

الجمهورية الجزائرية الديمقراطية الشعبية  
DEMOCRATIC AND POPULAR REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA

MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

THE UNIVERSITY OF ANNABA

**Palestino-Israeli Conflict**  
**With**  
**Special Reference to Algerian Position**

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO  
THE INSTITUTE OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF MAGISTER  
IN  
CIVILIZATION

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

By

MANAA MOHAMED

— 1987 —



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جامعة بوبكر بلقايد \* تلمسان \*  
كلية الآداب واللغات  
مكتبة اللغات الأجنبية

Inscrit sous le n° 00227  
Date le 23/01/2012  
Cote

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## INTRODUCTION

I have long been preoccupied by the Palestinian problem and it was the wish to know more about it, along with the possibility brought about in the framework of the postgraduate program, that finally prompted me to make this study. I have gone through the prominent historical events of this important problem in the history of Arab nation. However, what is proposed in this work should not be considered as an "expert" view nor, for that matter, personal testimony.

The Palestinian dilemma has been in the forefront of Arab politics for decades and has often been the focusing point of the Arab world. Palestine has been the basic component of the Arab reality. No attempt can succeed to separate the Palestinian cause from the Arab-Israeli confrontation; 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. Since the beginning, they considered the problem of Palestine as an Arab concern and the concern of every Arab state; for the Palestinian soil is heart of the Arab soil. The Arab fate and dignity are therefore linked to the recovery of Palestine and the liberation of the holy places.

The Palestinian problem made the Arab peoples strive for a certain degree of political unity corresponding to the relative unity which existed on the social and cultural plane. Such an



Arab objective is a necessity arising from the nature of the choices open to the Arabs in the modern world, at least as long as Israel appears as a bridgehead of the West in the midst of a profoundly committed area of the underdeveloped world. It is worth noting that, in addition to the Arab world commitment to Palestine, there is that of the world of Islam. The Palestinians gained the support of most of the countries in which Islam is the dominant religion. Some of these countries felt deeply concerned with the liberation of the holy cities in conformity with their Muslim ideology, though some others, like Turkey, have been much more reluctant, and for a long time maintained good relations with Israel. We, however, witness the development of strong feelings of solidarity and sympathy with the Palestinians, during the last two decades, among Muslims throughout the world.

Despite the foregoing, the contributions of both the Arab and Muslim worlds, to the Arab cause, are circumspect, and always made with an eye to their other interests. The differences between the Arab states are great and their peoples had evolved in different ways; they each had their own special problems and could regard the other Arab peoples at times <sup>and</sup> in a certain sense as foreigners. Also, each country of the Muslim world is faced with its own special problems, due to its geopolitical situation, and each tries to find its own solution in accordance with the internal economic and social levels of development.

However, unlike the Muslim countries, the Arab states are bound together by the strands of a common race, language, religion, history and culture, and any injury done to one country from



outside is deeply resented by the others. Thus, the Arab international relations are affected to a great extent by their solidarity and as a result by Palestinian cause.

It has also been of my particular interest to see the Algerian part in the Palestinian reality. Consequently we do cast a brief glance at the important Algerian role frequently played in Arab affairs and particularly in Palestinian problem. It would be necessary therefore to analyse the factors guiding the Algerian constant commitment to the Arab and Palestinian cause. The Algerian and <sup>the</sup> Palestinian revolutions had some common historical roots. Conflict had surged in both countries after the Second World War, because the ruling colonial powers ( Britain in Palestine and France in Algeria) had, at various times heightened the oppression of the native populations. They had been deprived of the basic civil rights, for the benefit of the minority of both countries. According to the Algerians, the Palestinian struggle is just a continuation of their own struggle against colonialism and imperialism, and is therefore an additional justification for their taking side with the Palestinian people.

The Islamic Brotherhood has been perfectly illustrated by the acceptance of the Palestinians within the Algerian society. Most of the Palestinians living in Algeria have become integrated in the Algerian society to the extent they use the dialect of the region they live in. The Palestinian social position in Algeria, allowed cultural interactions. Indeed, the Algerians are now used to Palestinian music, dance and theatre. Moreover, they know quite well the Palestinian traditions, customs and different ways of life.



Through this work we try to go through the Palestinian history and see it within the general Arab history. The Palestinian history is characterized by its link with Zionism which is different from the Arab history. The power of Zionism in Palestine brought about a close interest of the West at the expense of the Palestinian movement.

After the historical background this work provides a broad background of the Palestino-sraeli conflict and an assessment of foreign interventions in the Middle East and the connection between them. "The Palestinian cause" forms the first part which is composed of three separate chapters. The first one identifies the Palestinian people, takes note of their continuous presence in Palestine, traces the development of their consciousness as a nation, and their impact on the Middle Eastern affairs. We have tried to show that the Muslim, Christian and Jewish Palestinians who lived in Palestine for hundreds of years until they were driven out in 1948, were unhappy victims of the Zionist movement whose aim was to end the persecution of the Jews by Christian Europe.

The following chapter focuses on the role played by Herzl and Weizmann in expounding anti-semitism feelings that took place in Europe to gain the support of most of the Western Europe and America and attract the Jews to Palestine. This widespread support enabled the Zionists to realize their ultimate goal with the help of the British mandatory government and the American governments. The third chapter provides an analysis of the various phases of the formation of the Palestinian national movement. British conspiracy with the Zionists led to the development of the Palestinian

resistance against Israel. The need to a strong Palestinian organization that may lead the Palestinian revolution, was felt by all the Palestinians and some Arab states. Consequently, in 1964, the PLO emerged as a leading political force in the Middle East. It gained the support of almost all the Third World countries, in addition to a great number of states here and there throughout the world.

The second part contains two separate chapters dealing with the intervention of the superpowers in the Middle Eastern affairs. In chapter four, the historical background of U.S. policy and its involvements in the Middle East prior to the creation of the state of Israel are discussed. International and domestic factors compelled Wilson, Roosevelt and Truman to support the Zionists to create this state without taking into consideration the early promises of Britain for the Arabs' independence and self-determination. The Arabs rejected all the American proposals to solve the Palestinian problem because they failed to treat the political aspects of the problem and neglected the Palestinian legitimate rights. The Arab world was quaked in 1979 as Sadat became a fully-fledged American ally with the Camp David agreements. Both the United States and Israel refused to talk officially with the PLO. For the United States, this would happen if the PLO recognizes Israel's right to exist. However, Israel was not even required to recognize the Palestinians' right to choose their own representatives to the negotiations. Responding to both the Soviet and Arab threat, the United States sought to undermine the Soviet Union and keep it away from the Middle East, and send more aid to



Israel.

Chapter five discusses the early Soviet involvement in the Middle East as well as later developments. Soviet policy supported radical regimes, provided them with external economic and military aid and supported national liberation movements. This proliferated Russia into today's economic, political and strategic position in the Middle East. This chapter is ended by a short comparative study of the two superpowers' behaviour in the Middle East. Each one tries to endanger the other one's presence in the area. Thus, the United States froze the Russians out of any potential negotiations, though there has been an effort to cooperate to reach a durable settlement. The Camp David agreements put an end to any serious cooperation between the two big powers.

The third part is fully dedicated to the Algerian attitude towards the Palestinian cause through a historical study. The analysis shows the constant evolution of the Algerian support to Palestine and the Arab cause; and the role played by the Algerians in Arab-Israeli wars.

Methodologically speaking, the work can be considered as a historical and in a sense comparative study of the Palestinian problem through various points of view. The Palestinian problem cannot be understood without its historical perspective. This, however, includes the role of the Zionist movement that played in Palestine as well as the impact of the intervention of the great powers in the area. Within this framework, special attention has been paid on social, political and economic aspects of the question and of the Palestinian development.

PART ONE  
THE PALESTINIAN CAUSE



## CHAPTER I

### HISTORICAL SITUATION OF THE PALESTINIANS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

The history of the Middle East has always been characterized by the events that took place in *its* middle. The events in the Palestinian land have deeply affected the whole world and have evoked ardent emotion everywhere.

Our main concern here, is the Middle Eastern province<sup>1</sup> and the events and situations that are brought about by intruders whose disruptive force has been a blow to the traditions, beliefs and social structure of the inhabitants. Having put the topic into this perspective, it is wiser for us to examine the different settlements that occurred, starting from that of the Jews to the British, through that of the Muslims and Ottomans.

It is only for the sake of refreshment of memories that we will discuss the historical crossings of the Palestinian land by different races and communities. We base our attempt on real facts that are susceptible to work out our process in showing the role of the Palestinians in the area.

The ancestors of the Jews, as a race, first passage to

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<sup>1</sup>It is the little patch of Palestinian soil inhabited by Canaanites and other nomadic races who passed through Palestine as early as 7000 B.C. Palestine is an inalienable province of the Arab nation.

Palestine occurred around 1800 B.C., when Abraham and some of his followers reached the land which was controlled by the Canaanites. Later, his descendants went to Egypt and lived for hundreds of years before their return to Palestine where they formed a Jewish kingdom and built the first Temple in the city of Jerusalem during the tenth century B.C.<sup>1</sup> The kingdom lasted for about two hundred years before its division into the kingdoms of Judaea and Israel.<sup>2</sup>

The Northern kingdom of Israel was partly destroyed by the Assyrians around 721 B.C., whereas the Southern kingdom of Judaea was saved and continued to exist until the Babylonian invasion in 586 B.C. The Babylonians assailed the first Temple and compelled the Jews to leave the land. Some of them returned fifty years later, when Persia took Babylonia, and lived a freer life. The Jews built a second Temple to show their dominance over the area, which lasted for about a century until the arrival of the Romans.

The last Jewish state, therefore, ended with the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the second Temple in A.D. 70. The suppression of the last Jewish uprisings against the Romans in A.D. 135, led to the migration and Jews' deportation out of the region and their subsequent spread in other parts. From that date onward, the country was incorporated within the boundaries of various empires, governments and dynasties.

First, it was the Roman empire under which Jerusalem was a colony and Palestine a province. Then, it was succeeded by the

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<sup>1</sup>Fred J. Khouri, The Arab-Israeli Dilemma (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1968), p. 1



"Byzantine Empire until the seventh century, with a short Persian rule from 614 to 629."<sup>1</sup> Two years after the death of prophet Muhammad, his followers reached Palestine which became a part of the Muslim Empire for the next 450 years. The population welcomed the Muslims as liberators.<sup>2</sup> Even the inhabitants of one of the Syrian cities went out to welcome the advancing Muslims with music and songs.<sup>3</sup>

During the various phases of the Islamic campaign, the Jews considered the Muslims as their deliverers from the Christian-Byzantine yoke, and provided them with effective support.<sup>4</sup> Under the Roman and Byzantine rule, all the Palestinian communities had been oppressed and had suffered from exploitation and persecution.<sup>5</sup> The Arab Muslims entered Palestine without any attempt to expel the people of the land or to convert to Islam the conquered Jews, Christians and others. The Muslims, in fact, thought of these religions as possessors of a certain element of truth based on the Islamic respect of all divine religions. The Arabs therefore settled down alongside the autochtones Canaanites, Phoenicians, the Philistines and descendants of some other ethnical tribes such as the Hittites, Ammonites, Maobites, Edomites, and inter-married with

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<sup>1</sup> Moshe Sharon, "Palestine in the Islamic and Ottoman Period," The Palestinians, eds. Michael Curtis et al. (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1975), p.9

<sup>2</sup> Abdallah Frangi, The PLO and Palestine (London: Zed Books Ltd, 1983), p.18

<sup>3</sup> Moshe Sharon, "Palestine in the Islamic and Ottoman Period," The Palestinians, p.15

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p.16

them.<sup>1</sup> Gradually, the population began to convert to Islam, since that was relevant to social advancement. Arabic spread quickly and became the most widely-spoken language throughout the Palestinian land. This was enhanced by the fact that the Palestinians had been used to one lingua Franca or another.<sup>2</sup> Already, as a Christian region at the dawn of the Islamic invasion; it was linguistically united through the triumph and the spread of Aramaic language. Being itself a semitic language, Aramaic could give way to Arabic without any difficulty. It is a very pure and right form of Arabic moreover that is spoken in this region and in Jerusalem.

Therefore, the Palestinians became predominantly Arab-Muslims. Almost immediately after the advent of the Arabs, Palestinian entity and its characteristics—including its name in Arabic, *Filastin*<sup>3</sup>— became known to whole Islamic world. Furthermore, Palestine occupied a place of honour and privilege in the Islamic community. Jerusalem, soon became the third city sacred after Mecca and Medina. It was from Jerusalem, according to the Quran, that prophet Muhammad ascended into heaven.<sup>4</sup> This special position has

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<sup>1</sup>Roger Garaudy, L'affaire Israel (Paris: Papyrus, 1983), p.41

<sup>2</sup>Ahmad El Kodsý and Eli Lobel, The Arab World and Israel, translated by Brian Pearce and Alfred Ehrenfeld (London, New York: Modern Reader, 1970), p.9

<sup>3</sup>"The Israeli claim that the Romans, in their attempt to blot out the Jewish identity of the country, changed the name from Judaea to Palaestina." Quoted in Colin Smith, The Palestinians, N°24 (London: M.R.G. Ltd, 1984), p.3

<sup>4</sup>Sura 17, Verse 1



remained so until the present day. Palestine was as important for the Muslims as for the Jews who, also claim that it was their promised land.

But the Arab-muslims of Palestine were not saved from foreign invasion. And, like their cousins, their land was conquered in 1099 A.D., by the Crusaders (the Christian Knights) from Western Europe.<sup>1</sup> They recaptured Jerusalem and not only defeated the Muslims but massacred as well the entire population of the city composed, in addition to Muslims, of Jewish and Christian communities. But, in 1187 A.D., they were on their turn, attacked, defeated and expelled from the sacred city by Muslim troops headed by Saladin.<sup>2</sup> He showed, thereafter, a good example of the religious and political tolerance under Islam; he saved the city of Jerusalem from the destruction and offered the Jews freedom and a safe conduct if they would not show any further opposition. This victory marked, in fact, the end of the third attempt by Europeans to dominate the Middle East area. But it was not all, as there was still a long way to go before Europe began to revise once more its political attitude toward this part of the world.

Palestine remained, after all, under the Muslim rule. It was, thereafter, ruled by "Egyptian Mamluks, mostly of Turkish descent, until its conquest by the Ottoman Turks in 1516."<sup>3</sup> The new conquerors of Palestine had long been islamized themselves, and their rule

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<sup>1</sup> Colin Chapman, Whose Promised Land?, p. 19

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

continued to be based on Islamic virtues. The Islamic character of the Arab world, including Palestine, has not only endured but has intensified and deepened its influence steadily until the present day. Indeed, from the fourteenth century, Muslim state of the Ottoman Turks started to show its strength. By the sixteenth century, it dominated territories with Arab populations, mainly in Egypt, Palestine and Syria. The Ottoman empire was an immense structure, governed and ruled by the Sultan from Istanbul (previously Constantinople). It gathered a tremendous varied population, extending from Belgrade, and Bucharest to Algeria and the Yemen.<sup>1</sup>

Palestine was considered, however, as a province of this vast empire, and was controlled mainly by greedy landowners, but affecting its Arab-Islamic features. The minority religions there, Christianity and in particular Judaism, were allowed "considerable autonomy."<sup>2</sup> These religious communities throughout the Ottoman empire, made and enforced their own religions, judicial and social rules without any constraints. The Arab conquest did not change in any drastic form the composition of the population that had existed under the Byzantine rule.<sup>3</sup> Palestine was, even, left to its inhabitants and the Arabs did not use the policy of exile, as used to be followed by the previous conquerors from the Assyrians down to the Persians.<sup>4</sup> The Arabs simply asked the various Palestinian communities to pay some taxes in exchange for state protection and

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<sup>1</sup>Maxime Rodinson, Israel and the Arabs (Harmondsworth; Penguin, 1982), p.14

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Moshe Sharon, "Palestine in Islamic and Ottoman Period", p.13

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p.15



also, exemption from military service. Christians and Jews held, even, some important posts under the various Arab Caliphates.<sup>1</sup> These two communities represented about 15 to 20 per cent of the total population of Palestine before the decline of the Ottoman empire, and lived as small farmers and artisans. Among the Arab Palestinians, they never felt any kind of discrimination or animosity. Throughout the Islamic world, Jews were tolerated and protected.<sup>2</sup>

The history of the Jews in the Arab world is not so terrible as the history of Jewish oppression in the Christian or communist European societies. The Jewish communities have probably flourished culturally and commercially with the provision of more security in the Arab world during the last twenty centuries than they have in Europe.<sup>3</sup> Signs of persecution and of racial conflicts were very common in Europe. Some examples of this hostile attitude are discussed by Roger Garaudy in his L'affaire Israel. He mentions that in 1492, an important number of Jews, was driven out of Spain by the "Catholic Kings", right after the decline of the last Muslim kingdom in Grenada.<sup>4</sup> In 1648, about three hundred thousand Jews were killed in Poland by the "Cosaques" of Bogdan Chmielnisky. He went on to mention that from 1882, Jewish pogroms were organized in

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<sup>1</sup> Fred J. Khouri, The Arab-Israeli Dilemma, p. 13

<sup>2</sup> Maxime Rodinson, Israel et le Refus Arabe (Paris: Seuil, 1968), p. 8

<sup>3</sup> Charles Douglas-Home, The Arabs and Israel: A background Book (London: The Bodley Head, 1968), pp. 9-10

<sup>4</sup> Roger Garaudy, L'affaire Israel, p. 70

in Russia by the Tzars.<sup>1</sup> The Dreyfus affair in France from 1894 to 1906, and the Nazi struggle against the Jews from 1933 till the end of the Second World War showed to which extent the Jewish situation in Europe was dramatic.<sup>2</sup> These facts lead to the deduction that, from the beginning of the diaspora (the dispersion of the Jews), Jewish communities enjoyed a "freer life in Muslim Asia than in Christian Europe."<sup>3</sup>

However, the vastness of the Ottoman empire made its governors of various provinces out of control from the central power of Istanbul. They made their authority felt by all their subjects through some individual and arbitrary rules, and above all by "extracting tribute in taxes, dues and the like."<sup>4</sup>

Palestine, like all the Arab countries, suffered from all the usual ills, social and cultural, caused by the Turkish domination. Though, the Arab-Muslims did not consider such domination as a humiliating colonization, since the Turks were themselves Muslims, and therefore, they were not foreigners to be driven out. But later and under the pressure of the European colonial push, the Arab-Muslims in Palestine and elsewhere, started to develop their revolt.

