriented organizations like the Al-Ba’th Party and the Arab Nationalist Movement preached doctrines and ideologies which were not particularly enthusiastic about the establishment of a purely Palestinian organization such as the PLO. Lastly, and most important, was the fact that the attitude of the Palestinian organizations towards the Palestine Liberation Organization was, by and large, a reflection of the attitudes of the various Arab States with which most of these organizations had special bilateral relationships. The attitude of Syria, for example, was bound to condition the attitude of the Al-Ba’th Party towards the PLO. Similarly, the attitude of Saudi Arabia towards the PLO was bound to condition, among other things, that of the Arab Higher Committee whose funds were almost exclusively Saudi Arabian.

The following pages will be devoted to an analysis of the attitudes of the major Palestinian organizations towards the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization<sup>1</sup>. These are the Arab Higher Committee, the Palestinian branch of the Arab Nationalist Movement and the Arab Ba’th Socialist Party.

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### **The Attitude of the Arab Higher Committee**

The attitude of the Arab Higher Committee towards the establishment

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<sup>1</sup> With the exception of the Al-Fatah Organization which, in 1964, had not yet declared its existence.

of the Palestine Liberation organization did not derive its significance out of any real importance attached to a certain role, whether political or otherwise, played by the Arab Higher Committee, but rather as a reflection, on the one hand, of the historical importance attached to the Arab Higher Committee as the last form of Palestinian political organization in the pre-1949 period, and on the other hand, as a reflection of a part of organized Palestinian public opinion which, although limited in its existence to the leadership, could not be completely discarded.

The attitude of the Arab Higher committee towards the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization was, in the beginning, conciliatory, in the sense that it declared “its good intentions to cooperate with anybody who works, truly and sincerely, in the service of the Palestinian cause, and who fights firmly and strongly, any policy which aims at liquidating it”<sup>1</sup>. However, this attitude was later developed into an attitude of declared opposition and hostility. This attitude was justified, by the Arab Higher Committee, on the grounds that the formation of the First Palestine National Congress and the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization was done by appointment rather than through elections<sup>2</sup>. This, the Arab Higher Committee argued, did not prove that the PLO represented the Palestinians at large and had secured their consent<sup>3</sup>. Accordingly, the Arab Higher Committee opposed the PLO and withheld its support for it.

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Usbu' Al-Arabi Magazine. (Beirut, September 1964) p. 34. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>2</sup> Falastin Magazine. No. 44 (Beirut: Arab Higher Committee, October 1964), pp. 23-24.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

However, the real motives behind the opposition of the Arab Higher Committee to the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization were different and deeper from that of elections, for, after all, the Arab Higher Committee itself had never been the product of popular elections. There were three main factors behind the hostile attitude of the Arab Higher Committee towards the PLO. First, it was an act of self-defence in the sense that had the Arab Higher Committee supported the Palestine Liberation Organization, then, very little argument would have been left for the Arab Higher Committee to remain in existence, rather than be dissolved into the Palestine Liberation Organization. This was, more or less, made clear by the Arab Higher Committee when it argued, though implicitly, that the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization should not be at the expense of other existing Palestinian organizations<sup>1</sup>. This implied a non-recognition by the Arab Higher Committee that the PLO represented all the Palestinians. Second, there was a clear role for some Arab states such as Saudi Arabia who were either against Al-Shukairy personally or, like Syria, against the so-called “Pro-Nasser orientation” of the PLO, in promoting and encouraging the Arab Higher Committee to adopt an attitude of opposition to the PLO<sup>2</sup>. Finally, the personal rivalry between Haj Amin Husseini<sup>3</sup> and Ahmad Shukairy<sup>4</sup> as to who represented the

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 26-27.

<sup>2</sup> The attitude of the Arab states towards the PLO will be dealt with on pp. 313-318.

<sup>3</sup> He was Chairman of the Arab Higher Committee.

<sup>4</sup> He was Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Palestinians and spoke on their behalf played a role in determining the attitude of Haj Amin Husseini towards the PLO. Clearly, there was no room for cooperation between the two, since such cooperation would have meant that one of the two had to concede that the other represented the Palestinians.

### **The Attitude of the Arab Nationalist Movement**

Basically, the attitude of the Arab Nationalist Movement towards the PLO was in favour of the principle of having an organization which would represent the Palestinian people<sup>1</sup>.

“The Palestinian people (have) endured very difficult circumstances during the past sixteen years. Such circumstances prevented this people from exercising its duties in serving its cause as fully as expected. However, a new awakening has begun to manifest itself in many forms; this expresses the determination of the Palestinian people to perform its duties in order to recover its usurped homeland. The Summit Conference gave the Palestinian people the opportunity which prescribes to the organized forces the duty of making use of this unique experiment in Arab cooperation in order to seriously get ready for liberating Palestine”<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Ussbu' Al-Arabi, *op.cit.*, pp. 34-35.

<sup>2</sup> Arab Political Documents: 1964. Doc, 42, “Joint Communiqué on the Palestine Entity Issued by the Arab Nationalist Movement, the Federation of Palestine Students, the Palestine Liberation Front and the Palestine Arab Youth in Lebanon”, pp. 80-82 (Beirut: The American University of Beirut, 1965) p. 80.

This attitude, however, while in support of the idea of reviving the Palestinian identity and creating a Palestinian entity, was not similarly expressed in terms of the procedure which was adopted by Shukairy in his making of the PLO<sup>1</sup>.

The roots of the supporting attitude of the Arab Nationalist Movement to the revival of Palestinian identity could be traced back to the good relations and co-ordination between Nasser and the Arab Nationalist Movement at that time and the support which Nasser rendered to the idea of reviving the Palestinian identity. More important, the revival of a Palestinian identity which was the product of an all-Arab decision was not, therefore, in contradiction with the Pan-Arab orientation of the Arab Nationalist Movement which had always accorded the Palestine Problem a central concern in its Pan-Arab struggle<sup>2</sup>.

The roots of the opposing attitude, by the Arab Nationalist Movement, to the procedure adopted by Ahmad Shukairy in his making of the PLO should be seen in terms of the immediate interests of the Arab Nationalist Movement as an established popular party to which the procedure of Shukairy gave no role in the making of the PLO. This was made clear in the following statement issued by the Arab Nationalist Movement together with some of its off-shoots<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information see, pp. 309-314, 318-320.

<sup>2</sup> See, Chapter Three, pp. 161-162.

<sup>3</sup> See, p. 305, footnote No. 1.

“The Palestine Entity shall emanate from free elections that truly express the authentic revolutionary will of the people. If for some over-powering reasons, the elections can not be conducted, then the revolutionary people’s will must be represented in a general national conference. A provisional committee that represents all the revolutionary organizations and active forces shall call for this conference which will guarantee for the Entity a revolutionary character”<sup>1</sup>.

This demand which was not met by Shukairy on the grounds that the incorporation of existing Palestinian political organizations and parties within the PLO would lead to making the PLO “an arena for conflicting political parties and organizations which should not be the case, because the struggle for Palestine necessitates that the only loyalty should be to Palestine rather than to a political party or organization”<sup>2</sup>. This exclusion, by Shukairy, of existing political parties and organizations as the popular base of the PLO led the Arab Nationalist Movement to issue a statement on June 14, 1964, in which it declared that the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestine National Congress “did not meet the minimum requirements of the Palestinian masses”<sup>3</sup>. The same statement spelled out these minimum requirements by saying:

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<sup>1</sup> Arab Political Documents: 1964. Doc. No. 42, op.cit., p. 81.

<sup>2</sup> Al-Musawwar Magazine. (Cairo, 28/5/1964), p. 27. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>3</sup> Arab Political Documents: 1964. Doc. No. 100, “Statement by the Arab Nationalist Movement Concerning the Palestine Congress and the Palestine Liberation Organization”, pp. 243-246. (Beirut: the American University of Beirut, 1965), p. 245.

“These (Palestinian) masses want the Entity, the Liberation Organization and the Congress to create an effective Palestinian military outfit. They demand that the Palestinians be properly organized, that the Palestinians be properly organized, that the Liberation Organization should have collective leadership, that it should work in a true revolutionary fashion according to a clear mandate, and that it should procure for itself an independence which would allow it to function effectively and to be free of all pressures from reactionary quarters”<sup>1</sup>.

This reaction by the Arab Nationalist Movement to the attitude of Shukairy towards political parties and organizations led, eventually, to a rift between the PLO and existing Palestinian political parties and organizations. The outcome of this rift was catastrophic to the status and prospects of the PLO as the mother-organization and representative of the Palestinian people, because other Palestinian political parties and organizations would not conceive of the PLO as being the mother-organization, but rather as another Palestinian political party or organization, with no legitimate right to contain and to represent other Palestinian political parties and organizations.

“The Arab Nationalist Movement firmly believes that the failure of the Jerusalem Congress can in no way affect either the Palestinian spirit or the revolutionary

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

course chosen by the Palestinians since the catastrophe. It wishes to reaffirm that the responsibility for serious and consistent hard work which can alone cope with the dangers of the battle for the liberation rests with the revolutionary elements and forces. These forces must relentlessly pursue their attempt to establish a unified force capable of standing up to all suspicious movements that are determined to crush the genuine Palestinian revolutionary spirit. These forces must be ever on their guard against weakness, resignation and compromise which were allowed to dominate the Entity. The poor results achieved by the Congress are, once more, a proof of the fact that the masses alone are the beginning, the means and the end and that our path must lie through effective revolutionary organization”<sup>1</sup>.

### **The Attitude of the Arab Ba’th Socialist Party**

According to the Arab Ba’th Socialistic Party, “The Palestine entity.....is the practical embodiment of the goals of Palestinian struggle”<sup>2</sup>. However, the Ba’th Party did not accept that the idea of the Palestine entity as laid down by the First Arab Summit Conference was enough<sup>3</sup>. The

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 246.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., Doc. No. 35, “Statement of the National Command of the Ba’th Party Concerning the Palestine Entity”, p. 70.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 71.

al-Ba'th Party demanded that, if the Palestine entity were to become viable and capable of proper development, it should obtain the following conditions: First, that the proposed Palestine entity should have a popular organization which would represent the Palestinian masses and would enjoy an "actual authority to exercise all the rights which are derived from the Palestine Arab people's complete sovereignty over their homeland"<sup>1</sup>. Second, the proposed Palestine entity should have a Palestinian army, commanded by Palestinians under the higher authority of the civilian leadership of the Palestine entity. The existence of this army would "guarantee the development of the entity as a force for liberation and revolution, and not as a substitute for these"<sup>2</sup>. Third, that the proposed Palestine entity should have the financial and moral support of the Arab states without being subjected, in consequence, to any influence or pressures<sup>3</sup>. These conditions were later incorporated within the memorandum presented by the Syrian delegation to the Second Arab Summit Conference held on September 10, 1964<sup>4</sup>. However, the attitude of the al-Ba'th Party towards the Palestine Liberation Organization could best be detected through the attitude of Syria towards the PLO which will be discussed in a forthcoming part of this chapter.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., Doc. No. 171, "The Memorandum Presented by the Syrian Delegation to the Second Arab Summit Conference Concerning the Palestine Entity", p. 387.

## **Palestinian Conception of the PLO Compared with the Arab States**

### **Conception of the PLO: 1964 – 1965**

The establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization was an official Arab response to a Palestinian popular demand<sup>1</sup>. The demand was basically a logical outcome of more than two decades of neglecting the Palestinians and depriving them from playing any substantial role to serve their cause in Palestine<sup>2</sup>. The Palestinians believed that “they had potential and resources which they could utilize for serving their cause and that they only needed a Palestinian political framework and organization to do it”<sup>3</sup>. The Arab States however did not allow this belief to be translated into action<sup>4</sup>. Furthermore, the Arab States, while preventing the Palestinians from organizing themselves and taking any initiative to serve their cause directly, did not themselves take any serious initiatives on the road to the “liberation of Palestine”<sup>5</sup>.

