

PALESTINE ESSAYS No. 3

PALESTINE
AND
ARAB NATIONALISM

By

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PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION
RESEARCH CENTER

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I. PALESTINE : AN ARAB PROBLEM

Since the rise of Arab Nationalism a century or so ago, and since the emergence of what we call the Palestine problem at the turn of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, Palestine, has been, as a land, a people and a cause, a major and basic component of the Arab cause, hardly separable from it even for the sake of argument. Not a single attempt in the past seventy years has succeeded yet in separating the cause of Palestine from the Arab cause; for the faith of the Arabs in the organic unity of the two causes is too firm to leave in their minds any grounds for doubt as to this unity.

A quick look at the political and cultural history of Palestine, and at its physical and human geography will not be enough to reveal convincing or sufficient explanations for this truth.

A cursory look will only reveal that, on the level of national political action in the Arab home land, Palestinian participation was relatively little. There did not arise in Palestine any of the national politico-ideological parties responsible for clarifying and defining the general features of the national Arab idea. Most of these parties appeared in Syria and Lebanon. The role of the Palestinian youth was limited to accepting and absorbing the general terms of the ideas these parties upheld, and to a simple joining of these parties in limited numbers and on an individual basis. Thus at no time did there grow in Palestine any strong Palestinian wings of these parties; their branches in Palestine were no more than ordinary extensions of themselves. The same holds true for the non-Arab nationalist parties and for the non-nationalist religious or socialist ones.

Also there did not arise in Palestine any national intellectual institutions to make a considerable impact on Arab thought in the manner of the institutions that existed in Lebanon, Syria and Iraq in the years between the two world wars such as Al 'Urwa Al Wuthqa in Beirut, Al Muthanna Club in Baghdad and the Arab Club in Damascus. The absence of such institutions from the area was a factor in prompting educated Palestinian youth eagerly to join these clubs outside Palestine. The belated attempt at establishing the string of Greek Orthodox Clubs which a number of thinkers initiated in the late forties had a limited effect for more than one reason. However, disaster befell the Palestinians in 1948 before these budding clubs had time to yield their hoped for fruit and become on a par with the famous Arab nationalist clubs outside Palestine which were centers in the service of nationalist thought just as the parties were, sometimes even more so.

In the absence of an ideological party and a guiding club in Palestine throughout the thirty years prior to the disaster, intellectual output in the field of nationalist thought in the Arab homeland is lacking in Palestinian writings, i.e., writings published in Palestine, or penned by Palestinians. The bibliographies of valuable Arab nationalist ideological writings contain but few Palestinian names and still fewer Palestinian publishing and printing houses. As to the bibliographies of historical writings about the Arab national idea, in these more Palestinian names appear but they are still few, when compared to the non-Palestinian names, particularly the Lebanese, Syrian and Iraqi.

In addition, Palestine suffered from all the usual ills, social and cultural, due to the long Turkish domination and to the European occupation and mandate. In this, Palestine did not fare better than the other Arab states to the north and southwest (i.e., Lebanon, Syria and Egypt) nor for that matter did it fare better than the Arabs generally in the west of Asia and in North Africa. Like the other Arab entities, Palestine suffered from autocratic rule, foreign do-

mination, and violence; from suppression, oppression, persecution, and injustice; from general poverty, hunger, and from the absence of industry and the backwardness of agriculture; from chaos, bribery, negligence and corruption; from fear and suspicion; from ignorance, illiteracy, poor means of communication, and from the various other ills that prevent any society from progressing and discourage its members from undertaking a nationalist movement aimed at destroying these worn out conditions. Furthermore, compared to the Arab community upon which we look as one tightly knit homeland, even though its political entities are numerous and its peoples are varied in some respects, the smallness of Palestine both in area and population does not make any easier the comprehension of our claim that the cause of this small region has been the cause of all the Arabs. Statistics reveal the small size of Palestine, geographically and demographically, compared to the size of the Arab homeland. Palestine is 10,249 square miles as compared to 4,786,689 square miles, the area of the rest of the Arab world with its numerous entities. The Palestinians now number about 2,250,000 persons (including the refugees and those living in the occupied territories) out of a total of nearly 102 million Arabs. This means that Palestine constitutes 2/1000 only of the area of the Arab homeland and 2/100 only of the total Arab population. These figures indicate that the balance between the size of Palestine and the attention given it by the Arabs seems totally out of proportion. This may be the reason why some people have called Palestine "the heart of the Arab homeland." For in addition to being almost centrally positioned in the Arab homeland, it occupies a small area incompatible with its importance, exactly like the heart in the human body.

The cause of this land, we claim, small as it is in area and population, afflicted with four centuries of foreign domination, internal corruption and sundry calamities, and behind some of its Arab brethren in the realm of nationalist writings and political organization, has been not a side issue of the total Arab cause, nor

even at its heart. It has been the Arab national cause itself in its entirety.

This problematic situation can be solved by examining a number of preliminary factors and a central one. Let us start by reviewing the preliminary factors which emanated from certain conditions in Palestine which were different from the conditions in the other Arab entities. These led in their turn to results which were different from those that grew out of the conditions prevalent in the other Arab entities.

The smallness of Palestine throughout the various phases of its history since the Arab conquest in the seventh century, facilitated for its people, the process of accepting and absorbing most of the immigrant peoples and communities (and even the semi-conquering ones). This smallness facilitated also the process of fusion so that no great differences existed between one group and another; when there were differences, whether religious, ethnic, or cultural differences they did not appear conspicuous. Even when such differences continued to exist, they did not divide the people among themselves, nor did they make them disintegrate into different factions, a danger which more than one Arab region had to face. The explanation for this phenomenon lies in the fact that the close ties which normally grow between the members of a people in a small area would not otherwise have grown had the country been vast (exactly like a small family whose members are more tightly knit than a large family with members living dispersed in far off places), particularly since the members of the various ethnic groups get to know each other by intermixing through communal living, (through work, education, marriage) far more easily than do the members of the various communities in a vast country. In a small country this condition creates a sort of accord and harmony between the various communities. It prevents separatist tendencies, independence movements, and regional revolts from erupting against the central government and the majority.

For this reason, the Arabs of Palestine, who belonged to numerous religions and religious sects, together with the majority of the non-Arab immigrants from the East (Kurds, Caucasians, Armenians and Turks) and from the West (Greeks, a number of Italian, Yugoslav and Albanian families, and the remnants of the Crusaders) constituted one people with a unified culture. The Arab minorities (e.g. the Christians) and the non-Arab minorities (e.g. the Armenians and the Kurds) upheld the Arab national aspirations in the area, and participated, as individuals, in political activities to the point of armed struggle and sometimes to the point of martyrdom, side by side with the majority. In contrast to this situation, we find other Arab and non-Arab groups outside Palestine going against the national tide, and opposing the national struggle. In other words the small size of Palestine and the resulting homogeneity of the Palestinian people blocked the road imperialism followed in other Asian and African Arab states in crumbling the national unity of the people and in instigating sectarian and seditious calls contrary to the opinion of the Arab oriented majority.

The small size of Palestine was not the only factor in determining the atmosphere favorable for unifying the national aspirations and preventing the usual racial and sectarian divisions so familiar in the history of many peoples, particularly in this area. There is another equally important factor. The largest minority in Palestine, i.e. the Christians (forming 1/10 of the total population for the last seven or eight centuries) are Arabs who came from the Arab Peninsula or the adjacent areas, that is to say from the cradle from which originated the Arabs most of whom migrated to Palestine. The roots of both the majority and minority, therefore, go back to the same geographic and socio-cultural background. This has played an important role in bringing together the Muslims and Christians in their daily living, and in their opposition to the political danger that suddenly threatened them in an unprecedented manner. Until a late period in the history of Palestine prior to the disaster, scores of the important Palestinian families felt strongly tied to each other irrespective of

sect or creed. They stood united in the face of any traditional tribal or semi-tribal feuds such as those that used to break out between the zealous remnants of the Qaisi and Yemeni tribes near Jerusalem. Even when crimes or acts of vengeance were committed, or when indemnities were paid for blood that had been shed, those Muslim and Christian families who believed they belonged to the same "asabiya" stood as one family and bore collectively the results of such acts. With the exception of Trans-Jordan, I do not think a single Arab state experienced this sort of common living between its Arab inhabitants, regardless of their sect or creed.

So much for the social life. As for the national political scene, the minorities participated with the majority in all aspects of the national struggle. They joined the armed resistance; they participated in forming parties and political organizations bearing, along with others, the responsibilities of leadership. They wrote, contributed to the field of education and national guidance, campaigned for the Palestinian cause and helped finance the national movement. The fact that the Christians in Palestine were pioneers in transmitting the concept of nationalism from Europe to the Arab world and into Arabic, just as the Lebanese did, gave strength to Christian participation in the Muslim national action. Like the Lebanese, they were the first to come in contact with Western civilization, through the European and American religious missions to the East, the student missions to the West and through emigration to America. We must not forget that the first encounters between Arabs and Westerners took place in Palestine, and that the first Christian mission to the Arab world came to Palestine, for political and religious considerations which gave the land a special importance for these missions and made it particularly attractive.

There is a third factor which paved the way for the growth of an Arab nationalist awareness in the Palestinians. Palestine belonged throughout history (pre-Islamic and Islamic) to a part of the Arab homeland known in history as Syria. This unity between them was,

for the most part, political, juridical, social and economic. Palestine was therefore known as "Southern Syria" until very recently, i.e. until it was separated from the main body of greater Syria and placed under British Mandate, at the end of the First World War. The national demand of the Palestinian people throughout that war and after it, as evidenced by the platforms of the various national political parties, and the resolutions of the national congresses of 1919 and 1920, was to remain a part of the Syrian entity and as such be unified with the greater Arab homeland. Until that date less than fifty years ago, not a single voice was heard calling for the creation of a Palestinian entity independent from Syria and the Arab homeland, similar to the numerous entities which imperialism has since created and which have been recognized and accepted by the few who stand to profit by their creation. These completely independent entities now number seven in Asia alone, in addition to a larger number of emirates, protectorates and sheikhdoms in which Britain retains a favored position.

The realization of the Arabs of Palestine before 1920 that they were an inseparable part of Arab Syria committed them to strive towards union with Syria. After 1920 their feeling that they formed part of the Arab homeland led them and the Syrians to strive towards union with the other Arab entities. A number of Lebanese, most town-dwellers in Trans-Jordan, and nearly all Syrians shared this feeling with the Palestinians.

This leads us to the fourth factor determining the special status of Palestine in the Arab body: its geographic position. More important than the fact that Palestine formed a part of Syria is the fact it occupies a position enjoyed by no other Arab entity.

Palestine lies in the center of the Arab homeland and links three of its parts. These parts form three of the four geographical regions which constitute the Arab homeland: the Fertile Crescent, the Arab Peninsula and the Nile Valley. Only one part of the Arab

homeland, the Maghreb, is not directly linked to Palestine. Palestine, then, forms a sort of bridge between three quarters of the vast Arab homeland.

A few more facts add to the geographic importance of Palestine. Palestine connects the two continents in which the Arabs are spread—Asia and Africa. It is the only land-bridge between them and the shortest land-bridge to the Muslim Holy Places in the Arab Peninsula. Finally, the fact that Palestine lies exactly in the center of the Islamic world makes the holy places in Jerusalem the heart of the Islamic world geographically as well as spiritually. Thanks to this vital position linking two continents and leading to the shrines in Mecca and Medina, Palestine became also a stopping place at which travellers halted between the Mediterranean Sea and Trans-Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Egypt. Many came and stayed until, in the last years of the Turkish rule and during the British Mandate, it became the destination of hundreds of Arab families and important personalities who came to be employed in various fields: in the professions, the government, the press, and the fields of writing, education, and politics.

The geographic position of Palestine is of particular importance to at least three of the Arab entities: Egypt, Trans-Jordan and Iraq. According to political and military geographers, since ancient history Palestine has been the corridor to Egypt. Over it have passed all the conquerors and invaders who came to Egypt from the East or from the West by way of the East, such as the Hexos, the Hebrews, the Babylonians, the Assyrians, the Persians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Arabs, the Turks, the Mamlukes and the Crusaders. Over Palestine passed also Egypt's trade with Asia from the days of the pharonic-Syrian cooperation in ancient times to the time of the British mandate which connected Egypt with the west of Asia by coastal railroads. The resort to air routes has not minimized the importance of the previous land and sea routes. Generation upon generation of Egyptians have been convinced that protecting Egypt from the east

is more important than protecting it from the three other sides and that its protection (the Suez Canal in particular) from the east lies, not in Egypt itself, nor in the Sinai Peninsula, but in the interior of Palestine on the line that extends from the Gulf of Haifa to the Galilee Heights. No country can threaten Egypt more than the one which uses Palestine as a base to mount a campaign against that country.

Palestine is also Trans-Jordan's gateway to the sea. It is, therefore, its means of communication with the outside world. This was particularly true before the seaport of Aqaba came into being and was developed sufficiently to receive the ships coming to it along the long and winding Red Sea route. Trans-Jordan has recognized this fact throughout its history, both when it flourished during the short reign of the Nabateans in Petra and intermittently under the Crusaders as well as during its long epoch of decline. Thus Trans-Jordan lived tied to Palestine, expecting much from its seaports (Haifa and Acres in particular), and following slowly in the steps of its inhabitants along the path to civilization. Jordanians were led by the light of the Palestinians, acquired learning at their institutions, brought in their teachers, read their books and newspapers, sought amusement by the same means and imitated their habits and customs (both the good and bad) until Trans-Jordan became to many, merely the interior of a greater Palestine.

For Iraq, Palestine was its main outlet to the Mediterranean Sea during twenty years up to the disaster. Across it were laid the pipelines through which flowed the Iraqi petroleum to the refineries in Haifa. Palestine opened for Iraq the gates of wealth and abundance. Had it not been for this Mediterranean port which made the journey of the oil tankers to Europe and Britain much shorter and cheaper, cutting down the distance and the expenses by half in both cases, the Iraqi oil would have had to reach Europe by way of Basra in the Arabian Gulf.

The geographic position of Palestine, as we have seen, made it

possible for this small area to control life in three Arab regions to a great extent: economically as in the case of Iraq, militarily as in the case of Egypt, and both militarily and economically as in the case of Trans-Jordan. Palestine was therefore necessary for the national interests of three states with a total population at present of thirty eight million persons, or, more than one third of the total population of the Arab world. This situation invested this one Palestinian city of Haifa with moral and material worth enjoyed by no other Arab city in history not even Damascus, nor Baghdad, nor Cairo, nor Beirut, nor any of the other famous centers of learning, wealth and power in Arab history.

The fifth factor which contributed to making the Palestinians grow conscious of their Arab national reality is the fact that under no circumstance are they to be considered as less subject to the formative characteristics and constituents of Arab nationalism than the inhabitants of other parts of the Arab world. These apply to the Palestinians even more than they do to the inhabitants of a number of other Arab states, particularly to those in distant regions in the east and west.