Toward the end of the eighteenth century, the decline of the Ottomans was likely to occur. The Europeans, on the other hand started to exhibit their economic, technological and military supre-

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<sup>1</sup> Roger Garaudy, L'affaire Israel, p. 70

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Fred J. Khouri, The Arab Israeli Dilemma, p. 3

<sup>4</sup> Maxime Rodinson, Israel and the Arabs, p. 15



macy, due to the newly spectacular scientific advances. During the nineteenth century, the Western hegemony over the Ottoman empire became apparent. Western intrigues in the internal affairs of the Muslim countries began to <sup>make</sup> themselves felt. This was caused, in fact, by the earlier "treaties of capitulations"<sup>1</sup> passed and agreed upon between the sultan and the European countries, and mainly France. The Ottoman empire was soon invaded by European capitals; helped to a certain extent by the local Christian communities and also by the local Jews, many of whom came from Europe.

The integration of the Palestinian land into the world capitalist system, indeed took place much later than that of Egypt or the Maghreb. It did not begin on a large scale until the period of the mandate, to go on down to the present day. This can be explained by the fact that the Ottoman rule over the area preserved the unity of the province down to the First World War.<sup>1</sup> This rule, however, did not form an effective safeguard against imperialist penetration during the First World War. Since the early era of the European movement of colonization, England was particularly attracted by the position of Palestine. Due to her powerful navy, Britain dominated various trading sea-routes; thus, Palestine would enforce this domination and provide her <sup>with</sup> a favourable overland connection with her Indian colonies.

The clear decline of the Ottomans led, therefore, England

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<sup>1</sup> Bichara Khader, Histoire de la Palestine (Tunis: Maison Tunisienne de Diffusion, 1975), p. 11

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

and France to make prodigious diplomatic attempts to wrest territorial concessions from them. But, the Turks estimating a rapid recovery, and fearing serious problems among the various nationalities, opposed such dealings. Later, the Turkish opposition was revealed unsuccessful in front of the European determination to reach the ultimate goal. The Ottomans were therefore obliged to retreat through the Balkans before the Christian powers.<sup>1</sup> The Balkans subject peoples revolted one by one, with European encouragement, eroding the frontiers of the empire. France did not waste time and took the opportunity to invade Algeria in 1830.<sup>2</sup> Britain did the same and followed the path of open colonization of Aden in 1839.<sup>3</sup> A new era was therefore opened, marked by the beginning of the movement of direct colonization over the whole Ottoman empire, including the land of Palestine.

The long effort of resistance made by the Arab world was to culminate in defeat, and dates can be given for this, "1882 in the case of Egypt, the period of 1880-1914 in the Maghreb and 1919 in the Arab East."<sup>4</sup> The Turks were, therefore defeated during the First World War, and were pushed out of Palestine in 1918 by the combined efforts of the British, the French and the Arabs, who were dreaming of independence. A peace conference of the victorious powers was held at Versailles (Paris) in 1919 to decide about the division of the Middle East area. Thus, Palestine came under the British who finally realized their old dream with the mandate system which

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<sup>1</sup>Maxime Rodinson, Israel and the Arabs, p.15

<sup>2</sup>Maxime Rodinson, Israel et le Refus Arabe, P.16

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ahmad El Kodsy The Arab World and Israel, p.8



became effective since 1922.<sup>1</sup> France also took its part and was given responsibility for Syria. This decision came to assert the old intentions of the European colonialism to occupy the Middle East.<sup>2</sup> Thus, Palestine was made a pawn in big power politics until the great disaster of 1948. The Arabs felt such fragmentation, imposed by the Western powers, as a real betrayal and accused Britain of not respecting her promise of Arab independence for the help they provided. Britain, clearly underestimated the Arab claims and did not, even, commit herself to respect the mandate document. She provided the Jews with full protection, in their dealings aiming at the domination of Palestine. The Arab Palestinians who represented by the beginning of the mandate about 88% of the total population were aware of the danger.<sup>3</sup> A contradiction was therefore bound to arise for the British government between the Balfour declaration on the one hand, and the assurances to the Arab Palestinians laid down in the mandate document, on the other.<sup>4</sup> This conflict was to worsen steadily the situation till the end of the mandate, as England was never able to exorcise the evil spirits she had raised.

So, as we have seen, like all the other Arab entities, Palestine suffered from autocratic rule, foreign domination and violence. All the various calamities that prevailed in the society

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<sup>1</sup> Colin Chapman, Whose Promised Land?, p.18

<sup>2</sup> Rachid Boudjedra, Journal Palestinien (Alger: SNED, 1982), p.8

<sup>3</sup> Abdallah Frangi, The PLO and Palestine, p.51

<sup>4</sup> Leni Brenner, The Iron Wall (London: Zed Books, 1984), p.48

prevented it from any evolution and even discouraged its members from undertaking any further reform to improve their social and economic conditions. The attempt to reach the Palestinian political independence did not, however, stand as an impediment to achieve the harmony of the social structures. Palestine has, in fact, throughout the various phases of its history, since the Arab conquest in the seventh century, facilitated for its people the openness of accepting and absorbing most of the immigrant peoples and communities.<sup>1</sup>

The process of fusion has always been achieved with no friction, so that no great differences existed between one group and another. When there were differences, whether religious, ethnic, or cultural, they could not be easily noticed as they were not apparent. Even, when such differences and conflicts continued to occur, they did not reach the point of division of the Palestinians among themselves, nor did they make them break up into various factions.<sup>2</sup> The reason for this positive aspect in Palestine lies simply, in the fact that the close ties and relations that grew between the members of a small country, were absolutely in a larger one. It is quite evident that the members of the distinct ethnic groups get to know each other through daily activities, work, education, marriage, more easily than in a vast country. It is practically for this reason that the Arabs of Palestine who belonged to different religions and religious sects, together with

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<sup>1</sup> Roger Garaudy, L'affaire Israel, p.57

<sup>2</sup> Anis Sayegh, Palestine and Arab Nationalism (Beirut: PLO Research Center, 1970), p.10



the majority of the non-Arab immigrants, such as the Greeks, Italians, Albanians, Yugoslavs, and the remnant of the crusaders from the West of Europe and those from the Eastern Europe, the Kurds, Armenians, Caucasians and Turks, formed one people with a harmonious culture.<sup>1</sup> The Arab minorities (e.g. the Christians) backed the Arab national ambitions in the area, and participated, as individuals, in political activities and sometimes involved into armed operations, side by side with the Arab Palestinians.<sup>2</sup>

Sykes, when formulating his Zionist policy, was well aware of both the Jewish and the Arab opposition to Zionism. He, later revealed to having been impressed by such attitude, and some Arab leaders had told him that "Arabs, Christians and Moslems, alike would fight...to the last man against Zionist dominion in Palestine."<sup>3</sup>

In other words, the Palestinians and Palestine blocked, at the very beginning of the modern history, the early attempt of colonization of the area by the Western powers, and the Zionist intrusion. The Europeans tried to practise, in Palestine, the mundane axiom of "divide in order to reign", through the break of the national unity of the people and in inciting sectarian and seditious calls. In this context, Edward Said revealed that despite the great interests for the Jews in the Balfour declaration, the Jewish community in Palestine did not propagate it.<sup>4</sup> This indifference

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<sup>1</sup> Anis Sayegh, Palestine and Arab Nationalism, p.11

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Frank Hardie and Irwin Herrman, Britain and Zion (Belfast: Blackstaff Press Ltd., 1980), p.97

<sup>4</sup> Edward W. Said, The Question of Palestine (London and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), p.12

reflected in a way the British view that "the present inhabitants" of Palestine including the Jews need not be consulted at the time of the declaration.<sup>1</sup> The Palestinian Jews were regarded as aliens to the British project.

The Christians of Palestine were not of European descent, and therefore, bore the features of the land. They were Arabs who came from the same cradle from which originated the Arabs most of whom came to settle in the Fertile Crescent.<sup>2</sup> The roots of both the majority and minority (Muslim and Christian Arab Palestinians), therefore, go back to the same geographic and socio-cultural origins (the Arab Peninsula or the adjacent areas). This major element has played an important role in bringing together the Muslim and Christian communities in their daily life, and also in the strong opposition they manifested against the political danger that suddenly threatened them. Until recently in the history of Palestine, prior to the breakdown of the British mandate, the Palestinian communities felt very close to each other regardless of their different sect or creed. Thus, Muslim and Christian Arabs were equally committed "to save the family."<sup>3</sup>

Once more, the Palestinian population at the time of facing the European Jews, showed an irresistible devotion and a strong desire to preserve the national unity, unlikely to be found else-

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<sup>1</sup> Edward W. Said, The Question of Palestine, p.19

<sup>2</sup> Roger Garaudy, L'affaire Israel, p.45

<sup>3</sup> Moshe Sharon, "Palestine in the Islamic and Ottoman Empire"; The Palestinians, p.17. See also J. Harry Haines, Committed Locally-Living Globally (Abington: Parthenon Press, 1982), p.38



where. It is, in fact, extremely difficult to think about an Arab country, at that time, experiencing such kind of common feelings between the inhabitants, irrespective of religious and socio-cultural background.

The Palestinians showed a fine example on the national political scene, all of the communities, without exception, took part with the Arab Palestinians in all different forms of the national struggles.<sup>1</sup> Individuals and groups joined the armed resistance; they took part in the creation of various national parties and political organizations, sharing the responsibilities of leadership. The Palestinian intellectuals contributed to a certain extent, by their writings, to the domain of education, national guidance, and the best of all, the Palestinian cause. These efforts were, however, put forth with almost no Ottoman contribution.<sup>2</sup> During the reign of the Ottomans over Palestine, they were only concerned with the study and imitation of the Arab and Persian achievements in different fields. But, it was through all these national intense efforts that the Christian minorities of Palestine established some links with Europeans who transmitted the early concepts of nationalism and emancipation to them.<sup>3</sup> This was to be a kind of impulsion to further European political and religious intrusions in the area. The Europeans had, so far, paved the way for the growth

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<sup>1</sup> Bichara Khader, Histoire de la Palestine, p.19

<sup>2</sup> Jacques Berque, Les Arabes (Paris: Sindbad, 1979), p.54

<sup>3</sup> Bichara Khader, Histoire de la Palestine, p.30

of an Arab nationalist awareness among the Palestinians.

Palestine, needless to remind, belonged throughout history (pre-Islamic and Islamic periods) to a part of the Arab homeland, known as Syria. The unity between the two lands, i.e. Syria and Palestine, was for the most part, political, judicial, social and economic, say a complete one. Palestine was, therefore, known as Southern Syria, until the 1920's, when it was stripped from the main body of Greater Syria and placed under British mandate under the circumstances that we discussed previously.

The national demand of the Palestinians, throughout the First World War and after, was the same for all the Arab nations. All the Palestinian claims were well illustrated and showed by the platforms of the various national political parties, and the resolutions of the Syrian National Congress.<sup>1</sup> This body met at Damascus in 1919 and 1920, and clearly stressed the fact that Palestine was to remain a part of the Syrian entity and as such be unified with the greater Arab homeland.<sup>2</sup> A large number of Lebanese, most of the people living in Trans-Jordan towns, and almost all Syrians shared this feeling with the Palestinians.

The special status enjoyed by Palestine in the Arab World, is due to the fact that its land lies in the Middle of the Arab homeland and joins three of its parts. These parts form three of the four geographical regions that constitute the Arab homeland: "The Crescent Fertile, the Arab peninsula and the Nile Valley."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Maxime Rodinson, Israel and the Arabs, p.21

<sup>2</sup>Abdallah Frangi, The PLO and Palestine, p.45

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 13



The Maghreb land is the only one part of the Arab homeland which is not directly linked to Palestine. This land forms a sort of bridge between three quarters of the vast Arab territories. In addition, Palestine connects the two continents in which the Arabs are spread: Asia and Africa. The fact that Palestine stands in the center of the Islamic world contributes in making the holy Jerusalem the heart of the Islamic world geographically, as well as spiritually as shown before. Thus, this position made this small area controlling life in three Arab regions to a certain extent: Iraq, Egypt, and Trans-Jordan.<sup>1</sup> Palestine became, then, a necessary element for the national interests of these three countries. Later, the Palestinian land witnessed the development of the Arab nationalism at the expense of the Arab countries of both the Mashrak and of the Maghreb. This does not mean that the movement was restricted to the only land of the Levant; but owing to various factors, the movement appeared not before the 1920's in Egypt.

And, the Arab national identity was somehow weak in the Maghreb due to the fact that the impact of European imperialism on the area reached a highest point. The Arab consciousness in the Crescent Fertile was, however, based on the development of both language and classical Arab literature.<sup>2</sup>

The Islamic schools with the autochtone press and the Christian missions enhanced the Arab cultural movement in Great Syria. Consequently, the early intellectuals were to lead the

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<sup>1</sup> Anis Sayegh, Palestine and Arab Nationalism, p. 14

<sup>2</sup> Bichara Khader, Histoire de la Palestine, p. 16

fortunes of the renewal of the Arab culture. Various schools and newspapers propagated among the population the new scientific ideas, technical inventions, the Western society and the international relations.<sup>1</sup> Such ideas led to the birth of a hostile attitude toward the Turkish presence in Great Syria. The inhabitants were influenced by the Arab nationalist ideas of the Syrian thinker Abdel Rahman El Kawakibi (1854-1902) who attempted to show the superiority of the Arabs over the Turks.<sup>2</sup> From that time on, the Arab nationalism was characterized by the transformation of a cultural movement into a political one. The main popular claim became the recovery of the national autonomy and the struggle against foreign colonizers. This became, also, the central theme of all different ideologic organizations throughout the area.

Nevertheless, it is worth noting that already at that time in Iraq, in Egypt and above all in Syria, the Palestinian mutiny nourished the masses with enthusiasm, for it showed the way forward for national liberation.<sup>3</sup> There was a "feeling that the region as a whole was oppressed by the same imperialism with Zionism seen as the agent of this imperialism."<sup>4</sup> The national reaction to the Zionist threat to the life of the region was unitary and Arab in character. The Palestinians played therefore, an important role in

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<sup>1</sup> Bichara Khader, Histoire de la Palestine, p. 18

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 20

<sup>3</sup> Kodsý and Lobel, The Arab World and Israel, p. 25

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.



the cristallization of Arab national consciousness.<sup>1</sup> This was in a way obvious since the Palestinians were directly affected by the Zionist colonization.

The people of Palestine, who played a vital role in the history of the Middle East, saw their impact decreasing all the way through the last fifty years. This was due to the fact that the Arabs failed to seize the historic opportunity to spread throughout the Arab East the armed revolt of 1936 of the heroic little Palestine.

If the world has been suffocated, the will to survive will not be exhausted. It happened that the early Palestinian revolt against the enemy of liberty, affected another Arab nation in the Maghreb area that shared the same aspirations and acted for the same goal-though, according to Ahmad El Kodsy, for example, in his 'Nationalism and Class Struggles', the Maghreb, due to its geographic remoteness and its colonization by another power, France, seemed less concerned by the Arab unity.<sup>2</sup> This other nation, is Algeria which took the Palestinian example as a guiding star for its independence.

This can be shown by the positions taken by the Ulema: after the revolt of 1936, through their main journals such as Al-Shihab, la Defense, la Voix du Peuple.<sup>3</sup> They urged the Arabs to fight against the Zionist imperialism. They were also, very much aware of the sensitivity of the special position that Palestine occupies in

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<sup>1</sup> Bichara Khader, Histoire de la Palestine, p.35

<sup>2</sup> Kodsy and Lobel, The Arab World and Israel, p.20

<sup>3</sup> Jean-Paul Chagnollaud, Maghreb et Palestine (Paris: Sindbad, 1977), p.63

the Arab homeland, and committed themselves to save the sacred land, since the very beginning.

The Algerian nationalists warned the Arab nation about the Zionist threat as early as 1938.<sup>1</sup> In an important article published by "El-Ouma" newspaper, the Algerian People Party expounded its positions toward Palestine.<sup>2</sup> According to the same article, the Algerians considered Zionism as an agent of imperialism and as its supporter. It was also considered to be a continuation of Western colonization over the area and therefore a great danger to the whole Arab nation.

Finally, Palestine and Palestinians were, and are not only playing an important role in the Middle East, but also in the Maghreb area. "The Palestine revolt of 1936 found a far reaching echo in the area to the extent that it affected the relations of the Maghreb states with the imperialist French government."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jean-Paul Chagnollaud, Maghreb et Palestine, p.58

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.59

<sup>3</sup> Anis Sayegh, Palestine and Arab Nationalism, p.63



## CHAPTER II

### THE RISE OF ZIONISM AND THE FORMATION OF THE ZIONIST STATE

The history of Zionism reflects to a certain extent the new political ideas which deeply affected the structure of society in Europe and America in the last decade of the eighteenth century, mainly the idea of nationalism. Radical changes related to the concept both of man and of man's relation to society, were well illustrated by the American and French revolutions. These were, however, to be of good benefit to the rise and development of labor organisations early in the nineteenth century as well as to the spread of the spirit of nationalism.

The great thinkers and philosophers of that period of time had granted humanity a foundation for wider and larger religious tolerance and faith, to reach a universal harmony among people of diverse origins, traditions and languages. Consequently, foreign communities in different Western countries began to be assimilated into the life of these nations. These events, however, were not fulfilled without bringing about a conflicting situation later on.