The response of the Arab states, which was expressed through the approval of the first and Second Arab Summit Conferences to the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization, was an accumulation of a long process of Arab political failures which were characterized by an almost continuous process of Arab cold war<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Interviews with Hayder Abdel-Shafi and Walid Kamhawi.

<sup>2</sup> See, pp. 275-287, 289-290.

<sup>3</sup> An interview with Hayder Abdel-Shafi. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>4</sup> See, pp. 275-287.

<sup>5</sup> See, pp. 291-295.

<sup>6</sup> See, pp. 291-295.

The response of the Arab states, motivated as it was by political conditions, limited the role which the PLO was meant to play. The true nature of this role, which was never made explicitly clear by the Arab states, reflected itself in the dilemma which confronted many of the members of the First Executive Committee of the PLO, who did not really know the extent of the powers and freedom of action accorded to the PLO by the Arab states.

“As a matter of fact, things were not clear before us. We did not know the extent of the PLO military and political powers and the degree of freedom accorded, by the Arab states, to the PLO to practice its authority over the Palestinian people. More ambiguous was the relationship and degree of co-ordination between the PLO and the Arab states”<sup>1</sup>.

The Palestinian conception of the PLO was clearly different from that of the majority of the Arab States. During the first meeting of the First Executive Committee of the PLO, held in Jerusalem on August 25, 1964, a memorandum which was presented by one of the members<sup>2</sup>, was accepted as a basis for discussion. This memorandum which treated, among other things, the aims and duties of the Palestine Liberation Organization revealed that the

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<sup>1</sup> An interview with Hayder Abdel-Shafi. (trans. L.K.); Also see, an interview with Walid Kamhawi, (Both Abdel-Shafi and Kamhawi were members of the First Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization).

<sup>2</sup> He was Bahjat Abu-Gharbiyyeh.

Palestinians thought of the PLO as an organized framework for leading and mobilizing the Palestinian people politically and militarily in preparation for the “liberation of Palestine”. In this context, the memorandum stress four major points as being the principal aims of the PLO<sup>1</sup>. First, to point out the independent Palestinian character and Palestinian will and determination to liberate the occupied parts of Palestine. Second, the preservation of the Palestine Problem and defending it against any attempts to solve it in any manner short of total liberation. Third, an extensive military and political mobilization of the Palestinian people “in order to make them capable and ready for effective participation in the liberation of occupied territories when the time of liberation comes”. This also covered the holding of general elections for electing a Palestinian National Congress which would also lead to an elected Executive Committee. Fourth, “leading the Palestinian people, both as army an as people, along side the armies of the Arab states when the war of liberation erupts”.

This optimistic Palestinian conception of the aims and duties of the Palestine Liberation Organization was quickly brought to an end. During the Second Arab Summit Conference, the PLO delegation was told by the Syrian President, General Amin El-Hafez, to pack and leave because the Arab states were not serious about the Palestine Liberation Organization<sup>2</sup>. Similarly, when the then Egyptian Vice-President,

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<sup>1</sup> Unpublished Document. (from the private papers of Walid Kamhawi, member of the First Executive Committee of the PLO). (trans. L.K.)

<sup>2</sup> An interview with Walid Kamhawi.

Zakariyya Muhyiddin, was asked about the U.A.R. conception of the nature of the role to be played by the PLO, he emphasized that such a role would be mainly confined to “representing the Palestinian people on the international scene, as well as, propagating the Palestinian cause”<sup>1</sup>.

This Arab states’ conception reflected itself on the policy which was pursued by the PLO during its early stages and which was mainly directed at opening information offices and sending delegations to various international conferences. This, however, was not tolerated by the Palestinians who kept on demanding that the major activities of the PLO should be in the military area and in the area of popular organization of the Palestinian masses<sup>2</sup>. The implementation of these two major demands was frustrated by the Arab states.

The decision to form a Palestinian liberation army was taken by the Executive Committee shortly before the Second Summit Conference was held. However, in the background of this decision was the Palestinian popular demand and the resolutions of the First Palestine National Congress which called, inter alia, for the “immediate military training of all able Palestinians, men and women, on a permanent and compulsory basis”, “the

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<sup>1</sup> An interview with Walid Kamhawi, (Kamhawi was the PLO member who met Vice-President Muhyiddin).

<sup>2</sup> Al-Jihad Newspaper, op.cit.; Al-Kifah Newspaper, op.cit.; Al-Huriyyah Magazine, (Beirut) Vol. 5 Nos. 205, 206, 211, 214, 216, 220, respective pages being, 8-9, 8-9, 5, 12, 7, 7.

formation of Palestinian military regular regiments, as well as efficient and effective commando regiments”, and “the practice of popular resistance and civil defence among the ranks of the Palestinian people”<sup>1</sup>.

The Arab endorsement of the PLO decision to form a Palestine liberation army did not indicate an Arab acceptance that the PLO should exercise full authority in such areas as military action. The size of funds allocated by the Second Arab Summit Conference for the Palestine Liberation Army, which were 5.5 million pounds sterling, gave an indication as to the extent of military strength the Arab States had in mind for the proposed Palestinian army. Moreover, the attitude of countries like Jordan and Egypt, which controlled the largest concentrations of Palestinian populace and Palestinian land to any possible attempt by the PLO to exercise full authority in creating such Palestinian institutions as an army and a popular organization, was of crucial importance, and a reflection of the Arab states’ conception of the PLO.

In dealing with the Palestine Liberation Organization, the basic official attitude of the Jordanian regime was that “the problem of Palestine is the problem of Jordan, and that Jordan is Palestine”<sup>2</sup>. Accordingly, the Jordanian regime consistently argued against the development of

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<sup>1</sup> Palestine Liberation Organization. The First Palestine National Congress: Its Proceedings and Resolutions, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Arab Political Documents:1965. Doc. No. 152 “Speech of King Hussein in the royal Palace”, pp. 354-359 (Beirut: The American University of Beirut, 1966), p. 358.

autonomous PLO institutions in Jordan on the basis that such institutions were existing in Jordan, and since Jordan and Palestine were one and the same, then the PLO could function through those existing Jordanian institutions, because the development of Palestinian institutions alongside existing Jordanian ones might undermine national unity.

“Quite recently the sons of Palestine have begun to organize their ranks elsewhere than in Jordan, but we started this ourselves a long time ago. We have recently heard certain strange rumours and suspicious gossip which can only be intended to split our unity. This we can not in any way tolerate. Furthermore, such rumours are underhanded attempts to violate Arab unanimity and Arab plans for liberation by a unified command to which we must offer our total support”<sup>1</sup>.

The Jordanian attitude was thus a refusal to have a Palestinian army on its territory. Similarly, the Jordanian regime refused to permit the formation of a Palestinian popular organization to serve as a means for mobilizing the Palestinian masses. This attitude was made clear by King Hussein of Jordan, when he said in his speech of October 4, 1965:

“There is to be no organization in this country which does not originate from the need to organize through the proper national channels, and there is to be military recruitment except within

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 357-358.

the ranks of the armed forces. Nor is there to be any activity which could adversely affect the people's unity, morale and development”<sup>1</sup>.

The attitude of Egypt was more positive than that of Jordan. Egypt agreed that the PLO could open camps for military training in the Gaza Strip. Moreover, Egypt offered all the assistance needed for building the first two regiments of the Palestine Liberation army, whether in terms of instructors, equipment or weaponry<sup>2</sup>. However, Egypt was careful not to give the Palestinian army in the Gaza Strip complete independence, but rather to keep it under Egyptian supervision<sup>3</sup>. This meant that, in practice, there was a limit on the extent of the support rendered by Egypt to the PLO, in both the military sphere and the sphere of popular organization<sup>4</sup>. Egypt had no intention of giving the PLO an unlimited free hand to organize the Palestinian masses and to undertake military activities from bases in the Gaza Strip<sup>5</sup>. This attitude by Egypt was legitimized on the grounds that any Palestinian military action or build-up in the Gaza Strip might invite Israeli reprisals<sup>6</sup> which would definitely involve the Egyptian army. However, the gap in this Egyptian attitude was the fact that it was not declared. In other words, while Egypt did not make her attitude of limited PLO authority in the

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 358.

<sup>2</sup> An interview with Hayder Abdel-Shafi.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.; also see, an interview with Walid Kamhawi.

<sup>6</sup> The same argument could hold true in Jordan, Syria and Lebanon.

Gaza Strip known, every effort was made by Egypt and the other Arab states to make the Palestinians feel that the PLO enjoyed full powers as the leadership of the Palestinian people, and that the PLO received unlimited support from the Arab states.

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### **Palestine Liberation Organization: Ideology and Political Strategy**

From its establishment, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) did not adopt a particular ideology or political doctrine, other than its stated aim of the ‘Liberation of Palestine’. Its formation, which started from the top to the bottom, and its subjection, during its formative stage, to the various conflicting interests and strains of inter-Arab politics, were among the important reasons for the absence of a well-defined ideology and political strategy. The Palestine Liberation Organization, as an outcome of the policy of Arab Summit Conferences, had to be based on a policy of compromise, that it, the PLO itself was a compromise solution. This compromise was all the more fundamental in that the activities to be sponsored by the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people meant that the scope of the PLO operations had to cut across the various interests and political orientations of many Arab states, which were themselves in conflict. This meant that the PLO, in order to be able to function, was forced to adopt a policy of appeasement and compromise.

The “ideology of liberation” and the political strategy adopted by the PLO and manifested in the Palestine National Covenant stressed the links which bind “Palestine” and the Palestinian people with the

Arab World and the Arab nation<sup>1</sup>. It also stressed the right of the Arab Palestinian people, wherever they might be, to return to Palestine and to live there on equal terms with Jews who were living in Palestine in 1947, or their children<sup>2</sup>. Furthermore, the Covenant expressed, as part of its political strategy, its rejection of the establishment of the state of Israel, the Balfour Declaration and the British Mandate as being “illegal”, “false” and a “fraud”<sup>3</sup>. Zionism was also denounced as being “a colonialist movement in its inception, aggressive and expansionist in its goals, racist and segregationist in its configurations and fascist in its means and aims”<sup>4</sup>. The Covenant demanded from all nations to consider Zionism “an illegal movement and to outlaw its presence and activities”<sup>5</sup>.

The Covenant included other articles which were primarily meant to appease some Arab states, although, as we will see, such an appeasement was sometimes at the expense of the legitimate authority that the PLO was supposed to exercise over the Palestinian people. Article 24 of the Covenant confirmed that the PLO does not exercise any sovereignty over Palestinian territories under Arab control. This, of course, was meant to appease the Arab states concerned. In practice, however, the adoption of this article, which seems to have been, under the circumstances, a ‘must’ for the PLO, resulted in a serious hindrance to its work and activities<sup>6</sup>. Article 26 which

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<sup>1</sup> See, the Appendix, articles 1, 3, 8, 11, 12, 13 & 14.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, articles 6 and 7.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, articles 17 and 18.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, article 19.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, article 20.

<sup>6</sup> See, pp. 315-318.

confirmed that the PLO “does not interfere in the internal affairs of any Arab state”, was used, by some Arab states, mainly Jordan, to put limitations on the activities of the PLO on the grounds that such activities constituted an intervention in the internal affairs of the state, since the situation of the Palestinians residing in the host-states, especially as related to political and military activities, was always viewed as being an internal matter subject to the domestic regulations and security of the state concerned.

### **Palestine Liberation Organization: Military Strategy**

The military strategy adopted by the PLO upon its establishment was conventional in the sense that the PLO adopted a strategy which aimed at the “Liberation of Palestine” through a Palestinian military role supportive to that of the Arab states. In other words, the PLO, upon its establishment, based its military strategy on the assumption that the major burden for the “Liberation of Palestine” rested on the Arab states and the Arab armies, and that the role of the Palestinians came, through the Palestine Liberation Army and through the organization and mobilization of the Palestinian masses, as a spearhead of the battle for ‘liberation’ when the Arab states decide to initiate such a battle.