It is only normal that the various concepts of the Arab national idea should differ in their definitions of the constituents of a nation, particularly in the degree of emphasis writers lay upon the variances between one constituent and another. However, if we take all these concepts and extract their definitions of a nation, then apply these to the case of Palestine and the conditions of its people, we will find that they all apply, fully, so that this people comes out as part of the Arab nation no matter what the definition of a nation is, or how much theoreticians, historians and ideologues differ in their understanding of the nature of a nation.

There is almost general agreement among the historians and theoreticians of the Arab national idea that language is the main national link among the Arabs. The other ties about which most na-

tionalists agree and which they place in the second, or third, or fourth rank, are history, national interests and geographic position. At the bottom of the list come two factors which are considered by only a few nationalists, particularly in these past twenty years, race and religion.

We will notice, if we examine these six strong ties, that they all prove the Arab quality of Palestine beyond the shadow of a doubt. Arabic has been the language of the majority of the Palestinians since the earliest Islamic periods, before it became the language spoken in Lebanon, Egypt, Sudan and the Maghreb. Until this day the Palestinian dialect is closer to the written classical language than the dialects spoken by most of the Arabs living in the area bordering the Mediterranean Sea. The relative closeness of Palestine to the Arab desert may have preserved the tongues of its inhabitants from slipping into the errors which most of those outside the Arab Peninsula and Trans-Jordan fell into.

The Arab quality of the history of Palestine, like that of Syria, is more marked than the Arab quality of the history of any other Arab area outside the Arab Peninsula. Palestine was always more loyal to the Arab rule than any other Arab area due to its proximity to the centers of Arab authority (Damascus, Baghdad, Cairo) during the three major Arab epochs. As to the subjection of Palestine to extended foreign domination (Persian, Turkish, Mamluke, Tartar, Crusader, and modern European), it cannot be used as an argument to challenge this quality. Every part of the Arab world, beyond the Peninsula, fell, to a greater or lesser extent, under foreign domination.

The national interest that Palestine accrues by belonging to the community of Arab states, a factor which will determine its national identification, this study will never cease to proclaim. Had there been no ties to link Palestine with its Arab neighbors, and had the national interest not been one of the factors that drive a country

towards upholding a particular national belief, the vested interest of Palestine in belonging to an Arab body would have been reason enough. Possibly no history other than the history of Palestine proves more clearly that national interest should be considered among the constituents of its neighbors, militarily, economically and geographically; lying as it does in the center of the Arab world and across important routes. The same applies conversely. The importance of the neighboring Arab regions for Palestine, geographically, economically and militarily, shows that Palestine and its neighbors are complementary extensions of the same homeland, particularly in the west of Asia and the Nile Valley.

As to the factors of race and religion, they have ceased to figure prominently among the constituents of the nation in the definitions of most contemporary Arab theoreticians. The literal application of these two conditions may confuse the arguments brought up by the progressive secular nationalists but it will not confuse the statements they make about Palestine. For outside the Arab Peninsula there is not one region in which races and religions are not varied to the extent that they have been in Palestine, throughout the ages. However, the arguments used by the protagonists of these two factors will not be effectual in the case of Palestine just as they will not be so in the case of any other Arab region when we recall that these beliefs and races got so mixed over a long period and in such a deep manner, that the one way of life, the common aspirations, the mutual benefits, have become uniting factors rather than the factors of race or religious belief.

It seems that this fantastic applicability of the concepts and definitions of nationalism to the people and the land of Palestine, which has convinced the Palestinians and the rest of the Arabs of the authenticity of the Arab character of Palestine, has not convinced a number of specialists in Arab affairs in the West, particularly in England. The scholar can quote scores of statements made by well-known British Orientalists and Arabists who insisted upon denying

the Arab quality of Palestine after the manner of the geographer-archeologist Sir Charles Warren who was of the opinion that the Palestinians were absolutely not Arab [*The Promised Land* (London, 1875)]. Even such a book as the one published officially by the British Government about Palestine during the First World War described the Palestinians as a non-Arab people who speak Arabic (British Government, *Peace Memorandum*, No. 60). The head of the British Government at the time gave the same judgement. The Palestinians, he thought, were not of the same stock as the Arabs of Iraq, Syria and the Arab Peninsula (David Lloyd George, *War Memoirs*, Vol. II, p. 669).

In spite of this, the Arab people of Palestine remained Arab. The doubts shed by their enemies upon their "Arabness" failed to shake their faith especially when they saw the results of similar imperialist attempts in more than one Arab region, particularly in Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq and Morocco. They realized fully how profitable these results turned out to be for imperialism.

* * *

The five factors reinforced the sensitiveness of the special position of Palestine in the community of Arab states, and enhanced it. However they did not play the major role a sixth factor played, though it is a relatively new one having developed in these past seventy years. That is the Zionist threat to Palestine. To understand the nature of the Zionist threat and its effect in tying the Palestinian problem with the Arab cause as a whole, we have to look at the matter from two angles: from the angle of the danger Zionism constitutes to Palestine, and the angle of the danger it constitutes to the Arabs as a whole.

The Zionist danger to Palestine began to loom when the first leaders of Zionism called their first congress at Basle in 1897 and focused their designs against Palestine specifically, insisting upon

it as the "Promised Land" and rejecting all other plans and proposals to migrate to places in Africa and Latin America. Consequently, the Arabs of Palestine lived in their rightful homeland, which had always formed a part of their life and the lives of their forefathers for several centuries, exposed daily to the temptations of the enemy, his acts of terrorism, his threats, ruses and wiliness. They lived at the mercy of an evil far greater than the kindness of their hearts, their patience and their faith in justice. For half a century they closed ranks in order to protect themselves, holding onto the land so that it did not slip through their fingers. They bought their right to their homeland with their lives and comfort. They entrenched themselves, they struggled, they sacrificed, all to prevent the imperialist conspiracy from taking its course. They realized that the conspiracy was greater than they, for in it Zionist greed, imperialist rapacity, the ignorance of the world, the dirtiness of international politics and the evil of brute force joined forces with science put at the service of injustice, and progress concealing unjust aggression.

The Arabs of Palestine realized the conspiracy was too dangerous to be faced by them alone. They looked towards their brethren in the neighboring Arab states. Their brethren were looking towards them at the same time. They too had seen the ugly face of the conspiracy. But they did not see it as a danger to Palestine alone; they saw its shadow spreading over their territories too, for at the moment in which the rapacity for Palestine was born, the rapacity for all the Arab homeland was also born. There is no need for us to recount in detail the Zionist imperialist ambitions in the Arab homeland, particularly in the regions surrounding Palestine (Egypt, Trans-Jordan, Syria and Lebanon). Theodor Herzl, the founder of the Zionist movement, expressed his covetousness for the lands beyond the Palestinian boundaries to be included in the "Jewish State" which he dreamed for the Jews before he convened his first congress at Basle, and before he even reached the decision that Palestine should be the place where the Zionists were to establish their state. He noted in his diary on April 26, 1896 that the boundaries of the Zionist

state should extend to the Suez Canal in the south and Cappadocia (in central Asia Minor) to the north. Two years later he wrote that the boundaries should extend from "the Nile to the Euphrates." [Raphael Patai, *The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl* (New York, 1960), Vol. I, p. 342 and Vol. II, p. 711].

The Zionists did not hide the fact that they were not satisfied with Palestine alone. The Zionist ambitions in Palestine were to make of it but a stepping stone from which they intended to move into the rest of the Arab homeland in order to establish their full ascendancy over it politically and militarily, or, at least economically in the beginning. The Arabs, inside Palestine and outside, realized this fact from what they read written by prominent Zionists. The Arabs saw also in these Zionist schemes an ever growing danger, a cancer whose malignancy increased as time passed. For this reason the efforts of the Arabs outside Palestine to protect the Arab quality of that piece of land were in effect efforts directed at protecting the Arab quality of the other entities also. This fact played a part in converting the cause of Palestine into an Arab cause by merging the two together. The Zionists had a hand in this without their intending it or being aware of it; for their ambitions for the whole land of the Arabs woke up the owners of this land from their deep sleep, just as their ambitions for the land of Palestine woke up the Palestinians. Thus the Arab people adopted a united and tough stand against this alien enemy. If the five factors mentioned above were instrumental in strengthening the Arab quality of the Palestinian cause, the Zionist movement was even more instrumental.

It would be erroneous, however, to confer upon Zionism and imperialism the distinction of having led the Palestinian Arabs to adopt Arab nationalism and to consider their cause as an Arab cause. Equally wrong would be the belief that the Zionist-imperialist danger was the sole stimulus of Arab awakening as if without both these factors there would have been neither an Arab cause nor Arab aspirations for independence, unity and freedom. No matter how

important the two factors were in awakening the Arabs to their reality, this awakening was not a mere reaction, nor an artificial and superficial occurrence, sporadic and without roots. Not even Egypt's new awakening to its Arab character can be described as a mere reaction to the war in Palestine, to the developments in Arab affairs, or to immediate strategic considerations. For the seeds of Arab Nationalism in Palestine and outside began to grow naturally and gradually before the Arabs became aware of the Zionist danger. The aspirations towards freedom, independence and unity preceded the quest for self-protection against Zionist ambitions which grew in intensity at the end of the previous century. Even if the Zionist-imperialist danger were to recede now, and Palestine were to be freed while the foreign dominated Arab areas were to gain their independence, the Arabs would not abdicate their national belief. The Arabs' aspirations towards freedom, independence, and unity are not mere dispensable tools. They are a constant striving towards a better life capable of bringing about Arab self-realization and expressing a continuous movement of the Arab soul towards what is best for itself and the world. It is the frame without which, the Arab believes, no virtuous and happy life is possible for him, and beyond which no opening up to the world is feasible.

II. THE ARABS AND THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM

The Arabs have been remiss in their duties towards Palestine, but not more than they have been in their duties towards their own home states. This situation is the result of several factors none of which is due to the stand taken by the Arabs vis à vis Palestine, or to the extent of their faith in its cause. On the contrary, we can say that the Arabs in most places have, more often than not, considered the problem of Palestine as an Arab cause, and the problem of every Arab state, ever since the beginning. In no Arab state was the problem of Palestine ever considered a foreign one. The Arabs of Palestine were never left alone in the arena. Even when Arab assistance was limited to moral support, rousing speeches and ineffectual sentiments, and even when most regions were under European domination, the Arabs of Palestine, the actual fighters, were satisfied with this limited support. They expected good from it, particularly as the Arab masses everywhere were always the first to extend their sympathy, lend their support and react to events. The masses used to impose their will upon their governments, who were irresolute, or had reservations for one reason or another, or were submissive to the will of the foreigner. Thanks to the vigilance of the masses, the various Arab governments willy nilly went along with the tide upholding the Palestinian cause for about half a century. Only a king and a president deviated publicly from this course. The first paid with his life for flouting public opinion in his country — he was assassinated before he could sign a peace treaty with the enemy. The other paid with his reputation — he was ostracized and banished from the community of the Arabs before he dared implement the same policy for which his colleague had been killed.

As mentioned earlier, the Arabs saw the Zionist danger as soon as the newspapers and the press agencies began to report on the Zionist designs on the Arab world. Arab reaction, particularly in Asia, but to a lesser degree in Egypt, took at first the form of concern for the safety of the Palestinian land and opposition to its sale. In the summer of 1891, the Palestinian Arabs recorded their first decisive stand against the sale of land to Jews. A group of Jerusalem notables cabled the Ottoman authorities in Istanbul demanding that a Firman (decree) be issued forbidding Zionists from owning land in Palestine. This measure was taken in order to stop the flow of immigrants to the colonies scattered about the countryside. These had begun to pour into Palestine, financed by wealthy Jews in Western Europe in accordance with the Zionist colonialist plan to infiltrate into the area. No sooner did the Palestinian Arabs take this measure than the non-Palestinian Arabs residents in the capital exercised their influence in support of their brethren. They pressured the Sultan until he issued a decree forbidding such sales. That was the first instance of Arab solidarity in the face of Zionist expansionist schemes.

As time went by, the Arabs in neighboring areas moved along a parallel path in their struggle against land sales to the Zionists. In Trans-Jordan the inhabitants perceived the Zionists' attempt to infiltrate into their region, which the Zionists publicly claimed as an inseparable part of "the Promised Land." They expelled a group of Zionists who had established near Jerash the first colony in Trans-Jordan. Houses, crops and farm animals were destroyed and the Zionists were never allowed to return. This occurred in 1898. In the spring of that year, the nationalist Egyptian newspapers took to warning against the dangers of the resolutions of the Basle Congress as soon as news of the event reached Egypt. Led by the Lebanese expatriate Muhammed Rashid Rida, owner of *Al-Manar*, the Egyptian papers began to run articles exposing the Zionist plot. Some years later, the Zionists failed to convince the Egyptian authorities and the British administration in Egypt to allow them to establish a Jewish

state lying between the Ottoman Sultanate and the Egyptian Khedivate. It was to be erected around a number of colonies the Zionists wanted to build in the Sinal Peninsula and in the south of Palestine, on land bought from the Sultanate and from Arab landowners, with the blessings of England. Herzl himself visited Egypt in 1903 in an effort to realize this plan.

Another Lebanese newspaperman, Najib Nassar, led a campaign in the Palestinian press against Zionist infiltration. He devoted his newspaper in Haifa, "*Al-Carmel*," to this end. A Syrian, Shukri Al-Asali, led the Arab campaign in the Turkish Parliament against such land sales. A large number of Arab members, mostly non-Palestinian, backed him until he succeeded in forcing the Turkish authorities to ban anew the sale of land. When the Zionist conspiracy succeeded in tempting one of the big non-Palestinian Arab absentee landlords to sell a portion of his vast holdings in the north of Palestine, the wrath of the people flared up against him in Palestine and in the other Arab regions, which were still under Ottoman rule.

When the First World War broke out, Turkey entered the war on the side of the Axis while the British penetrated the Asian side of the Middle East more than ever before. Basic changes occurred then in the nature of the Zionist and imperialist ambitions in the area and in the relationship of the problem to imperialist interests and to the international situation. The danger changed from a relatively simple, distant and masked one (the attempt to purchase land in order to establish colonies for new immigrants), to a more complex and serious one: the attempt to establish permanent imperialist bases (British in particular) in various parts of the Sultanate completely subservient to the European imperialists. There were as well the Zionist attempts to gain an international promise allowing them a share in the spoils of the fallen sultanate. At least Palestine was to become the nucleus of a Jewish "National Home." The Zionists did receive such a promise in the Fall of 1917 (the famous Balfour Declaration) — two and a half years earlier the British had secretly come to an understanding with France to split between them the

Asian Arab parts of the Ottoman Sultanate lying outside the Arab Peninsula (in what is known as the Sykes-Picot Agreement of May 1915).

This collaboration between the Zionists and imperialists took place behind the backs of the people directly concerned and contrary to their inalienable right to self-determination. This happened at a time when this right was being emphasized in President Wilson's program known as the Fourteen Points.