Our attempt here is to analyse the controversial attitudes of the European defenders of the liberal ideas about the individual civil rights and the Jewish claim for civil emancipation. The Jewish reaction was through the development of the Zionist movement aiming at the establishment of an independent state to solve the problems mainly of the Jews in Eastern Europe. The early idea of

emancipation was soon to be seen as a principle around which political Zionism was born. This new Jewish body actually looked for a pure colonial territorial solution to the problems of persecution endured by the Jews of Europe. These Jews were, therefore, directed toward the land of Palestine, the ultimate goal of the Zionist leaders, with a considerable political and economic support of the European colonial powers.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, anti-semitism deepened, and Jews suffered more from its effects.<sup>1</sup> Some Jewish leaders, tried to face and counter the anti-Jewish attitude in Europe. In 1862, Moses Hess, a German socialist Jew wrote the "Rome and Jerusalem", a book now considered by many historians as the first modern document stating the notion that freedom for the Jewish people could be attained in their "own historic homeland."<sup>2</sup> The Russian doctor, Leo Pinsker (1831-91) expressed in 1882, his personal despair in his pamphlet entitled the "Auto-emancipation" of the Jews, of any possibility of the Jewish freedom without " a land of our own."<sup>3</sup> Pinsker's solution is that the Jews should decide for their own destiny by themselves, colonize land and cultivate it. Two years later, Pinsker became the leader of the

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<sup>1</sup> Edward W. Said, The Question of Palestine, p.69

<sup>2</sup> Chaim Weizmann, "The Jewish People and Palestine", The Palestinians, p.47

<sup>3</sup> Colin Chapman, Whose Promised Land?, pp.37-38



"Hovévei-Zionism"<sup>1</sup> and soon after directed the first Zionists to Palestine from Rumania. This event released a large propaganda for Jewish immigration, throughout Europe. "Ahad Ha'am" meaning "one of the mass", a Jewish writer, advocated a peaceful establishment of a "spiritual Zionism"<sup>2</sup> in Palestine around which the ideal unity of the scattered Jewish nation crystallize without any political or economic power. This Russian thinker whose name is Asher Ginsberg visited Palestine in 1891 and went around the Jewish colonies at the invitation of the "Lovers of Zion" congregation. The trip convinced him that the idea of a nation in Palestine that would include all Jews, was impracticable. In front of the increasing desire of some Zionist leaders to achieve their goal, Ginsberg tried to draw their attention to the fact that Palestine was not an empty territory and that this posed problems.

The idea of an independent Jewish state in Palestine was not unanimously claimed by the Zionist leaders. They were split into two different sides: those who wanted to live on good terms with their Arab neighbours, considering there as a cultural center, and those who from the beginning took a different, more radical attitude. As early as 1880, they failed to organize a Jewish conference at Munich, due to the strong opposition from the German

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<sup>1</sup>That is the doctrine of "Hovévei Zion", the (Lovers of Zion), a Palestinophile movement of Russian Jews beginning in the 1880's. Having no political outlook, it aimed at regenerating the Jewish people by establishing Jewish agricultural colonies in the promised land. Quoted in Maxime Rodinson, Israel: A colonial-Settler State? (New York: Monad Press, 1973), p. 43

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

rabbis who declared that "the attempt to establish a Jewish national state in Palestine is contrary to the messianic promises of Judaism."<sup>1</sup>

Consequently, Zionism's impact waned while democracy was progressing in Europe.<sup>2</sup> The integration of the Jews in various European countries was near to the final triumph. Most of the Jews were assimilated with the destiny of the nations where they lived. They were contributing in an effective way in the political, economic and cultural fields of these countries.<sup>3</sup> This new political status acquired by the European Jews, brought about a birth of two main leading groups: the supporters of assimilation on the one hand, the Zionists on the other. The two had different ways to solve the "Jewish question."<sup>4</sup> The persons who plead for assimilation, wanted the Jewish communities to be entirely integrated into the societies in which they lived and to speed up the process in East Europe. For the Zionists, this situation meant that it may lead to a loss of Jewish identity belonging to the race. They talked about the peculiarities of this race in terms of moral,

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<sup>1</sup>Quoted in Roger Garaudy, L'affaire Israel, p.88

<sup>2</sup>Abdallah Frangi, The PLO and Palestine, p.29

<sup>3</sup>'Fully integrated into their nation, most of the Jews were assimilated with the destiny of each of their nations, contributing greatly in their politics, economy and culture. From Spinoza and Carl Marx to Martin Buber, from Heine to Kafka, from a musician as Mendelssohn to a physician as Einstein, the message was universal and addressed to all mankind.' Quoted from Roger Garaudy, L'affaire Israel, pp.112-113

<sup>4</sup>Colin Chapman, Whose Promised Land?, p.40



spiritual and intellectual superiority. Such arguments harmed the efforts toward the integration of the Jews in Western Europe, while the status of the Jews in Eastern Europe became uncomfortable. Consequently, various waves of emigrations to the United States of America and some Western European countries were organized. And some Jewish groups went to Palestine, still under the Ottoman rule, and began to buy up land of some Arab and Turkish landowners. To these settlers, there seemed no way to escape persecution in Russia mainly, unless they migrate.

At this time Theodor Herzl, the young Paris correspondent of an Austrian newspaper, emerged as the most prominent advocate of the Zionist cause. His concept of Zionism consists in the rejection of any kind of assimilation as according to him, it leads to the loss of the Jewish radical purity. The early events in what was later to be known as the 'Dreyfus case'<sup>1</sup> guided his sense of action. In fact, the idea of overseas colonial settlement for the Jews that came to him was an antidote for anti-semitism. Just like the colonial powers of the time, he regarded non European peoples as uncivilized natives over whom the Europeans had a natural right to rule. This idea was current at the end of the nineteenth century, even as an idea for Jews. Herzl therefore, proposed that all Jews should combine their efforts and establish a state of their own.

In 1895, Herzl popularized the Zionist movement in his

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<sup>1</sup> Alfred Dreyfus ( 1859-1935) was a Jew who was an officer in the French army. In 1894, he was accused of spying for Germany. Summarily tried, he was found guilty and sentenced to life imprisonment.

best-known book "Der Juden Staat"<sup>1</sup> (the Jewish state), arguing, that because of anti-semitism, it was necessary that Jews have the political and economic identity, that would come only through the establishment of a Jewish national state. Such idea is quite well related to the conception of the Zionist movement to free Jews and solve the problems of anti-semitism in Europe with an independent Jewish nation. Herzl assumed that anti-semitism would be necessary to realize his project as it would convince the Jews to flee and immigrate to Palestine; the place he proposed. This idea is discussed in detail in L'affaire Israel.<sup>2</sup> There Garaudy quotes Herzl as saying what is left is only to exalt an extranational nationalism to consider the Jews as foreigners where they live and rely on the persecutions to stimulate their immigration.<sup>3</sup> Herzl expressed his clear determination in his fight against any potential assimilation of the Jews. He declared that Jews are unique people who can be assimilated in any society provided they are secured for a long period of time and this will not work for our interests.

The project of a Jewish state was thought to be realized somewhere in a "vacant space."<sup>4</sup> The location of the Zionist state, originally, seemed without much importance, even for Herzl himself,

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<sup>1</sup>D.R. Gerald Kurland, The Arab-Israeli Conflict (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 1973), p. 3

<sup>2</sup>Roger Garaudy, L'affaire Israel, pp. 114-16

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 115

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 72



than the foundation of the state and the formation of society of Jews. Moreover, he intended to establish a "chartered colonial company"<sup>1</sup> to settle either in Argentina (proposed by Baron De Hirsch in 1897), or in those territories proposed by England such as Uganda in 1903 and 1904, Cyprus in 1901 and 1902, or Sinai in 1902.<sup>2</sup> But among all these possible territories to establish his state, Herzl and his followers soon made up their mind and saw in Palestine, the ideal territory for their project, because, they argued, of the Jews religious ties with this land, but without excluding completely the other proposed areas.

According to Herzl, Palestine the crossroad of continents, was a possibility as it can be acquired through direct negotiations with the colonial powers in the area. Added to this, the fact that Palestine is the place where there existed a "spiritual bond in the form of a covenant between God and Jews."<sup>3</sup> It had also, the further advantage of being a "backward province in an even more backward empire."<sup>4</sup> It is perfectly clear that, the effort of all Zionist apologetics from the early moment was to lay claim to Palestine both as a less advanced, largely uninhabited region and as a place where the Jews, "enjoying a unique historical privilege could reconstitute the land into a pure Jewish homeland."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Roger Garaudy, L'affaire Israel, p.72

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Edward W. Said, The Question of Palestine, p.23

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

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

Herzl provided political Zionism with his most effective leadership. In 1897, he convened the first Zionist congress in Basel, Switzerland and founded the World Zionist Organization.<sup>1</sup> Most of the one hundred and fifty Zionist delegates were from Eastern Europe. Many of them denied ultimately to set up a Jewish state, but caution and practical considerations caused the congress to pass a resolution favouring only a "home in Palestine";<sup>2</sup> for the Jewish people. The congress on the other hand, approved the four major points of the Basel program as they convene with the final aim: the promotion of industrial and agricultural colonization in Palestine, an effort to organize and to bind together the dispersed Jews by means of appropriate institutions, local and international, in accordance with the laws of each country, an effort to increase their national sentiment and consciousness, and last but not least, the undertaking of preparatory steps to get the consent of Western governments, to the achievement of the aim of Zionism.<sup>3</sup> Thus, the idea of reviving a state which had been buried for almost two thousand years, was launched. And the Zionist project was set forth. Such attempt, however, seemed impractical, and had never been undertaken before; but it was welcomed and much supported by a people whose desperation matched their faith. It was practically fully taken in charge by the wealthy Barons, Lionel De Rothschild and

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<sup>1</sup> Edward W. Said, The Question of Palestine, p. 97

<sup>2</sup> Fred J. Khouri, The Arab-Israeli Dilemma, p. 3

<sup>3</sup> Maxime Rodinson, Israel: A Colonial-Settler State?, p. 44



de Hirsch who had, for sometimes, been behind the "Jewish Colonization Association"<sup>1</sup> for helping Eastern Jews to emigrate to Argentina and Brasil, and the wealthy Jewish communities of Western Europe and the United States. Another baron, Edmond de Rothschild, a wealthy French Jew, provided also Herzl with a substantial support. The latter was in fact eager to extend his experience in the exploitation of the Algerian Arabs as a cheap labor on his vineyards, to some other Arabs in Palestine.<sup>2</sup>

Though the Zionist leaders knew, since a long time ago, that the concerned land was occupied by other people, they underestimated the misconsequences. Herzl and others overlooked the problems which Jewish settlement in Palestine would bring about, to the extent that they thought of different faith and nationality; all living equally in front of law under the Jewish protection. Herzl was also aware of the fact that a Jewish state in the Middle East cannot survive without being protected itself and secured by a big power. He argued about in his "Jewish State", the different advantages that the European countries may get from a Jewish state in Palestine:

We should there form a portion of the rampart of Europe against Asia, an outpost of civilization as opposed to barbarism. We should as a neutral state remain in contact with all Europe, which would have to guarantee our existence.<sup>3</sup>

From here, Herzl and the political Zionism founders sought to convince potential European imperial patrons that Zionism would be

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<sup>1</sup> Edward W. Said, The Question of Palestine, p.70

<sup>2</sup> Roger Garaudy, L'affaire Israel, p.28

<sup>3</sup> Quoted by Colin Chapman, Whose Promised Land?, p.42

their cat's-paw in Palestine. In his attempt to get foreign support, Herzl even tried to persuade the Ottoman authorities to grant Palestine a charter of autonomy. He declared:

If Abdul Hamid would give Palestine to the Zionists as an autonomous vassal statelet, Jewish high finance would solve the problems of his imperial exchequer by paying off its crushing foreign debts.<sup>1</sup>

The Sultan, however, as analysts pointed out, showed no interest in the Zionist proposal as he knew that the idea of autonomy will lead to eventual independence. He was aware of the fact that, if he granted it to the Jews who were a tiny minority in Palestine, he could hardly deny it to the Christian nations<sup>2</sup> in other parts of the Ottoman empire. This rejection did not impede the Zionist plan, if we consider Herzl's trial to obtain the promise that the Russian government will respond positively to his plan of massive immigration of the Russian Jews.

In 1904, Herzl died before the realization of his project but not without giving it the necessary foundations which were as pillars of the Jewish question. Among the various achievements, we can mention the second meeting of the Zionist congress, held in Basel, in 1898, under the leadership of Herzl, and the creation of the Jewish Colonial Trust Limited to be replaced later on in 1903 by the Anglo-Palestine Company.<sup>3</sup> Herzl wanted to provide the Zionist movement with colonial institutions that would organize

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<sup>1</sup> Lenni Brenner, The Iron Wall, p.38

<sup>2</sup> Maxime Rodinson, Israel and the Arabs, p.22

<sup>3</sup> Edward W. Said, The Question of Palestine, p.97



the Jewish immigration toward Palestine. This initiative was well reinforced, later on, when the Jewish National Fund (J.N.F.) came out of the Colonial Trust, with the powers to buy land and hold it in trust for the Jewish people.<sup>1</sup> The J.N.F. was always controlled by the World Zionist Organization and supported by the wealthy Jews, and in 1905, it financed the first land purchases in Palestine. The role of the J.N.F. comprises two related elements; it exists either to develop, buy or lease the acquired land only for the Jews. This role fulfilled perfectly the Zionist colonial project, which consisted of a methodical spoliation of the Arab peasantry and the expropriation of the poor natives. A clear analogy existed between the tasks of the J.N.F. and what Herzl advocated in his journal of June 12, 1895: "...we should expropriate discreetly the private property on the assigned territories."<sup>2</sup>

These points of view show to what extent the native communities were neglected by the Zionist project. In fact, their very existence was jeopardized by the fact that no room seemed to be assigned to them. "They are hardly of any consequence,"<sup>3</sup> said Chaim Weizmann.

The death of Herzl did not bring any change to the Zionist and other Jews recurring differences of opinion. Some wished for autonomy and regarded the settlement in Palestine as an investment

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<sup>1</sup> Anis Sayegh, The Hashemites and the Palestinian Problem, In Arabic (Beyrouth: Modern Library, 1966), p.23

<sup>2</sup> Roger Garaudy, L'affaire Israel, p.127

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p.48

as was the case of the Rothschild family and other barons.<sup>1</sup> Others such as the American rabbis and later on Einstein, Judah L. Magnes, and others considered Palestine as an intellectual, cultural and spiritual-religious centre of Judaism.<sup>2</sup> Such opposition of conceptions was not to last for long. Herzl's successors succeeded in reaching a reconciliation between these conflicting views, under the umbrella of nationalism. It was in fact easy enough, due to the anti-semitism, to gather all the Zionists for the attainment of the common goal. Jewish colonial settlement in Palestine went on to reinforce the Zionist claim over the, when necessary.

X Chaim Weizmann is considered by the modern historians as another influential and eminent leader of the modern Zionist movement.<sup>3</sup> This distinguished British chemist with Nahum Sokolow, a Russian member of the Zionist Executive, were fully committed to lead the efforts to achieve the Zionist objective in Palestine. Weizmann started as early as 1906 to communicate and to establish close contacts with such important and influential British leaders as Lords Balfour and Miener, Lloyd George, Sir Mark Sykes, and the editor of the influential Manchester Guardian, P.C. Scott. Such relations were revealed to be responsible for the chain of events that took place later, particularly in Palestine. Weizmann popularized to the last extent the conditions endured by the Jews in some European countries and tried to convince his partners for a

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<sup>1</sup> Ahmad El Kodsy & Eli Lobel, The Arab World and Israel, pp. 104-5

<sup>2</sup> Roger Garaudy, L'affaire Israel, pp. 142-44

<sup>3</sup> Frank Hardie & Irvin Herman, Britain and Zion, p. 60



Jewish national homeland. The events that occurred, thereafter in Russia,<sup>1</sup> were perfectly exploited to gather the divergent opinions around the Zionist claim for Jewish migration to Palestine. There, the increasing number of the settlers, started to make itself felt by the native population. Moreover, the Jews began to insist on Hebrew as the official language of their communities and to implement a policy of the non-employment of the Arab labor, and the non-use of the Arab markets. This attempt was enhanced by the creation of new Jewish establishments in Palestine. Thus, in 1908, a Zionist office was set up in Jaffa encouraging new migration.<sup>2</sup> The same year witnessed some events that brought about changes in Constantinople; Enver Pasha led the movement of the young Turks, overthrew Abdul Hamid and took over the government of the Ottoman empire.<sup>3</sup> The new regime was revealed to be based on Turkish nationalism embracing all the different national races in the Turkish empire. The supreme institution, the Union and Progress Committee contained a Christian and a Jew among its members. The Jewish circle welcomed the 1908 revolution and its outcomes. The Jewish influence was soon to be apparent within the Committee. The Zionist leaders skillfully moderated their claim from a political aspect to an economic and cultural one, in accordance with the given circumstances. Thus, they founded some active branches throughout the empire under the name of the Palestinian office.

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<sup>1</sup> Russian Revolution of 1905.

<sup>2</sup> Frank Hardie & Irvin Herrman, Britain and Zion, p.15

<sup>3</sup> Anis Sayegh, The Hashemites and the Palestinian Problem, p.23

This is in a way, the outcome of the efforts that Weizmann had put forth many years ago. He was very much the practical and opportunistic Zionist leader. He was able to weld together many of the divergent lines of thought in Zionist circles, and to focus his energies upon the Jewish nationalism and the Jewish state when possible. He succeeded in the field where Herzl failed.<sup>1</sup>

The strenuous efforts of the Zionist movement, were somehow affected by the outbreak of the First World War. The opposing positions of Britain and the Ottoman empire jeopardized to a certain extent the Zionist project. Jewish activities in Palestine were curtailed and the center of the Zionist movement was finally shifted from Germany, now allied with the Ottoman Empire. Although the official headquarters of Zionism was transferred to Copenhagen, the effective center was moved to London. These arrangements were made to further the Jewish question, mainly in England where Zionism enjoyed a steady rise in influence, both cultural and political.<sup>2</sup>

The entry of Turkey into the war at the end of October, 1914 on the side of Germany, added a special element of enthusiasm on the side of the Axis for the war. The opportunistic Weizmann stood faithful to the Zionist line of action and tried to take profit from the new wartime conditions. He took the initiative to appeal Germany to consider the Zionist project, hoping that a

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<sup>1</sup> Frank Hardie & Irwin Herrman, Britain and Zion, pp. 58-59

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 76



victorious Germany would give Zionism Palestine. The talks, finally came to nothing, because of the refusal of the Ottoman Allies.<sup>1</sup> The World Zionist Organization pursued, for any substantial support from any powerful nation, went on. The next call was for England to which Weizmann addressed a memorandum containing these words:

...in submitting our resolution we entrusted our national and Zionist destiny to the Foreign Office and the Imperial War Cabinet in the hope that the problem would be considered in the light of imperial interests and the principles for which the Entente stands.<sup>2</sup>

This declaration aimed at urging Britain's support of Zionist objectives at political as well as military levels, in exchange to the potential services the Zionists will provide the Allies with during the war.