The Palestine Liberation Army itself was established on conventional bases, trained and equipped in the manner of a regular army. Attempts, in the form of studies and recommendations, were made in 1965

to transform the Palestine Liberation Army into a popular unconventional army, on the lines of commando units<sup>1</sup>. Such a recommendation was, however, rejected by the leadership of the PLO<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Unpublished Document. (From the private papers of Walid Kamhawi). This study was made and presented by the ex-army officer and Head of the PLO office in Damascus in 1965, Mustafa Sahtut.

<sup>2</sup> In February 1968, the command of the Palestine Liberation Army established the Popular Liberation Forces on the lines of commando units. These forces were not, however, a substitute for the Army, but part of it.

**Al-Fatah: Palestine National Liberation Movement, A Palestinian-Sponsored Form of Palestinian Entity<sup>1</sup>**

“From among our steadfast people, waiting at the borders, our revolutionary vanguard has issued forth, in the belief that armed revolution is our only path to Palestine and freedom. Let the imperialists and Zionists know that the people of Palestine are still in the field of battle and shall never be swept away”<sup>2</sup>.

Communiqué No. 1,  
The Asifa Forces<sup>3</sup>

This Communiqué No. I, by the Asifa Forces, marked the commencement of paramilitary, and eventually, political activities by the Al-Fatah: Palestine National Liberation Movement. It served as the first public announcement of the existence of a Palestinian paramilitary organization called the Al-Asifa. Shortly after the issuance of Communiqué No. I, on January 6, 1965, the Al-Fatah declared, on January 28, 1965, its existence as the mother-organization of the Asifa. This declaration marked the culmination of long secret preparations towards the formation of a Palestinian movement which would shoulder the responsibility of the Palestinian military and political struggle for the ‘liberation of Palestine’.

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise mentioned, the information provided in this part about Al-Fatah is based on the following interviews:

- An interview with Yasser Arafat (Abu’Ammar), Beirut: February 7, 1975.
- An interview with Khalil El-Wazir (Abu-Jihad), Beirut: January 3, 1975.

<sup>2</sup> Arab Political Documents: 1965. Doc. No. 4, op.cit., pp. 4-5.

<sup>3</sup> The Asifa Forces are the military wing of the Al-Fatah.

## **Al-Fatah: Background and Origin**<sup>1</sup>

The background to the origin of the Al-Fatah could be found in the circumstances and conditions under which the Palestinian in the Arab world lived in the 1950's<sup>2</sup>. In this context, the experiences and conceptions of those Palestinians who were largely responsible for initiating the efforts and moves which eventually led to the emergence of the Al-Fatah occupy primary importance. Those experiences were political and paramilitary, organizational, and the experiences of employment. While these were not necessarily experienced equally or wholly by each one of the founders of the Al-Fatah, they, nevertheless, constituted, as a whole, and in general, the background of the majority of the founders of the Al-Fatah.

### **Political and Paramilitary Experience**

The majority of the Palestinians who participated in the creation of the Al-Fatah had the common political experience of having been members of political parties, most important of which was the Muslim Brotherhood Movement<sup>3</sup>. In being so, those Palestinians acquired their basic political experience and were brought up in the militant atmosphere of the Muslim

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<sup>1</sup> This account of the origin of the Al-Fatah Organization is exclusively based on interviews with Yasser Arafat and Khalil El-Wazir, who were mainly responsible for the creation of the Al-Fatah. It is, however, to be mentioned that the complete authentic story of the creation of the Al-Fatah has never been revealed in its entirety.

<sup>2</sup> See, Chapter Four, pp. 186-209, Chapter Five, pp. 246-271, and Chapter Six, pp. 273-295.

<sup>3</sup> See, Chapter Three, pp. 148-150.

Brotherhood Movement where the concept of Jihad<sup>1</sup> occupied a central importance.

“We used to listen to the heroic stories of the Mujahidin (fighters) of the Muslim Brotherhood Movement, the same way a pupil would listen to his teacher. Their heroic operations against the Zionist invaders used to stimulate us. We learned a lot from them”<sup>2</sup>.

More important was the actual practice of the concept of Jihad. In 1952, Yasser Arafat<sup>3</sup> took part in many of the commando operations against the British bases in the Suez Zone. In 1954, another of the founders of the Al-Fatah, Khalil El-Wazir,<sup>4</sup> together with two others<sup>5</sup> formed a small guerrilla organization in the Gaza Strip, which was known as Shabab Al-Tha’r Al-Arabi (Men of Arab Revenge)<sup>6</sup>, and which undertook many operations inside Israel. Most important among those operations was that of blowing-up the Zuhar water-reservoir near Falujah inside Israel<sup>7</sup>, which brought tough Israeli reprisals resulting in massive human losses among the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. These losses, which resulted in huge demonstrations, prompted Nasser to re-arm his army which eventually led to the Czech Arms Deal<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The concept of Jihad is a Muslim concept which encourages the spirit of fighting in the service of God, and promises that those who get killed will go to Paradise.

<sup>2</sup> An interview with Khalil El-Wazir. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>3</sup> Leader of the Al-Fatah, and Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization since 1968.

<sup>4</sup> One of the founders of Al-Fatah and member of its Central Committee.

<sup>5</sup> They were Mohammad Hassan Al-Ifranji and Mohammad El-Ayedi.

<sup>6</sup> Interviews with Yasser Arafat and Khalil El-Wazir.

<sup>7</sup> An interview with Khalil El-Wazir.

<sup>8</sup> See, Chapter Five, pp. 266-268.

## **Organizational Experience**

Many of the founders of the Al-Fatah had organizational experience related to political and paramilitary formations. Some, like Yasser Arafat and Salah Khalaf<sup>1</sup>, acquired such experience through the Federation of Palestine Students in Cairo, of which Arafat was a president during the period 1954-1956, and Khalaf was vice-president. According to Arafat, his presidency of the Federation of Palestine Students was also an opportunity for him to organize para-militant groups from among Palestinian students in the form of Jawwalah (scouts)<sup>2</sup>. Others, like Khalil El-Wazir, acquired such experience in the Gaza Strip, where he managed to organize some Palestinian students, in addition to the organization of the paramilitary group of Men of Arab Revenge<sup>3</sup>. To this can be added the organizational experience which the majority of the founders of the Al-Fatah had as ex-partisans.

## **The Experiences of Employment: The Melting-Pot**

The majority of the founders of the Al-Fatah were working in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states. Thus they were better exposed than their fellow Palestinians in Jordan, Syria or Lebanon to the suffering of the Palestinian people at large and to the hardships which the Palestinians had to encounter in order to secure a living for themselves

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<sup>1</sup> One of the founders of the Al-Fatah and member of its Central Committee.

<sup>2</sup> An interview with Yasser Arafat.

<sup>3</sup> Interviews with Khalil El-Wazir and Yasser Arafat; also see p. 324.

and their families. This was due to the fact that Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states served as a melting-pot for the dispersed Palestinians since such states were the only place where the Palestinians scattered in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and the Gaza Strip were able to meet, en masse, live together and exchange their views on the political, social and economic conditions under which they were living. This interaction was bound to escalate the resentment and frustration of those Palestinians. Under the circumstances, it was natural that those Palestinians should think of the means to effect a change in the political deadlock under which the Palestinians were living since 1948.

“The suffering and bitterness which the Palestinian people experienced after the loss of Palestine, the failure of the Palestinian struggle through various political parties, and similarly through the many coups d'état which the Palestinians hoped would bring about an improvement in the Arab effort to liberate Palestine, all these led the Palestinians to adopt an attitude of self-reliance and dependence on themselves”<sup>1</sup>.

In addition to previous factors, the Gulf states and Kuwait were exposed to the Arab press and media which meant that the Palestinians there had access to various views and diversified interpretations of news which promoted the faculty to criticize and to analyze among those Palestinians<sup>2</sup>. Besides, the relatively ‘liberal’ atmosphere which prevailed in Kuwait and

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<sup>1</sup> An interview with Khalil El-Wazir. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

the Gulf states, and the willingness of some newspapers there to open their pages for articles and discussions which were sponsored by the founders of the Al-Fatah, all helped in making out of Kuwait and the Gulf states a better breeding-ground than other Arab states<sup>1</sup>.

### **The Making of the Al-Fatah: The Origin**

Contrary to general belief, the early moves towards the establishment of a Palestinian para-military movement, which came to be known as the Al-Fatah, did not originate from one single particular group and place, but rather from various groups of Palestinians in various places, though mainly in the Gulf States, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. It was only after long debates and discussions which extended over more than two years, from 1957-1959, that such groups agreed on a general political and para-military programme of principles, which eventually resulted in the formation of the Al-Fatah: Palestine National Liberation Movement<sup>2</sup>. Accordingly, the very basic foundations of the Al-Fatah were, more or less, a coalition of some para-military and political Palestinian nuclei which had one thing in common, the desire and determination to put the initiative of the struggle for the 'liberation of Palestine' back into Palestinian hands<sup>3</sup>.

Most important among those original nuclei were two. One was in Cairo and headed by Yasser Arafat, and the other one was in the Gaza Strip and headed by Khalil El-Wazir. Arafat's group, which included Abu-Iyad (Salah Khalaf), originated and developed through the Federation of Palestine Students in Cairo<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> An interview with Khalil El-Wazir (Abu-Jihad).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> See, p. 325.

El-Wazir's group originated in the Gaza Strip and developed through both student struggle and para-military operations of the Men of Arab Revenge<sup>1</sup>.

The first contact between Arafat and El-Wazir took place in the years 1954 and 1955, when the latter used to write to Arafat, who was President of the Federation of Palestine Students, explaining to him "the suffering of the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip"<sup>2</sup>. In 1956, El-Wazir and Arafat met in Cairo when the former arrived there. During that meeting, they discussed the general condition of the Palestinian people and aspects of the activities of Palestinian students<sup>3</sup>. The Second meeting between the two men took place in the Gaza Strip in March 1957, where Arafat was touring the Strip on a special mission which was delegated by the Egyptian Revolutionary Council<sup>4</sup>. Shortly after this meeting, Arafat went to work in Kuwait and El-Wazir in Saudi Arabia.

### **The Making of the Al-Fatah: The Countdown**

The making of the Al-Fatah was not itself an aim sought by its founders, but rather as a means through which certain political and para-military convictions could be implemented. While the political and para-military convictions of the Al-Fatah will be dealt with in a forthcoming part of this chapter, the emphasis here will be given to the actual steps which were taken by the founders of the Al-Fatah and which culminated in 1965 with the commencement of para-military operations inside Israel.

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<sup>1</sup> See, p. 324.

<sup>2</sup> An interview with Khalil El-Wazir. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Interviews with Yasser Arafat and Khalil El-Wazir.

According to Yasser Arafat<sup>1</sup>, the making of the Al-Fatah took place through seven phases. First was the phase of loss which extended from 1949-1951. Second was the phase of thinking and evaluation which covered the period 1951-1952. Third was the phase of contact with Palestinian revolutionary elements which extended from 1952-1956. Fourth was the phase of the move towards creating “an effective organization capable of shouldering its expected responsibilities”<sup>2</sup>. This phase covered the years 1957 and 1958. Fifth, the phase of declaring the existence of the Al-Fatah through its mouthpiece Our Palestine (Falatinuna) Magazine. Sixth was the phase of military training and preparedness which extended from 1960-1964. Seventh was the take-off phase with the commencement of para-military operations inside Israel on January 1, 1965.

These phases could be divided into two eras. The first era which covers phases one, two and three should not, and could not, be considered as part of the process of the making of the Al-Fatah because they mainly dealt with personal experiences and mental exercises which were discussed under the previous heading of the origin of the Al-Fatah. After all, none of those first three phases resulted in actual steps to create an organization, although they eventually laid down the mental and psychological bases on which the actual steps for building the Al-Fatah rested. The second era, which covers phases four, five, six and seven, was the era of the making of the Al-Fatah. Accordingly, the analysis in this part will concentrate on these phases which cover the period 1957-1965.

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<sup>1</sup> An interview with Yasser Arafat.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. (trans. L.K.)