The news of this conspiracy leaked out gradually from sources in London and from the files uncovered by the Bolsheviks upon the withdrawal of Russia from the war, towards the end of 1917. We can safely say that Arab popular reaction was uniform. The non-Palestinian Arabs rejected the Sykes-Picot Agreement and the Balfour Declaration with as much vehemence as did the Palestinians. All found the post-war developments equally shocking. Palestinian and non-Palestinian Arabs had risen together against the Turks. They had co-founded clubs and secret political parties paving the way for the Arab Revolt and inciting their people to rise against the Turks. Their necks were delivered alike to the henchmen of Jamal Pasha (1915-1917). Later they participated in the revolt they had incited, turning over its leadership to the Sherif of Mecca. The aims of the revolt, as described in the first letter of the Sherif to McMahon (July 14, 1915) were the realization of "...the independence of the Arab countries which are bounded: on the north, by the line Mersin-Adana... to the Persian frontier; on the east, by the Persian frontier down to the Persian Gulf; on the south, by the Indian Ocean...; on the west, by the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea back to Mersin." Britain agreed to these frontiers, and to Arab independence and unity, through McMahon and through dozens of British writers and politicians, experts in Middle Eastern affairs. From the recorded controversy which ensued between the Arabs (through Sherif Hussein) and the British (through McMahon) we can infer the Arab insistence upon including Palestine in the pro-

jected Arab state. The British pretended to agree in terms which they later tried to distort so as to justify their failure to keep their promises.

As we have seen, Britain was planning to divide the Ottoman Empire and place it, with the exception of the Arab Peninsula, under its direct rule and that of France; she promised, as well, to help establish in the area a "National Home" for the Zionists. That is why the Arabs did not keep silent. They did not take matters lightly although they were in the midst of a battle and in a critical position *vis à vis* the Turks, having been left without an ally. From what we read in Lawrence's memoirs about the Arab Revolt, the Arab soldiers and officers (mostly Syrians and Iraqis) expressed their apprehension and protested before him boldly and firmly from the moment they got wind of the conspiracy. Some refused to continue against the Turks; others fought but no longer with as much zeal as previously.

The opposition to the conspiracy in the political circles grew strong in Egypt first, where hundreds of Syrians, Lebanese, Iraqis and Palestinians had taken refuge, then, after the retreat of the Turks, in Palestine, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq. More than one non-Palestinian delegation and committee were formed with the purpose of pursuing the matter with the Allies, Britain in particular. Although there is evidence of some negligence on the part of the Hijazi leadership of the Arab Revolt (mostly as a result of ignorance of the ill faith which international relations entail), the leaders of the Arab nationalist movement, the heads of the nationalist parties, and clubs, the Arab notables too, adopted a unified stand against the conspiracy. In 1918 "the Syrian Union Party" grew out of this solidarity. The new party took upon itself the task of safeguarding the rights of the Palestinians. Most of its members were Syrian.

When the British forces occupied the whole Syrian territory, the Syrian Congress espoused the cause of Palestine. The various

groups and political parties in Palestine, Trans-Jordan, Syria and Lebanon were represented in it. It met towards the end of June, 1919, to discuss the future of the Syrian homeland and to express the Arabs' disappointment in their allies who had begun to uncover their ruse by opposing Arab independence and unity, and by exposing Palestine to Jewish domination. The congress came out with its resolutions on July 2, 1919. The first and most important resolution was the following:

"We desire full and absolute political independence for Syria within the following boundaries: on the north, the Taurus Range; on the South, a line running from Rafah to al-Jauf and following the Syria-Hijaz border below 'Aqaba; on the east, the boundary formed by the Euphrates and Khabur rivers and a line stretching from some distance east of Abu-Kamal to some distance east of al-Jauf; on the west, the Mediterranean Sea."

The seventh resolution stated:

"We reject the claims of the Zionists for the establishment of a Jewish commonwealth in that part of southern Syria which is known as Palestine, and we are opposed to Jewish immigration into any part of the country. We do not acknowledge that they have a title, and we regard their claims as a grave menace to our national, political and economic life. Our Jewish fellow-citizens shall continue to enjoy the rights and bear the responsibilities which are ours in common."

The eighth resolution read in part:

"We desire that there should be no dismemberment of Syria, and no separation of Palestine...; and we ask that the unity of the country be maintained under any circumstances."

And the tenth resolution stated:

"The basic principles proclaimed by President Wilson in condemnation of secret treaties cause us to enter an emphatic protest against any agreement providing for the dismemberment of Syria and against any undertaking envisaging the recognition of Zionism in southern Syria; and we ask for the explicit annulment of all such agreements and undertakings."

These were the resolutions of the first comprehensive national congress of the representatives of the Syrian regions convened in their own homeland. It was followed, eight months later, by a second congress which was also convened in Damascus. It was more broadly representative than the first and of a more official character. Its resolutions were more decisive in the political history of the Arabs of Syria. It proclaimed the establishment of a "constitutional government" in Syria at whose head was to sit a "constitutional monarch." The resolutions, which were made public in the closing session (March 7, 1920), stated in part:

"We the participants in this congress consider ourselves to be the true representatives of the Syrian Nation in the whole Syrian mainland, who speak for it... As such, we declare the independence of our Syrian country within its natural boundaries, which include Palestine. We base our independence on a civil parliamentary system, on the protection of minority rights and on the rejection of Zionist claims aimed at making Palestine a National Home or a place of immigration for Jews."

* * *

Nearly fifty years have passed since these two congresses met to liberate and unite the "Syrian mainland", and to protect it from Zionist-imperialist designs. During these years Arab representatives have met in hundreds of national official and unofficial popular

congresses, either to discuss specifically the Palestine problem and pass resolutions supporting the rights of the Palestinian people, or, to discuss national matters in general, the Palestine problem included. Over three hundred unofficial national congresses were convened between 1919 and 1966 to discuss the Palestine problem, in addition to a greater number of conferences and meetings held officially in the past twenty five years for the same purpose. Of the unofficial meetings we mention: the Bludan Conference (1937), the Conference of the Arab Diplomatic Missions to Europe (1939), the Arab University Graduates' Conferences in Beirut, Jerusalem and Cairo in the fifties, the conferences of the federations of women, and those of writers, etc... Of the official meetings we mention: the Anshas Conference (1946), the Aley, Saufar, Bludan Conferences (1946-1947), the three Arab Summit Conferences in Cairo, Alexandria and Rabat (1963-1965). [The Palestine Research Center has published a study on these official conferences. Another study on the non-official conferences will appear soon.]

We can say in this respect that the Arabs in the independent Arab states, as masses, governments, political parties, trade unions (even the apolitical ones such as those representing doctors, pharmacists, engineers and artists) convoke more than one conference a month to discuss the problem of Palestine and discuss its latest developments. They have been doing this since the forties at least.

The same situation prevailed among the Arab political parties. The basic tenets of most Arab parties in the Asian states where parties were formed legally (Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Trans-Jordan), affirmed clearly and frankly the Arab quality of Palestine. They repeated this in their periodicals, pamphlets and publications. Even those parties whose basic programs did not deal with the problem referred to it in their literature. Almost all political parties participated in demonstrations, rallies, discussions, meetings, protests and the various other means that popular institutions resort to to express their opinions. Only four or five parties out of a total of forty major

ones formed in the above mentioned states during the past fifty years failed to follow a definite and frank policy concerning Palestine. But none of these parties denied the rights of the Arabs or repudiated them.

In addition to conventions and the interest of parties there is a third example of the continuous attention the Arabs have paid to the Palestine problem: the Arab League. In spite of the strangeness of its birth and the circumstances of its establishment, the narrowness and weakness of its potentialities, and its continuous failings, this institution has made the Palestine problem its main concern since its formation twenty one years ago. It has not as yet paid as much attention to any other Arab problem as it has done to the problem of Palestine. To the historian it seems that this attention exceeds what this institution devotes to all the other Arab problems put together, at least judging by the number of resolutions concerning Palestine which have been passed by the League since its inception (seven hundred resolutions, or an average of three per month!). What holds for the League holds for its member states and their international official attitudes particularly in the United Nations. At first Iraq and Egypt alone were the spokesmen of the Arabs on behalf of Palestine at the League of Nations during the thirties; now this number has increased to thirteen Arab members in the United Nations.

The reader may object to the emphasis we place on the importance of the continuous verbal support the Arab people, governments and representatives have offered to Palestine, on the grounds that this support was no more, and should mean nothing more, than a lot of verbiage which the non-Palestinian Arabs offered to the Palestinian Arabs. The reader is right but only to an extent. It is true that the Arabs have used every verbal channel to further the cause of Palestine. But it would be unfair to claim that Arab support stopped there or that verbal support did not lead to tangible results. For this phenomenon holds two important meanings:

First, it was an expression of healthy Arab sentiments which came out in conventions, meetings demonstrations and mass rallies. But at other times these sentiments came out in the form of support given to revolts and of serious attempts at protecting the Arab quality of Palestine before 1948. After 1948 these attempts have been directed at recovering the rights that were lost. What concerns us here is not the rhetoric or the overflowing sentiments expressed in Arab speeches and declarations, but the sentiments and tendencies which were reflected in more serious forms.

Second, this continuous talk, this superfluity, contributed towards enlightening Arab public opinion about the problem of Palestine, and thus encouraged the people to act seriously and fruitfully for the cause.

The best expression of this moral Arab support, is the fact that Arab aid, popular and governmental, was not meant as interference by one group in the affairs of another, as Zionists and imperialists often picture it (particularly when they refer to the 1948 war in Palestine). It was in fact a natural, lawful action, a national duty that the people and the governments took upon themselves in self-protection and out of loyalty to a segment of the nation in distress, and in order to protect a part of the homeland, which is after all the basic task of these governments.

* * *

The Zionists and imperialists complain about the great attention the Arabs pay to the Palestine problem. Their complaints are due of course to their fear that Arab action may win and recapture the bases they have usurped. These complaints are in fact in contradiction not only to Zionist ambitions in areas surrounding Palestine and their seeking to build a nation extending from "the Nile to the Euphrates"; but they are also in contradiction to Zionist and imperialist efforts to introduce the various non-Palestinian Arab regimes into

the affair whenever the Zionists and imperialists see on the part of the former any laxity or readiness to sell short the Arab right, or any deviation from the nationalist path. Thus Israel, who protests against the performance of a national duty on the part of the Arab states when they act on behalf of Palestine, does not object when an Arab ruler overreaches himself by calling for a peace treaty with Israel (as happened in 1951) or to a compromise solution, which would have been in effect a surrender (as happened in 1965). The fact is that the Zionist movement tried fifty years ago to involve a number of non-Palestinian Arab leaders in the affair after it sensed the steadfastness of the Arabs of Palestine in their opposition to the movement on the one hand, and the readiness of these leaders to appease the Zionists at the expense of the rights of the people. For this reason Weizmann negotiated with Emir Faisal ben Al-Hussein, and later with his father and his brother Abdulla. The head of the Zionist Committee expressed this frankly when he noted in his diary:

"It is, and always has been, my conviction that the understanding which we have to reach with the Palestinian Arabs will be achieved only by our developing relations with the larger Arab world, that is, with the real leaders who enjoy unquestioned authority in the neighbouring Arab countries." (F.H. Kisch, *Palestine Diary*, London, 1938, p. 361).

At that same time, the British authorities in Palestine were playing the same sly game. When the unyielding revolt of the Palestinians subdued British pride in 1936-1937, the British worked at shifting the responsibility for the revolt from Palestinian leadership and at placing it in the hands of some Arab kings and princes who were not as resolute as the Palestinian nationalist elements or as those in their own entities. By this attempt the British hoped to end the revolt. They succeeded, but only temporarily, that is, until the Palestinians regained the initiative in the revolt.

This shifting of responsibility, from the people concerned to

some non-Palestinian rulers, hurt the Palestinian cause. So did the Zionist and imperialist attempts at shifting the responsibility from the Arab masses and preventing them from participating in the Palestinian efforts to protect the homeland. From long experience the Palestinian Arabs and their brethren in the other states have discovered that the climate most suitable for fruitful work in support of the Palestinian cause is created through providing opportunities for the non-Palestinian Arabs to act alongside the Palestinian Arabs in the service of the cause, their own cause too, while preventing the other Arab governments from arrogating exclusively to themselves the responsibility for such service.

Three examples will be enough to support this view. In the past fifty years, the three major setbacks the Palestinian Arabs experienced, occurred when the Palestinians were compelled, were it but for a time, to resign the administration of their national affairs and to relegate this function to Arab officials who were removed not only from the sentiments of the Palestinians, but also from the sentiments of the Arab nation in general, as well as those of their own citizens.

The first example concerns the great disappointment of Arab nationalists during the few years following immediately upon the First World War. The British failed to honor their promises of full Arab independence and unity (which of course included Palestine). Entities were created, mandates were imposed, fragmentation was firmly established and constant efforts were made towards turning Palestine into a Jewish state. During the five years extending between 1916 and 1921, the direction of the Arab movement was removed from the hands of the leaders and representatives of the people; for the Sherif of Mecca (later King of Hijaz) had monopolized the Arab cause and was acting at his own discretion without any public surveillance.

The second event concerns the great disappointment of the Arabs in the results of the 1936-1939 revolt. This was a symbol of

the national popular struggle in Palestine. During this revolt, the Zionists, the British and their agents were exposed to all kinds of reprisals and insults, and were made to suffer losses the like of which they had not been used to in the Arab world, not even during the famous Egyptian and Iraqi revolts of 1919-1920. This revolt, too, lost its vitality and was soon impaired when the British succeeded in bringing it under the control of certain Arab rulers who dealt with matters according to their own whims (having come to a previous understanding with the British). Soon these rulers advocated a state of concordance with the enemy which was tantamount to capitulation. Although the revolt flared up again, once the Palestinians reshouldered their responsibilities, it lost in its second phase (1938-1939) the qualities of authenticity, solidarity and purity which had characterized it in its first phase (1936-1937).

The third example is that of the 1948 war. The war lasted officially for not more than five weeks. Five Arab armies (Egyptian, Jordanian, Syrian, Lebanese and Iraqi) and volunteers from another four (Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Sudan and Libya) took part in the fighting. It ended with the loss of three quarters of Palestine i.e., fifteen times the area the Arabs lost in thirty years. If we remember that the Palestinian Arabs permitted the Zionists to acquire through land sales only $\frac{1}{10}$ % of the area, we shall find that, as a result of this war, the other Arabs turned over to them a hundred and fifty times what the Palestinian Arabs let slip in thirty years! The cause of this lies, of course, in that in 1948 the Palestinians were forcibly barred from shouldering the responsibilities of the 1948 war. Instead, a leadership which had begun to conspire against the interests of Palestine a quarter of a century earlier was imposed on the Palestinians.