In spite of earlier British assurances to the Arabs for the support of the creation of native Arab governments in the Arab territories under the control of the Ottoman Turks, the London Foreign Office reacted positively to the Zionist appeal.<sup>3</sup> It was seen as a good opportunity to apply perfectly the "Aliens Act"<sup>4</sup> of 1905, forbidding the access into the British territory of the Jews by diverting them toward Palestine, and to put an end to the French interests in the area. The British position has also been influenced to a certain extent by the Jewish strength in the United States. It is quite clear that the British officials took into consideration the appointment of Brandeis, an American Jew, in 1916, as a Justice

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<sup>1</sup> Bassam Bishut, The Role of Zionist Terror in the Creation of Israel (Beirut: Palestine Research Center, 1969), p. 11

<sup>2</sup> Maxime Rodinson, Israel: A Colonial-Settler State?, p. 47

<sup>3</sup> D.R. Gerald Kurland, The Arab-Israeli Conflict, p. 5

<sup>4</sup> Frank Hardie & Irwin Herrman, Britain and Zion, p. 80

of the Supreme Court.<sup>1</sup> The influence of Brandeis on the American political decision, convinced Weizmann to involve him in the process of the realization of the Jewish state. He wrote to him arguing that a Jewish Palestine set up by Britain with the support of America would sweep the combined domination of Islam, Russians and Turks in the Orient.<sup>2</sup> But, in order to enlist Arab support against the Turks, Britain took a momentary decision when promising Shariff Hussein, then ruler of Mecca, a larger Arab kingdom. Consequently the Arabs fought on the Allied side; wholly trusting the British. However, the British colonial impulses with the Zionist pressure were revealed to be stronger than British-Arab relations.

Two years after the beginning of the First World War, Britain opened her intentions; the secret Franco-British agreements, called the Sykes-Picot agreements, had already divided the Middle East region between Britain and France and provided for the internationalization of Palestine.<sup>3</sup> Hussein knew nothing about this treaty until the Bolshevik government of Russia published the agreements.

Such dealings arouse the Arab suspicion, and Hussein asked for more information. He was informed that the agreement was not a formal one and can be repealed. But the British allegiance to Zionism reached a very advanced level even before the end of the war. Such attitude can be explained by the various conducts of the

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<sup>1</sup> Frank Hardie & Irwin Herrman, Britain and Zion, p.44

<sup>2</sup> Groupes D'études et de Recherches, La Palestine en Question. Tome I (Alger: SNED, 1969), p.38

<sup>3</sup> Abdallah Frangi, The PLO and Palestine, p.39



British officials. As early as 1916, Weizmann asked, as a personal reward for his "valuable" contribution to the British war effort, for British support for the Jewish national home in Palestine. Thus, the British-Palestine Committee met in London, one year later, and declared the creation of the Jewish home in Palestine.<sup>1</sup> On November 2, 1917, the British government issued in the form of a personal letter from England's Foreign Minister Lord Arthur Balfour to Baron Rothschild, the Balfour Declaration. It stated:

His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this subject, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish communities or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.<sup>2</sup>

The British commitment was outcome of the different factors, like the need for Jewish financial resources and scientific skills; we discussed their impact previously. This British political act was not to be done without the formal support of the United States for Britain. Later, France and Italy vaguely proclaimed their support for the Zionist program without mentioning the Balfour Declaration itself.

Such attitudes reflect clearly the colonial intentions to the Middle East, where Britain had already taken a real step. Zionist leaders received the declaration with great enthusiasm, even if it did not give them all they wanted, and was not as

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<sup>1</sup> Groupes D'études et de Recherches, La Palestine en Question, p.45

<sup>2</sup> Leonard Stein, The Balfour Declaration (New York: Samhar Press, 1961). Quoted by D.R. Gerald Kurland, The Arab-Israeli Conflict, p.5

specific as they would have liked. Nevertheless, it strengthened the Zionist project immeasurably.

Actually, the Zionists, at least in their more forward demands, had been careful to avoid specifically asking for a Jewish state; despite the fact that a state was indeed their ultimate objective. Zionist leaders were, therefore willing to take one step at a time and reach their aim piecemeal. They were even willing to make tactical retreats when necessary. In fact, these policies and tactics paid off in 1917, and they were to pay off after as well.

Speculations about the real motivations that pushed the British government to issue the Balfour declaration, became the central theme of the British political life.<sup>1</sup> Many theories have been advanced as to the reasons behind this decision. It is quite clear that Arthur Balfour put the weight of his influence, as a Prime Minister, behind the Jewish claims. It is an instance of bad conscience, or perhaps a simple syllogism that a pro-semite is an anti-Zionist, because he wants to add Jewish culture to that of his native land, and an anti-semite is pro-Zionist because he wants Jews to go somewhere else.<sup>2</sup> Balfour, then belonged to those prominent pro-Zionists who had anti-semitic records. He was responsible for the British measure for the restriction-on alleged socio-economic grounds- of the flow of Jewish immigration from Russia. Such action seemed to run parallel to the Herzlian analysis contained in the "Jewish State," considering the "departure of Jews as an

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<sup>1</sup> Anis Sayegh, The Hashemites and the Palestinian Problem, p.71

<sup>2</sup> Frank Hardie & Irwin Herriman, Britain and Zion, p.9



improvement both for them and the countries they leave."<sup>1</sup> Consequently, a large-scale immigration of Russian Jews, was diverted to the Middle East furnishing to a considerable extent the earlier Herzlian plan.

Balfour, however was no blind sentimentalist and was aware of the contradiction, implicit in the promises and assurances given to the Jews and those given to the Arabs. Other theories based on the need of Britain for help in the financing of the war, were advanced. One of these would have stated that the declaration was issued in return for Jewish contributions to the war chest. Yet, another theory relates the British decision to the attempt aiming at the involvement of the United States in the Allied war effort. This thesis stated that the American Jews, still affected by the outbreak of pogroms at Kishinev and large persecution of the Jews in Russia after the killing of Alexander II in 1881, were revealed to be definitely anti-Russian.<sup>2</sup> Their pro-German tendencies, however, would have kept the United States' forces out of the war, unless they had been influenced by the English support of the Zionist project.

According to a source, the Germans and Sultan Abdul Hamid were, themselves, preparing a "declaration with the same aims in view,"<sup>3</sup> and that the Balfour declaration was quickly produced to

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<sup>1</sup> Frank Hardie & Irwin Herrman, Britain and Zion, p.2

<sup>2</sup> Anis Sayegh, The Hashemites and the Palestinian Problem, p.20

<sup>3</sup> Abdallah Frangi, The PLO and Palestine, p.29

head off this effort to gain Jewish support over, to the side of Britain's enemy. Many historians are convinced, however that Britain was virtually motivated by her unabated desire to extend her influence in the Eastern Mediterranean and particularly to provide a buffer between the Suez canal and Syria that seemed to be under the influence of her imperial rival, France.

According to this theory, the British government realized that the preservation of Zionist demands would be a humanitarian excuse for this that might satisfy even the French. Thus, the Zionist leaders, who felt the need of a powerful protector if they were to go on with their program against the rise of national feeling among the Arabs, had obtained the sanction and so the sponsorship of one of the world's great power.

The Arabs, however were considering the declaration surprisingly. Hogarth<sup>1</sup> managed to pacify the Arab attitude as he told Hussein that the "Jewish settlement in Palestine would only be allowed insofar as would be consistent with the political and economic freedom of the Arab population."<sup>2</sup> He, also assured him that Britain was "determined that the Arab race shall be given full opportunity of once again forming a nation in the world."<sup>3</sup>

Fred J. Khouri in his analysis of the new British declaration argues that "the terms political and economic freedom" used by

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<sup>1</sup> Director of the Arabian Department on Allenby's General Staff. Allenby (Edmund Henry) was Commander of British forces in Egypt in the First World War. Commander David George Hogarth had to explain the declaration to the Arabs.

<sup>2</sup> Fred J. Khouri, The Arab-Israeli Dilemma, p.9

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.



the British were stronger than the "civil and religious rights" of the Balfour declaration.<sup>1</sup> The would-be British favour for the Arabs, intended to preserve the Arab allegiance to the empire. The conviction of Hussein in Britain can be explained by his perpetual search for effective support to realize his kingdom, even through concessions to Jews. He promised Weizmann his "freedom from religious prejudices by expressing a willingness to welcome Jews who wished to settle in Palestine or in any other Arab territory as long as these areas remained under Arab control."<sup>2</sup>

**The Zionist commission, led by Weizmann, tried to convince the Arabs in Cairo and in Palestine of its objectives containing no political intentions. Hussein's son, Feisal met Weizmann several times and both of them agreed on a kind of "peace treaty."**<sup>3</sup>

By the end of the First World War, Britain succeeded to appease and to delay the Arab suspicion. During the wartime, the Arabs were not able to find out the similarities between the Jewish aspirations and the British policy in the Middle East. They did not realize that the Western powers with the Zionist movement were acting against the Arab interests. They never suspected the so-called Western assurances but took them at the face value. It was until the Peace Conference that they realized that neither their claims nor the British promises were going to be taken into consideration by the victorious powers in the division of the Ottoman Empire.

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<sup>1</sup> Fred J. Khouri, The Arab-Israeli Dilemma, p.9

<sup>2</sup> Abdallah Frangi, The PLO and Palestine, p.44

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

After the First World War, the victorious allied powers showed a great interest in the Ottoman Empire. Conflicting claims shook the alliance. Such an attitude had an impact on both the Zionists and the Arabs. Unlike the Arabs, the Zionist leaders exerted strong pressure on all the negotiating parties, attending the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, to prevent Palestine from being internationalized and rather being put under the control of Britain.<sup>1</sup>

Even if the Paris Conference did not seem to satisfy the Zionist claims, the Zionist leaders considered its resolutions as a half way toward their ultimate goal. These feelings were to be revealed later, through the chain of events that took place in Palestine.

In Paris, the Zionists put in a comfortable position to realize their project once the Palestine mandate was established.<sup>2</sup> The Arab failure at the Paris Conference can be related to the fact that King Faisal was not able to give the negotiators a clear idea about the Arab situation. His reliance on his British advisor T.E. Lawrence, who was working more for the British, made the Arab cause not presented effectively.<sup>3</sup>

In front of the deteriorated political situation, President Wilson set up the "King-Grane Commission"<sup>4</sup> to analyse the reaction of the Middle Eastern countries towards the new political decisions,

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<sup>1</sup> Abdallah Frangi, The PLO and Palestine, p.45

<sup>2</sup> Fred J. Khouri, The Arab-Israeli Dilemma, p.11

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p.12

<sup>4</sup> Richard H. Curtis, A changing Image: American Perceptions of the Arab-Israeli Dispute (Washington: American Educational Trust, 1982), p.17



and also to give him the satisfaction that he had at least consulted the opinion of the people of Palestine. The commission reported that the overwhelming number of Palestine Arabs wanted Palestine to remain part of Syria with Faisal as the head of the state; if a mandate were established, the Arabs claimed that it be transitory, with either the United States or Britain as the mandatory power. The commission also warned against the extravagant Zionist program for Palestine of non restriction of immigration of Jews, aiming at making Palestine distinctly a Jewish state.<sup>1</sup>

In the meantime and even before the King-Crane report was completed, it was revealed that Wilson intended to go ahead with his support to the Zionist policy, irrespective of the results of the commission. Wilson had, in fact, never considered that the idea of peace and self-determination should be applied in Palestine. Thus, the contacts and discussions conducted by the King-Crane Commission in Palestine and Syria aimed at impressing the Palestinians and tranquilize the anti-Zionists. Moreover, the commission report was ignored by Europe's "peacemakers" at San Remo Conference which put an end to the Arab faith placed in Wilson's fourteen points containing the principle of the self-determination of all nations.

Britain finally got the opportunity to interfere in the Middle East. She has now spheres of influence, the lands now known as Iraq, Trans-Jordan (or Jordan) and of course, Palestine. France

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<sup>1</sup> Richard H. Curtis, A Changing Image: American Perceptions of the Arab-Israeli Dispute, p. 17

has to control what is left of the Fertile Crescent, Syria and Lebanon.

The Zionist dealings in the Middle East became commonly known, mainly in Palestine. The fourth article of the British mandate over Palestine - decided by the General Assembly of the League of Nations on 24 July, 1922- stated:

An appropriate Jewish Agency shall be officially recognized as a public institution for the purpose of advising and cooperating with the administration of Palestine in such economic, social and other matters as may affect the establishment of the national Jewish home and the interests of the Jewish population in Palestine. The institution was to be the Zionist Organization for as long as its organization and constitution are in the opinion of the mandatory appropriate.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, Britain was officially responsible for the assigned territories and the Zionist incursions in Palestine would be carried out under the British shade. The thwarted Arabs in Palestine were resolved to fight against such Jewish colonial invasion. The Jewish communities started forming the "Yishuv", the organized body of people.<sup>2</sup> They sought to strengthen their gains and increase their number through the mass immigration policy.

Initially, the new arrivals did not disturb the Palestinians, so much, who thought that these helpless people had escaped the persecution of Europe and came to the Holy land seeking peace and security.<sup>3</sup> But, soon the advancement of these "unfortunate" people and the expansion of the Zionist movement in Palestine were to be

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<sup>1</sup> Groupe d'Etudes et de Recherches, La Palestine en Question, pp.89-90

<sup>2</sup> Maxime Rodinson, Israel: A colonial-Settler State?, p.63

<sup>3</sup> Bassam Bishut, The Role of the Zionist Terror in the Creation of Israel, p.17



felt by the inhabitants. Consequently, the British High Commissioner of Palestine, who was responsible for the organization of the Jewish immigration, promulgated the first immigration law to limit the number to sixteen thousand and five hundred Jews every year.<sup>1</sup>

However, under the Zionist influence, either through the anti-semitism propaganda or the idea of the promised land, the number of the Jews entering Palestine exceeded largely the official one. Such attempt was purportedly done by the Zionist Organization in order to have the greatest possible influence over the British mandate administration and policies, and to establish the appropriate structures which would later permit them to come to power in Palestine. Various Zionist organizations pressed Britain to realize the Zionist plan considering Palestine as a "home of the World Jewry."<sup>2</sup>

Understandably, differences and conflicts took place between the British mandate government and the Zionist organizations about the immediate establishment of the Jewish national home. The mandate document, however, clearly engaged Britain to look after the civil rights of the Arab Palestinians. But, Britain had already committed herself to a large extent to the Zionist side and therefore could not retreat. As a matter of fact, Britain did not react against the formation of the various Jewish organizations and groups in Palestine.

The Zionist organizations in Palestine obtained the

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<sup>1</sup> Abdallah Frangi, The PLO and Palestine, p.51

<sup>2</sup> Lionty Kothov, The Palestinian Cause: Aggression, Resistance and Peace, in Arabic (Moscow: Soviet Academy of Sciences, 1983), p.76

financial support of the wealthy Jews throughout the world, and the political engagement of the Western governments. This made the Jewish Agency developed into a kind of government similar to the mandate government.<sup>1</sup> The mandate government, thereafter, granted the Agency a right to deal with the development of the country. The Agency became, moreover, responsible for the organization of Jewish immigration, legal and illegal colonization, and settlement policy. In Palestine, it established separate education and health systems for the Jews, and some other institutions related to the settlement such as the acquisition of land and the creation of new jobs for the Jews only. Thus, Palestine went through a chaotic situation, characterized by Jewish violence, and Palestinian unemployment, due to the creation of the "Haganah", a Jewish underground army, by the right wing Zionist leader Jabotinsky in 1920.<sup>2</sup>

All these various Zionist institutions were created in order to achieve both economic and political powers throughout the land of Palestine. Consequently, the Palestinian inhabitants were to be isolated, deprived of land and job, and finally obliged to leave the region. We can therefore notice a perfect analogy in the policy adopted and followed by the Zionists in Palestine and that of the "colons"<sup>3</sup> in Algeria who pushed the natives from fertile land to rocky mountains. In both cases, the idea of separation from the main land was raised. But due to some determinant factors, specific to each

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<sup>1</sup>Maxime Rodinson, Israel and the Arabs, pp.33-34

<sup>2</sup>Lenni Brenner, The Iron Wall, pp.54-59

<sup>3</sup>A French word commonly used in Algeria to designate the non-muslims established on the Algerian farms by the French colonial system.



of the two countries, this idea was to be fulfilled in Palestine and not in Algeria. The British hesitant government was unable to apply its mandate policy in front of the increasing power of the Jewish Agency, whose members influenced more than one Western government through their large scale propaganda throughout the world.<sup>1</sup>

The Arab Palestinians then became aware of the extent of the danger caused by the Zionist movement. They protested and appealed Britain to abide by her earlier promises. The influx of Jewish immigrants continued to pour into Palestine, in open defiance of the Arab opposition. This brought about serious outbreaks between the two communities over the land ownership. The British proposal to the Arabs was the formation of an "Arab Agency"<sup>2</sup> to retort the Zionist Organization. This was, in fact, another kind of compromise aiming at avoiding the Arab revolt. On the other hand, the Zionists urged for more immigration and turned to violent methods in the acquisition of new land.

The British authorities, soon realized the extent of the danger, and in 1937, the Peel Commission asked for the division of Palestine into Arab, Jewish and British - with the neutral British

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<sup>1</sup>In 1922 the American Congress passed a resolution: "Resolved by the Senate and the House of Representatives of USA in Congress assembled, that the USA favors the establishment in Palestine, of a national home for the Jewish people," Congressional Record, 67th Congress, 2nd session. Quoted by Bichara Khader, Histoire de la Palestine, p. 103

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

buffer separating the two hostile communities - states.<sup>1</sup> While the Zionist Congress accepted the proposal, the Arabs rejected it, and asked for the control of all of Palestine.

Britain had shown herself increasingly sensitive to Arab hostility toward the Zionist plans. While she had once seen a solution resting upon a partition and thus in the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine, the looming war with Germany slowed down such project. The second White Paper is considered by Maxime Rodinson as an open hostility to any Jewish state, but with the intention to create an independent Palestinian state where the Jews form the minority.<sup>2</sup> Such sudden change of British attitude toward the Arabs, sought the Arab support in the Second World War. Thus, Britain avoided the Arabs to go over to her enemies.

According to the second White Paper, Palestine will get its sovereignty and become a democratic state, and promised also that the number of Jews that would be allowed to enter Palestine will be reduced to 75,000 per year by 1944.<sup>3</sup> Any further Jewish immigration would occur with the consent of the Arab population.