The first important and organized move towards the formation of the Palestinian para-military movement which came to be known as the Al-Fatah took place in Kuwait in October 1957. During that month, five Palestinians, two of whom were Yasser Arafat and Khalil El-Wazir, met and agreed to unite their efforts and to work for the establishment of a Palestinian para-military organization with the aim of reactivating the efforts for the ‘liberation of Palestine’ through putting the initiative for political and military activities back into Palestinian hands<sup>1</sup>. At the same time, there were other groups in other places who were also doing the same. No contact or coordination had yet been established among those groups<sup>2</sup>.

Early in 1958, another meeting, which was also attended by Arafat and El-Wazir was held in Kuwait. In this meeting, the decision to establish a “Palestinian movement on a Palestinian basis”<sup>3</sup> was taken. Furthermore, an agreement was reached actually to start building a Palestinian organization which would fulfill “the Palestinian hope of having a Palestinian revolutionary movement”<sup>4</sup>.

A plan for organizational expansion was laid-down. This plan was carried out in two ways. First, a contact was established with other groups which were known to have similar views as to the need for a Palestinian para-military movement and who similarly had initiated preliminary steps in this direction. Most important among those groups was

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<sup>1</sup> An interview with Khalil El-Wazir. Also see, an interview with Yasser Arafat.

<sup>2</sup> An interview with Khalil El-Wazir.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. (trans. L.K.)

that of Qatar in the Gulf area, which was headed by Mohammad Yusuf El-Najjar, Kamal Udwan and Mahmood Abbas<sup>1</sup>, and that of Saudi Arabia which was headed by Abdel-Fattah Humood<sup>2</sup>. Negotiations with the El-Najjar and Udwan group in Qatar and that of Humood in Saudi Arabia extended from 1957-1959, and ended successfully with a decision to incorporate all groups together in what turned out to be the Al-Fatah. Second, a contact was also established with other individuals in the Gaza Strip, Jordan (including the West Bank), Syria and Lebanon. The response of those individuals was limited<sup>3</sup>. Nevertheless, “none of those who were approached attempted to reveal the identity of the person who contacted him, nor the nature of his mission”<sup>4</sup>. This was probably so because those who were contacted were screened in order to make sure whether that they were true nationalists.

In January 1959, a move towards propagating the political views and convictions of the newly found the Al-Fatah was done through a Beirut-based magazine called Our Palestine: The Call For Life (Falastinuna: Nida’ Al-Hayat). During the same year, preparations for building the para-military wing of the Al-Fatah were initiated. These preparations extended from 1960 until mid-1964 when the Al-Fatah was ready to commence its para-military activities<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Both El-Najjar and Udwan were assassinated in Beirut in 1973 by Israeli agents.

<sup>2</sup> An interview with Khalil El-Wazir.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>5</sup> Interviews with Yasser Arafat (Abu’Ammar) and Khalil El Wazir (Abu Jihad).

The period 1960-1964 witnessed, alongside paramilitary preparations, the beginning of the Al-Fatah contacts with some Arab and non-Arab states. Some of these contacts were, however, part of the para-military build-up of the Al-Fatah<sup>1</sup>.

Until 1963, the mainstream of the Al-Fatah para-military preparations were in the field of recruitment, military training and collecting arms and weaponry.

The Al-Fatah sought recruits from among the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, Jordan (including the West Bank), Syria and Lebanon. The majority of those who joined the Al-Fatah as ‘fighters’ were drawn from among the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank<sup>2</sup>. The training centres, which were secret, were located in Syria, Algeria<sup>3</sup>, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip<sup>4</sup>. The commencement of para-military activities was subject to debate and discussions within the Al-Fatah leadership. Some did not want to commence para-military operations until the Al-Fatah could muster enough men, weapons and money to guarantee the continuity of para-military operations for a considerable time<sup>5</sup>. Others wanted to commence para-military activities with the few men, weapons and money which the Al-Fatah had on the grounds that this little would create the right conditions which would eventually lead to promoting the

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid. (For more information see, pp. 333-335).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Since 1964. See, an interview with Yasser Arafat.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. Also see, an interview with Khalil El-Wazir.

<sup>5</sup> An interview with Khalil El-Wazir.

al-Fatah capabilities, whether in terms of recruits, arms or finance<sup>1</sup>. Apparently, the second opinion was accepted, and it was decided to commence para-military activities as soon as possible<sup>2</sup>. The implementation of this decision was however delayed. This delay was mainly due to an incident which took place in Jordan in September 1963. On September 8 and 10, 1963, some of the Al-Fatah leaders were in Jordan to buy arms. They bought 43 pieces of weaponry and two tons of explosives<sup>3</sup>. On the 14<sup>th</sup> of the same month these weapons and explosives, in addition to 23 Al-Fatah recruits, were caught by the Jordanian security forces in the Hebron District in the West Bank. This constituted a severe blow to the Al-Fatah, because, on top of the loss of the confiscated weapons and explosives, the Al-Fatah had to replace the 23 men who were caught, in addition to paying thousands of pounds to secure their release, which actually happened after seven months<sup>4</sup>. By mid-1964, the al-Fatah was able to mass enough men and arms in order to commence its para-military activities.

During the same period, 1960-1964, the Al-Fatah leadership had established contacts with some Arab states, the most important of which were with Algeria and Syria.

The contacts between the Al-Fatah leadership and the Algerian leaders dated to the early 1960's. In 1962, a delegation from the Al-Fatah,

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

headed by Yasser Arafat, went to Algeria and met the Algerian leaders to continue talks which had been started earlier<sup>1</sup>. In 1963, when Algeria became independent, another Fatah delegation, which was also headed by Arafat, went there and arranged with the Algerian leaders for the opening of an office for the al-Fatah in Algeria<sup>2</sup>. The office, which was opened in the same year, was headed by Khalil El-Wazir (Abu Jihad). That was the first office opened by the Al-Fatah in any Arab country. The opening of this office constituted “one of the important pillars on which the Al-Fatah Movement capitalized during its early life”<sup>3</sup>. This was mainly due to the fact that the support rendered by the highly prestigious Algerian Revolution to the Al-Fatah by allowing them to open an office in Algeria promoted the chances of the Al-Fatah and its credibility, since it was the only Palestinian grouping, among many others at that time, which had this privilege<sup>4</sup>. More important was the fact that through this office, the Al-Fatah leaders were able to meet many of the world leaders and representatives of the liberation movements. It was through such meetings and contacts that the Al-Fatah leaders were invited to visit China and North Korea. In March 1964, a delegation which was composed of Yasser Arafat and Khalil El-Wazir went to China as representatives of the Palestinian people and conferred with Premier Chou En Lai. Later Arafat went back to Kuwait and El-Wazir proceeded to North Korea where he met the Korean leaders<sup>5</sup>. In addition to facilitating such international contacts for the Al-Fatah, Algeria also provided facilities for the military training of the Al-Fatah recruits through both the Algerian military academy and summer training camps<sup>6</sup>. Finally, all

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> An interview with Yasser Arafat.

<sup>3</sup> An interview with Khalil El-Wazir. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>4</sup> Interviews with Yasser Arafat and Khalil El-Wazir.

<sup>5</sup> An interview with Khalil El-Wazir.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

these achievements which the Al-Fatah got out of its presence in Algeria helped it in recruiting more people and thus expanding its organized base<sup>1</sup>.

The Al-Fatah relation with Syria started also in early 1960's. This relation had its origin in Kuwait, the birth-place of the Al-Fatah, and it was initiated through the many personal relations which the Al-Fatah leaders had with prominent Ba'thi leaders in Kuwait and in Syria. Through such friends, the Al-Fatah leaders made official contacts with the Syrian rulers<sup>2</sup>. In addition, some of the important Ba'thi leaders in Syria, like Abdel Muhsen Abu-Maizer<sup>3</sup>, were Palestinians. Such prominent Ba'thi Palestinians were approached by the Al-Fatah by the Al-Fatah leaders, and in 1963, Abu-Maizer worked, among others, in promoting the Syrian decision to allow the Al-Fatah presence on Syrian territory<sup>4</sup>. In taking this decision, the Syrian government, through its chief of military intelligence, Ahmad Suwaidan, made it clear to the Al-Fatah leaders that Syria took this decision out of its appreciation of its pan-Arab responsibilities, especially regarding the Palestine Problem, and that it would not, therefore, tolerate any eventual attempt by the Al-Fatah towards the practice of brinksmanship, or towards putting any doubts on the nationalist pan-Arab attitudes of Syria regarding the Palestinian cause<sup>5</sup>. The Al-Fatah presence in Syria was therefore not as easy and free as its presence in Algeria. Nevertheless, the location of Syria

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> He was editor-in-chief of the Ba'th Party official daily newspaper, The Al-Ba'th. For more information on Abu-Maizer, see, Chapter Three p. 159 (the footnote).

<sup>4</sup> An interview with Abdel Muhsen Abu-Maizer; also see, an interview with Khalil El-Wazir.

<sup>5</sup> An interview with Abdel Muhsen Abu-Maizer.

in the midst of the Arab world, and the fact that it has borders with Israel made the presence of the al-Fatah there very crucial for the actual practice, by the Al-Fatah, of para-military operations against Israel, which eventually started on January 1, 1965.

Originally, the decision was taken by the Al-Fatah leadership to commence para-military operations in 1964. This was meant to serve as the Palestinian answer to the Israeli plan to divert the tributaries of the river Jordan<sup>1</sup>. On September 5, 1964, the military council of the Al-Fatah was meeting secretly in Amman to discuss the timing of the commencement of paramilitary operations, when it learned of the Arab League endorsement, through the Second Arab Summit Conference, of the establishment of Palestine Liberation Army<sup>2</sup>. This endorsement caused a split in the military council of the Al-Fatah. Some were of the opinion that the establishment of Palestine Liberation Army was a good initiative and that the commencement of para-military operations must be postponed in order to give enough time for the Palestine Liberation Army to prove itself and to see whether it was meant to be a credible fighting army or a ceremonial symbolic army<sup>3</sup>. Others within the Al-Fatah military council were of the opinion to start para-military operations immediately irrespective of the decision to establish a Palestine Liberation Army. Apparently, the decision was to postpone para-military operations<sup>4</sup>. This postponement was also accompanied by a decision, which was suggested by Mohammad Yusuf El-Najjar, which

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<sup>1</sup> An interview with Yasser Arafat.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

recommended that the Al-Fatah para-military operations should initially be propagated under another name, in the event that such operations fail, the Al-Fatah would not then suffer any premature set-backs and would remain “to continue the march”<sup>1</sup>. On these lines, it was decided by the Al-Fatah military council to commence para-military activities on January 1, 1965, under the name of the Al-Asifa (the Storm). Concurrently, Mohammad Yusuf El-Najjar was appointed the military commander of the Al-Asifa Forces<sup>2</sup>.

### **Al-Fatah: Political and Military Strategy**

The political and military strategy advocated by the Al-Fatah, and the line of analysis adopted by it during the period 1959-1965, constituted a basic shift in the political thinking and orientation of the majority of the Palestinian masses<sup>3</sup>.

During the 1950's and early 1960's, the general trend among the Palestinians was towards pan-Arabism and Arab unity<sup>4</sup>. Moreover, the majority of the Palestinians who were seeking to ‘liberate their homeland’ did not embark on the national (Palestinian) path, but rather on the extra-national (Pan-Arab and to a much lesser degree Islamic) path for the ‘liberation of Palestine’<sup>5</sup>. Accordingly, when in 1959, at a time which witnessed the zenith of the spread of pan-Arabism and Arab unity, the Palestinian-sponsored Al-Fatah preached the necessity of adopting the

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> See, Chapter Two, pp. 52-63, Chapter Three, pp. 125-143, Chapter Four, pp. 213-215, and 238-240.

<sup>4</sup> See, Chapter Three, pp. 125-143.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. Also see, Chapter Three, pp. 143-169.

national (Palestinian) path as the primary way, politically and military, in any serious effort towards the ‘liberation of Palestine’, this call seemed, at the time, to have been at best unrealistic, and at worst suspicious.

In its early literature, the Al-Fatah gave the bases on which it justified its preaching of the national (Palestinian) path for the ‘liberation of Palestine’ as compared to the extra-national (pan-Arab) path.