* * *

What has just been discussed is but one side only, the darkest, of the Arabs' experience in Palestine. The other side tells the story

of fifty years of brave struggle on the part of the Arab people to preserve the Arab quality of the Palestinian soil and to support the Palestinian glorious armed struggle with men, money and arms. This side too can be illustrated by three examples.

The first example deals with the Palestinian revolts 1919-1948. The Arabs of Palestine rose in defense of their rights and their country several times throughout thirty years. These popular revolts were characterized by authenticity, soundness of purpose, and fairness of means. The ones that occurred in the twenties and the first half of the thirties had limited effects. Fighting was limited to the Arabs of Palestine. Their brethren in the other states were unable to help for they were too busy with their own internal problems and with their own struggle for independence, being themselves under the yoke of foreign domination.

But the mid-thirties were a turning point in Arab history: First Iraq then Egypt signed treaties with Britain granting the two countries relative independence. Then they joined the League of Nations and found relief from certain of their local problems. The Syrians and the Lebanese signed similar treaties with France. Order was restored in Saudi Arabia and Yemen and the two states signed a treaty after a short period of belligerency. These six states were capable of striding further along the road of national sovereignty and independence after the Second World War. They joined the United Nations and became almost completely free to dispose at will of their military and material forces.

For these reasons the two major revolts which broke out in Palestine in 1936 (when the British authorities remained passive in the face of intensified Jewish immigration) and 1947 (following the U. N. Partition Resolution when the Zionists resorted to arms) had certain qualities that were missing in the revolts of the previous fifteen years. These later revolts were characterized by stubborn, powerful, persevering and widespread struggle.

Doubtless, what lent this struggle such vitality and strength, is the fact it did not remain limited to the Palestinians alone, but engaged thousands of young nationalists who came, particularly from Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Trans-Jordan and Egypt. For the nationalist political movements and institutions in these five states considered the Palestine problem as theirs. In the light of this belief their members entered the battlefield side by side with the Palestinian combatants. Amongst them were soldiers and officers. Since, in the thirties, Egypt was still less conscious of its Arab quality than it became in the forties, the majority of the non-Palestinian combatants in Palestine participating in the 1936 Revolt were not Egyptian. But in 1947-1948 when events took a new and decisive turn, the majority of the member states in the United Nations sided with injustice: the United States of America entered as a party in the conflict on the side of the enemy; the ruling Labor Party in England marshalled all its power and conspired with some reactionary Arab regimes to act against the will of the Arabs; the Jews grew strong by exploiting the sympathy of the world for what they had been subjected to under Hitlerism, having first profited by the war to acquire arms and military experience. Egyptian citizens joined their brethren in the West of Asia. They were led by dozens of Egyptian military personnel belonging to the secret Free Officers movement, who eventually came into the open when they effected the July (1952) Revolution in Egypt. Similarly a number of Iraqi, Syrian and Jordanian officers participated in the struggle. They too came to the fore in the fifties as important political and military leaders in their states.

Arab public opinion considered the participation of these combatants in the war in Palestine a very natural thing, since the majority of the people believed that Palestinian soil was an extension of Arab soil on which were established the other states. Thanks to this participation, the Palestinian felt that he was not alone in the battlefield. This feeling provided him with an incredible capacity for enthusiasm.

Similarly the financial and military aid which the Palestinians

received from their supporters in the other Arab states (particularly from those in the five neighboring states) had a great deal of effect in keeping alight the sparks of the two events. Thus, what spurred, the Palestinians most in their struggle, was the feeling that their cause was alive in the hearts of the whole Arab nation.

The second example deals with the commando raids 1955-1956. The Palestine disaster was too deep to be passed over by the Arab states without leaving any major effects. Among these, as we shall see in Chapter Four, is the revolt of the Arab people in a number of Arab states against the rulers responsible to a great extent for the defeat. It was natural, therefore, that the national uprisings which had come about as a result of the disastrous events in Palestine should feel themselves committed towards correcting conditions so as to serve the cause of Palestine. This was the feeling of the biggest national uprising of them all: the revolution of the Egyptian army against the royal regime in July, 1952. It was towards this end that the revolution acted once Egypt woke up from the nightmare of British occupation by the signing of the evacuation treaty in 1954, and once it began to realize its place and status in the community of Arab states and in the world, recognizing its Arab quality and freeing itself from the ties of its traditional loyalty to the West.

Thus revolutionary Egypt added to its freedom of determining its foreign policy in the light of its interests and those of the Arabs, its wish to lay the ground for the sacred struggle to liberate Palestine. In practice this meant that Egypt would allow the Arabs of Palestine to enter their occupied homeland as commandos, to train them in guerilla warfare, to arm them and to provide for them safe bases so they could be able to sow fear in the hearts of the intruders. In addition to these facilities, Egypt had the merit of filling the hearts of the Palestinians with faith—a faith which spurred hundreds of young men to join the commandos. These unknown soldiers wrote an epic of silent brave deeds. This is neither the time nor the place to recount them (though they will be recounted on other occasions)

but this is the place to draw out a lesson from them: the power to perform miracles capable of shaking the very foundations of Israel emerges when the Palestinian spirit of self-sacrifice concurs with the honest support of the Arabs.

The third example treats the revival of the Palestinian entity. At the first Arab summit conference of 1963, the Arab heads of state agreed to call upon the Palestinians living outside the occupied territories to form a political organization that would represent them and lead their endeavors towards liberating their homeland. It is true that this organization turned out to be symbolic for the most part. It was planned in such a way as not to exercise legitimate power over the Palestinians since the host governments feared such an organization might deprive them of any authority over these communities. It is true also that certain Arab governments sanctioned the revival of such an entity as a formality only, others because they were too timid to go against the tide, still others because they intended to sabotage it. Nevertheless, the fact that the establishment of this political organization was endorsed collectively and was given the green light, and the fact that it came out in the form of the Palestine Liberation Organization with its military, political, cultural and information apparatuses, all that in itself can form the corner stone in the future Palestinian struggle which shall liberate Palestine and return it to its owners, having established on its soil an independent Arab entity. This entity cannot come to be without this corner stone.

The Palestine Liberation Organization is the correct formula which ought to exist between the Palestinians and the rest of the Arabs for the liberation of Palestine, i.e. to re-establish the balance between the roles of each group: correcting the error of the 1948 war, continuing the struggle of the 1936-1939 revolt, the 1947-1948 defense and the 1955-1956 raids, so that the struggle does not stop at the minimum demand of liberating Palestine within its traditional boundaries.

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III. THE PALESTINIAN AND THE ARAB CAUSE

When the idea of nationalism began to grow in Arab society in Asia (particularly in Syria where it spread earlier than it did in the other Arab regions) in the last quarter of the past century and the beginning of the present one, Palestine formed a part of the Ottoman Empire indistinguishable from the other adjacent provinces. It would be absurd and artificial to try and isolate the specific role the Palestinians played in the national movement of the past seventy five years or more, i.e. in clubs and societies, in the literature on the subject and in the efforts of the pioneers of the idea of nationalism.

Nevertheless, if we examine the names of the pioneers of the movement, we discover some Palestinian names. In addition to joining political movements and attending national conventions, Palestinians held high posts in the state, the army, parliament and public administration. They offered martyrs to the movement too. Jamal Pasha executed a number of Palestinians in Jerusalem and Gaza as well as in Damascus and Beirut. But this is one thing, and to say that the Palestinians played a special role distinguishable from the roles of the other Asian Arabs, in that period, would be unfair to the facts. For though the Palestinians did do their national duty like the rest, the practice of outstanding Palestinian revolutionary political activity was limited to those residing at the time in the two foremost Ottoman cities in Asia: politically (Istanbul) and culturally (Beirut). The most outstanding significant revolutionary activities were concentrated in these two cities almost exclusively though some activity was carried on in Damascus, Baghdad and Basra. For this reason the Palestinian cities now seem to us to have lagged behind in national agitation against the Turkish rulers. In fact they were not much behind. But the Palestinians, it must be noted, did not have

a particular and distinct influence. Nor did the Syrians or the Iraqis for that matter. Even the Lebanese, who surpassed their neighbors in their intellectual efforts and wrote more than the rest, had no distinct writings of their own. For the cause was common to the area, the mentality the same, the sentiments, the aspirations and the demands identical.

The distinct role of Palestine at that stage in the development of the concept of Arab nationalism lay in another area. Palestine played a part in opening the eyes of the Arabs, in Asia particularly, to the Zionist threat directed at the Arabs as it was at the Palestinians. Thus Palestine opened their eyes also to the dangers of Western colonialism acting in collusion with Zionism. In the heat of their confrontation with Turkish colonialism, which had been exploiting them for four centuries, the Arabs of Asia almost forgot Western colonialism. The ties connecting the Zionist movement with Western imperialism (the British in particular) opened many a slumbering eye to the European danger in general. Britain appeared no longer as the benevolent friend who encouraged them to rise against the Turks because she wished them well... The Palestinians watched Britain encourage the Ottoman authorities to permit Jews to migrate to Palestine and to acquire land; they saw her place under her protection the Jews in Palestine who belonged to various nationalities; finally they saw her leading political, literary, intellectual and religious figures of all political shades, assert the "right" of the Jews to "return" to their "homeland", i.e. they saw these people sanction the Zionist effort to occupy Palestine and expel its inhabitants.

The effects of this Palestinian campaign were limited, not because the Arabs did not believe that the Zionist and the imperialist threats existed or that the two movements concurred, a fact which the Palestine problem has since shown in practice, but because the complications of the international situation and the outbreak of the world war on the one hand, and the gravity of the Turkish oppression, forced the Arab nationalist movement to place its hand in that of

its wooing enemy until such a time that it could put an end to the Turkish existence on its soil. Only very few of the leaders of the movement were aware of the British ambitions to the extent that they refused to cooperate with the Western imperialism in spite of their awareness of the Turkish danger and their complaints against it. The majority preferred to come temporarily to an agreement with Britain until the war would end.

Therefore the circumstances of the war (i.e. the alignment of the government with the countries of the Axis against Britain, the declaration of martial law in Syria and the appointment of "the butcher" Jamal Pasha as Wali in Syria so that he could use his bestial methods of administration, the serious increase in the popular discontent at the corruption of the administration, particularly since the famine; finally the persecutions on the one hand and the British and French instigations on the other) obstructed the Palestinian attempts at arousing the Arabs' suspicions of Britain and at keeping them from falling into the trap set by the British and the Zionists. However, no sooner did the war come to an end than the Arabs looked beyond the worries of the moment to find themselves completely trapped. Only then did the warnings of the Palestinian nationalists and their Syrian and the Lebanese supporters begin to bear fruit. The Arabs of Asia came out from the revolt they had started for the sake of liberation and unity, farther still from their goals. They emerged parcelled up into separate enslaved entities in the midst of which lay a foreign presence which was being prepared as a wedge to be thrust into the heart of the homeland.

From here arises the fact that the Arab struggle for independence and unity, since the end of the First War to this day, has been fully linked with the struggle for the protection (then recovery) of Palestine and *vice versa*. For the lesson that Palestine and its tragedy has taught the Arabs is indeed plain: imperialism wishes to turn Palestine into a Jewish state because it covets the whole Arab land; if the Arabs wish to protect their regions they have first to prevent

the judaization of Palestine. Furthermore, just as there will be no protection for Palestine (and since 1948 no recovery) without Arab concurrence and complete independence, there will be neither any guarantees for Arab independence, nor any hope for the unification of the Arab world, without the liberation of Palestine.

Since the end of the First World War, the Palestine problem has taught the Arabs this lesson clearly. Not a single event has passed in Palestine that has not further established this moral and supported it with proofs, so that the developments of the problem and its progressive deterioration have become a factor conducive to the growth of national awareness and to the increase of the Arab ability to sense danger and to seek to avert it through striving for independence, unity and the saving of Palestine.

This explains the close connection between the Arab nationalist movement and the Palestine problem as well as the close ties between those active in the movement and those calling for the protection (later the liberation) of Palestine since 1920. This bond became most distinct in the second half of the thirties, when some states achieved tangible progress towards stability and independence (Iraq, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Syria and Lebanon to a lesser extent) and when other entities began to follow suit (Trans-Jordan, the fringes of the Arab Peninsula and North Africa).

There were of course other factors which underlay this blazing of the national consciousness in the Arab states in the second half of the thirties which reached a degree of intensity it had not reached since the Arab Revolt. Among these factors were circumstances Western writers stress unnecessarily such as the factor of the growth of the Fascist and Nazi movements in Italy, Germany and Spain and their success in realizing for their people certain national achievements which seemed then from a distance and to the unsophisticated observer to be great national services. But the main factor which Western writers ignore (perhaps deliberately) lies not

in Nazism nor in Fascism, but in the policies of the West itself towards the Arabs. This unjust policy, particularly in Palestine, contributed more than anything else towards encouraging national sentiments to protect Palestine and to realize popular aspirations.

In the middle of the thirties, Jewish immigration to Palestine increased more than ever before, under the pretext of Nazi persecution of the Jews. During the years 1933-1935, the number of Jewish immigrants reached 135,000. The Zionists moved from the defensive to the offensive. They formed military contingents, which they armed and trained, to attack the Arabs whenever there was occasion. They formed as well, more than one terrorist organization which resorted to savage methods. These para-military organizations were the nucleus of the Zionist army which fought the Arabs ten years later. Britain's enthusiasm for the partition of Palestine heightened and the British began to issue and publish one proposal after the other, aiming at creating a political entity for the enemy on a part of Palestine and annexing the rest to the Emirate of Trans-Jordan whose prince was an ally of the British. As a reaction to these ideas and intentions, the Arabs set their minds to protecting themselves and their land by way of armed insurrection. Throughout the prolonged revolt of 1936-1939 the Palestinian Arabs lost more victims than did the Arabs in any other entity during a single revolt against Western imperialism, the Algerian Revolt apart.

What concerns us in this essay are not the details or the causes of the Palestine Revolt as much as the role it played in arousing the majority of the Arabs from Iraqi in the east to Morocco in the west. This condition led to a series of revolutionary movements in most parts of the Arab homeland during the next five years (1936-1941). A survey of these movements will give us a clear picture of the role the Palestine problem played at the time in spurring Arab national thought, in encouraging the nationalists to undertake joint and effective action, and in reviving the Arab national idea from the torpor it fell into after the 1918-1920 setback and the failure of the

revolts in Egypt, Iraq, Syria and Palestine in the wake of the First World War. As we shall see, the effect Palestine had on the Arab cause during the late thirties was fourfold:

First, the growing Zionist and imperialist danger to Palestine intensified the anger of the Arabs outside against the sources of these two dangers and led them to take quick action.

Second, the Arab revolt in Palestine, and the brave deeds of the Palestinian men and women became models of the kind of action to be taken against imperialism.