The Zionists reacted violently against such measures contrary to their aspirations. The Jewish Agency considered the White Paper as void and decided to fight its decisions vigorously. On the eve of the war, the Zionists showed no disposition to fight against Britain. The president of the Executive Committee of the

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<sup>1</sup>D.R.Gerald Kurland, The Arab-Israeli Conflict, p.37

<sup>2</sup>Maxime Rodinson, Israel: A Colonial-Settler State?, p.58

<sup>3</sup>Abdallah Frangi, The PLO and Palestine, p.63



Jewish Agency, David Ben-Gurion declared at the Zionist Congress in Geneva, in August 1939: "We will fight with England against Hitler as if the White Paper did not exist and we will fight the White Paper as if there were no war."<sup>1</sup>

In 1942, the Zionist leaders decided to state openly their aims; they ratified the "Biltmore program"<sup>2</sup>, adopted previously at the New York meeting, to become then the official program of Zionism, and allowed the birth of some new para-military groups such as the "Irgun" or Erzel and the "Lehi" or Stern.<sup>3</sup> According to a view, these extremist Jewish bodies were to be the source of violence against the Arab population and the British officials of the mandate government.<sup>4</sup>

The anti-British campaign was therefore launched, showing the British as oppressors and colonizers. The British limitations of Jewish immigration coincided with the difficult conditions endured by Jews in Germany. This made the Jewish Agency acting opposingly and diverted thousands of Jews into Palestine from different parts of the world, and asked for an open struggle against the British "tyranny," to end the Jewish tragedy in Europe.<sup>5</sup> The Arabs, on the other hand, reminded Britain of her earlier pledges. Amidst such explosive situation, Britain appointed a joint Anglo-

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<sup>1</sup> Abdallah Frangi, The PLO and Palestine, p.63

<sup>2</sup> Maxime Rodinson, Israel: A Colonial-Settler State?, p.66

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p.65

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p.67

American Commission in November 1945, to inquire about the prevailing conditions in Palestine. Two years later, the commission urged Britain to allow the entry of 100,000 homeless European Jews into Palestine and asked for the partition of the country between the Arab and Jewish communities.<sup>1</sup> At that time, the flow of the Jews into Palestine continued until the Jewish population augmented from 11 per cent in 1922, to 32 per cent in 1945.<sup>2</sup> Britain thought then to involve the United States in the military and financial charges for Palestine - to enable Britain to apply her mandate regulations and the commission's report.

The idea of partition was to be without success in front of the Arab disapproval, and the claim for an independent Palestinian state. Though the Jewish Agency called on the British to proclaim a Jewish state where the Palestinian Muslims should become a minority.

The Palestinian situation was becoming more and more precarious for Great Britain which found herself in a real political quagmire. She finally declared her incapacity to find any appropriate solution to the Palestinian problem that may satisfy all the parties concerned. Thus in 1947, the Palestinian mandate was over, and responsibility was passed on to the United Nations' General Assembly for solving the country's problems. The General Assembly recommended the partition of Palestine into Arab and Jewish states

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<sup>1</sup>D.R.Gerald Kurland, The Arab-Israeli Conflict, p.8

<sup>2</sup>Bassam Bishuti, The role of the Zionist terror in the creation of Israel, p.25



with a "corpus separation"<sup>1</sup> for Jerusalem and its surroundings. The resolution was voted on 29 november, 1947. The vote has immediately been followed by violent clashes in Palestine between the Jews who hailed it, and the Arabs who rejected it and decided not to consider themselves concerned by this decision.

In front of such state of affairs, the British government announced its intention to evacuate the country soon. So, the Zionists hastened in consolidating their positions and their military forces invaded territories attributed to the Arabs, **including Jerusalem. Such Zionist acts were accomplished with the support of their committed allies in Europe and America, and also with the conspiracy of some Arab leaders.**<sup>2</sup>

We do not intend here to lay any critical analysis on personal intentions of the Arab leaders. One can easily see that the prevailing conditions throughout the Arab world in 1948 were not to contribute to any collective Arab action. The same conditions worked perfectly for the Zionist aims leading to the "Deir Yassin massacre"<sup>3</sup> and the proclamation of the Jewish state. The proclamation occurred on 14 May, 1948, when the British High Commissioner had left Palestine and the evacuation of the British troops had begun. David Ben-Gurion announced the creation of the state of Israel at Tel-Aviv. On the following day, the dispersed armies of the surrounding Arab countries tried to release Palestine.

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<sup>1</sup> An internationalized area, according to the U.N. partition plan of 1947.

<sup>2</sup> Jean Paul Chagnollaud, Maghreb et Palestine, pp. 100-102

<sup>3</sup> Maxime Rodinson, Israel and the Arabs, p. 34

Their attempt was in vain due, to factors inherent in the prevailing situation in the Middle East. The large and effective support that the European and American Governments provided to the Jewish State added to the Arab military inexperience, corruption and above all the rivalry between Arab states led to the defeat of the Arab troops.<sup>1</sup> In the meantime, the United Nations, under the pressure of the big powers, mainly the United States, reached a cease-fire **resolution on 11 March, 1949. Such efforts in Maxime Rodinson's** words ended the war but did not make peace.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Maxime Rodinson, Israel and the Arabs, p. 35

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.



### CHAPTER III

#### THE FORMATION OF PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE TO ZIONIST STATE

The first and second decades of the twentieth century witnessed the emergence of a new type of intellectuals in the Arab world - then under the Ottoman Empire. They were open to the currents and <sup>the</sup> prevailing ideas of the century, and were convinced of the need to lead their peoples out of humiliation and foreign domination. Gradually some significant groups of men grew up, putting into effect the desire to protect the achievements of the Arab cultural and literary renaissance of the previous decades and the effort to obtain political rights for the Arab citizens of the Ottoman Empire.

The Arab awakening conduced the Arab nationalists in the Middle East toward the struggle against the Western imperialism - primarily British but also French and American. The Arabs wanted, in fact to reestablish and maintain their unity despite the considerable amputations of the Arab world.<sup>1</sup> They therefore felt very much concerned by the fate of the Palestinian land. Hence, the enmity shown to the Zionist project arose because it was regarded as a "final step" of imperialism, and as an absolute imperialism, deprived from any educative approach and human relations.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, Jewish immigrants from Europe were regarded as "aliens" to

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<sup>1</sup>Maxime Rodinson, Israel et le Refus Arabe, pp.28-30

<sup>2</sup>Jacques Berque, Les Arabes d'Hier à Demain ( Paris:Seuil, 1969), p.280

the Palestinian land.

The Arab Palestinians, almost without exception were very much affected by the Arab rejection of imperialist intentions. Hence, many political and intellectual organizations were formed to direct the energies of the Arab Palestinian communities, and create a Palestinian identity opposed equally to British rule and to Zionist colonization. Though such organizations have to survive only through the mobilization of the working mass and peasantry, they reflected the role played by the intelligentsia.<sup>1</sup>

In fact, the Palestinians could not develop a clear sense of national identity due to some constraints specific to the Palestinian land. This land was considered, for a long time, as a Southern part of Syria; consequently the ideological point of view of the Syrian leaders dominated the Palestinian affairs. This made the Palestinian nationalism remain somehow without a clear democratic structure and political line.<sup>2</sup>

Family rivalries in Palestine was at its height, bringing about the decline and split of the neo-nationalist movements. Some of them headed by the Nashashibis, preferred close collaboration with mandatory government.<sup>3</sup> Others led by the El-Husseini family formed the Supreme Muslim Council of which El-Haj Amin El-Husseini, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, was president.<sup>4</sup> Despite all this, the

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<sup>1</sup> Jacques Berque, Les Arabes d'Hier à Demain, p.273

<sup>2</sup> Ahmad El Kodsy & Eli Lobel, The Arab World and Israel, p.41

<sup>3</sup> Bichara et Naim Khader, Textes de la Revolution Palestinienne. (Paris: Sindbad, 1975), p.21

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p.32



nationalist movement of the Palestinian Arab communities possessed from its early days, a specific characteristic, the struggle against a concrete enemy — Zionism. Muslims everywhere were called upon to assist Palestine's Arabs in preserving Islam's holy places in Jerusalem.

Though the impact of burgeoning Arab nationalism was probably less in Palestine than in neighbouring areas, there was a growing feeling, by the 1920's, that the Arabs of Palestine should have something of their own.<sup>1</sup> The result was the event of prophet Mussa, in 4 April 1920, that was seen as the starting point of organized bloody struggle between Arabs of Palestine and the Zionists after the First World War.<sup>2</sup> It is quite evident that until this event, the Palestinian opposition to Jewish colonies had no political contest.

The radicalization of the Palestinian Arab movement during the two other major revolts that occurred in Palestine in 1936— due to the British permission of Jewish mass immigration— and in 1947 —related to the United Nations partition resolution and the use of arms by Zionist groups—, was part of more general processes which took place in Palestine and throughout the Middle Eastern countries. The Arab revolt in Palestine that lasted three years (1936-1939), was spontaneous and popular, stirred up by peasantry, bedouins and villagers. So, it was a violent and a persistent revolt. Though it was defeated militarily, it was quite successful

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<sup>1</sup> Anis Sayegh, Palestine and Arab Nationalism, p.36

<sup>2</sup> Idem, The Hashemites and the Palestinian Problem, p.50

politically.<sup>1</sup> It was a movement expressing the aims of the Arabs, their demands, and their readiness to fight for the liberation of Palestine. During an internal discussion, David Ben Gurion declared:

The revolt is an active resistance by the Palestinians to what they regard as a usurpation of their homeland by the Jews... Behind the terrorism is a movement, which though primitive is not devoid of idealism and self-sacrifice.<sup>2</sup>

This gives an evidence of how strong the revolt was. It greatly affected the various Palestinian political parties that grouped to form the Arab Higher Committee, presided over by the Mufti of Jerusalem, El-Husseini.<sup>3</sup>

The Palestinian difficulty, on the other hand, gained pace throughout the Arab world and became a key element in the Arab foreign relations. The inter-Arab relations were, therefore, modulated according to the extent of perception, as well as readiness to get involved, of individual Arab state for the Palestine issue. Hence, the Arab kings intervened to end the "troubles" that broke out in 1936 and intensified in 1937, after the Peel partition plan.<sup>4</sup> They did conspire with Britain to crush the uprisings and persuade the Arab Palestinians to believe in Britain's good intentions. The Arab involvement in Palestinian affairs gave

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<sup>1</sup>Yehoshua Porat, "The Palestinian-Arab Nationalist Movement," The Palestinians, p.124

<sup>2</sup>Noam Chomsky, The Fateful Triangle (London: Pluto Press, 1983), pp.91-92

<sup>3</sup>Jean Paul Chagnollaude, Maghreb et Palestine, p.56

<sup>4</sup>Yehoshua Porat, "The Palestinian-Arab Nationalist Movement," The Palestinians, p.124



Britain the opportunity to proclaim, in 1939, a so-called new policy for Palestine. After the London conference, the British government published a White Paper, containing decisions of stopping the Jewish immigration and the promise of independence to Palestine.<sup>1</sup>

One can note here that the sudden shift in Britain's Palestine policy was neither a fortuitous event nor a result of the Arab impact on British government, but it was simply due to the approaching of the brink of the Second World War. Britain considered the friendship of the Arabs to be of vital importance during the war. So, it played the cards of Palestine problem as it was the central political theme of the Arab states. The policy of gaining time and diverting Arab energies, had already paid off during the First World War.

The Arabs, mainly of Palestine, did not take a fancy to the British new policy, as it did not satisfy their demands. They continued to oppose the Jewish immigration and the idea of partition of Palestine. Britain, however, went on her attempt to convince more the Arabs, promising independence of their territories by the end of the war. Moreover, in 1941, Anthony Eden declared that Britain would support any attempt aimed at Arab unity, to show the British intention to keep the word.<sup>2</sup>

During the Second World War, Arabs' view on British policy was not unanimous. The Arabs of Palestine were, in fact, divided into two large political groupings and stood in conflict with each other.

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<sup>1</sup>Maxime Rodinson, Israel and the Arabs, p.32

<sup>2</sup>Groupe d'Etudes et de Recherches, La Palestine en Question, p.121

The first one, sponsored by King Abdullah of Transjordan, favored close relationship with Britain in order to realize the greater Syria project, including Palestine.<sup>1</sup> The second one, however, distrusted totally Britain and advocated the creation of a new Arab state in Palestine headed by Haj Amin El-Husseini, with the support of Egypt and some other Arab states afraid of any further territorial annexation of King Abdullah in the Middle East.<sup>2</sup>

Through this inquiet atmosphere, the Arab Palestinian communities thought it best to rely on the independent Arab states in their opposition to the growing Zionist pressure. In fact, during this period of time, Zionism also was looking for a new protector, rather than Britain, and seemed to find it in the United States, where the Zionist movement was gaining pace. The Jews, throughout the world, grew strong by exploiting the sympathy of the world for what they had been subjected to under Hitlerism. In an attempt to face the Zionist movement in the Middle East and to take a path toward the Arab unity, the founding charter of the Arab league, signed in Cairo in 1945, gave a special attention to the Palestinian problem, with a special paragraph of the league statutes.<sup>3</sup> And Musa

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<sup>1</sup> Anis Sayegh, The Hashemites and the Palestinian Problem, p.293

<sup>2</sup> Jean-Paul Chagnollaud, Maghreb et Palestine, p.100

<sup>3</sup> Groupe d'Etudes et de Recherches, La Palestine en Question, p.128. As far as the Arab league is concerned, on 7 October, 1944 under the presidency of Nahas Pasha of Egypt, the representatives of seven Arab states—Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Transjordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Yemen—agreed, at Alexandria, on the creation of the Arab league.



Alami was appointed as a Palestinian delegate to take part in the meetings of the Arab league.

By the end of the Second World War the Arabs tried, through a plan they presented to the United Nations, to obtain from Britain the independence of Palestine and to avoid its partition.<sup>1</sup> However, the pan-Arab attempt was revealed to be ineffective as it could not avoid the vote on the disgraceful partition plan of Palestine at the General Assembly in 1947. The United Nations resolution was not passed without the American pressure on the members of the United Nations Organization, and the secret diplomatic activities of the Zionist leaders. The Arabs reacted violently and repudiated the international decision which they considered as unfair.<sup>2</sup> But the bulk of the Jews accepted the recommendation, even if it was far below their expectations; one which, nonetheless, might provide them with a firm base.<sup>3</sup>

Civil strife broke out right away after the announcement of the resolution, with terror and violence on both sides. During the period preceding the fateful day of 15 May, 1948, guerrilla struggle raged in Palestine. Each side tried to acquire as much space as possible before the withdrawal of the British troops.<sup>4</sup> The better-organized Jewish armies had quickly taken over parts of

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<sup>1</sup> Abdallah Frangi, The PLO and Palestine, p.74

<sup>2</sup> Population: Arabs: 1.200.000 = 65% — Jews: 600.000 = 33%  
Land Ownership: Arabs: 15.066 Km<sup>2</sup>=93% — Jews: 1.134Km<sup>2</sup> = 7%

<sup>3</sup> "Entretien avec Maxime Rodinson", Contact Magazine, Bimensuel du Maghreb, n° 19, du 24 October 1974, Tunis, p.15

<sup>4</sup> Maxime Rodinson, Israel et le Refus Arabe, p.38

territories assigned to the Palestinians by the United Nations, and defeated the astonishingly weak Arab armies.

Once again, the dependence on the Arab military force did not bring about the results that the Arabs of Palestine had reckoned upon.<sup>1</sup> Moreover the Arab defeat by Israel in 1948 was the most terrible blow to Arab national pride, and an end to an illusion — the illusion of Arab unity.<sup>2</sup> It rather revealed the prevailing collision of interests existing between the Arab states during this critical phase of the Arab history.

The newly established Arab league was neither able to avoid the loss of Palestine, nor the Baghdad Pact, nor the tensions between its members.<sup>3</sup> The Arab states, full of bitterness and rancour, refused to recognize Israel's existence as a sovereign state and vowed to exterminate her. The Palestinians were determined to carry on the struggle they started in 1936. The setbacks of the Arab defeat was the fragmentation of the Arab Palestinian population into refugees in the Gaza Strip, into citizens of Israel, into refugees and permanent residents of the Kingdom of Jordan and refugees in Syria, Lebanon, the Arabian side of the Gulf and in other parts of the world.<sup>4</sup> Consequently, about 700.000 Palestinians fled or were expelled during the war of 1948, and were relegated to the status of non-entities. The clearing out of Palestine was caused

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<sup>1</sup>D.R. Gerald Kurland, The Arab-Israeli Conflict, pp.9-12

<sup>2</sup>Charles Douglas-Home, The Arabs and Israel, p.65

<sup>3</sup>Jacques Berque, Les Arabes d'Hier à Demain, p.265

<sup>4</sup>Bichara et Na'im Khader, Textes de la Revolution Palestiniene, p.27



chiefly by the Israeli terror and cruelty — the Deir Yassin massacre as an example — and not by the incitation, or propaganda of the Arab leaders.<sup>1</sup>

The United Nations Organization sought to remedy the situation by its creation of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency ( U.N.R.W.A. ) for Palestinian refugees, in the Near East.<sup>2</sup> The assigned role to this Agency was to provide the fifty six camps of Palestinian refugees with tents, medical services, education and professional training. Unfortunately, such role remained fruitless for financial constraints due to the considerable number of Palestinians driven out of their homeland and destituted from their land and properties. The UNRWA camps gathered mainly the unskilled laborers and landless persons who became dependent on the United Nations' charity for their survival.<sup>3</sup> Israel and her allies offered to compensate the displaced Palestinians for what they left in Palestine, so they could resettle elsewhere. Such an attitude explains, clearly Israel's intention of not being prepared to allow the Palestinian return, in order to avoid the destruction of the racial exclusiveness and Jewish culture.<sup>4</sup> In 1948, Ben Gurion declared: " We must do everything in our power to ensure that they never return."<sup>5</sup> The Palestinians rejected the "generous" indemnity

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<sup>1</sup> Noam Chomsky, The Fateful Triangle, pp. 96-97

<sup>2</sup> Colin Smith, The Palestinians, p. 19

<sup>3</sup> Abdallah Frangi, The PLO and Palestine, pp. 91-92

<sup>4</sup> Maher Sherif, "The Bases of Zionist Ideology", Palestine Affairs, ed. Dr. Anis Sayegh, 47 (July 1975), pp. 115-16

<sup>5</sup> Maxime Rodinson, Israel et le Refus Arabe, p. 65

clinging to the dream that they would one day be able to come back to their homeland.