According to the early Al-Fatah literature, the Pan-Arab approach for the ‘liberation of Palestine’ had led to conducting the struggle for the ‘liberation of Palestine’ in such a manner that the Palestine Problem became a tool of brinkmanship in inter-Arab differences. The absence, since 1948, of any Arab achievements towards the ‘liberation of Palestine’ meant that the struggle for Palestine was submerged by the various Arab states and was given a secondary importance to other problems, which were confronting each of the Arab States<sup>1</sup>.

“The means adopted by the Arab Governments is dealing with the Palestine Problem were and are still based on giving priority to temporary regional interests over challenging the usurping enemy”<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information see, Chapter Six, pp. 286-295.

<sup>2</sup> Al-Fatah: Palestine National Liberation Movement. Studies and Revolutionary Experiences, No. 1 (1966), p. 8. (trans. L.K.)

Moreover, the early Al-Fatah literature stressed that the denial, by the Arab States, of the Palestinians' right to shoulder the responsibility to initiate, direct and conduct the struggle for the 'liberation of Palestine' whether alongside, or apart from the Arab States, had contributed, to a great extent, to the weakening of the Arab struggle for the 'liberation of Palestine', because the principal actor (the Palestinians) were simply discounted.

“We believed that the Jews were able to establish their entity (in Palestine) only after the (Palestinian) Cause moved from our hands (the Palestinians) to other hands (the Arab States). We also believe that we (the Palestinians) should have the primary role in our Cause. Besides, we are sure that things will deteriorate more if we were forced to remain out of action, and if we were not consulted in matters which are directly related to our existence. The starting point towards solving our Cause lies in elevating our Cause above Arab differences”<sup>1</sup>.

The basic principle underlying the Al-Fatah political strategy during the period 1959-1965 called for the need, on the part of the Arab States, to allow the Palestinians to take charge of their own affairs. More precisely, the Al-Fatah called for the necessity of giving the Palestinians the freedom

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<sup>1</sup> Falastinuna: Nida' Al-Hayat (Our Palestine: The Call For Life), Vol. III, No. 17 (Beirut, May 1961), pp. 9 and 26. (trans. L.K.)

to organize themselves and to undertake military and political activities with the specific aim of ‘liberating their homeland’, that is, Palestine<sup>1</sup>. This was also accompanied by a call for establishing a Palestinian entity on parts of Palestine under Arab control.

“There are some parts of Palestine under Arab control. On these parts, we (the Palestinians) must establish a Palestinian nationalist revolutionary rule which would undertake, in cooperation with Arab States, the task of liberating Palestine...”<sup>2</sup>

This call must be seen in relation to the Al-Fatah belief that the catastrophe in Palestine befell the Palestinians as a result of Arab intervention in Palestine in 1948, and also as a result of the Arab states’ refusal, since 1948, to allow the Palestinian people the freedom of organization and political and military action for the liberation of Palestine.

“The real catastrophe started on the day when Palestinian people were isolated from their battle as a result of the imperialist and Zionist cooperation. Accordingly, the imperialist Zionist forces were able, through their indirect

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<sup>1</sup> *Falastinuna: Nida’ Al-Hayat*, *op.cit.*, Vol. III, No. 13 (Beirut, January 1961), p. 5; Also see, interviews with Yasser Arafat (Abu’ Ammar) and Khalil El-Wazir (Abu Jihad).

<sup>2</sup> *Falastinuna: Nida’ Al-Hayat*, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, No. 11 (Beirut, November 1960), p. 2. (trans. L.K.).

influence over the Arab regimes existing at that time, to hit the Palestinian nationalist movement and to isolate it from its battle-ground....

This isolation started actually before May 15, 1948, at the hand of the Saving Army\* with the active support of the British imperialist forces in Palestine. Accordingly, when that day (May 15) arrived, the Palestinian nationalist forces were dispersed, paralyzed, deprived of arms and of all means of fighting. Simultaneously, a dirty campaign in some traitorous Arab newspapers was launched with the aim of minimizing the Palestinian heroic struggle.

The second act of this imperialist plan was executed at the hands of the Arab armies which were under traitorous commands, and which surrendered to the Jews more than three-quarters of Palestine....”<sup>1</sup>

The early Al-Fatah literature spelled-out, in some detail, the conditions for the establishment of a Palestinian entity on parts of Palestine under Arab control, as well as the nature and aims of such an entity. Basically, the early Al-Fatah literature frequently made it clear that its demand for a Palestinian entity was firm and unqualified.

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\* Saving Army (Jaish Al-Inkaz) is the name given to all the Arab armies which entered Palestine on the eve of May 15, 1948, with the aim of saving Palestine from the Zionists.

<sup>1</sup> Falastinuna: Nida' Al-Hayat, op.cit., Vol. V, No. 32 (Beirut, August 1963), p. 4. (trans. L.K.)

“We the Arabs of Palestine declare that we do not accept any alternative for our entity which would serve as the base for our revolution towards the liberation of Palestine”<sup>1</sup>.

This entity, according to the Al-Fatah, should come at a stage subsequent to the start of Palestinian military operations inside Israel. When such operations come into existence and prove to be viable, time is then ripe for establishing a Palestinian entity on Arab controlled parts of Palestine<sup>2</sup>. This entity would then serve as the base for Palestinian organization and mobilization and as the logical and legitimate grounds for launching the Palestinian struggle for the ‘liberation of Palestine’<sup>3</sup>. Moreover, this entity, as sought by the Al-Fatah, had to be a product of Palestinian will, and not that of the Arab States<sup>4</sup>. Besides, this entity had to be “free”, “independent”, and not subject to the influence or mandate of anybody except the Palestinian people<sup>5</sup>.

In advocating this line of political analysis, the Al-Fatah literature argued contrary to the general Pan-Arab thinking which was accepted by

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<sup>1</sup> Falastinuna: Nida' Al-Hayat, *op.cit.*, Vol. III, No. 13 (Beirut, January 1961), p. 5. (trans. L.K.)

<sup>2</sup> Falastinuna: Nida' Al-Hayat, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, No. 12 (Beirut, December 1960), p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.; Also see, Ibid., Vol. III, No. 17 (May 1960), p. 26.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Falastinuna: Nida' Al-Hayat, *op.cit.*, Vol. III, No. 15 (Beirut, March 1961), p. 5.

perhaps the majority of the Arab masses during the 1950's and early 1960's. While the accepted principle was that Arab unity was the means to liberate Palestine<sup>1</sup>, the Al-Fatah argued that the liberation of Palestine was the means to Arab unity<sup>2</sup>. Nevertheless, this did not mean that the Al-Fatah was asking the Arab States to disengage themselves from any responsibility for the 'liberation of Palestine', but rather that the Arab States and the Arab people, should shoulder that responsibility together with the Palestinians who will be spearheading that responsibility<sup>3</sup>.

The early Al-Fatah literature on military strategy must be seen in the light of its political strategy. The essence of the Al-Fatah military strategy called simply for the need on the part of the Palestinians to follow the path of armed struggle as the only means towards 'liberating' their homeland. The initiation of this armed struggle and its nature were spelled-out by the early Al-Fatah literature in the following manner"

“What is needed is to have groups of Palestinians in every Arab State, without necessarily being, at the beginning, under one command, but rather seeking the same aim. The aim should be to launch attacks and undertake sabotage

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<sup>1</sup> See, Chapter Three, pp. 125-143.

<sup>2</sup> Interviews with Yasser Arafat (Abu' Ammar) and Khalil El Wazir (Abu Jihad).

<sup>3</sup> Falastinuna: Nida' Al-Hayat, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, No. 11 (Beirut, November 1960), p. 2; also see, Ibid., Vol. II. No. 12 (December 1960), p. 4.

operations inside Israel with the aim of keeping the enemy (Israel) occupied and alert. In other words, what is needed is a new guerrilla movement which originates in all the Arab States surrounding Israel, and which should be purely Palestinian, and enjoy the support of Arab governments without involving such governments, either internationally or nationally.

If this takes place, then, we, the Palestinians would be walking in the right path for solving our Problem....

....If the groups succeed in proving themselves, then their unification should be inevitable”<sup>1</sup>.

What follows from this principle of guerrilla warfare is the rejection, by the Al-Fatah, of the classical theory of conventional warfare under which Arab armies would fight the Israeli army. This the Al-Fatah rejected on the grounds that the Arab armies were not united and that most of the Arab regimes were “not trustworthy militarily”<sup>2</sup>. Besides, the Al-Fatah military strategy rested on the basic principle that the military struggle for the liberation should be initiated and conducted by the Palestinians themselves and that the role of the Arab states, and consequently Arab armies, should be a supportive one.

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<sup>1</sup> Falastinuna: Nida' Al-Hayat, op.cit., Vol. II, No. 12 (Beirut, December 1960), p. 4. (trans. L.K.).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 3. (trans. L.K.).

In its inception, the Al-Fatah claimed itself to be a non-ideologically oriented organization with the sole aim of initiating and conducting the struggle against Israel until liberation. When liberation takes place, the Al-Fatah argued, the Palestinians can then entertain whatever ideology or ideologies they want. In this respect, the Al-Fatah was closer to the Guevara and Régis Debray theories of starting with armed struggle than to Mao Tse Tung's theory of stages which gives the priority to ideology and political indoctrination of the masses to be followed by armed struggle. However, such questions pertaining to the assessment of Palestinian strategy became more acute after 1967. The Al-Fatah was, then, no longer the only militant Palestinian organization. Other militant Palestinian organizations which came into being after 1967, such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (P.F.L.P.) and the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (P.D.F.L.P.), both of which call themselves Marxist-Leninist, adopted the Maoist line of penetrating and indoctrinating the masses as a prerequisite for a successful armed struggle. A comparative analysis of the Al-Fatah and that of other Palestinian organizations with other theories of guerrilla warfare goes beyond the scope of this study.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **Palestinian-Arab Relations: A General Assessment**

Any attempt to analyze the issue of Palestinian-Arab relations should be undertaken with a high degree of academic caution and an exceptional exercise of control on the conduct of the research. As we have seen, the issue of Palestinian-Arab relations touches almost on every aspect of life of the Arab Host-States, as well as of the Palestinians. Moreover, the issue itself lies at the very heart of intra and inter Arab politics, and plays a significant role in the relations between the Arab states concerned and the outside world<sup>1</sup>. Finally, a special political sensitivity has often been attached to the issue of Palestinian-Arab relations, since all the Arab Host-States who adopted and advocated the Palestinian cause were keen not to be accused of any sort of political suppression, discrimination and the like against the Palestinians residing on their respective territories. Similarly, individual Palestinians who played official roles in the shaping of this relationship, especially in Jordan, were also keen not to establish any direct personal link with policies or acts of suppression against their fellow Palestinians, or more important, against the interests of the Palestinian cause itself. While the writer acknowledges that this research was conducted against these and other disadvantages<sup>2</sup>, he, nevertheless, hopes that the findings of this research, inconclusive as they may be, will help to shed some light on the

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<sup>1</sup> See, Chapters Four, Five and Six.

<sup>2</sup> See, The Introduction, pp. 7-10.

nature of Palestinian-Arab relations during the period 1949-1967, and that such findings may also help in explaining other similar issues, if any, or indeed aspects of them.