Third, the flagrantly anti-Arab attitude of the British in Palestine brought the Arabs, in Palestine as well as outside it, closer to the other camp, which was leading an anti-British campaign while wooing the Arabs and calling for the fulfilment of their aspirations. Thus the Arabs found a convenient international ally who promised to back them if they revolted against Britain and her ally France. The propaganda campaigns which the two Axis Powers, famous as they were in the art of advertising for themselves, did not succeed in gaining the sympathy of the Arabs as much as did the bad conduct of the British and the French in the Arab East and the Maghreb.

Fourth, many Palestinian leaders left Palestine to neighboring states and steered the course of the national struggle in some of the Arab capitals (Baghdad mostly; Damascus, Beirut and Cairo to a lesser degree). They were a chief influence in shaping the events that took place in the Middle East during the first twenty months of the war. For the first time since the Arab Revolt a quarter of a century earlier, Arabs from one state led the Arabs of another in their revolt against imperialism.

On the basis of these four aspects of the connection between the Palestine problem and the events of the second half of the thirties and the early forties in more than one Arab state, we can

say that the Palestine problem played a major role in the liberation movements and national revolts in the area at the time. We can go even further and say that these revolts and movements were a direct reflection and a necessary result of the Palestinian developments. We are justified, then, in claiming that Palestine played an important and unique role in the national history of the Arabs generally, in the years following the the First World War, a role possibly surpassed only by that of Egypt in this decade.

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Let us now survey very quickly the community of Arab states to see which of the important events in their regional national history bear a special relationship to the developments of the Palestine problem.

Possibly, Syria is the closest of the Arab states to Palestine in more than one sense. Geographically Palestine is a part of the Syrian mainland. They formed a political unity during long epochs in history, until, as an aftermath of the First World War, Palestine was stripped from Syria against popular wishes in the two regions, in order to facilitate the judaization of Palestine. This event only served to increase the attachment of the inhabitants to each other: the Syrians feared for their brethren the fate the latter were being driven towards, and the Palestinians hoped for the support of their brethren in their opposition to this fate. Furthermore there are common borders between the two regions extending over sixty-five kilometers of open and easy to cross terrain. That is why it became the main road followed by combatants during revolts: volunteers from Syria (as well as from Iraq, Lebanon, and Trans-Jordan who were assembled in Syrian training bases) would cross into Palestine to participate in the struggle of the Palestinians; and Palestinian combatants would retreat into Syria escaping intensified British pursuit. These open borders facilitated also the immigration of tens of thousands of Syrian civilians from the various walks of life in search of work

before 1948, just as they facilitated later the exodus of tens of thousands of Palestinians expelled from their homes. Finally, Syria, which has been known for a century to be a main center of the Arab idea, is spiritually close to Palestine. Possibly more than any other Arab region, Syria has shared with Palestine its pains and sorrows.

It is not strange, therefore, that the first three widely representative national congresses convoked in advocacy of the Palestine cause should be convened in Syria (the afore-mentioned Congresses of Damascus 1919 and 1920 and the Congress of Bludan 1937). So, also, was Syria the center of Arab action in support of the Palestine Revolt 1936-1939. There the plans to back the revolt were drawn, the revolutionaries found an asylum in 1937 when they found themselves driven into a corner, and from there they sent additional recruits. In 1939 when the White Paper was issued and the revolt was crushed, the revolutionaries retreated once more into the Syrian territory.

Syria remained the center of Arab action until the middle of that year (1939) when the French authorities began to bear down hard on the Palestinian refugees and the Syrian nationalist elements cooperating with them. The presence of the leaders of the Palestinian national movement in Syria and the example of the Palestinian revolt which had managed to intimidate Britain into issuing the White Paper, caused Syrian public opinion to flare up against France, and spurred the Syrian independence movement (begun in 1936) to demand a treaty with France similar to the treaties obtained from Britain by Iraq and Egypt. Fearing that the continued presence of the Palestinians would inflame the Syrians further, the French authorities increased their pressure. The leaders of the Palestinian and Syrian struggle found themselves obliged to seek asylum elsewhere. The center of national action thus moved from Damascus to Baghdad.

We notice that the period during which the Syrians were intensely active in support of the Palestinian cause (convening the Congress

of Bludan, extending Syrian hospitality to the Palestinian nationalists, maintaining the revolt with Syrian lives and money) was at the same time characterized by intense pursuit of national independence from France and by the formation of the National Bloc, which led both struggles, as well as by the activities of the League of National Action, which provided these struggles with men. We can say that the five years between 1936 and 1941 did not just witness concurrent action in Syria towards protecting Palestine and seeking independence, they witnessed one movement engaged in the two struggles simultaneously. The two struggles became so fused as to form nearly a single one. Therefore the moving of the center of Arab action from Damascus to Baghdad in 1939 made of Baghdad a center of action for both the liberation of Palestine from British mandate and Zionist ambitions, and the liberation of Syria from French mandate. As already mentioned, when the French authorities began to prosecute and incarcerate and sometimes even execute the participants in the national movement in Syria in the early years of the war, the nationalists who were being persecuted at the moment, were the same people who had been active for the Palestine cause. Later, when the Arab movement centered in Baghdad grew so strong that it could make political and military plans for the liberation of Palestine (British influence having been curtailed with the removal from power of the Regent and Iraq having come closest to real independence), Syria was directly involved in this movement: its nationalists were among the planners and executors of plans, and its total liberation formed part of the general scheme. With high hopes and great enthusiasm, the Syrian nationalists began their famous insurrection against French rule in the spring of 1941, i.e., at a time when the Iraqi national movement was strong. They disregarded the Emergency Laws, the circumstances of the war and the cruelty of the Vichy regime. They were not slow in offering victims. Soon the insurrection turned into a semi-revolt. The Syrian plans concurred fully with the Arab plan in Iraq to liberate Palestine and to protect the nationalist regime in Iraq. The failure of this regime and its fall under the bayonets of the British soldiers, inevitably

brought about the failure of the national revolt in Syria also. After British forces, with the aid of Zionist and Jordanian forces, occupied Iraq and deposed the national government, towards the end of May 1941, these same forces occupied Syria, put an end to the national struggle and imposed on the country a military rule entrusted with the task of curbing the nationalists.

Much of what applied to the relationship between the political developments in Syria and the Palestine problem in the late thirties and the early forties applied also to the Lebanese scene, though to a lesser degree. A number of Lebanese nationalists participated with their Syrian brethren in seeking an independence treaty 1936-1939, and in forming national political parties tending towards cooperation with the Arabs in the other states. Heading the list are the Constitutional Bloc and Al-Nida' Al-Qawmi (National Appeal Party). Many Lebanese joined the militant parties in Syria (such as the League for National Action) and hundreds of Lebanese youth volunteered to fight in the 1936 revolt. They too sought refuge in Iraq when the French administration proscribed the Palestinians staying in Lebanon and the Syrian nationalists cooperating with them. Similarly, they had a hand in planning to solve the problems of the mandates over Lebanon, Syria and Palestine.

That period in particular which witnessed a sufficient Lebanese interest in Palestine to block the Zionist propaganda of the mid-thirties, was characterized by Arab movements (some purely national in nature, others, sectarian or political) which sought simultaneously to gain independence from France, to liberate Palestine and to establish strong ties with Syria and the other neighboring regions.

Later, in 1943, when the Lebanese agreed to enter into what is known as the National Charter (undertaking to realize the independence of Lebanon from both France and Syria, and removing the discrepancies between the policies of the two main tendencies in Lebanon representing the large Maronite and Sunni religious sects), the pro-Arab faction represented in the charter was the same group who,

two years earlier, had led the anti-French movement in Lebanon and Syria, the anti-British movement in support of Palestine and Iraq, and the opposition to the Zionist ambitions in Palestine and in Lebanon in particular. Therefore, just as the Syrian militant nationalists agitating for the liberation of Syria and Palestine inherited authority from the French and came to power in 1943, to remain in it for the next six years, so did their counterparts in Lebanon, who remained in power for the next ten years or so.

As to the Iraqi nationalists agitating for the total independence of Iraq and the liberation of Palestine, they had a different fate. They attained neither self-rule nor high positions; the majority fell victim to the hangman's noose and the rest suffered imprisonment, dispersion and exile. To the extent that Baghdad had been a meeting-place for nationalists and a center for action to assist the Arab states (particularly the Asian ones), it fell victim to British tyranny, reactionary rule and foreign military occupation to a degree worse than that witnessed by Beirut, Damascus or even Jerusalem and Jaffa.

The part Palestine played in the Iraqi events is more prominent than its part in the events of any other Arab state during the period under discussion. A coalition of nationalist officers (known as the Four Colonels) began to have a hand in the affairs of their country, particularly in the fields of Arab and international relations. This situation was due to the desire of these officers to do something decisive for the Palestine cause after they had witnessed the dangerous turn that the events had been taking there for some years. They also wished to recover the glories that used to belong to Arab Iraq by reintroducing it into the Arab atmosphere from which previous governments sought to remove it (King Faisal the First 1921-1933 had sought to minimize Iraq's Arab commitments, and anti-Arab Premier Bakr Sudqi 1936-1937 had attempted to tie Iraq to the non-Arab states in the region to weaken its Arab connections).

Since the enemy of Palestinian Arabs, who was protecting the

Zionist cancer, was Britain, and since Britain was the "ally" of Iraq according to the treaty of 1930, the free officers had first to square their plans for the liberation of Palestine with the presence of Britain, the holder of military bases in the country. From here they got the idea of liberating Palestine militarily (and by the way liberating Syria and Lebanon from French domination and possibly liberating Trans-Jordan from the pro-British Hashemite rule) with the consent of Britain since doing it against her wishes would be difficult if not altogether impossible. In other words the Free Officers thought of striking a bargain with Britain by which she would let them carry through this multifold operation of liberation in return for guarantees that the Arab states in Asia (at least Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Trans-Jordan and Palestine) would take her side in the coming war against the Axis Powers.

The Free Officers' plans were not mere fantasies or childish whims. Two factors substantiated their position. First, they had seized all authority—they had full control of the army; they were backed by the nation with the majority of its institutions, social strata, professions and other sectors; they installed at the helm of affairs a purely nationalist government after they had driven the Prince Regent out, removing with him the group of reactionary pro-British politicians. Second, they were not the spokesmen for the liberation movement in Iraq only, they spoke also for the movement in Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Trans-Jordan and to a lesser extent for the movement in Egypt.

As we have seen earlier, representatives of the various national movements in the west of Asia had assembled in Baghdad since the mid-thirties. Most of them were Palestinian politicians and revolutionaries who had escaped to Damascus; thence they had gone to Beirut and later to Baghdad. In recognition of the merit due to the Palestine Revolt and of the Palestinians' right to liberation, and in accordance with the belief in the oneness of the Arab struggle, the Iraqis were not satisfied merely to extend their hospitality to the

Palestinians; together they formed national committees which directly supervised Arab action: they mobilized the masses, contacted foreign states, drew plans, supplied weapons to the army and formed extensions of themselves in the other Arab states. These committees, in which the Palestinians formed the majority of the members, directed Iraqi foreign affairs for two months.

During this period, as mentioned earlier, a plan appeared calling for the liberation by the Iraqi army of the Arab regions under mandate in return for Arab support of Britain during the war. But the British turned down the offer. The nationalist elements were forced, thereupon, to declare the neutrality of Iraq and to limit their dealings with Britain strictly to the terms of the 1930 treaty. Aware of the implications of their neutrality, and in an attempt to forestall events, they decided to buy arms from certain Axis Powers since their allies, the British, had failed to provide the Iraqi army with what it needed.

We can see, then, that the effects of the Palestinian presence in Iraq were extremely important in terms of Arab History: the Hashemite house, which had in the past stabbed the Arab (the Palestinian in particular) national movement in the back on more than one occasion, was removed; the claws of British influence in the area were clipped; pro-British elements in the government were not permitted to dominate any longer and Iraqi policies subordinate to Britain's were replaced by a neutral course between the two contending camps. Other effects were the building up of the Army, and, above all, making the Palestinian demand for liberation the basis of Iraq's foreign relations and the aim of every policy. However, in the stormy sea of international relations, winds did not blow the way the nationalists had hoped. The winds of British influence were far too tempestuous for the Arabs to steer a safe course. The British occupied Iraq after a four-week war, the majority of the nationalist elements were dispersed and a number were executed. Thus the reverse suffered by the Arabs was no less serious

than the reversal of a quarter of a century earlier when the two national aspirations of the Arabs (independence and unity) failed to materialize; instead artificial states, reactionary governments and foreign occupations became the order of the day. The remnants of the nationalist government and of the Free Officers, who had escaped death, had to yield resignedly and bide their time, until, seventeen years later, they were able to fulfill part of the aims they strove for in 1941. They toppled the Hashemite rule, destroyed the last vestiges of British influence and drew up for Iraq a sound Arab policy. In the meantime Palestine had been lost.

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The upsurge of national action, which had contributed the form of a unified movement under one leadership, did not leave its impact on Syria, Lebanon and Iraq only, but spread to the south also, to some of the emirates in the Arabian Gulf, particularly to Kuwait, Bahrain, Dubai and Trans-Jordan.

The emirates of the Arabian Gulf were still directly under British domination. National consciousness at the time had not reached a significant degree of development. Nevertheless, several events had served to arouse the hopes of the new generation in the Gulf, particularly in Kuwait, Bahrain and Dubai, the three emirates most in contact with the rest of the Arabs. King Ghazi had started a campaign in 1938 for the purpose of liberating the region under discussion from British influence, especially via the broadcasting station he had set up in his palace; the Gulf youth had turned to the Iraqi and Egyptian institutions of learning and had thus come under the influence of the political activities in these countries; the nationalist elements in Iraq had come to power and Baghdad had been transformed in a short while into the main center of joint national action. The new generation began to make its voice heard in protest against foreign occupation, cultural backwardness and the absence of democratic institutions. Towards the end of 1938, they

began to express their opposition to the prevalent conditions and to demand independence, a democratic regime and cooperation with Iraq for unified action. Early in 1939, the movement saw some development when the liberal young people realized some success in Kuwait and formed the majority in the legislative assembly they had convinced the Emir of Kuwait to form. But the British authorities who felt uneasy about this sort of activity cooperated with the local authorities to suppress it by force. Soon the heads of the three emirates resorted to a unified policy against national opposition: they abolished the legislative assemblies, imprisoned the opposition, closed down newspapers, and executed a total of fifty persons in the three emirates.

Naturally, the heat generated by the Palestine Revolt 1936-1939 and of the national movement in Iraq 1939-1941 extended to the Emirate of Trans-Jordan as well. The Emirate was connected closely to these two Arab states. It was connected to Iraq spiritually because both areas were subject to the same ruling family, and materially because the petroleum pipeline to Palestine passed through the Jordanian territories—a fact which contributed towards economic prosperity making it possible for the Emirate to construct a network of routes and highways and to reclaim vast areas of land. To Palestine, Trans-Jordan was connected with links stronger than those existing between any two Arab areas, at least in Asia. Historically, economically, culturally, and socially Trans-Jordan is a natural extension of Palestine. The Jordan River could be considered as a vertebral column of the Palestinian entity, unifying rather than dividing it. This connection is one of the reasons that has led the Zionists to harbor ambitions against Trans-Jordan too; they consider it a continuation of what they claim to be their national home.