It is common to refer to the 1948 disaster and its consequences as an open betrayal of some Arab states to the Palestinian cause.<sup>1</sup> Thus, Jordan and Israel became practically the successor states of the Palestinian one. Secret negotiations took place between some of Arab leaders and the Israelis. Farouk of Egypt shared the division of the Gaza region, and Emir Abdullah was allowed to annex the West Bank, under the protection of Israel.<sup>2</sup> Later, the results of such conspiracies were revealed to be more dangerous than the state of Israel itself. The Arab Palestinians relied entirely on their brethren to preserve the Palestinian land; that is why their deception was greater than the advent of the state of Israel.

Despite such disillusion, the participation of Arab combatants in the war of 1948 made the Arabs of Palestine hope for a better Arab support. They felt that their struggle against Israel has nevertheless become the main concern of some devoted Arab nationalists.<sup>3</sup> The Arab states finally got wind of the immensity of the disaster and the revelation of the extent of the Zionist evils and imperialist intentions in the area, decided to "move accordingly." Thus, the Arab league decided in 7 July, 1948 to create a

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<sup>1</sup> Anis Sayegh, The Hashemites and the Palestinian Problem, pp. 253-287

<sup>2</sup> Noam Chomsky, The Fateful Triangle, pp. 96-97

<sup>3</sup> Anis Sayegh, Palestine and Arab Nationalism, p. 38



"temporary civil administration" to deal with the Arab Palestinians affairs inside and outside Palestine.<sup>1</sup>

The Palestinian nationalists, collectively, reacted through an attempt to resurge some political organizations to gather the efforts and energies of all Palestinian communities. As early as 1950, they began to take their fate into their own hands. Their common concern was how to find suitable means to liberate their land in defiance to imperialism and its agents in the region. Thus, the Movement of Arab Nationalists (Al-Qaumiyyun Al-Arab) headed by George Habash was organized in Beirut at that time.<sup>2</sup> Its motto was "unity, freedom, revenge." It aimed at the attraction of all the Arab countries in the process of the liberation of Palestine, using their economic resources and human potentialities to a large extent.

At the same time, some Palestinians were attracted by the newly born Ba'ath party of Michel Aflaq.<sup>3</sup> This party emerged in Iraq and Syria, and saw in the Arab unity the best ways to bring independence to Palestine. These two political movements, actually, pinned the hopes of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees and sympathizers for the release from the camps and<sup>a</sup> final return. The defeat of 1948, in fact, caused the emergence of a succession of Palestinian political organizations. The Federation of the Palestinian students in Egypt was founded in Cairo by Yassir Arafat, and a number of those who later were to be his colleagues in the leader-

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<sup>1</sup> Bichara et Nā'im Khader, Textes de la Revolution Palestinienne, p.31

<sup>2</sup> Yehoshua Porat, "The Palestinian-Arab Nationalist movement", p.125

<sup>3</sup> Jacques Berque, Les Arabes d'Hier à Demain, p.94

ship of Fatah.<sup>1</sup> These students were very active and capable of conveying the Palestinian cause to non-Arab citizens. They also succeeded to establish a direct contact with students' organizations and political movements outside the Arab world. Yassir Arafat presented the Palestinian problem skilfully and persistently until it gained support and sympathy throughout the world.<sup>2</sup>

Arafat and his comrades were convinced of the importance of raising Palestinian consciousness for armed struggle for their independence. They adopted the name of Fatah, permuted form of which in Arabic is "hatf" meaning "death from a lightning stroke," for their organization.<sup>3</sup> As early as 1953, they launched sporadic attacks against Israel conducted by guerrilla elements of the organization.

After that, the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip tried to imitate the students' Federation and organized themselves under the leadership of some of their nationalists such as Khalil Wazir (Abu Jihad), later commander of the Al-Assifa forces, and Abu-Yussef El-Najar who was assassinated by an Israeli commando in 1973.<sup>4</sup> The aim of such groups in the Gaza Strip was to create a common front, around which all the Palestinian movements of resistance would gather, leaving apart their political differences.

In pursuance of this some Palestinian political organiza-

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<sup>1</sup>Chaim I. Waxman, "Varieties of Palestinian Nationalism", The Palestinians, pp.114-15

<sup>2</sup>Abdallah Frangi, The PLO and Palestine, p.95

<sup>3</sup>Chaim I. Waxman, "Varieties of Palestinian Nationalism", p.115

<sup>4</sup>Abdallah Frangi, The PLO and Palestine, p.95



tions clearly showed their non-reliance on the Arab armies and governments or on the United Nations' resolutions to recover their legitimate rights. However, the beginning of their first independent effort coincided with the success of the Egyptian Revolution led by Gamal Abdul-Nasser.<sup>1</sup>

Along the same line, encouragement by Nasser of the Palestinians to develop their military resistance was consistent. As an Arab nationalist, Nasser showed immediately a fervent interest to the Palestinian problem. He did not hesitate to allow the Palestinian military groups to use the Egyptian territory as a base from which they directed attacks against Israel. He even provided them with arms and adequate military training in Guerrilla warfare.<sup>2</sup>

Israel and its allies were no longer content to see their existence in the region in danger. Such fears increased in 1956 when President Nasser decided to nationalize the Suez Canal. The decision threatened to a large extent the imperialist supremacy in the Middle East. The Zionist leaders therefore took the opportunity to occupy the Gaza Strip in order to eliminate the Palestinian military groups and to put an end to their dangerous harassments. The event was also good enough for Britain to attack and come back to the Middle East, repudiating the Evacuation Treaty of 1954.<sup>3</sup> For

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<sup>1</sup> Anis Sayegh, Palestine and Arab Nationalism, p.37

<sup>2</sup> Maxime Rodinson, Israel et le Refus Arabe, p.71

<sup>3</sup> Richard H. Curtis, A Changing Image: American Perceptions of the Arab-Israeli Dispute, p.39. As far as the Evacuation Treaty of 1954 is concerned, the agreement was reached with Egypt on the final withdrawal of British armed forces from the Canal zone, within a period of twenty months.

the French government, being unable to crush the Algerian revolt of the first of November 1954, hoped to annihilate in Egypt the leaders of the Algerian Revolution and its ally.<sup>1</sup>

A Franco-British expedition, helped in by Israel and consisted of invading Egypt and taking control of Suez canal, was stopped by the effort of both America and Russia. Israel refuted the idea to withdraw from the Sinai desert for security reasons, but finally Ben Gurion accepted it and informed Eisenhower that Israel has never planned to annex the Sinai desert.<sup>2</sup> Though the idea of launching a "preventive war" was planned since 12 October 1955, when Menahem Begin declared to the Knesset that the war against the Arab states must take place without any hesitation.<sup>3</sup> Skillful Israeli leaders cooperated with American peace initiative after having suppressed the Palestinian military activities specially in Gaza Strip.

The tripartite aggression against Egypt committed the Palestinians to intensify their struggle against the Zionist state, using their resources and possibilities to the last extent. The event had, on the other hand, taught the Palestinian resistance movement a significant lesson. It confirmed the effectiveness of small military groups, if being united under an independent Palestinian leadership with clear political aims.

The Ba'ath party seemed to respond to the Palestinian

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<sup>1</sup> Roger Garaudy, L'affaire Israel, p.157

<sup>2</sup> Richard H. Curtis, A Changing Image, p.49

<sup>3</sup> Roger Garaudy, L'affaire Israel, p.157



needs. Many Palestinians then joined its ranks. The Ba'ath party and the Arab Nationalists were the most influential political movements in the Arab world at that time.<sup>1</sup> They had their strongholds in Syria and Iraq, and, therefore, attracted the Palestinian refugees there.

The new situation gave birth to some Palestinian political groups, such as the National Unity Front Al-Fatah ( Harakat Al Tahrir Al Watani Al Palestini Fatah),<sup>2</sup> founded in 1955, and reinforced its structures after the Suez war. The Al-Fatah<sup>3</sup> organization openly called for a Palestinian entity and a Palestinian way of fighting. The immediate aim of its leaders was to win over a great number of Palestinians and to extend the sphere of influence till beyond Gaza Strip, Cairo, Southern Lebanon, Jordan and elsewhere. Various cells were also set up in the countries usually inhabited by Palestinian immigrants such as Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the Gulf states. Al-Fatah leaders thought to set out on the path of the Vietnamese, Yugoslav and Algerian revolutions in taking up the armed struggle and political propaganda against Israel throughout the world.<sup>4</sup> Military operations were therefore organized by the members of the group and executed by Al-assifa ( the Storm).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Yehoshua Porat, "The Palestinian-Arab Nationalist Movement", The Palestinians, p.126

<sup>2</sup>Taken from Abdallah Frangi, The PLO and Palestine, p.95

<sup>3</sup>Meaning in Arabic, conquest or victory.

<sup>4</sup>Abdallah Frangi, The PLO and Palestine, p.97

<sup>5</sup>It is a fighting military organization constituted and led by Al-Fatah group.

On 31 December, 1964 the first spectacular military attack of Al-Assifa destroyed a great number of Israeli posts. Though this action was successful, it was condemned by almost all the Middle East Arab countries which decided to forbid any further Palestinian military activities on their territories, fearing Israeli retaliation. If we consider the following figures we may understand the reasons of such Arab attitude:

Raids of reprisals by Israel against the Arab neighbors, <sup>1</sup>				
Years	Egypt	Jordan	Syria	Lebanon
1965	595	843	4.726	88
1966	392	579	4.181	64
<u>General Total: 11.468</u>				

The number of the Israeli military reprisals against these Arab countries was so high that had a great impact on their relationships with the Palestinian military groups.

It is interesting to know that the first Palestinian Fedayee was killed by Jordanian army bullets.<sup>2</sup> The hostile attitude showed by the Jordanian Kingdom towards the Palestinian resistance resulted in a series of bloody confrontations between the royal army and the Fedayeen.

Despite the Arab negative position towards the Palestinian military groups, Al-Fatah continued to execute its military operations until after the June war of 1967. In the meantime, two important events contributed to the decision making of Al-Fatah organization to fight without waiting for any Arab support; the first was the collapse of the union between Egypt and Syria which

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<sup>1</sup>Groupe d'Etudes et de Recherches, La Palestine en Question, Tome I, p.278

<sup>2</sup>The Palestinian Fedayee shot by the Jordanian army bullets was Ahmad Mussa.



might have been the preamble for the liberation of Palestine. The second was that the independence of Algeria, after seven years of armed struggle. So, the Palestinians hoped no more for any near Arab unity, and rather did rely on popular revolt, claimed by Al-Fatah, and proved its effectiveness.<sup>1</sup> This led once more to the emergence of a great number of military groups.

By 1960, there were about forty Palestinian military organizations in exile struggling actively for the liberation from non-entity, oppression and exile.<sup>2</sup> They were, however, of different ideologies, tactics, and strategies. The remnant of Palestinian groups inside Israel showed a kind of conflicting attitude with the goals of the deported Palestinian people.

The organization of Usrat al-Ard (family of the land) aimed at remaining in their land (in Israel) with the will to submit to Israeli polity and the attempt to acquire equal rights.<sup>3</sup> Whereas, the military branch of the movement of Nationalist Arabs—Abtal al-Audeh (heros of return)—had a different position and was very active, since its foundation in 1966, to realize the liberation of Palestine.<sup>4</sup> Another group issued from the movement of the Nationalist Arabs, Munadhamat Shabab Al-Tha'r (Youth Organization for the Revenge) organized its first military operation against Israel on

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph Neyer, "The Emergence of Yasser Arafat", The Palestinians, p.128

<sup>2</sup> Abdaklah Frangi, The PLO and Palestine, p.94

<sup>3</sup> Edward W. Said, The Question of Palestine, p.135

<sup>4</sup> Bichara et Naim Khader, Textes de la Revolution Palestinienne, p.46

the eve of the war of June 1967.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the Liberation Front of Palestine — Jabhat Tahrir Filastin — was formed in 1968 by Ahmad Jibril and Ahmad Zaarour to participate in the common struggle, with the other Palestinian military groups, against the Zionist state.<sup>2</sup>

The awakening of the Palestinians made the Arab states react accordingly. On 15 September, 1963 the Arab League Council decided to create a Palestinian Organization to affirm the Palestinian national entity, and to assure and safeguard the defense of Palestinian interests throughout the world.<sup>3</sup>

Ahmad Shukeiry, a Palestinian lawyer, was entrusted the **chairmanship of the organization and later became the Palestinian** delegate at the Arab League. He formed the Palestine Liberation Army as a military wing of the Palestine Liberation Organization, but was considered as an integral body of the Arab armies, that is to say, no freedom of action without the Middle East Arab states' consent.<sup>4</sup> The PLO was assigned the task of being the umbrella organization for all the other Palestinian organizations which can be controlled and manipulated easily. Such Arab dispositions did not appeal to the various Palestinian groups. Thus, the leaders of Al-Fatah expressed their doubts concerning the potential success of an organization which dissociated itself from the popular

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<sup>1</sup> Bichara et Naim Khader, Textes de la Revolution Palestiniene, p.46

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Abdallah Frangi, The PLO and Palestine, p.99

<sup>4</sup> Ahmad El Kodszy and Eli Lobel, The Arab World and Israel, p.51



revolutionary forces.

During the first Palestinian National Council, on 1 June 1964, Al-Fatah had to act or else lose the influence it had gained in the rising Palestinian national movement. Its leaders did their best to convince the participants of the need of an independent Palestinian armed struggle.

The commitments of Shukeiri to the Arab states made his organization unable to crystallize the Palestinian energies and to determine the means and methods necessary to the liberation of Palestine.<sup>1</sup> In the meantime, Al-Fatah grew stronger and emerged as a great fighting Palestinian Organization. Its members proved it perfectly during the June war, and the battle of Karameh that we will discuss later. The main aim of Al-Fatah was to assure the return of the Palestinians to their homeland.

The radicalization of the Palestinian attitude, due to the way of fighting of Al-Fatah, led to the emergence of some other organizations on the Palestinian political and military scenes.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine was propelled by the members of Ba'ath party, around the 1960's, to represent the Syrian point of view on the Palestinian cause. Its left wing, the Democratic Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, acted according to the aims and principles of Al-Fatah. The impact of Al-Fatah on the various Palestinian political

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<sup>1</sup> Ahmad El Kodsý and Eli Lobel, The Arab World and Israel, p. 51

<sup>2</sup> Michael Curtis, "The Palestinian Organizations, Their Leaders, and Ideologies", The Palestinians, pp. 140-41

movements became effective. So most of these thought it best to set up a joint Palestinian National Council.<sup>1</sup> Such attempt was to reconcile and unite all the Palestinian factions into one strong Palestinian resistance movement.

The Palestinian National Covenant —Al-Mithaq al-Watani al-Filastini — was therefore adopted by the First Palestinian Congress, which took place in May, 1964.<sup>2</sup> It made known, clearly, the official position of the Palestinian organizations toward the Palestine Liberation Organization, and appointed a Palestinian delegate at the United Nations. It also mentioned that the PLO's budget was a kind of direct contributions provided by the Arab countries, and a tax imposed on every Palestinian.

Shukeiry's ambitious attitude made him later acting independently from some Arab leaders' influence. This meant setting a course that soon put him into conflict with the desires of some of the members of the Arab league. However, the very existence of the PLO consisted of a struggle against Israel; so, the Palestinian people were expecting its realization impatiently. Shukeiry was fully devoted to such Palestinian feelings, if we refer to his articulation "to drive Israel into the sea."<sup>3</sup> His militant rhetoric was however followed by very little action. But, this also can be explained by the fact that the Palestinian military groups were

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<sup>1</sup> Bichara et Naim Khader, Textes de la Revolution Palestiniene, pp. 101-102

<sup>2</sup> Maxime Rodinson, Israel and the Arabs, pp. 142-43

<sup>3</sup> Abdallah Frangi, The PLO and Palestine, p. 100



constrained not to conduct raids and military actions from those Arab territories surrounding Israel. The following official figures of Palestinian incursions in Israel from Arab territories may give us an idea about the situation that prevailed from 3 January, 1965 to December 1966.

Palestinian raids against Israel, from:

Years	Egypt	Jordan	Syria	Lebanon
1965	3	29	—	3
1966	—	17	18	6
Total	3	46	18	9

The total number of incursions in Israel comes therefore to about 76, during one year.<sup>1</sup> In the meantime, the Palestine Liberation Army (PLA) — the military branch of the PLO — had abrogated its military operations, due to its integration into the Arab armies. These armies had always disapproved the Fedayeen military actions, against Israel.

As early as 1965, signs of split threatened the organization of Shukeiry, and all his actions and demands were reprehended and even rejected by the Arab leaders. Thus, all his recommendations, to the Arab Summit Conference in September, 1965 at Casablanca were ignored.<sup>2</sup> Most of the Arab leaders were about to cease providing Shukeiry with political and financial support. The break up of their relationships was hastened by the Arab disaster of the war of 5-10 June, 1967.

In an attempt to set up a common political line, the Arab

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<sup>1</sup> Groupe d'Etudes et de Recherches, La Palestine en Question, p.277

<sup>2</sup> Maxime Rodinson, Israel and the Arabs, p.144

sovereigns and heads of states met in Khartum between 29 August and 1 September, 1967. They all agreed upon the principles of "no peace with Israel, no recognition of Israel, no negotiations with Israel,"<sup>1</sup> in order to preserve the right to a homeland for the Palestinians. The conference had, on the other hand, rejected all proposals made by Shukeiri in the name of the PLO, concerning mainly the right to direct or indirect negotiations with Israel, when dealing with "any settlement which might affect the Palestinian cause."<sup>2</sup>

The position of Shukeiri had been discredited even at the Palestinian level, until he was evicted from the chairmanship of the PLO in December, 1967. The new PLO leader, Yahya Hamuda was also unable to initiate new policies for the Palestinian liberation struggle.<sup>3</sup> The traditional division in Palestinian ranks seemed persistent and the divergence of ideological tendencies increasing. The Fifth Congress of the Palestinian National Council took place in Cairo, on 10 and 17 July 1968.<sup>4</sup> It was dominated by the resistance organizations which gained half the seats in the National Council. A national charter was adopted by rearranging an earlier text which had accompanied the foundation of the PLO, in 1964. This document mentioned explicitly the character and the aims of the resistance. Palestine was defined as an integral part of the Arab

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<sup>1</sup> T.C.F. Prittie, "How and Why Did the State of Israel Come to being?", Britain and Israel, 165 (April/May 1985), p4

<sup>2</sup> Maxime Rodinson, Israel and the Arabs, p.203

<sup>3</sup> Daniel Dishon, "The Palestinian Organization", Middle East Record (Jerusalem: Israel University Press, 1967), p.318

<sup>4</sup> Yehoshefat Harkabi, "The Palestinian National Covenant", pp.143-53



world. The Palestinian movement was entrusted the role of gathering the various political groups to be the vanguard of the Arab nation.<sup>1</sup> The charter stated also that all the Palestinian activities were to be independent, rejecting any interference from any Arab state or force. The Palestinian principle of non-intervention in their own affairs was, an important guarantee of Palestinian freedom of decision, and a secure way for the unity of the Palestinian military groups. From now on, more freedom of movement, for the guerrilla groups, was decided. The United Nations Security Council resolution 242 was finally rebuffed, as it called for the the recognition of the state of Israel, and neglected the Palestinians and their rights.<sup>2</sup>

The Arab defeat of 1967 had a great impact on the Palestinian resistance and its perspective. It increased the number of refugees as about some 780.000 Palestinians had to flee from Palestine.<sup>3</sup> No part of Palestine still existed which was not subject to the Israeli rule. This caused the Palestinian resistance to develop a distinct Palestinian national ideology at the expense of Pan-Arabism.