In our general hypothesis, we have identified the Palestinians in the Arab-Host states as the intruding-element, and the Host-States as the existing-elements<sup>1</sup>. Our general hypothesis stipulates that the intruding-element attempts to establish as many common bonds with the existing-element as possible and that the intruding-element would attempt to stress most among those common bonds those which suit its cause and needs best<sup>2</sup>. Following the establishment of the common bonds, the intruding-element attempts to identify its cause in terms of the broad national interests of the existing-element. In so doing, the intruding-element seeks legitimacy through identifying its interests with those of the existing-element<sup>3</sup>. Furthermore, our general hypothesis stipulates that the intruding-element tends to advocate, create and support extra-national tendencies and movements in the existing-elements. We have also suggested that through the existence of such tendencies and movements, the intruding-element hopes to be able to fit in and to find a legitimate place for itself within the framework of the existing-elements<sup>4</sup>. Further to this general hypothesis, it was argued that in the Arab case, the existence of Pan-Arabism as an extra-national framework which is

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<sup>1</sup> See, Chapter One, pp. 29-30.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 33-34.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

broadly accepted by the Arab people and the Arab states, facilitates the attempts of the intruding-element towards promoting and creating extra-national tendencies and movements within and across the boundaries of the existing elements<sup>1</sup>. In this respect, it was pointed out that although the intruding-element advocates extra-national tendencies it, nevertheless, exhibits a high degree of national self-consciousness which serves as a means towards preserving its own national identity as a substitute to the non-existent political entity. The achievement of the nationalist goals of the intruding-element constitutes, in fact, the essence of its extra-national attitude in its relations with the existing-elements<sup>2</sup>.

In the remaining part of this chapter, we shall consider this hypothesis in the light of the findings of this study, to which will be added a brief allusion to the applicability of our hypothesis to other cases.

The Palestinian case has tended to support the validity of our hypothesis. The findings of this research have shown how the Palestinians in the Arab Host-States adopted, during the period 1949-1963, a policy which consistently emphasized the extra-national tendencies in the Arab Host-States and in the Arab World at large. These covered religion, class, and – in the Arab case – Pan-Arab tendencies<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> See, Chapter Three, pp. 123-169.

The Palestinians, however, in appreciation of the necessity of direct Arab participation<sup>1</sup> in any effort to liberate Palestine, oriented most of their activities towards the promotion of Pan-Arabism. This direct Arab participation, although essential, was, nevertheless, not viewed by the Palestinians as meaning Palestinian non-participation. The Palestinian formula seemed to call for direct participation by all Arab states combined with indirect participation on the part of the Palestinians and the Arab masses through extra-national channels such as political parties and political literature.

From the very beginning, the Palestinian appreciation of the importance of direct participation by Arab states was confronted with inter-Arab conflicts, and the barely concealed plans of Transjordan to annex parts of Palestine under its control<sup>2</sup>, as determining factors in channeling the future of the Palestinians in what seemed to be an inevitable course. This was largely carried out during the immediate stage which extended from 1948-1950<sup>3</sup>.

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- Direct participation: - official participation and involvement by state authorities and institutions.
- Indirect participation: - legal participation and involvement on the popular level by the masses as well as popular organizations as compared with state organized bodies without a genuine popular character. (In this definition, the word legal means that such popular participation is to take place publicly and not to be suppressed by the state).
- Non-participation: - participation is either not allowed at all even indirectly, but possibly secretly, that is, illegally.

<sup>2</sup> See, Chapter Four, pp. 170-186.

<sup>3</sup> See, Chapter Two, pp. 76-88.

For some Host-States, direct Palestinian participation in legitimizing the course determined for them was important. This largely applied to Transjordan and was aimed at legitimizing the Transjordanian attempt to unify the West Bank and Transjordan<sup>1</sup>. In this case, direct Palestinian participation was designed to be a temporary one. Subsequently, the Palestinians in the West Bank and Transjordan were expected to participate within the framework of the institutions of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan<sup>2</sup>. Concerning the other Host-States, direct Palestinian participation was not desired since it served no goal for the Host-States, although it was encouraged by Egypt and Syria on a very limited scale, and only inasmuch as it served to frustrate the intentions of the Transjordanian regime in annexing the West Bank. In this respect, the short-lived All-Palestine Government was the best example<sup>3</sup>.

By the end of 1949, the stage was, more or less, set between the intruding-element (the Palestinians) and the existing-elements (the Host-States) on the basis that the former would not undertake any direct participation. This was, to a great extent, accepted by the majority of the members of the intruding-element who were aware of their military and economic vulnerability, and who were seeking the support and direct participation of the existing-elements in bringing about a solution to the

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<sup>1</sup> See, Chapter Four, pp. 170-185.

<sup>2</sup> For more information see, Chapter Four, pp. 186-191, 201-209.

<sup>3</sup> For more information on the All-Palestine Government see, Chapter Six, pp. 275-278.

nationalist problem of the intruding-element. The majority of the Palestinians called, through their political activities<sup>1</sup> and political literature<sup>2</sup>, for the substitution of direct Palestinian participation, which presupposed a form of separate Palestinian political entity, with direct Arab participation, combined with indirect Palestinian participation. This formula required that the intruding-element should attempt to find as many common bonds with the existing-elements as possible, and to stress most among those bonds the ones which suited its cause and needs best. Indeed, the Palestinians explored all possible common bonds with the Arab states including extra-national religious, class and pan-Arab bonds. The latter proved to be the most viable framework for linking the Palestinians, the Arab states and the Arab people at large, and it was, therefore, stressed most by the majority of the Palestinians<sup>3</sup>.

In adopting the pan-Arab approach, the Palestinians were keen to have their cause identified with that of the Arab Host-States and the Arab states at large, in terms of the national interest of each one of those states. Although, this was achieved rather early, both officially<sup>4</sup> and through

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<sup>1</sup> See, Chapter Three, pp. 143-169 and Chapter Four, pp. 210-240.

<sup>2</sup> See, Chapter Three, pp. 123-143.

<sup>3</sup> See, Chapter One, pp. 27-29 and Chapter Three, pp. 123-169.

<sup>4</sup> The mere fact that the armies of seven Arab states have taken part in the wars with Israel since May 15, 1948, suggests that the Arab states identified the Palestinian cause in terms of their national interests.

the Arab league<sup>1</sup>, the important task of translating this official identification into actions and policies was still to be implemented, and it depended very much on the activities of the intruding-element itself. In order to achieve this, the Palestinian political literature portrayed the Palestine Problem as a pan-Arab problem, and envisaged its solution in a pan-Arab manner<sup>2</sup>. More important, however, was the stress in the Palestinian political literature on the assumption that the existence of the state of Israel constituted a threat to the Arab states themselves, and that the liberation of Palestine would therefore remove such a threat<sup>3</sup>. In addition to the political literature, the Palestinians played an active, and often a leading role, in all extra-national political parties in the Arab world, especially the pan-Arab ones<sup>4</sup>. Furthermore, the Palestinians founded extra-national political parties, the most important of which was the Arab Nationalist Movement which, in advocating Pan-Arabism and Arab unity, gave a central importance to the Palestine problem as an obstacle to the achievement of Arab unity, thus opening the door for the long-debated question of whether Arab unity will lead to the liberation of Palestine, or whether the liberation of Palestine will precede Arab unity<sup>5</sup>. Finally, the

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<sup>1</sup> Palestine was given a seat at the Arab league. See, Chapter Six, pp. 295-297.

<sup>2</sup> See, Chapter Three, pp. 123-143.

<sup>3</sup> See, Chapter Three, p. 126.

<sup>4</sup> For more information see, Chapter Three, pp. 143-166; Chapter Four, pp. 233-234, 238-240.

<sup>5</sup> See, Chapter Three, pp. 161-162.

Palestinians called for the need to modernize the Arab world as an important prerequisite for any serious attempt by the Arab States to liberate Palestine and to defeat the Zionist ‘cultural invasion’ which cleverly utilized modern technology<sup>1</sup>. Consequently, the Palestinians were aware of the importance of education, science and technology, and it was, therefore, natural that they should embark on a vigorous search for education. In so doing the Palestinians eventually opted to infiltrate the educational and economic sectors in the Host-States and Arab states, as a means of enhancing Palestinian influence, of promoting extra-national tendencies and, ultimately, of helping to modernize the Arab world. In this respect, one should nevertheless, point out that the stress on infiltrating the educational and economic sectors in the Arab world did not find its initial motivation as a means to enhance Palestinian influence and the Palestinian cause, but rather in purely economic terms<sup>2</sup>. However, those Palestinians who happened to be educated and were thus among the first to work in such sectors quickly comprehended the importance of infiltrating the educational and economic sectors in enhancing Palestinian influence and promoting the Palestinian cause. Accordingly, Palestinian infiltration of the educational and economic sectors of the Arab world acquired, in addition to its economic advantages, a political importance.

In adopting the pan-Arab approach, the Palestinians created two taboos which could not be violated

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 133-134.

<sup>2</sup> See, Chapter Three, pp. 118-123.

in the course of the pan-Arab struggle for the liberation of Palestine. the first taboo consisted of a set of political principles which constituted, in Palestinian eyes, important safeguards for the preservation of their cause until such time as the liberation of Palestine took place. This set of principles stressed the non-recognition of the State of Israel, the right of the refugees to return to their homeland in accordance with Resolution 194 (III) of the General Assembly<sup>1</sup>, and until this is effected, the refusal to solve the Palestine refugee problem, and the preservation of the refugee-status of the Palestinian refugees<sup>2</sup>. Secondly, the Palestinians refused to grant any single Arab state, or party, or a group of Palestinians the right to act as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians with authority to seek a solution for the Palestine problem<sup>3</sup>. All efforts by the Jordanian regime to acquire such a mandate from the Palestinians failed<sup>4</sup>, and often resulted in Palestinian rioting<sup>5</sup>. Similarly, when President Camille Chamoun of Lebanon in 1953<sup>6</sup>, and President Nasser of Egypt in 1954<sup>7</sup> attempted to solve, unilaterally, the Palestine refugee

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<sup>1</sup> See, Chapter Two, pp. 84-86.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 90-101.

<sup>3</sup> See, Chapter Six, pp. 279, 283-284, 285-286.

<sup>4</sup> See, Chapter Four, pp. 173-174, 184-186.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> See, Chapter Six, pp. 282-284.

<sup>7</sup> See, Chapter Five, p. 268.

problem, they were faced with an all-Palestinian opposition. Any solution of the Palestine Problem was, therefore, to take place in accordance with the political taboos, and with the consent of the Arab states. Indeed, demanding as they were, these two taboos were, among other things, largely responsible for the failure of the pan-Arab approach. If we accept the Palestinian argument that their political taboos are a legitimate Palestinian mechanism to safe-guard their cause, securing all-Arab consent to a solution was clearly an impossible undertaking for the Palestinians, let alone the Arab states themselves. This is due to the fact that each Arab state had different interest, and grouping them together was almost impossible, if for nothing other than the simple fact that the Palestinian presence in four Arab countries (the Host-States) made the nature of any solution to the Palestine Problem an issue of national interest on which most of the Host-States were, more or less, at odds. In the case of Jordan, the nature of the solution could affect, or even determine, its very existence as a state<sup>1</sup>. As for Lebanon, it could seriously alter the sectarian balance, and, thus, upset the basis of the Lebanese political system if the solution meant that a vast number of Muslim Palestinians would become Lebanese citizens<sup>2</sup>. Although Egypt and Syria have had no similar threats to their national existence or internal political system, yet, they could not have

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<sup>1</sup> This is due to the fact that more than half the population of Jordan is Palestinian. Moreover, the richer part of Jordan is the West Bank. For more information see Chapter Four.

<sup>2</sup> See, Chapter Two, pp. 76-78.

solved the Palestinian Problem alone without securing the consent of Jordan, Lebanon and, indeed, the Palestinians.

The failure of the pan-Arab approach was not confined to the necessity of securing all-Arab consent, but also to the policies adopted by the Host-States towards the Palestinians residing on their respective territories.

In adopting the pan-Arab approach, the policies of the Arab Host-States towards their respective Palestinian communities largely reflected what seem to be conflicting interpretations of the ways and means of applying the pan-Arab approach. Most of the Host-States seemed to accept the notion of direct participation, and to forego that of indirect Palestinian participation. Apparently, the Host-States were willing to accept Palestinian participation only through the institutions of the state itself<sup>1</sup>. In other words, the Palestinians in the Host-States were practically forced into a position of illegal indirect participation, that is, non-participation, which was eventually bound, among other things, to increase Palestinian frustration<sup>2</sup>. Since indirect participation was the only way to protect their cause. In Jordan, for example, the citizens, including the Palestinians, were allowed to participate only through the institutions of the State<sup>3</sup> which were not necessarily in

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<sup>1</sup> See, Chapter Four and Chapter Five.