All this created in Trans-Jordan a strong echo of the Palestinian struggle against Zionist designs, in spite of the conciliatory policy of the Emir towards the British and Zionists, and in spite of the fact that the majority of the people were nomadic or semi-

nomadic tribes whose national consciousness had not attained a degree sufficient for protecting them from slipping into the traps of Zionist and imperialist temptations. This echo had come to exist since the first organized Arab act of opposition against the Zionists in Palestine during the festivities of the Prophet Moses (Mawsim al-Nabi Moussa) in Jerusalem in April 1920, when the Jordanian notables took an honorable stand and tried to defend national action in Palestine. Yet this echo did not reach its peak until the thirties. About that period, the death of Prince Abdullah's father, and brother Faisal, and the exile of his other two throneless brothers, placed him at the head of the Hashemite house, or so he felt. He began to negotiate with the Zionists, facilitating their infiltration into Trans-Jordan, drawing financial and commercial deals with them, and calling openly for the partition of Palestine and for reconciliation with the Zionists.

The various opposition parties in Trans-Jordan joined in an organization known at the National Congress. The National Congress led the Jordanian support of Palestine as much as it attacked the Prince for his deviation from Arab unanimity, his covering up for the enemy, and his suppression of the Palestinian combatants who had sought refuge in Trans-Jordan after the British authorities closed the borders with Syria. It arranged the conveyance of volunteers, provided financial aid, and facilitated the passage of Syrian combatants across Jordanian territory. The opposition shown by this organization to the Emir was so strong that he was led to dissolve it several times, and finally to arrest those leaders who had not escaped. Some had escaped to Syria and Iraq and had joined the national coalition (Al-Tajamu' Al-Watani) to fight Abdulla through pamphlets, and broadcasts from beyond the borders.

Possibly the strongest evidence of the growth of Arab consciousness in Trans-Jordan at that period is the stand of a Frontiers' Force unit which had been ordered to participate with the Arab Legion (composed of Jordanian soldiers and British officers) in

the British campaign against Iraq for the purpose of destroying the nationalist regime there. The Frontiers' Force was a small Arab army composed of a Palestinian majority, a Jordanian minority and a British officers' corps. When the British decided to attack Iraq, in May 1941, they felt they needed Arab soldiers, on the one hand because these knew how to fight and were familiar with the terrain, and on the other so that the campaign would appear as a legal act aimed at serving the Arabs. The British assigned a unit of the Frontiers' Force, to participate with the Bedouins of the Arab Legion and some Zionist gang members in the task of paving the way for the British army. But the majority of the men in this unit refused to carry out the orders of the High Command to attack Iraq; instead they stopped resolutely at the Jordanian-Iraqi borders. The British authorities were forced to disband the whole unit and imprison its highranking Arab officers. Never since, have the British authorities relied on any of the other units of this force.

As to Saudi Arabia and the Yemen, we cannot claim that they witnessed any strong popular movements similar to those we have examined. This fact goes back to the isolation and political backwardness from which they, especially, suffered, and to the type of government to which they were subject that did not permit the people to express their opinions or to listen to the opinion of others frankly and freely. And yet we find some evidence that the effects of the Arab revolt in the Middle East did not stop impotently at the gates of Saudi Arabia and Yemen, but entered, in spite of the obstacles, to affect the foreign policies of both states.

The effect of this Arab revolt on Saudi Arabia and Yemen was to draw them out partially from their Arab and international isolation and to help them open up to the external world to an unprecedented degree. In Saudi Arabia, a number of Palestinian, Syrian and Lebanese nationalist leaders, who had found refuge there from British and French suppression succeeded in convincing the advantages of bringing his country out of its Arab and international isolation and of negotiating with Hitler's Germany, Britain's greatest

enemy at the time, a deal by which Saudi Arabia would get arms, to be used in defending the Kingdom and in helping the Palestinian Arabs if necessary, as well as the Syrians who were being led by King Abdul-Aziz' leading business representative. The nationalist regime in Iraq too, participated in drawing the Kingdom out of its isolation. Iraq had started its Arab contacts by concluding with Saudi Arabia an agreement which removed whatever disagreement had existed between the two governments due to the Saudi-Hashemite feud.

The attempt came to nought and the Saudi-German negotiations remained limited to preliminary talks between the King's representatives and the German authorities. Nevertheless this attempt opened before Saudi Arabia the door to the outside world which the King was unable to close, particularly after work was begun in the oil fields and early indications of dollars pouring into the country from foreign companies seeking to acquire concessions to exploit the Arabian oil resources became evident. The Saudi King entered the Palestine arena like the other Arab rulers. He adopted the cause of Palestine on several occasions on the national and international scene; also, since he entered the Arab League he became an effective element in Arab politics and became involved in all its ramifications.

As to the Imam Yahya, his emergence from his proverbial isolation under the influence of some judicious Syrian refugees who had escaped the death and prison sentences passed upon them in absentia by the French, took him in the direction of Italy, because it was the nearest European state in the mid-thirties through its presence in Ethiopia, Somaliland and East Africa. Although his contacts with the Italians did not come to fruition, and did not develop beyond the arrival of a limited number of doctors into his poor Imamate, the Imam could not totally abandon his Arab duties. He kept his relationship with the other Arab states, and through

them with the world, by joining the Arab League with reservations allowing his representatives to attend most meetings as observers only.

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During this decisive period, the Arab idea had better fortune in Egypt than it had in the Arab Peninsula. Popular interest in it moved the Palestine problem and the Arabs in general onto a new phase. Interest in Arab affairs was no longer limited to the Syrian and Lebanese immigrants to Egypt, as the case used to be in the latter part of the previous century up to the end of the First World War. Nor did it remain limited to the religious elements whose fear for the fate of Palestine emanated from their concern over the Holy Places, as was the case in the late twenties and the early thirties. Now the fate of Palestine and the west of Arab Asia kept large sectors of the Egyptian population in a state of anxiety. The Palestine problem became an Egyptian one over which Egyptians kept careful watch. Along with the increase in Egyptian attention towards Palestine, interest in the Arab problem in general also developed. From the admission of Egypt to the Arab League in 1945, through its participation in the Palestine War 1948, this interest reached its peak over ten years ago when Egypt began to consider itself an Arab state, and committed itself to an all embracing Arab policy.

A number of factors contributed towards this development in the second half of the thirties, in addition to the main factor (namely the critical stage the Palestine problem had reached, the outbreak of the revolt, the rallying of the Arabs of Asia around it and their unanimity in considering it the affair of every Arab). Among the other factors we can list the activity of the Asian Arab residents in spreading and explaining the Arab idea, particularly in the universities, the clubs and the press (these were mostly university students, authors, and politicians who had left their homes to avoid being apprehended by the imperialist authorities). Another factor was

the emergence of the Egyptian intellectuals from their past isolation from the rest of the Arabs and their going eastward on educational tours and school trips, or, in search of work in universities and government institutions (particularly in Iraq). There were also the improvements introduced in the means of communication between Egypt and Arab Asia: new land routes were built and the railroad was restored; the first Arab maritime company was established in Egypt, the first Arab airlines was founded and dozens of foreign airlines opened branches in Arab cities. Last but by no means least was the fact that Egypt gained its independence treaty in 1936 which made it possible for the state to plan its own foreign policy away from British tutelage, and for the Egyptians to feel a special sense of responsibility towards their neighbors and brethren.

We can trace this concern of the Arab Egyptian people in the Arab Palestine problem in more than one group shortly before the Second World War and at its outset. We can notice this trend in a number of parties even the most Egyptian and most removed from the Arab current (such as The Green Shirts who came to be known later as The Young Egypt Movement), and the most Muslim and most opposed to the secularism of Arab nationalism (such as the Muslim Brothers). These political and pseudo-political institutions met in conventions and rallies to support the cause of Palestine, and they sent delegations to that land in order to increase their familiarity with the problem. They made financial contributions, wrote articles and memoranda, and disseminated information. All in all they were a major factor in getting through to the Egyptians their Arab reality. They also aroused in the traditional political parties an interest in the Arab cause which led these to ride with the tide of popular enthusiasm over Palestine. Thus it became an official policy. Successive governments paid special attention to the problem. Their representatives defended the Arab quality of Palestine in the League of Nations and later at the Round Table Conference in London. Officially Egypt, thenceforth, cooperated with the other Arab governments in adopting the Palestine cause on all

levels. This involvement encouraged Egypt to crystallize the idea of the Arab League and become its principal founder. Members of the Parliament and of the Senate followed in the steps of their governments. They held the first parliamentary congress in support of Palestine, in Cairo, in 1938. The congress was attended by representatives of dozens of Parliaments in Arab, Islamic and Oriental states. Ten years later, both Houses voted unanimously to enter the Palestine War. The congress of 1938 developed into an Arab national rally demanding the realization of all Arab aspirations. It became in a sense, a coalition of Arab M.P.s following a nationalist line in the various Arab states. This description applies equally to another congress which was convoked at the end of the same year in Cairo: the Arab Women's Congress for the Support of Palestine. It was attended by representatives from dozens of Arab, Islamic and Oriental states. The participants exchanged views about Palestine and called for the realization of the aspirations of its people.

Interest in the question of Palestine became widespread among Egyptian intellectuals, specifically among the students and teachers of the University of Fuad I (as it was called at the time). A number of clubs, societies and circles were established for the purpose of familiarizing Egyptians with the Arab cause. With time they became centers for congregating nationalists, Egyptians and non-Egyptian residents. Eventually, these centers became bases for Arab action in Egypt and they remained so for several years.

Interest in the Arab cause spread also in army circles, particularly among low ranking officers whose education and interests had given them the opportunity to get acquainted with the grave problems affecting Arab destiny, and among those who had not been corrupted by high positions and status-seeking as had been the leading officers working under the British. Those people were pained by the fate of Palestine and Egypt and by their subjection to British influence. Young and newly graduated from the military academy, low-ranking officers were moved around 1939, to form the first nucleus of what

came to be known later as the Free Officers. It was these Free Officers who volunteered to fight in Palestine against Zionism in 1948, and who succeeded in 1952 in overthrowing the regime responsible, together with others, for the loss of Palestine. It was they who drew for Egypt a national Arab policy whose main aim is the liberation of Palestine.

During the late thirties and the early forties, the early movement of the Free Officers went side by side with a similar movement started by non-partisan nationalists, who opposed British occupation and believed in Egypt's Arab call. These nationalist elements were able to come out in the open, organize themselves and start implementing their plans when a number of them came to power during the premiership of Ali Maher (August 1939). More than one minister in that Cabinet believed in joint action against British imperialism. Some, particularly the head of the Army, the Arab Egyptian patriot Aziz Ali Al-Masri, acted in harmony with the plan laid by the Iraqi nationalists (a number had been colleagues of Al-Masri during the Arab Revolt of 1916) for liberating Palestine and for considering the stand taken by each of the two international camps *vis-à-vis* Palestine as the determining factor in the ultimate attitude of the Arabs towards the two said belligerent camps. The nationalists in both Egypt and Iraq were in harmony to the extent that contact was established between the two governments. Later when the Cabinet was dismissed along with the head of the Army, the latter tried to escape British prosecution by fleeing to Iraq where he intended to link the national struggle of the two regions. His attempt failed. He was apprehended, together with some of his followers (Free Officers), and imprisoned. So were a number of Cabinet members. Some were to remain detained until the end of the war. Thus the British nipped this Arab attempt in the bud. Nevertheless it was a useful experiment which the Free Officers kept in mind until they were able to realize the aims of this early attempt in another form.

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As for North Africa, it was sunk deep in its problems with French imperialism which was so harsh that it forcibly diverted the Maghreb from looking eastward and from contacting the East politically, intellectually and even socially. Even so, the Palestine Revolt 1936 found a far reaching echo in the area to the extent that it affected the relations of the North African states with the imperialist French government on the one hand, and with the Arab states on the other.

It may seem strange to claim that there is a Palestinian effect on the political movements of North Africa in the second half of the thirties. The proofs are few and the Arab historians have paid but little attention to this fact. It has been customary, since the last century, to consider the North African events and revolts as the influencing factors in the Arab East (such as the effect of the uprisings of Emir Abdul-Kadir Al-Jaza'iri on the west of Asia prior to his arrival in that region, then the impact of his advent to it). Similarly, Arab thought has tended lately towards considering the Algerian Revolt in the fifties and sixties to be the example which should light the way for the Arabs of the East, the Palestinians in particular.

But this is only one side of the coin. There is another side to the relations of the two regions. The Arabs of North Africa have been guided by the events of the East since Algeria rose for the first time in this century, in the wake of the 1933-1934 incidents in Palestine. The incidents of Constantine (August 1934) indicate that the Algerians were affected by Palestinian events for they poured their anger primarily on the Jews of Algeria for their pro-Zionist stand in general and their cooperation with the French imperialism. Of the twenty-seven killed in Constantine, twenty-three were Jews. The following year the spark of zeal against both France and Zionism spread to Sit'efe, Anaba (Bon) Sidi Bel Abbas, Oran, Bou Sa'ada. In 1937-1938, after the Palestine Revolt had broken out, the spark of revolt was transmitted to Tunisia and Morocco. The revolt deve-

loped into an all North African Arab national movement uniting nearly everybody against the two common enemies, France and Zionism. Hundreds died, victims or martyrs of this revolt which was not suppressed until the Palestine Revolt was crushed and the world war broke out. The demand of Arab public opinion, in North Africa, was twofold: it demanded that treaties comparable to those granted by Britain to Iraq and Egypt be negotiated with France on the one hand, and that the political nationalist movement in the area declare emphatically their rebellion against France following the example of the political national movements in Palestine during that epoch. The North African national movements were in fact connected with the Eastern movements through their origins, though officially no contacts were established after these movements rose. The Star of North Africa which became so popular in Tunisia and Morocco in 1936 that the French authorities were moved to ban it, was organized along the same lines as the national movements in the East. Also Abdul-Aziz Al-Tha'alibi, the pioneer of the Tunisian national movement, sojourned in Palestine, Egypt and Iraq and participated in the Arab national action. The Algerian High Council of 'Ulama (Muslim religious leaders) owed its existence to the Islamic Congress convoked in Jerusalem late in 1931. This council was the most prominent political national movement in Algeria in the thirties. One of the wings of the Moroccan national movement, after the split in the movement in 1937, was clearly Arab oriented. Up to the end of the Palestine Revolt of 1936, the French authorities considered the revolt in Palestine and the Anglo-Egyptian treaty to be the two main factors behind the rise of the national movements in the Maghreb.