The major elements of the Palestinian armed movement, though individually sponsored by separate Arab states, were now gathered within the Palestine Liberation Organization which had

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<sup>1</sup>Augustus R. Norton, "Moscow and the Palestinians", The Palestinians, p.231

<sup>2</sup>Joseph Neyer, "The Emergence of Yassir Arafat", The Palestinians, p.181

<sup>3</sup>Edward W. Said, The Question of Palestine, p.137

never accepted resolution 242, under the impulsion of Al-Fatah. The views and analyses of this organization, about the liberation of Palestine, were espoused by most of the Palestinian groups. Thus, the early pledges of Al-Fatah, for an Arab military action against Israel to liberate Palestine, were taken into consideration mainly after the Israeli victory over the Arab armies in 1967.<sup>1</sup> Its call for the continuation of armed struggle was therefore well grasped by all the Palestinians. Consequently, the first military training camps, that were set up by Al-Fatah in Damascus and Algiers, were very successful.<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, the military operations and attacks led by the Palestinian commandos were received with great enthusiasm and respect by the Palestinian population — hundreds of young Palestinians joined the ranks of Al-Fatah. The unification process of the various Palestinian forces has evolved in such a way as—and to some degree—to enhance the PLO role. This process is, of course, the essence of the aftermath of the June war. For example, the devotion to the PLO policy of an independent Palestinian armed struggle of the Arab Nationalists—from which the Popular Front of George Habbash had been issued—and other guerrilla forces is important because such a devotion would both contribute to the increase of Palestinian military resistance and make the Palestinian cause an essential element in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph Neyer, "The Emergence of Yassir Arafat", The Palestinians, p.131

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.128



Israel responded to all the Palestinian dispositions by directing military attacks on alleged guerrilla bases. Thus, the Israeli military offensive of 1968 aimed at the destruction of the important and strategic Palestinian guerrilla base, Karamah, and the decimation of the Palestinian resistance from Jordan. There, the Jordanian troops and Fatah commandos accepted battle and succeeded to repulse the Israeli forces composed of about ten thousand of infantrymen supported by armoured vehicles and aircraft.<sup>1</sup> Israeli troops were proved vulnerable and were inflicted considerable material and human losses.

The decision of Fatah troops to fight and die, if needed be, became the leitmotiv of the guerrilla movements. Yet, clearly, the destruction of the myth of invulnerable Israeli soldiers by Fatah men, increased its prestige and admiration. Within weeks, its size had grown substantially, and its popularity and influence spread among the refugee camps. Fatah leaders received promises of support and recognition from Arab and non Arab states they had visited.<sup>2</sup> After Karamah, it was then impossible to ignore the guerrilla movements and Fatah commitment to armed struggle. The Palestinian resistance which grouped many organizations around Al-Fatah claimed to move from resistance to revolution against Israel.

In February 1969, less than a year after Karamah, Al-Fatah found itself in control of the PLO through the election of Yassir

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<sup>1</sup> Abdallah Frangi, The PLO and Palestine, pp. 110-12

<sup>2</sup> Terence Prettie, "Israel and the Palestinian Question", The Palestinians, p. 219

Arafat as president of the PLO Executive Committee (PLOEC) during the fifth session of the Palestinian National Council.<sup>1</sup> Since holding this post, Arafat has guided the destiny of the PLO, impressed it with his personality, permeated it with his ideas, inspired it with his stubborn courage, and led it steadily to the course of self-confidence. Arafat's sense for practical and pragmatic politics, and the use of his own indisputable charisma have made him overwhelming conflicts between the "left" wing and the "moderate" line, and the various splinter groups that emerged in the PLO.<sup>2</sup> For all his great efforts, the dissidents showed a strong opposition to Arafat's policies. Thus, some leaders of Palestinian organizations did not share Arafat's strategy of action, and the share-out of seats in the National Council and continued their marginal existence. Whereas the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine of George Habbash claimed that Palestine can only be regained once the Arab world as a whole is fundamentally reformed, old regimes swept away and then a united socialist Arab world would finally liberate Palestine.<sup>3</sup>

Though the special meeting of the Palestinian National Council, held in Amman on 27 and 28 August, 1970, called for the national unity, the Palestinian ideological movement reached the point of dissension and splits during the events of Jordan in

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph Neyer, "The Emergence of Yassir Arafat", The Palestinians, pp. 128-132

<sup>2</sup> David Pryce-Jones, "On Israel's East", The Palestinians, p. 211

<sup>3</sup> Chaim I. Waxman, "Varieties of Palestinian Nationalism", The Palestinians, p. 117



September. The left wing members of the movement, under the leadership of Nayef Hawatmeh, formed the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PDFLP). This break was preceded by that of 1968, organized by Ahmad Jibril—an ex-Syrian army officer—who created the Popular Front—General Command (PF—GC) due to ideological differences with the PFLP of George Habbash. Fatah and its loyalists were the main target of such new groups.<sup>1</sup>

Many Arab states were using "their own" Palestinian resistance groups to gain influence on the movement as whole.<sup>2</sup> Thus, Iraq and Syria organized and backed Palestinian guerrilla groups, which obviously act more in their favour than on the part of the Palestinian national movement. The Arab Liberation Front, led by Abdul Rahim Ahmad, has had almost no influence on the Palestinian affairs. Its small number of membership undermined Iraq's efforts. Syria, on her turn, supported some other Palestinian dissident groups as the vanguard for the popular liberation war, commonly known as Saiqa (Thunderbolt).<sup>3</sup> This group received a large support from the refugee camps in Syria. Its hostility to Al-Fatah policy has been ascertained on different occasions. Its political platform, for instance, parallels that of the Syrian Ba'ath regime as it sought to unite the PLO with Syria, Egypt and the Soviet Union against Israel and its allies. Other organizations including the Palestine Liberation Front (PLF), a break-away from Popular Front-General Command,

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<sup>1</sup>David Price-Jones, "On Israel's East", The Palestinians, p.211

<sup>2</sup>Colin Smith, The Palestinians, pp.12-13

<sup>3</sup>Edward W. Said, The Question of Palestine, p.159

the Palestinian Popular Struggle Front (PPSF) and the Palestine Liberation Army, the official military wing of the Palestine Liberation Organization—created in 1964—, were revealed to be manipulated by some Arab states; as it is the case for the PLA by Syria.<sup>1</sup>

A Palestinian popular congress was convened in Cairo in April, 1972 claiming the gathering of all political and military forces around the PLO. One year later, the Palestinian National Council created a Palestinian National Front in the Occupied Territories (PNFOT), a Palestinian Military Council, and a central council of the PLO (CCPLO) to enhance the Palestinian authority in Palestine.

However, the existence of so many dissident Palestinian factions brought about disarray and fear amongst the Palestinians and even the Arab states.<sup>2</sup> For example, the organization of Abu Nidal compromised the PLO position at the world political level by its spectacular actions, as the Munich Olympics outrage. It reduced considerably the PLO chances in getting an international hearing or in discussing a pragmatic peace settlement. Despite the antagonism of all these groups, AL-Fatah remained the most powerful organization in the PLO through the control of the national council which is the supreme decision-making body, and the executive committee, the implementing unit of all resolutions.

The aims of AL-Fatah and the PLO, affirmed by the fifth session of the Palestinian National Council, were the recovering

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<sup>1</sup> Abdallah Frangi, The PLO and Palestine, pp. 151-53

<sup>2</sup> Maxime Rodinson, Israel and the Arabs, p. 223



of the homeland, and the establishment of an independent democratic Palestine in which Jews, Christians and Muslims would live together in peace and harmony.<sup>1</sup> However, all the Palestinians knew that the path to this goal would be full of bloody and bitter confrontations.

The consequences of the activities of the Palestinian guerrilla groups, in the Arab neighbouring states of Israel, caused the wrath of some of their leaders. To name but an example, we recall that King Hussein ordered the expelling of Palestinians from Jordan, in 1970; creating a civil war within his own territory.<sup>2</sup> **This harassing decision the main purport of which was to bear a strong hold on the guerrilla movement led to the killing of thousands of Palestinian commandos and civilians during the "black September".** The PLO was defeated and its military presence in Jordan weakened.

In 1973, another bloody conflict opposed the Palestinians to the Lebanese army units as a result of repeated skirmishes between the two. The Lebanese troops' objective was the dismantlement of the Palestinian resistance movement and the destruction of its offices near the Arab University in Beirut.<sup>3</sup> But, the Palestinians resisted the Lebanese operations, supported politically and military by their Lebanese allies.

Some Arab states offered their mediation between the two

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<sup>1</sup>Yehoshafat Harkabi, "A Palestinian Democratic State as the Political Goal of the Palestinians", The Palestinians, p.154

<sup>2</sup>Gerald Kurland, The Arab-Israeli Conflict, pp.29-30

<sup>3</sup>Abdallah Frangi, The PLO and Palestine, pp.123-30

belligerents. Egypt and Syria succeeded to make the two protagonists accept a peace-agreement. The conflict appeared to be over. But, it had opened wounds within the Palestinian and Lebanese societies. The seeds of the next confrontations had been sown.<sup>1</sup>

During the Lebanese civil war(1975-76),and despite the several armed attacks on the Palestinian bases,the PLO had always tried to resolve conflicts and differences of opinion by peaceful means. However,the atrocities and cruelties caused by the Lebanese Front's troops against the Palestinian localities,forced the PLO to intervene.<sup>2</sup>

It is worthwhile to remind that,at the beginning of the Lebanese civil war,the main protagonists were the Lebanese Front gathering groups like the Falangists,the National Liberal Party, the right-wing militias and the National Block Party,on one side, and the Lebanese National Movement including socialist,nasserist, and Communist parties and organizations,and the Syrian Socialist-Nationalist Party,on the other side.<sup>3</sup> But,later the Syrian army intervened in the fighting and then began a painful and tragic confrontation which the Palestinians had never wished.Fortunately, a cease-fire agreement was soon reached after a "small" Arab summit meeting in Riyadh. The conference upheld Lebanese integrity and sovereignty and decided to send an Arab peace-keeping force, composed mainly of Syrian soldiers.

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<sup>1</sup> Colin Smith,The Palestinians,p.6

<sup>2</sup> Abdallah Frangi,The PLO and Palestine,p.129

<sup>3</sup> Edward W. Said,The Question of Palestine,p.148



Although so was the critical situation of the Palestinians in the Middle East, the PLO leadership did not turn away from the sacred cause. Moreover, the Palestinians took part in the fourth Middle East war side by side with the Egyptian, Syrian and Iraqi troops.<sup>1</sup> As soon as war broke out, tens of thousands of Palestinians went on strike in the occupied territories. The Palestinian guerrilla groups were determined to back the Arab troops by every means available. Thus, the role assigned to them, during this war, was to cut off Israeli supply bases from reaching the front, and conducting military operations within Israel itself. The courage of the Fedayeen in this war—which Hussein refused to take part in—increased the political standing of the PLO in the Arab world.

In the fifth Summit conference that took place in Algiers in November, 1973, the Arab states asked for the Israeli withdrawal from all occupied territories, and the recognition of the Palestinian right to self-determination. The Palestine Liberation Organization was recognized by all the Arabs as the "sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people", except Jordan.<sup>2</sup>

The October war was a driving-force in the political-diplomatic offensive of the PLO. The meeting of the co-ordination Bureau of the Non-Aligned movement which was held in Algiers, in 1974, ended in complete success for the PLO. In the statement on the Middle East and the Palestine problem, the Non-Aligned states expressed their "full recognition of the Palestine Liberation

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<sup>1</sup>Bichara et Naim Khader, Textes de la Revolution Palestiniene, pp.122-26

<sup>2</sup>Ya'acov Caroz, "The Palestinians: Who They Are?", The Palestinians, p.79

Organization as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and its struggle."<sup>1</sup> The member states of the Non-Aligned movement were also asked to break off diplomatic relations with Israel if they had not already done so.

The Arab summit conference at Rabat in October, 1974 confirmed the Non-Aligned conference resolutions on the PLO and proclaimed the right of the Palestinians to establish a separate and independent Palestinian state in any liberated territory.<sup>2</sup> From now on, the Palestinians were distinguished as forming a nation by its own political and social structure. The significance of this change was visible after November, 1974, when Yassir Arafat was invited to address the United Nations General Assembly about the Palestinian problem. In his speech, Arafat referred to the formation of a unified and secular democratic state in Palestine,<sup>3</sup> a statement of hope for a near return for the Palestinians. Though it was perceived by Israel and its allies as an attempt to destroy the Jewish state.

Few days later, the General Assembly passed the resolution 3236 which reaffirmed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people in Palestine, including, the right to self-determination without external interference; the right to national independence and sovereignty.<sup>4</sup> Thus, the General Assembly showed a deep concern

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<sup>1</sup> Abdallah Frangi, The PLO and Palestine, pp. 139-40

<sup>2</sup> Mohammed K. Shadid, The United States and the Palestinians (London: Croom Helm, 1981), p. 103

<sup>3</sup> Richard H. Curtis, A changing Image, p. 101

<sup>4</sup> Farouk Kadoumi, "The Palestinian Political Militancy", Palestine Affairs, ed. Dr. Anis Sayegh, 39 (November 1974), p. 8



in finding a just and durable solution to the Palestinian problem which continues to endanger very much the international peace and security. The Palestinians saw, through this resolution, a recovering of their lost rights through the previous General Assembly resolutions, 242 and 338.<sup>1</sup> This international shift derives from the solidarity of the Third World countries with the PLO, and power of Arab oil-exporting nations.

Despite the newly acquired rights of the PLO, the United States still considers the two resolutions, mentioned above, as a basis for any potential recognition or negotiation with the Palestinians. However, such American attitude did not prevent the PLO from acquiring a world-wide recognition.<sup>2</sup> A recognition which has been enhanced by the proclamation of 29 November—the anniversary of the United Nations partition resolution for Palestine—as a day of international solidarity with the Palestinian people.

Another important change took place when the PLO has been able to express clearly, in the United Nations, its demands for the setting up of a Palestinian state covering the West Bank of Jordan, the Gaza Strip, and some other territories occupied by Syria and Egypt. Arafat intended to live alongside with the state of Israel peacefully.<sup>3</sup> But the "shift" from the "official line" proclaimed

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<sup>1</sup>Mohammed K. Shadid, The United States and the Palestinians, p.104

<sup>2</sup>The PLO has gained full membership in the League of Arab states, the Afro-Asian Conference, the Non-Aligned Conference, the UNESCO, The International Labor Organization, Observer status at the United Nations and in the Organization of African Unity.

<sup>3</sup>Noam Chomsky, the Fateful Triangle, p.77

by the Palestinian National Council in 1974, brought about some internal difficulties. Arafat was accused of capitulation and deviating from <sup>the principle of</sup> the liberation of all of Palestine.<sup>1</sup> The Palestinian Rejection Front called for the continuation of armed struggle until the liberation of the Palestinian homeland. The important point to note is that the Israeli leaders ignored completely the political offers of Arafat. Moreover, he was asked for more concessions, such as the de facto recognition of the state of Israel and giving up armed struggle. To accept these "impossible things," means to amend the PLO covenant, said Yassir Arafat.<sup>2</sup>

Despite all of the foregoing, Arafat persisted in finding ways to make possible the participation of the PLO at a Geneva Conference, specially convened to achieve a fundamental solution to the Middle East problem, with the participation of the representatives of all the parties involved in the conflict, including the Palestinian people. But, Israel—supported by the United States—objected strongly the participation of any PLO members in the negotiations and rejected even the terms of "legitimate rights of the Palestinian people."<sup>3</sup>

All the recent Palestinian political decisions in favor of a peace settlement, in the Middle East, did not save the Palestinian resistance from being under constant attacks; in Lebanon, in the

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<sup>1</sup> Edward W. Said, The Question of Palestine, p.277

<sup>2</sup> Ya'acov Caroz, "The Palestinians: Who they are?", The Palestinians, p.80

<sup>3</sup> Mohammed K. Shadid, The United States and the Palestinians, p.137



Arab world, in the West Bank, in Gaza and elsewhere. In the meantime, even the rhetoric Arab support was, at times, reduced to nought. The Camp David was not to encourage the Palestinians to recover their legitimate rights. Moreover, the Egyptian capitulation weakened the Arab world and the Palestinian resistance, and was advantageous to Israel. Thus, the Palestinians found themselves shut out of Egypt and harassed by Israel.

Three days after the signing of the Camp David agreements on 17 September, 1978 between Muhammad Anwar al-Sadat, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, and Menachem Begin, Prime Minister of Israel, with the witness of Jimmy Carter, President of the United States of America, the steadfastness Front (or Rejection Front) was formed in Damascus.<sup>1</sup> It gathered the progressive Arab states, Algeria, Libya, the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, and Syria in addition to the PLO. The Camp David accords were completely rejected as they jeopardized the Palestinian cause rather than helped it, and negated the PLO status and rights as stated and formulated by the United Nations resolutions. The Rejection Front aimed at isolating the Egyptian government from the Arab circle and also at the international level.<sup>2</sup> These governments were to convince the Arabs about the provision of necessary help to the PLO in order to face Israel under the prevailing circumstances.