<sup>2</sup> See, Chapter Six, pp. 289-290.

<sup>3</sup> Although political parties were allowed in Jordan until 1957, yet, we note that extra-national political parties were not legalized by the Jordanian regime and were actively suppressed most of the time. For more information see, Chapter Four, pp. 233-240.

conformity with the needs of the Palestinian cause due to the basic contradiction between such needs and the interests of the Jordanian regime. Any Palestinian participation in institutions or political organizations outside the framework of those provided by or in support of the state invited the reaction of the Jordanian regime, and since the majority of the Palestinians in Jordan (and elsewhere) were inclined to participate outside the framework of the state's institutions, it was, therefore, inevitable that the Jordanian regime should suppress the Palestinians and develop an attitude of suspicion towards them. This was developed into an all-out discrimination against the Palestinians in Jordan<sup>1</sup>. The practice of structural violence by the Jordanian regime invited the reaction of the Palestinians in the form of manifest violence against the Jordanian regime<sup>2</sup>. The failure of Palestinian manifest violence in bringing about any change in the regime or its policies due to the maximum utilization by the Jordanian regime of its tools of coercion facilitated, in due time, the Palestinian shift from the pan-Arab to the nationalist approach.

In the Gaza Strip, the Palestinians, although not actually discriminated against, had, nonetheless, any political activities suppressed if channeled outside the institutions of the Egyptian Administration<sup>3</sup>. This does not, however, imply that the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip lived under similar coercive conditions to those in Jordan. Nasser, unlike Hussein, was considered by most of the Palestinians as being their best hope in liberating Palestine<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> See, Chapter Four, pp. 191-209.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 210-233, 240-244.

<sup>3</sup> See, Chapter Five.

<sup>4</sup> See, Chapter Three, pp. 162-169.

This, however, does not mean that the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip did not in fact suffer many frustrations under the Egyptian Administration. The authoritarian nature of the Egyptian regime reflected itself in the Egyptian Administration of the Gaza Strip through the vesting of all powers in the General Administrative Governor of the Strip, who was always an Egyptian<sup>1</sup>. Subsequently, the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip were granted a minimal role in running the internal affairs of the Strip which led to a feeling of bitterness and resentment especially among the intellectuals<sup>2</sup>. Furthermore, the absence of political freedom, and the right of association and expression, unless approved by the Egyptian General Administrative Governor, created a ruler-ruled relationship between the Egyptians and the Palestinians in the Strip, and reflected itself in a general state of uneasiness<sup>3</sup>.

Finally, and taking all the previous factors into consideration, the fact that the Palestinian nationalist cause was at the core of the Palestinian pan-Arab attitude, and the failure of the pan-Arab approach to bring about any solution to the Palestine problem, was likely in its turn to bring about the Palestinian shift from a major stress on pan-Arabism and Arab unity as a means to liberate Palestine to a major stress on reviving the Palestinian national entity, thus moving the Palestinians from a position of indirect or non-participation, into a position of direct and independent participation. Added to this was the collapse of the unity between Egypt and Syria in 1961,

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<sup>1</sup> See, Chapter Five.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> See, Chapter Five.

which constituted a severe blow to the cause of Arab unity<sup>1</sup>, and the success of the Algerian Revolution which was conducted by the Algerian themselves with Arab support, and which provided a successful practical example for an alternative Palestinian approach to the liberation of Palestine<sup>2</sup>. To put in differently, if the struggle primarily through the extra-national approach proves, in terms of actual achievements, futile, the intruding-element is likely to shift back to the nationalist approach. This does not take place suddenly, but rather through a process of accumulation. The shift, however, does not indicate a denunciation, by the intruding-element, of the extra-national approach, but rather giving primacy to the nationalist struggle of the intruding-element.

Such a shift is likely to invite severe reactions by the existing-elements, who, in identifying the nationalist cause of the intruding-element in terms of their own national interests, are uneasy in allowing the intruding-element to play the major, and more precisely, the decisive role in determining the course of their national interest, with all its political and military implications. In this case, the existing-elements are likely to pursue one or more of the three following options:

First, to suppress the nationalist political activities of the intruding-element as being traitorous to the extra-national linkage on the grounds that such nationalist tendencies

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<sup>1</sup> See, Chapter Six, pp. 287-289.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

would weaken or undermine the extra-national struggle. In so doing, the existing-element(s) is normally backed by the great prestige which the extra-national linkage (in our case Pan-Arabism) enjoys among the masses of both the existing-element(s) and the intruding-element. This option was exercised by Jordan in its attitude towards the Palestine Liberation Organization<sup>1</sup> and later towards Al-Fatah<sup>2</sup>. This option was also adopted, although to a much lesser degree, by Egypt in expressing its early hostile attitude towards Al-Fatah.

Second, the existing-element(s) might sponsor a form of nationalist organization for the intruding-element with enough guarantees for the existing-element(s) to have an influence over such an organization. Thus, the existing-element(s) hopes to pre-empt any attempt by members of the intruding-element to establish an activist nationalist organization which could be outside its influence, and ultimately a source of political embarrassment and possibly of military involvement. This option was mainly exercised by Egypt. The Palestine Liberation Organization was an Egyptian-sponsored initiative<sup>3</sup>. More important, however, was the way the PLO was created, financed and organized<sup>4</sup>, which

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<sup>1</sup> See, Chapter Six, pp. 299-321.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 322-344.

<sup>3</sup> See, Chapter Six, pp. 297-299.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 299-321.

would indicate that the PLO was meant to be symbolic rather than effective, and above all, in constant need of Arab help and support.

Third, if the regime of any of the existing-elements represents an extra-national political party, than such a regime is inclined to establish a nationalist organization, which would enjoy the backing of the existing-element concerned, from amongst the ranks of the intruding-element members of its extra-national party. Such an organization would then serve as the spokesman of the existing-element within the nationalist movement of the intruding-element, as well as a justification for such an existing-element in its suppression of other non-loyal members of the intruding-element. This option was exercised by Syria and Iraq both of which are ruled by Ba'thi regimes<sup>1</sup>.

While the main finding of this research are in support of our hypothesis, there are however certain limitations which are either not covered by the hypothesis, or are simply a reflection of the particularities of the subject-matter of this study which means that the findings need not necessarily apply to the relationships between other intruding-elements and other existing-elements. These limitations are:

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<sup>1</sup> This was exercised after 1967. Syria established its own Palestinian organization under the name of As-Saigah comprising Ba'thist Palestinians. Similarly, Iraq established the Arab Liberation Front.

Firstly, that the general hypothesis assumes that the intruding-element would attempt to establish as many common bonds with the existing-element(s) as possible. Such bonds could be cultural, linguistic, social, ideological, historical, political, economic, or whatever, in any combination. Our hypothesis does not stipulate whether such bonds should be already existing, or whether they can be developed, elaborated or even created by the intruding-element itself.

Secondly, the general hypothesis assumes that there is a dual character for both the intruding-element and the existing-element(s), and that one aspect of this dual character is commonly shared by both. In our case, this common aspect of the dual character was Pan-Arabism. This pan-Arab linkage implied by definition the existence of many common bonds between our intruding-element (the Palestinians) and its respective existing-elements (the Arab Host-States) in such areas as history, language, culture, religion and so on. More important, however, is the fact that Pan-Arabism did not simply indicate the existence of such common bonds, it was rather an ideology and a broad framework for political identification which was accepted by the intruding-element and the existing-elements. This provided our intruding-element (the Palestinians) with a unique exception which should not necessarily apply to other intruding-elements at least to the same degree.

Thirdly, our general hypothesis stipulates that the intruding-element can be dispersed in various existing-elements which themselves are linked together whether in terms of language, culture, history, and

so on, or who enjoy a broader identity which is accepted by all of them. While our intruding-element was dispersed in various Arab existing-elements which enjoyed all the above common bonds, this does not necessarily hold true for other intruding-elements and other existing-elements. The Kurds or the Armenians, for example, are dispersed in various existing-elements which have no common bonds such as those enjoyed by the Arab existing-elements. In addition, the general hypothesis stipulates that the intruding-element would have one enemy. In the case of our intruding-element (the Palestinians) this holds true. However, this could be the exception rather than the rule. In other examples, such as the Kurds, the intruding-element, in its effort to re-establish its state-in-image, is confronted by more than one enemy.

Finally, in retrospect, the general hypothesis does not draw a distinction between the unique aspects pertaining to our intruding-element, and the impact of such unique aspects on the form of support sought by the intruding-element, and the form of support expected from the existing-element(s). In the Palestinian case, it was possible for them to expect their respective Host-States to identify the Palestinian cause in terms of the national interest of each of the Host-States, and to seek support, in any form, whether diplomatic, political, military, financial, or otherwise, from other existing-elements. This may not be possible for other intruding-elements. Accordingly, although the intruding-element may seek various forms of support from its existing-element(s), it does not necessarily

hold true that every intruding-element can demand or should expect that its own cause be identified in terms of the national interest of the existing-element(s) concerned.

Now that we have examined Palestinian-Arab relations, where does this case stand in terms of current trends in world society. The aspiration for independence, which, in the Palestinian case is synonymous with liberation of Palestine is their ultimate goal. It is a part of the ubiquitous struggle against colonialism. In attempting to liberate themselves equally from the tutelage of the Arab states, and in their recent shift towards stressing their national identity, they likewise reflect the general aspirations shared by other peoples. By embarking on the para-military option as a means of achieving the goal of independence (liberation), the Palestinians are clearly in line with one of the most important current trends as witnessed in a plethora of wars of national liberation. The Palestinians also stressed the universality of their struggle by relating their own cause to the general struggle against colonialism and imperialism in the world, and by allying themselves to the Third World. In being subjected systematically to various forms of structural and manifest violence, the Palestinians' lot was similar to that of many other deprived and aspiring national groups. But

their experience has likewise shown that, in the contemporary world, it is hard to defeat people because they will not accept defeat, they refuse to be 'integrated' and they cannot be exterminated.

## **APPENDIX**

### **IN THE NAME OF ALMIGHTY, THE MAGNIFICENT, THE MOST MERCIFUL**

#### **THE PALESTINIAN NATIONAL COVENANT**

We, the Palestinian Arab people, who waged fierce and continuous battles to safeguard its homeland, to defend its dignity and honour, and who offered all through the years continuous caravans of immortal martyrs, and who wrote the noblest pages of sacrifice, offering and giving.

We, the Palestinian Arab people, who faced the forces of evil, injustice and aggression, against whom the forces of international Zionism and colonialism conspired and worked to displace it, dispossess it from its homeland and property, abused what is holy in it and who in spite of all this refused to weaken or submit.

We, the Palestinian Arab people, who believe in its Arabism and in its right to regain its homeland, to realize its freedom and dignity, and who has determined to amass its forces and mobilize its efforts and capabilities in order to continue its struggle and to move forward on the path of holy war until complete and final victory has been attained.

We, the Palestinian Arab people, depending upon our right of self defence and complete restoration of our lost homeland a right that has been recognized by international covenants and common practices

including the charter of the United Nations, and in implementation of the principles of human rights and comprehending the international political relations, with its various ramifications and limits, and considering the past experiences in all that pertains to the causes of the catastrophe, and the means to face it.

And embarking from the Palestine Arab reality, and for the sake of the honour of the Palestinian and his right to free and dignified life.

And realizing the national grave responsibility placed upon our shoulders, for the sake of all this,

We, the Palestinian Arab people, dictate and declare this Palestinian National Covenant and vow to realize it.

Article 1 - Palestine is an Arab homeland bound by strong Arab national ties to the rest of the Arab Countries and which together form the large Arab Homeland.

Article 2 - Palestine with its boundaries at the time of the British Mandate is a regional indivisible unit.

Article 3 - The Palestinian Arab people has the legitimate right to its homeland and is an inseparable part of the Arab Nations. It shares the suffering and aspirations of The Arab Nation and its struggle for freedom, sovereignty, progress and unity.

Article 4 – The people of Palestine determines its destiny when it completes the liberation of its homeland in accordance with its own wishes and free will and choice.