IV. THE PALESTINE DISASTER AND THE ARABS

The loss of a large part of Palestine, more than three-quarters of its area, and the establishment of an enemy state covetous of the remaining quarter and of additional parts of the Arab homeland, is the greatest disaster to befall the Arabs in their modern political history. This is the belief of contemporary Arabs. It is comparable to the outstanding disasters in Arab history, such as the fall of the Umayyad state in Syria in 750, the fall of Baghdad in 1258, the withdrawal of the Arabs from Andalusia (Spain) in 1492, the gradual usurpation of the Muslim Caliphate by the Ottoman Turks beginning in 1517 and similar dark events upon which the Arabs look with sorrow and pain.

Yet in spite of its ugliness, or possibly because of it, the Palestine disaster rendered Arab national thought an important and unique service: it spurred this thought to review its past reckonings, to criticize itself and to re-examine its national concepts, its political, social, and economic institutions and its foreign relations. Just as the Arabs read in history books that the past disasters were by no means sudden, but were the results of various deep-rooted factors, they became convinced that the disaster of 1948 was deeper and broader than it seemed from the outside, and that its roots had been spreading for a long period into the various aspects of Arab life.

The role Palestine assumed in developing the Arab cause since 1948 was no less than its role in the first half of this century, as we have tried to demonstrate in the previous chapters. The difference between the two historical periods as set off by the year 1948, is in fact the difference between the constitution of the Palestine problem,

its development and the circumstances surrounding it, during these two periods. The more critical the problem became, after the majority of the Palestinians were expelled from their homes (the problem becoming one of liberating and recovering Palestine not of protecting its Arab quality), the more important became the influence of Palestine on Arab affairs. The Arab scene was affected first, through the enormity of the disaster and the revelation of the size of the Zionist danger and imperialist schemings; secondly, through the exodus of more than one million Palestinians to the other Arab lands; thirdly, through the tragic failure of Arab life socially, politically, economically, ideologically and psychologically which the disaster brought to light, showing a dire need for moulding it anew.

The Arabs, all the Arabs not just their philosophers, historians and scientists, learnt several lessons from the disaster. The most outstanding are:

Firstly, the existence of an imperialist base and a stepping stone within the Arab body in general, and in particular across the most vital routes of communication (i.e., between Asia and North Africa), makes its removal imperative. It is a necessary condition for a minimum of safety, human communion and happiness, not just a luxury, or extremism in seeking national security. The aims of the traditional nationalist movement to which were added the aims of independence, unity, justice and liberation during the past decade and a half have become unattainable fully, and incapable of serving the Arab citizen as long as Israel exists.

Secondly, the Palestine problem is no longer a theoretical question for which individual judgement can find solutions. It has become a concrete problem evidenced by the existence of a large number of homeless refugees, cut off from the soil on which they were raised. In addition to this there is the loss of the land. Even if the Arabs were able to forget Palestine and its cause, the continued existence of this vast number of displaced people will

continuously keep the tragedy alive in the minds and consciences of millions.

Thirdly, Arab action towards the recovery of Palestine and the protection of the neighboring Arab states will not succeed unless it be equal to the Zionist danger itself from the viewpoint of organization, planning, strength and mobilization, and from that of re-examining old methods and plans.

For the nature of the developments of the Palestine problem since 1948 has dismayed Arab national thinking more than any other national problem has done, more even than Western imperialism, cultural backwardness and the national lack of cohesion. Furthermore, the Arabs do not face an imperialist enemy who only occupies the land in spite of the will of the nation (as is the case with imperialism everywhere and every time). They face an enemy people who expelled the inhabitants in order to remain in their stead as long as fortune will have it. After 1948, the Arabs have come to realize that the other evils of imperialism, disintegration and backwardness, are tightly connected with Israel. It is true that political independence, national unity, cultural progress and social justice are conditions which contribute much towards strengthening Arab confrontation with Israel; nevertheless, the destruction of this usurping entity, and the recovery of the usurped rights are the most effective weapons that the Arabs can raise in the face of these evils so they can acquire independence, unity, cultural revival and justice. The lesson learnt from the experience of the Egyptian Revolution is a tangible proof of the aforesaid. The Egyptian Revolution achieved full independence, and effected the evacuation of foreign troops from the land, it devoted itself to national action and established the first political union in contemporary Arab history in 1958. It set up the bases for industrialization and established a socialist regime based on science and justice. In spite of all this, the Egyptian entity has remained threatened by Israel and its supporters and friends in the West, or, at least, has continued to be so because of Israel. We have

not forgotten yet the repeated Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip, Israel's direct and infamous role in the Tripartite Agression 1956, and in all the foreign interference and plots to which Egypt has been exposed day in day out for ten years with the purpose of exhausting its strength, isolating it, and diverting it from confronting its foremost enemy. Nor have we forgotten Israel's role in frustrating Arab union, and in opposing the revival of the Palestine entity and the creation of the Arab Unified High Command, as well as its role in diverting the Jordan River waters.

Arab nationalists realize fully that Israel's presence contradicts the aims of Arab nationalism. For the Arabs, then, the moral drawn from the establishment of Israel is that the solution of the Palestine problem will not only be the end of the tragedy of a million and a quarter of displaced people now living in the lands of their brethren, but also the guarantee of a happy, free and progressive life for an additional one hundred million Arabs.

* * *

We shall attempt now to examine the main aspects of the effects which were reflected on the Arab political and national conditions due to the enormity of the disaster and the strength of the impression it left on the Arab Psyche. Some of these effects go back mainly to the Palestinians as a people. The rest go back to the problem and the disaster as such from the theoretical point of view.

First there are the changes which occurred in the international boundaries and the body politic of certain entities.

Two Arab states have absorbed the remainder of Palestine, which had not been occupied by the Zionists, and incorporated it in their state, in addition to the tiny part which Syria administers. This section is so sparsely populated that it cannot be used for purposes of

comparison. One of the two states in question has been exposed to greater consequences than the other as a result of the changes referred to. The placing of a part of Arab Palestine (the 90 sq. mile Gaza Strip in the south) under Egyptian administration since the Egyptian forces occupied the area during the Palestine War 1948 was but a temporary act from a legal and practical angle. Even now the Strip is still separate from Egypt, retaining its designation and its distinct Palestinian entity, territorially, humanly and juridically. This has deprived the Strip from affecting Egypt directly. Conversely, a few months after the disaster, the other sector (2165 sq. miles), which had been occupied by the Jordanian forces during that war was fused completely into Trans-Jordan, legally, internationally, and administratively, such that this sector was prevented from keeping its own personality, existence, entity and name. In fact, no matter how great the consequences of the Trans-Jordanian annexation of the part in question have been for the Palestinians in general (the Palestine cause also), and for those residing in it (they lost their distinct entity, and were denied their existence as Palestinians), these consequences have been much greater for Trans-Jordan and the Trans-Jordanians. The following figures will support the importance of this act of annexation on life in Trans-Jordan. Trans-Jordan's area used to be 37,500 sq. miles; after the annexation it became 39,665 sq. miles. The population numbered 400,000; after the annexation it grew to one and one-third million people. Yet figures give an idea about the outer frame of the subject only. The effects of the annexation on the people and the state of Trans-Jordan go deeper than this increase in area and population. This fact is due to the discrepancy in the extent of civilization, culture, and socio-economic development in the two societies, particularly that, at the time, Trans-Jordan was the most backward Arab state in Asia outside the Arab Peninsula, while Palestine ranked second among the Arab states in Asia in the degree of progress it used to enjoy. The following statistics may give a correct idea of the social conditions in Trans-Jordan in 1948, just before the annexation occurred. 85 per cent of the population were nomads and

semi-nomads. 8 per cent were literate. There were 190 schools attended by 16 per cent of school age children. The rate of infant mortality exceeded 200 per 1000. There were 7 hospitals with a total of 150 beds. 200 miles of railroads ran through the state. There was no large newspaper or broadcasting station.

Trans-Jordan did not profit from the tragedy of Palestine by expanding its area only, but also by profiting from the talents of a large portion of the Palestinian population and gaining from their large capital of knowledge, culture, specialization, a stock of nationalist stands, administrative know-how, social development, cultural progress and wealth, in addition to the exploitation of the rich, fertile good earth of Palestine compared to the desert which constituted the greater part of Trans-Jordan. Possibly, the prospect of all this profit, was the factor which motivated the Jordanian late sovereign (Emir, later King Abdulla bin Al-Hussein) to strive for the realization of this event as early as the thirties. The Arabs (particularly the Palestinians) opposed him and his aspirations. When he succeeded in bringing about the annexation of Palestine the Palestinians punished him for it: a young Palestinian assassinated him during one of his visits to what has become known since, as 'the West Bank.'

If Trans-Jordan followed a solitary course by violating the Arab policy of maintaining the Palestinian quality of the people and the land of Palestine occupied by in 1948, it was not alone in extending its hospitality to a large number of Palestinian displaced people. Of the 2,200,000 Palestinians now in the world, 1/8 live in the occupied territories. The remaining 7/8 are distributed among the Arab states as follows: approximately a third of a million are in the Gaza Strip, one and one-third million in Jordan and another one-third of a million in Syria and Lebanon.

There are of course thousands of Palestinians who have gone to other Arab states. There is no Arab state to which they have not gone in search of work after they were cut off from their means of

livelihood in their own land. If the number of Palestinians in some of the distant areas is much smaller than their number in the surrounding ones (Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Syria), their influence on these distant Arab areas exceeds their influence in the neighboring ones (with the possible exception of Jordan). This is due to the fact that the distant Arab states to which the Palestinians went (such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, some of the Gulf emirates and Libya) happened to be undergoing social, economic, political and international growth and development, particularly owing to the discovery of petroleum and the benefits accruing from it. It so happened that the date of the Palestinians' exodus and their subsequent search for new places in which to earn a living by offering their various skills coincided with the emergence of the aforementioned areas and their growing need for technical skills which were still unavailable locally and had therefore to be imported so that the areas could continue developing.

It would be difficult to determine the role of the Palestinian refugees in developing the areas to which they moved. Such a study belongs more to the field of sociology than to that of politics. But we can give the following quick judgement: the Palestinians did not go to any Arab state without leaving there a special cultural and social effect, which was usually deeper and greater, relatively speaking, than is expected from a comparable number of displaced people, refugees, or immigrants to any one country. This effect varies in strength and compass from one area to another. It reaches its peak in the Arab states which began their march along the road to progress late (such as the emirates on the periphery Arab Peninsula, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Jordan). We can say that the Palestinian influence on the abovementioned states has been the main factor, socially, in developing these states - i.e., it is as important as oil, the basic and first economic factor, the backbone of economic life in these states—with the exception of Jordan.

Even those states (such as Lebanon and Syria) which had begun to develop before the 1948 disaster and had realized for themselves a degree of cultural progress that did not leave them in need of the Palestinians and their cooperation to continue advancing (as was the case in the Gulf emirates of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Jordan for instance), they too were exposed to wide Palestinian influences. This was especially on the social level, to the extent that we can consider the arrival of the Palestinians to be an important landmark in the course of their cultural development—though not the most important landmark as is the case with the more recently developing states mentioned earlier. Lebanon is a good example being the Arab state most developed from the standpoint of culture, standard of living, availability of skills, and openness to the outside world. Consequently it is the least prone to be affected by the thousands of Palestinians who moved into it, and who congregated mostly in semi-isolated camps. On the other hand, Lebanon is least in need of the skills of the refugees, being culturally and scientifically more advanced than Palestine.

In spite of this, the Lebanon of the fifties and the sixties is not the Lebanon of the years before 1948. It is a new Lebanon in which the Palestinian sojourn and the Palestinian-Lebanese interaction are extremely evident. The English language (the main foreign language spoken by the Palestinians), for example, competes with French (the foreign language spoken by most Lebanese). New types of schools grow (such as evening schools, language schools, accounting and business schools), new types of concerns (travel and touring agencies for example), new professions (real estate agencies) etc. Of course the incoming of the Palestinians was not the only factor in causing these and similar changes. Each of the previous events has other causes. But the Palestinian factor is present directly and forcefully to say the least.

So much for Lebanon, but to the other less advanced Arab states late to start on the road to progress, the Palestinians came

bringing their skills and talents. They established new methods of administration, of government and of social living to which the regions had not yet been introduced. Thus, serious modernization in these lands began with the exodus of the Palestinians; and with modernization came the building of modern states.

The refugees brought with them something else. They carried the seeds of revolution, of a national and social revolution, everywhere they went. Three main factors encouraged them to sow the seeds of this revolution:

First, the Palestinians moved to far off lands reaching the outer most parts of the Arab homeland at a time when most of these areas were awakening from their slumber and beginning to sense their national place and their international existence. The Palestinians appeared among societies which at that very moment had begun to search for a respectable official identity. On the other hand they arrived in these societies at a time when the Arab human being was questioning the soundness of the Arab regimes in his quest for the causes of the Palestine disaster. The disaster had come to him as a total surprise, but its causes, he was beginning to realize, were not accidental. At the time many were led to reject the prevalent regimes and were looking for substitutes. It was not strange, therefore, that the populations in those regions should seek the answers to their questions among the refugees from the afflicted land, who knew more than anybody else that disintegration, degeneration and iniquities were factors which facilitated the success of the Zionist-imperialist cabal. In other words, the Palestinian refugees to the other Arab lands played a twofold role. As refugees they were a symbol of the outcomes of the disaster and its monstrous and deep-rooted causes (amongst which was the corruption of the old regimes). They took part in reconstructing these lands and in solving the Arab crisis (of which the tragedy of Palestine constituted an aspect). As such, they were a symbol of the organized efforts which erect societies along new bases.

The second factor is that the Palestinians were one of the few Arab communities who had dedicated themselves to the Arab idea since its inception. The Palestinian people have not encouraged any separatist movement, be it based on political, racial, sectarian or regional grounds, throughout their modern national history. As we have seen earlier, several factors contributed towards the absence of non-Arab movements in Palestine, a situation which greatly freed the area from the seditious doctrines abounding at one point or another during this century in most of the Arab states, such as Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Sudan and the whole Maghreb. Consequently, the national thought that the refugees took with them was purely Arab. In all fairness the provincialism that the modern historian attaches to a small Palestinian faction residing in the lands of the diaspora is very recent. Such a sentiment began after the exodus and under duress. The non-Palestinian Arabs also share in bearing the responsibility. For the most part it is a tribal reaction to Arab anti-Palestinian clannishness. Most of it has arisen as a reaction to the persecution of the Palestinians, politically, socially and economically, or, to the feelings of superiority that a group exhibits over them, in any one area. But this provincialism is limited, local and intermittent. Thus it is the exception rather than the rule. The rule is the awareness of the Palestinians throughout the past fifty years of their Arab quality and of that of their cause. In this respect, we have to take care not to misconstrue their aspiration in reviving the Palestinian entity. The purpose here is not to establish another state thereby increasing the fragmentation of the Arabs and the disintegration of their cause. What is intended is quite the opposite: it is to help the Palestinians to close their ranks in order to enter the battle of liberation whose victorious outcome will support and realize the principles of independence and unity.