Article 5 – The Palestinian personality is a permanent and genuine characteristic that does not disappear. It is transferred from fathers to sons.

Article 6 – The Palestinians are those Arab citizens who were living normally in Palestine up to 1947, whether they remained or were expelled. Every child who was born to a Palestinian parent after this date whether in Palestine or outside is a Palestinian.

Article 7 – Jews of Palestinian origin are considered Palestinians if they are willing to live peacefully and loyally in Palestine.

Article 8 – Bringing up Palestinian youth in Arab and nationalist manner is a fundamental national duty. All means of guidance, education and enlightenment should be utilized to introduce the youth to its homeland in a deep spiritual way that will constantly and firmly bind them together.

Article 9 – Doctrines whether political, social or economic, shall not occupy the people of Palestine from the primary duty of

liberating their homeland. All Palestinians constitute one national front and work with all their feelings and spiritual and material potentialities to free their homeland.

Article 10 – Palestinians have three mottos: National unity, National mobilization, and Liberation. Once liberation is completed, the people of Palestine shall choose for its public life whatever political, economic or social system they want.

Article 11 – The Palestinian people firmly believe in Arab unity, and in order to play its role in realizing this goal, it must, at this stage of its struggle preserve its Palestinian personality and all its constituents. It must strengthen the consciousness of its existence and stand against any attempt or plan that may weaken or disintegrate its personality.

Article 12 – Arab unity and the liberation of Palestine are two complementary goals; each prepares for the attainment of the other. Arab unity leads to the liberation of Palestine, and the liberation of Palestine leads to Arab unity. Working for both must go side by side.

Article 13 – The destiny of the Arab nation and even the essence of Arab existence are firmly tied to the destiny of the Palestine

Question. From this firm bound stems the effort and struggle of the Arab Nation to liberate Palestine. The people of Palestine assumes a vanguard role in achieving this sacred national goal.

Article 14 – The liberation of Palestine from an Arab view point, is a national duty. Its responsibilities fall upon the entire Arab nation, governments and peoples, the Palestinian people being in the foreground. For this purpose, the Arab nation must mobilize its military, spiritual and material potentialities, specifically, it must give to the Palestinian Arab people all possible support and backing and place at its disposal all opportunities and means to enable them to perform their role in liberating their homeland.

Article 15 – The liberation of Palestine, from a spiritual view point, prepares for the Holy Land an atmosphere of tranquility and peace, in which all the Holy Places will be safeguarded, and the free worship and visit to all will be guaranteed, without any discrimination of race, colour, tongue, or religion.

For all this, the Palestinian people look forward to the support of all the spiritual forces in the world.

Article 16 – The liberation of Palestine from an international view point is a defensive act necessitated by the demands of self defence as stated in the charter of the United Nations. That is why the people of Palestine desiring to befriend all nations which love freedom, justice, and peace, is looking forward for their support in restoring the legitimate situation to Palestine, establishing peace and security in its territory, and enabling its people to exercise national sovereignty and freedom.

Article 17 – The Partitioning of Palestine in 1947 and the establishment of Israel are illegal and false regardless of the loss of time, because they were contrary to the wish of the Palestine people and its natural right to its homeland, and in violation of the basic principles embodied in the charter of the United Nations. Foremost among which is the right to self-determination.

Article 18 – The Balfour Declaration, the Mandate system and all that has been based upon them are considered fraud. The claims of historic and spiritual ties between Jews and Palestine are not in agreement with the facts of history or with the true basis of sound statehood. Judaism because it is a divine religion is not a nationality with independent existence.

Furthermore, the Jews are not one people with an independent personality because they are citizens of the countries to which they belong.

Article 19 – Zionism is a colonialist movement in its inception, aggressive and expansionist in its goals, racist and segregationist in its configurations and fascist in its means and aims. Israel in its capacity as the spearhead of this destructive movement and the pillar for colonialism is a permanent source of tension and turmoil in the Middle East in particular and to the international community in general. Because of this the people of Palestine is worthy of the support and sustenance of the community of nations.

Article 20 – The causes of peace and security and the needs of right and justice demand from all nations, in order to safeguard true relationships among people, and to maintain the loyalty of citizens to their homeland, to consider Zionism an illegal movement and to outlaw its presence and activities.

Article 21 – The Palestine people believes in the principle of justice, freedom, sovereignty, self-determination, human dignity, and the right of peoples to practice these principles. It also supports all international efforts to bring about

peace on the basis of justice and free international co-operation.

Article 22 – The people of Palestine believes in peaceful coexistence on the basis of legal existence, for there can be no coexistence with aggression, nor can there be peace with occupation and colonialism.

Article 23 – In realizing the goals and principles of this Covenant, the Palestine Liberation Organization carries out its complete role to liberate Palestine in accordance with the fundamental law of this Organization.

Article 24 – This Organization does not exercise any regional sovereignty over the Western Bank in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, on the Gaza Strip or the Himmah Area. Its activities will be on the national popular level in the liberational, organizational, political and financial fields.

Article 25 – This Organization is encharged with the movement of the Palestine in its struggle to liberate its homeland in all liberational, organizational, political, and financial matters, and in all other needs of the Palestine Question in the Arab and international spheres.

Article 26 – The Liberation Organizational co-operates with all Arab governments each according to its ability, and does not interfere in the internal affairs of any Arab State.

Article 27 – This Organization shall have its flag, oath and a national anthem. All this shall be resolved in accordance with a special system.

Article 28 – The Fundamental Law for the Palestine Liberation Organization is attached to this Covenant. This Law defines the manner of establishing the Organization, its organs, institutions, the specialties of each one of them, and all the needed duties thrust upon it in accordance with this Covenant.

Article 29 – This Covenant cannot be amended except by two-thirds majority of the National Council of the Palestine Liberation Organization in a special session called for this purpose.

## **FIRST CHAPTER**

### **FUNDAMENTAL LAW**

#### **GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

Article 1 – The Palestinians among themselves in accordance with the rules of this Law form an organization known as the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Article 2 – The Palestine Liberation Organization assumes its responsibilities in accordance with the principle of the National Covenant, the rules of this Law and regulations and resolutions proclaimed and based upon them.

Article 3 – Relations with the Organization are based upon firm adherence to the national struggle and endeavour at the various levels form the foundation of the Organization to its collective Leadership, on the basis of the respect of the minority to the wishes of the majority and gaining confidence of the people through persuasion and the pursuit of the struggle to perpetuate the Liberating thrust among the masses. In executing and practicing this principle, the Executive Committee is called upon to draft a special system for the different formations of the Organization taking into consideration the conditions of the Palestinians in their places of gathering, and the realization of the goals

of the Covenant and this Fundamental law.

Article 4 – All Palestinians are natural members in the Palestine Liberation Organization. They execute their duties in liberating their homeland according to their abilities and capabilities. The Palestinian people is the basic foundation of this Organization.

## **SECOND CHAPTER**

### **THE NATIONAL COUNCIL**

Article 5 – Members of the National Council are elected directly by people of Palestine in accordance with a Law to be prepared for this purpose by the Executive Committee.

Article 6 – Should election of the members of the National Council be impossible to carry out, the National Council continues to function until favourable conditions prevail.

Article 7 – The National Council is the Supreme authority of the Liberation Organization. It formulates the policies, plans and programs for the Organization.

Article 8 – The National Council is elected for a period of three years. It is called into a meeting in an ordinary session once every year in the month of May by its Chairman upon the request of the Executive Committee or one fourth of its members. It meets in Jerusalem or Gaza or in any other place depending upon the necessary conditions. Should the Chairman fail to call the Council into session, the Council meets in the place and at the time prescribed in the request of its members or the request of the Executive Committee.

Article 9 – The Council has a presidency office composed of the President, two Vice-presidents and a Secretary General, elected by the Council during its first session.

Article 10 – The National Council during its ordinary session considers the following:

- a) The annual report submitted by the Executive Committee on the achievements of the Organization and its various organs.
- b) The annual report of the National Fund and the approval of the budget.
- c) Suggestions submitted to it by the various committees of the Organization.
- d) Any other issue submitted for its consideration.

Article 11 – The National Council sets the necessary committees to facilitate its functions. These committees submit their reports and recommendations to the National Council which debates them and issues the needed resolutions.

Article 12 – Two-thirds of the members of the Council form the quorum and decisions are adopted by simple majority.

### **THIRD CHAPTER**

#### **THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Article 13 – The National Council elects the Chairman of the Executive Committee from its members and the Chairman selects the members of the Executive Committee.

Article 14 – The Committee is made up on fifteen members including the chairman. They elect one of their members as Vice Chairman.

Article 15 – The Executive Committee is the highest executive authority in the Organization. It is always in session. Its members devote their full time to its work. It executes the policies, plans and programs formulated by the National Council. It is responsible to the National Council collectively and individually.

Article 16 – The Executive Committee takes charge of the following:

- a) Representation of the Palestine people.
- b) Supervision of the different formations of the Organization.
- c) Issuing schedules, directions and adopting the necessary decisions to organize the functions of the Organization, provided these do not contradict the Covenant or the Fundamental Law.
- d) Executing the financial policy of the Organization and preparing its budget. On the whole, the Executive Committee conducts all the responsibilities of the Liberation Organization in accordance with the general plans and resolutions issued by the National Council.

Article 17 – The city of Jerusalem is the permanent headquarters of the Executive Committee which can hold its meetings at any other suitable place.

Article 18 – The Executive Committee establishes the following departments:

- a) Liberation Department.
- b) Department of Political and Informational Affairs.

- c) Department of the Palestine National Fund.
- d) Department of Public Affairs and National Guidance.
- e) Any other Department that the Committee finds necessary to establish. Each Department is headed by a director and has necessary staff.

A job sheet for each department is devised by the Executive Committee.

Article 19 – The Executive Committee strengthens the relations and coordinates work between the Organization and other Arab and International Organizations, Federations and Institutions that have similar goals and purposes or help the Executive Committee in achieving the goals of the Organization.

Article 20 – The Executive Committee continues to perform its functions and duties as long as it has the confidence of the National Council. The Executive Committee should submit its resignation to the new National Council at its first session. The Council may re-elect the outgoing Chairman.

Article 21 – Two thirds of the members of the Executive Committee form the necessary quorum. Decisions are taken by simple majority.

## **FOURTH CHAPTER**

### **GENERAL RULES**

Article 22- Special Palestinian Military Units are formed in accordance with the military needs and the plan adopted by the Unified Arab command in approval of and in cooperation with the Arab States concerned.

Article 23 – The Executive Committee works to enroll Palestinians in Arab military colleges and institutions, and mobilizes all the capabilities and abilities of Palestinians, and prepares them for the battle of liberation.

Article 24 – A National Palestinian Fund is established to finance the activities of the Organization. The Fund is managed by a board of directors composed in accordance with a special law issued by the National Council.

Article 25 – Sources of income for the National Fund are the following:

- a) A fixed tax on Palestinians levied and collected in accordance with a special system.
- b) Financial contributions given by the Arab Governments and peoples
- c) The revenue from a liberation stamp

issued by the Arab Governments and used in mail and other services.

- d) Donations and wills.
- e) Loans and contributions from Arab Governments or from friendly nations.
- f) Any other source approved by the National Council.

Article 26 – Committees for the support of Palestine are set up in various Arab and friendly countries to raise funds and back-up the organization in its national endeavours.

Article 27 – The Executive Committee determines the level of representation of the Palestine people to the Arab institutions and conferences. It also names a Palestinian representative to the rulers of Arab States.

Article 28 – The Executive Committee has the right to issue the necessary schedules to implement the rules of this law.

Article 29 – Amending this Fundamental Law, changing it, or adding to it, is a function of the National Council by a two – third majority.

## **FIFTH CHAPTER**

### **PROVISIONAL RULES**

Article 30 – The first National congress becomes a provisional National Council. Its period expires when the First National council is elected in accordance with the rules of this law. It performs all the functions and rights of the National Council.

Article 31 – The duration of the present national Council is two years starting with 28<sup>th</sup> May, 1964.

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