The third factor is that the practical experience of the Palestinians and their political and labor organization before 1948 made it easy for them to introduce their Arab brethren to this organization. Most of the Palestinians who went to the developing Arab states in

order to work were experts in various fields, or former government officials who had practised organized administrative work, or skilled workers. These three categories of Palestinians had had experience in unionization under the British Mandate. They used to have their own associations and labor unions which had a large membership and a good organizational structure not achieved by any other Arab labor body before the end of the forties. They were also familiar with modern thought, particularly that connected with planning a new world appreciative of work, respectful of the worker and willing to give him his rights. They were not ignorant of the labor developments, in practice and theory, taking place in the world, particularly after the destruction of the fascist regimes in the mid forties. Thirdly, these three categories of Palestinians had enjoyed a good education when still in Palestine, and had benefited from the superiority of the educational system, elementary and secondary, over the other systems of education in the rest of the Arab world in the thirty years following the establishment of the various entities in Arab Asia. Their stock of knowledge fitted them for the role of pioneers in a number of fields in the majority of the Arab lands in which they were dispersed.

* * *

The seeds of nationalism which the Palestinians carried with them to the Arab states in which they settled or worked bore fruit. They were fruitful in familiarizing the various states with their national cause, or in deepening their knowledge of it. They succeeded also in shaking people out of their torpor and ruffling the monotony of their lives. Finally, they succeeded in introducing people to the principles of social justice. This last fact has become one of the factors which irks some of the Arab governments and leads them occasionally to subject the Palestinians working in their lands to deportation, imprisonment and torture. Palestinians have been exposed to mass deportation from several Arab states where the conservative social structure does not suffer that the seeds of revolution be sown intentionally or accidentally by the Palestinians.

What scares the conservative regimes most is the fact that, to a great extent, the basic changes in the governments of a number of Arab states after the disaster of 1948 occurred under its impact. It mattered little whether these fears emanated from the inflow of the Palestinian refugees or from the disaster itself and its effects upon the Arab Psyche.

The disaster was responsible for the assassination or exile of the statesmen who were at the head of the belligerent Arab governments during the war in Palestine. For five years after the disaster in Egypt, Syria, Trans-Jordan and Lebanon, rulers were being removed—though the fall of President Bishara El-Khoury and the assassination of Premier Riad El-Solh, the two Lebanese leaders in 1948, were not direct results of the disaster as were the deposition of King Farouk and President Shoukri El-Kouwatli and the assassination of King Abdulla. Only the royal family in Iraq remained safe for another five years to be killed by the anger of the populace in 1958. It is no coincidence that the leaders of the revolutionary movements and the military coups d'état against the old regimes were veterans of the Palestine War 1948 who faced the enemy and tasted the bitter defeat. Adib Al-Shishakli, the hero of the three coups d'état (1949) in Syria, Abdul-Karim Kassim and Abdul-Salam Aref, the two heroes of the Iraqi Revolution 1958, Jamal Abdel-Nasser and most of his Free Officers companions, the heroes of the Egyptian Revolution 1952 and Abdulla Al-Tall, the first military opposer of King Abdulla, were all officers who had led Arab units in the war on various fronts. And although the Lebanese army did not have a part in the deposition of the Bishara El-Khoury regime, the civilian political attack directed against him included criticism of this government's shortcomings during the war. In other words, of the five kingdoms which participated in the Palestine war by word or deed, three became republics, one king was killed and the son and heir of the fifth was deposed. None of the measures taken against the five kings failed to be accompanied by

mention of the disappointments of the people in these rulers because of the Palestine problem and its ramifications.

Arab rulers today note that the fall of the kingdoms in the Arab world after the Palestine war 1948 is similar to the events in Europe after the Second World War. Some go so far in their fear of the Palestinian influence as to attribute to it measures which need not fall within the framework of the immediate outcome of the Palestine problem in Arab political history. But these fears and exaggerations go back basically to the fact that the immediate and latent results of the Palestine war were a principal factor in changing the mentalities and mode of thinking just as they were a factor in changing states and regimes. Possibly the influence of this war in changing states and regimes is a reflection of the changed mentalities and habits of reasoning.

After the disaster a great deal of literature was written on the subject. The torrent of books shows no indications of lessening. Hardly a month passes without the appearance of a new study about Palestine. We can choose four of these studies to get a general idea about the opinion of Arab thinkers on the event. These happen to be the first four works on the subject (they all appeared, in their first editions, between August 1948 and January 1950). They were written by four authors of different political and ideological affiliations, their thinking varying between the extreme right and the extreme left, between extreme conservatism and a revolutionary radicalism. All are learned men (a physician, a mathematician, a historian and a lawyer), two are educators and the other two head educational institutions of sorts. They come from three Arab states: two Palestinians, a Syrian and a Lebanese. They represent different cultural backgrounds having studied in different institutions in Egypt, Lebanon, Britain, Germany, the United States and possibly elsewhere too.

The books are *The Meaning of the Disaster* by Dr. Constantine Zurayk, *The Lesson of Palestine* by Moussa Al-Alami, *After the*

Disaster by Qadri H. Tukan and *The Road to Salvation* by Dr. George Hanna. All books were printed in Beirut.

In spite of the differences in background, intellectual and political direction, the reader today is surprised at the parallelism in the broad outlines of all four books. All authors started from the same base: they emphasized the fact that the disaster the Arabs suffered in Palestine was not a temporary political failure as might seem at first glance; but it was a comprehensive fiasco due to a number of inter-related factors and circumstances reaching far into the fabric of Arab society. In their search for solutions, they all reached the same conclusions: the solution is undoubtedly a speedy or a temporary political one; it is a set of complementary measures which must be implemented through the cooperation of all members of the various sectors of the population.

The four authors agreed almost unanimously on determining these factors and these measures: the liberation of the Arab individual, women in particular, industrialization, reliance upon science as a method of treating problems, mobilization of the nation, improved means of education, social justice, Arab unity, military reorganization, the coming into power of a new leadership, etc. It is evident to the reader that, in addition to all this similarity in thinking, there is also one belief in which they all share, namely the necessity of changing conditions in the Arab world. Some were daring enough to call for a revolution, the others were conservative and called for an evolution. They all wanted the Palestine disaster to be a lesson the like of which the Arabs had never learnt in their long history full of glories and calamities. They wished it to be a dividing line between the Arabs of yesterday and the Arabs of today: between a dim yesterday, full of weaknesses, problems and injustices, and a bright, good, and just tomorrow in which the Arab mind would be able to serve humanity as much as it had failed to interact creatively with civilization during the centuries of darkness because of its shackles. They wanted the disaster that befell the one

million Palestinians to serve as a bridge across which the seventy million Arabs (the number of the Arabs at the time) would pass towards a better life. They wanted the Palestine problem to become the most powerful active force in Arab life, much more than it was in the past.

However the people were not in need of these books or of others, nor did they wait to be informed that the disaster was not just a result of a military, political, diplomatic, economic, cultural and psychological weaknesses and an aspect of these weaknesses; the people knew that the disaster was the result of the degeneration of the bases of Arab society: of its regimes, ideologies, psychologies, parties, governments and institutions, as well as an aspect of this degeneration. The Arab citizen's belief in these institutions began to weaken quickly and discontent became widespread. At that point the military and civilian revolutionaries seized the opportunity and tried to make up for the disappointment of the citizen by changing the basic political regime in more than one state, profiting from the wrath of the public on the one hand, and from the clean record of the Arab armies on the other, for these armies had lost without having had the chance to enter the battlefield and save the cause from those who were not fit to save it. Some of the revolutionary officers and civilians were satisfied to depose the previous regimes and charge them with having forsaken Palestine. Some went further and tried to lay the ground for new foundations of Arab life different from the outworn ones. The methods and treatment varied. There emerged Republics, military dictatorships, one-party systems, popular unions, revolutionary councils, new administrative and legislative regulations and new national, economic and ideological concepts hitherto never experienced by the Arabs.

As an example of the modernization of concepts mentioned earlier, we shall treat the changes introduced in the concept of Arab nationalism in which one notes signs of the evolution that occurred in the Arab mentality due to the disaster. As happens with all

disasters, this one was followed by certain efforts which cynically declared the death of Arab nationalism and its bankruptcy, profiting from the downfall of the giant to stab it. This tendency was most apparent in Lebanon and Egypt where the two strongest non-Arab nationalist movements were active. These two movements did succeed in shaking the belief in Arab nationalism among some elements who had witnessed the Arabs lose the battle, but who had failed to note, out of real or assumed ignorance, that the Arabs had not lost the battle because of their nationalist doctrines but because of the weakness of their faith in them, or, because of their non-nationalist methods of action—political life and the prevalent regimes did not promote the national interests; also the rulers' non-nationalist conduct was motivated by idiosyncrasies or self-interest under the guise of nationalist slogans.

Sati' Al-Husri, the foremost Arab nationalist ideologue of the mid-century, was most eloquent when he pithily retorted: "It should not be said that the Arabs lost the battle of Palestine although they were seven states but rather the Arabs lost the battle of Palestine because they were seven states." (*Views and Discourses on Arab Nationalism*, 1951, p. 33).

Al-Husri points out here that the factor considered by the enemies of Arab nationalism to be the cause of the loss of Palestine (i.e. the belief in one Arab nation) was in fact rendered ineffectual, else the defeat would not have occurred.

All this led the leaders of the national movements in the Arab states not to be satisfied any longer with repeating nationalist slogans as they used to do in the past. They began to adapt the national concepts to fit the present mentality and they strove to get rid of the wornout concepts which had contributed the disaster. Perspectives were modernized and concepts and methods were further developed. As to the methods, the false democracy which favored one class as against others was discarded and the regimes which provided the

opportunity for the traditional leadership to enslave citizens and counterfeit their will were scrapped. Public opinion, characterized by the purity of its national aims and its removal from narrow interests, was stressed. It became the capital invested in the cause and the guarantee for its success. It was permitted to impose its will instead of the wish of the minority. Means of information and national orientation were emphasized as a bridge which leads the people towards the fulfilment of their aspirations and fosters the spirit of struggle. Finally the controversy was transformed from a monotonous dialogue with the non-believers in Arab nationalism to a struggle against pretenders who hide behind its catchwords in order to subvert it. Belief in Arab nationalism became a matter of fact and any argument about the subject became purely academic.

As to the concepts, the Asian regionalism of the Arab Idea was transcended. There was no further need for an Asian state to assume the role of a Prussia in uniting the Arabs and liberating them. One Arab region became as good as another, the only distinction being the extent to which each strove towards liberating the Arabs and unifying them in general, and towards liberating Palestine in particular. It became an imperative condition that joint Arab action should extend beyond the limits of Asia, i.e., that it should become Afro-Asian, so that it could encircle and contain the enemy state. Egypt was no longer the marginal factor it used to be during the period between the two world wars. It became one of the pillars of Arab action in spite of the efforts of the sceptics in Egypt and Arab Asia in the wake of the 1948 disaster, to detach Egypt from the scene so the non-Arab organizations, imperialism and Zionism would remain alone in the arena. Thus, the re-emergence of the Arab quality of Egypt was one of the unintentional and immediate results of the Palestine disaster, although the perpetrators of the disaster had exploited the partial absence of Egypt from the field of Arab action before the fifties, hoping that this situation would continue after the establishment of "Israel."

Second, the extreme conservatism cloaking the Arab Idea was removed. It became possible for the idea to develop further in order to absorb the whole people and promote its interests. No longer did one fortunate social class inherit the leadership of the Arab movement and exploit it to further its interests only. This class was removed from the leadership of the cause and the movement became the property of the nation. There were no longer any class privileges or monopoly in bearing the responsibility. The cause began to pay attention to the citizen as a citizen not as a tool to serve the leadership and its private ends. Thus social justice became one of the aims of the Arab movement. The movement became directed towards matters of everyday living and it was entrusted with the task of solving the problems of the Arab individual and of saving him from his woes by providing for him a medium of safety, dignity and justice not available while the movement was limited to a minority only and had no roots that went deep enough in the people. Interest in the Arab fatherland came to require an interest in its social foundations. Thus the nationalist movement was converted from a conservative trend, which looked romantically upon the homeland but forgot the citizen, to a humanitarian socialist movement.

As we have seen, the Palestine problem contributed in the first quarter of this century towards arousing Arab consciousness and forging it in a conservative romantic mould to protect the Palestinian soil from being sold and to face the Zionist danger of infiltration and colonization. The same problem contributed in the third quarter of the century, once the Zionist danger became embodied in the form of a state, towards evolving the Arab movement and forging it into a progressive mould capable of protecting the Arab individual from the various evils, be they local or foreign. Its logic in this is that the enslaved Arab human being, this backward and oppressed creature, cannot be fit or able to confront the aggression and repel the invaders. The free man only can fight for his usurped rights.

Third, the Arab Idea was freed from the tutelage of the West, particularly that of Britain. The Arab movement was no longer tied to an external factor (a factor which in fact served the interests of the enemy) and thus ceased to be loyal to it. The Palestinian victims, the martyrs of British conspiracy, could no longer accept the logic which tied the movement, supposed to liberate them, to Britain's will, as had been the case since the Arab Revolt in 1916.

The liberation of the Arab movement from Western trusteeship, intellectually and politically, provided it with the opportunity to play an unprecedented role in world affairs and the overall problems of man. No longer limited to its narrow world, the Arab movement began to keep pace with the humanitarian trends and follow up the human struggle on the various fronts in the world for the sake of man's dignity, his freedom and his happiness. Thus it shared with the humanitarians of the world their anxiety over the fate of mankind.

To our mind, the main influence the disaster has left on the Arab cause during the fifties and sixties has been the re-directing of Arab national thinking towards interest in the problems of mankind and its opening up to such issues. This new direction is the element which protects the concept of nationalism from ossifying, stagnating and lagging behind in a world which constantly moves towards the better and the more beautiful. Thus nationalism proves its authentic humanism and shows itself as a means of self-protection and an assurance of a better future for the Arabs and the world at large. It would be unnatural if the cause of the Arabs of Palestine, based as it is on complete justice and truth, should henceforth lead to anything other than the recognition of these two principles as bases for Arab international relations and for human civilization. The Arabs have faith that they will contribute towards building this civilization, for they refuse to lead any longer a marginal existence. From here arises the interest of the Arabs, especially the Palestinians, in following up the human cause whenever this

cause finds itself in danger or engaged in a struggle, be it in Rhodesia, South Africa or Vietnam. The deepest lesson the Arabs have learnt from the Palestinian disaster is that evil is might and that right cannot conquer unless it be changed into active might. They have learnt too that the effectiveness of evil stems from the solidarity of its perpetrators. For right to become effective, its adherents, too, have to close their ranks. If in the past, the call for solidarity to face the Zionist colonial conspiracy against Palestine was limited to the Arabs in general, now that the human conscience has transcended boundaries and cut short distances, all free people in the world are called upon to stand by the Palestinians and the rest of the Arabs in their struggle to rectify conditions and correct the crimes which the enemies of the Arabs committed eighteen years ago.

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