The Camp David agreements made Israel able to harden its military apparatus in the region. It continued, thereafter, the

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<sup>1</sup> Abdallah Frangi, The PLO and Palestine, p. 167

<sup>2</sup> Colin Smith, The Palestinians, p. 7

annexation of new Arab territories, and the bombing of Palestinians everywhere in the Arab world. The withdrawals of Israel from the Sinai were, in fact, largely compensated in other places. In 1982, after the expansionist adventure in Lebanon, Ariel Sharon declared that "there would be no more withdrawals from Israeli settlements."<sup>1</sup> Thus, the Golan Heights and South of Lebanon, and of course the West Bank had become an integral part of the state of Israel, if we refer to the previous declaration. Once more and as we have indicated, Israeli de facto policy was skilfully applied. However, the Israeli leaders did not seem to be ready for giving up occupying new Arab territories and killing of thousands of Palestinians and Arab civilians in Lebanon, Syria and elsewhere. Although the Palestinian problem looms large on some Arab nations, it is a burden for some others, especially the neighbouring countries to the state of Israel. The September war of 1970 in Jordan, the civil war in Lebanon and the separate treaty of Egypt, are instances that disclose such an attitude.

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<sup>1</sup> Abdallah Frangi, The PLO and Palestine, p. 171



PART TWO  
SUPERPOWERS INTERVENTION

## CHAPTER IV

### CAPITALIST BLOC

The Middle East is considered by all the major industrialized countries as important, external powers are significantly involved in the region. We would like therefore to discuss the changes and continuities in the policies of these powers with special emphasis on the United States of America, since the day the Jews expressed a yearning for a return to the land of Palestine.

Until the Second World War, the Middle Eastern affairs were left to Britain and France, and the United States largely stayed out of the area. However, since the end of the war, it steadily superseded the old imperial powers in the region, according to its so-called "pioneering spirit"<sup>1</sup> and competition over strategic interests with European countries as well as with the Soviet Union. The United States became thereafter a crucial element in shaping the political and military developments within the Middle East.

The Arab world and the Middle East in particular came into contact with the West, if not before, as early as 1849 when Europeans founded their literary societies to achieve cultural objectives.<sup>2</sup> By the turning of the nineteenth century, France and Britain established the so-called mandates or protectorates. The Arabs did

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<sup>1</sup> Mohammed K. Shadid, The United States and the Palestinians, p.24

<sup>2</sup> Bichara Khader, Histoire de la Palestine, pp.19-20



not obtain their independence after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in the First World War, as agreed, but suffered from land division and subjection to alien powers. The Arab nationalist movement was severely shaken and frustrated by the West, it had taken to be a helpful ally.

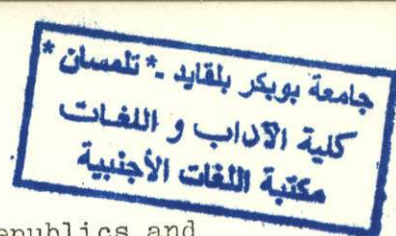
Britain and France came to the evidence that their privileged positions in the Middle East are going to be jeopardized by their political controversial decisions.<sup>1</sup> They disappointed the Arabs by their early Sykes-Picot agreements dividing the area between themselves, without regard to the earlier pledges to King Hussein of Hejaz of Arab independence and self-determination in the liberated territories from the Ottomans. Moreover, Britain through the Balfour Declaration, as we pointed out before, promised the Arab land of Palestine to the Jews of Europe to establish their "national home". Later, due to the Second World War circumstances, Britain issued a new decree, added to the White Paper, regulating the acquisition of Arab land by the Jews, restricting the Jewish immigration to Palestine, and subjecting further immigration to Palestinian Arabs' consent.<sup>2</sup> In such a case, Britain once again, preferred to preserve her interests in the Arab world to her alliance with Zionism. This brought to the fore a hostile Jewish attitude, and no Arab gratitude whatever.

By the end of the war, Britain and France left an Arab world

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<sup>1</sup> Watkins David, The Exceptional Conflict: British Political Parties and the Arab-Israeli Confrontation (London: CAABU, 1984), pp. 20-21

<sup>2</sup> Groupe d'Etudes et de Recherches, La Palestine en Question, pp. 116-17



dismembered and divided into numerous kingdoms, republics and administrative units.<sup>1</sup> The Second World War heralded their end as successful colonial powers, and hastened their deprivation from energy, enthusiasm and self-confidence. The Arab confidence in the West finally waned as it failed to understand the Palestinian cause, while the Arabs themselves failed to establish a direct contact with the Western nations.<sup>2</sup>

Since the early days of the Middle East conflict, the Arabs neglected most of the ordinary channels to communicate with the West, while the Zionist propaganda spread at large scale, making use of the plight of Jewish victims of Nazi persecution. In the meantime, the United States of America which has always accorded the Middle East area great considerations, decided to take Britain's place as the Zionist's best friend. Such American decision disturbed Britain as she regarded the Middle East within her own sphere of influence. The Tripartite Declaration of May, 1950 between Britain, France and the United States, stated that Israel and its surrounding Arab states should be given arms only for the internal security and legitimate self-defense.<sup>3</sup> Despite this, the United States considered its involvement in the Middle East as a duty to safeguard the general interests of the anti-communist struggle, even if this action may lead to a conflict with the

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Douglas-Home, The Arabs and Israel, pp. 68-69

<sup>2</sup> Abdallah Frangi, The PLO and Palestine, pp. 75-76

<sup>3</sup> Geoffrey Kemp, "The Military Build-up: Arms Control or Arms Trade?", Crisis Management and the Superpowers in the Middle East, ed. Gregory Treverton, Gower, London, 1983, p. 37



European allies.

As early as 1891, some active American Zionists tried to drag the American society and its political institutions to support the proposal for a Jewish homeland in Palestine that would be ahead of the interests of the United States in the region. It should be noted that Zionist attempts in the United States had almost always paid off. The Zionist lobbies established the idea that American presidents can only be elected with the support of the Jewish vote, and that they can only get that vote by backing Zionism. It was revealed later that these lobbies stood behind the decisive decisions taken by the early American presidents—Wilson, Roosevelt, Truman and Eisenhower—concerning the American Palestine policy.<sup>1</sup> Those decisions constituted the bases of more than fifty years of the United States policy on the Middle East conflict. There was, however, no American policy towards the Palestinian people in particular, but a policy towards the land of Palestine and how to establish a Jewish homeland.

Bearing in mind the Jewish influence, President Woodrow Wilson backed the Balfour Declaration, and agreed that Palestine should be given to Jews. Thus, he fell in contradiction with the twelfth of his fourteen points promulgated to the American Congress on January 8, 1918, stating that ". . . the other nationalists which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous

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<sup>1</sup> Michel E. Jansen, The Three Basic American Decisions on Palestine (Beirut: PLO Research Center, 1971), pp. 5-7

development."<sup>1</sup> Wilson's commitment to the Zionist cause was to leave the United States bound to recognize the Jewish state as soon as it comes to existence in Palestine. Thus, Wilson had to support the Zionists to acquire a territory in Palestine to settle in.

The American commitment to Zionism inherited from the period of Wilson had not changed later. Moreover, the incoming president, Franklin D. Roosevelt enforced the Zionist claims. In view of the consolidation of the electoral groundworks of his party, Roosevelt wanted to politically leapfrog the opposed political party. He assured the Zionists leaders of the American support for the establishment of a Jewish state and unrestricted Jewish immigration into Palestine. This was an immediate cause to the pouring of so many Jewish refugees into Palestine. Thus, Roosevelt definitely linked the fate of the European Jewish refugees to the fortunes of Palestine and confirmed the Zionist claim that Palestine is the only possible homeland for the world's Jews.<sup>2</sup>

The encouragement of Jewish immigration was never an unqualified American policy. Indeed, the paramountcy of the goal of undermining European influence ( France and Britain in particular) was consistent, so that the Zionists found themselves benefiting from strong American support in their quarrels with the Arabs.

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<sup>1</sup>Richard H. Curtis, A Changing Image, p.25

<sup>2</sup>Mohammed K. Shadid, The United States and the Palestinians, p.32



The Zionist leaders realized, later, that the existence of a Jewish state in a hostile environment needed to be protected by a great power namely, the United States. They, therefore sought military intervention of that power, or the guarantee of Israeli military predominance over the region.

The successor of president Roosevelt ensured the Zionists, since the first days of his term, to carry out the policies of the late President.<sup>1</sup> Truman sought to contribute to the policy of Israeli predominance rather than committing American troops to fight on behalf of the Zionists. His support for the existence of a Jewish state has been argued largely in terms either of "duty" resulting from the Holocaust or of a means to maintain American credibility. An alternative—and far more empirically valid—reason for Truman's support of Zionists is concern to come by the Jewish vote in America.

As we have pointed out above, Truman was troubled by the conditions of the Jews in Germany. In 1955, he declared that "...the fate of the Jewish victims of Hitlerism was a matter of deep personal concern to me."<sup>2</sup> He, then promised to provide them with necessary support. To this end, he assumed that the Balfour Declaration is a "solemn promise...which should be kept, just as all promises made by responsible, civilized governments should be kept."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mohammed K. Shadid, The United States and the Palestinians, p.34

<sup>2</sup> Richard H. Curtis, A Changing Image, p.25

<sup>3</sup> Harry S. Truman, Memoirs: Years of Trial and Hope, 1946-1952 (New York: New American Library, vol. 2, 1961), p.132

Like Wilson, President Truman seemed to be betrayed by his own words, unless the various British and American governments that gave promises to Arabs for independence, self-determination and consultation were neither responsible nor civilized. Roosevelt, for instance, assured King Abd al-Aziz Ibn Saud of Saudi Arabia, in 1945, that he would "do nothing to assist the Jews against the Arabs and would make no move hostile to the Arab people."<sup>1</sup> This, however, did not prevent him from favouring a Jewish state and an unlimited Jewish immigration into Palestine.

Further evidence of the political nature of the United States governments stand on Palestine was shaped with reference to domestic politics. This made the British Prime Minister, Earl Clement Attlee saying that the "U.S. policy in Palestine was molded by the Jewish vote and by party contributions of several big Jewish firms," and that "there is no Arab vote in America."<sup>2</sup>

The evolution of the American involvement in the Middle East affairs, since the Second World War, made her playing an important role in the adoption of the United Nations partition plan of Palestine on 29 November, 1947. Every form of pressure was brought by American officials on some nations, namely, Haiti, Liberia, the Philippines, Nationalist China, Greece and Ethiopia, to vote in favour of the partition.<sup>3</sup> The final result, then, was the approval of partition by the United Nations.

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<sup>1</sup> Richard H. Curtis, A Changing Image, p.23

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.36

<sup>3</sup> Mohammed Shadiq, The United States and the Palestinians, p.35



The confusion and bloodshed in Palestine which followed upon the United Nations vote brought about a new American attitude toward the partition plan. The United States had shifted its position from partition to trusteeship in Palestine. This shift was designed to reach a reconciliation between the Arabs, Jews and Britain without outside interference.<sup>1</sup> However, the prevailing conditions in Palestine indicated that agreement was as far as ever.

With the trend of American policy away from the enforcement of partition, the Zionist leadership continued to plan for the proclamation of an independent state, refusing to acquiesce on the proposed trusteeship. On 15 May President Truman was advised to take the lead in recognizing the world's "newest democracy."<sup>2</sup> Within a few hours, the United States became the first nation to grant the new born state of Israel "de facto" recognition.<sup>3</sup> The various versions as to how this came about are, in fact, of least importance, here, as the American contribution to the creation of the state of Israel did not come to an end with such recognition. The American commitment to Zionism has been reiterated constantly until the present day. Throughout the period prior to the Second World War, the American Palestine policy has been dealing, only, with the Zionists and the Arab States. The changing role of the United States, after the 1948 war, and evolution of its political-strategic

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<sup>1</sup> Mohammed K. Shedid, The United States and the Palestinians, p.37

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.39

<sup>3</sup> Groupe d'Etudes et de Recherches, La Palestine en Question, p.197

interests in the Middle East, determined its relationships with Israel and other Middle Eastern states especially those providing the greater part of the West's oil supplies. America considered Saudi Arabia, for instance, as "...a stupendous source of strategic power, and one of the greatest material prizes in world history."<sup>1</sup> Thus, the American foreign policy approach essentially operated upon keeping under the U.S. control these energy reserves.

The war of 1948 brought about a large Palestinian exodus from their homeland and made America deciding thereafter to examine the conditions of these "refugees". America backed the United Nations twice in 1948 and 1953 in passing resolutions allowing the Palestinian refugees to come back home and live in peace with their neighbours, with a compensation to those who would settle elsewhere.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, American foreign policy was centered on solving the Middle East crisis through her contribution to the U.N.R.W.A.'s operations to improve the socio-economic conditions of these Palestinians, before they could be absorbed by the Arab countries. In addition, America attempted some political efforts to resolve the Middle East conflict, and to reach a compromise between the Israeli refusal of any return of the Palestinians, and the Arab rejection of refugees resettlement outside Palestine.

The American policy toward the Arab-Israeli conflict has somehow changed with the coming of Eisenhower administration. The

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<sup>1</sup>Noam Chomsky, The Fateful Triangle: The United States, Israel and the Palestinians, p.17

<sup>2</sup>Maxime Rodinson, Israel and the Arabs, p.58



new White House Chief sought to gain the esteem of the governments of the Middle East countries, to ensure further American involvement there.<sup>1</sup> He, for instance, refused to support the tripartite aggression on Egypt in 1956. Indeed, this military attack caused the loss of prestige of the leading countries of Western Europe (Britain and France); in the sense that it compromised the chances of mobilizing the Arabs against the communist "menace" of the Western interests in the region.<sup>2</sup>

However, Eisenhower was accused of allowing the Soviet intrusion into the Arab world by deciding so. Moreover, the Jewish political pressures in American governmental circles sought an American constant military assistance to Israel. This would enable the Jewish state to defend her chosen territories against any potential Arab attack. Consequently, President Eisenhower changed his attitude toward the Middle East area. By 1950, American economic and military aid involved countries such as Egypt, Jordan and others, in an attempt to bring them "to reason and attract them to the right side."<sup>3</sup> This would contain communist intrusion in the Middle East, and keep its countries ruling without Soviet assistance. Thus, Israel was considered as a "strategic asset" that would form a rampart against radical Arab nationalist threats to Western interests.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Douglas-Home, The Arabs and Israel, pp. 68-69

<sup>2</sup> Richard H. Curtis, A Changing Image, p. 53

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Noam Chomsky, The Fateful Triangle, p. 20

The political confusion in the Middle East, added to the hesitating American foreign policy over how to deal it, led to new troubles—for example, the Lebanese crisis in 1958. The U.S. reacted by sending her military forces—as in Jordan and Syria in 1957—to secure Christian communities against Muslims during the presidential elections.<sup>1</sup> The American intervention in Lebanon was conform with Eisenhower doctrine—accepted by the Congress in the same year—according to which, the president was authorized "to include the employment of armed forces of the United States to secure and protect the territorial integrity and political independence of such nations requesting such aid against overt armed aggression from any nation controlled by international communism."<sup>2</sup>

The American government of the day decided to fill the vacuum created by the decline of British and French colonial power in the region. The new American function as an "international policeman" has been accomplished not without the support of her numerous allies throughout the world.<sup>3</sup> Hence, Israel is acting as an "instrument" to fulfill such American policy in the Middle East.

Meanwhile, the U.S. continued her peace-plans to "solve" the problem of the Palestinian refugees, to ensure the economic and political stability of the Near East that would preserve her

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<sup>1</sup> Noam Chomsky, Jonathan Steele and John Gittings, Superpowers in Collision: The New Cold War (London : Penguin, 1982), pp.29-30

<sup>2</sup> Maxime Rodinson, Israel and The Arabs, p.71

<sup>3</sup> Noam Chomsky, The Fateful Triangle, p.23



interests there. However, the American foreign policy at the time centered its various peace proposals on the Palestinians as refugees. The Palestinians then were not perceived there as a nation or state but were referred to as ordinary "refugees". Thus, all the American peace attempts brought half-hearted responses from the Arabs and the Palestinians in particular.

In fact, the American invasion of Lebanon in 1958 and of Jordan and Syria in 1957, was seen by the Arabs as a substitution of one kind of Western protection for another.<sup>1</sup> These events made the Arab respect for the U.S. as a "moral authority" vanished. By 1966, the U.S. Congress reacted strongly to the Arab support of the PLO. This organization developed sufficiently to threaten Israel and became a formidable political force. The American complaint was that the Palestinian refugee camps became effective centres of fighter recruitment for this new Palestinian organization, as hundreds of young Palestinians swelled its ranks. The American subsidies to U.N.R.W.A., soon became conditional on Palestinian "passive existence", i.e., non serving in the ranks of the Palestinian Liberation Army and other military groups.<sup>2</sup>

Added to the new Palestinian militance, the June war of 1967 altered greatly the American attitude toward the Palestinian refugee problem. The U.S. provided the state of Israel with an absolute support during and after the war. And blamed the Arabs for their failure to solve the Arab refugee problem. In addition

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Douglas-Home, The Arabs and Israel, pp. 68-69

<sup>2</sup> Mohammed K. Shadid, The United States and the Palestinians, p. 72

to the destruction of Arab military forces, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were displaced by the war.<sup>1</sup> The American approach, thereafter, was centered on settlement of the refugee problem mainly through resettlement and integration into neighbouring Arab countries. To this effect, the United States and Britain deliberately voted for the Security Council resolution 242, considering the refugee issue as the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict.<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile, French President, De Gaulle, called for a four-power conference (i.e., France, Britain, U.S.A. and the Soviet Union) to reach a compromise and to work out solutions concerning the crucial Palestinian problem, but in vain.

The Palestinian rejection of the resolution was regarded by the Americans and their allies as an obstacle for peace settlement in the Middle East. This was an argument for American officials to refuse any recognition of or dialogue with the PLO, whose acceptance of United Nations resolution 242, and recognition of the state of Israel were preconditions for direct talks with the United States.<sup>3</sup>

Despite such American siding with Israel matched with the fresh Arab defeat, the Palestinians did not capitulate. Moreover,

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<sup>1</sup> Mohammed K. Shadid, The U.S. and the Palestinians, p.73

<sup>2</sup> T.C.F. Prittie and R.I. Jones, "The British Role in the Middle East", Britain and Israel, 32 (May 1974), p.4

<sup>3</sup> Mohammed K. Shadid, The U.S. and the Palestinians, p.104. As far as the United Nations Security Council Resolution 242 of November, 1967 is concerned, it was set out as a basis for a final settlement, Israeli withdrawals from conquered territories in return for Arab recognition of Israel's right to exist within secure and recognized boundaries. However, it saw the Palestinian people merely as refugees.



they organized regular military operations against Israel and contained Israeli advance in Arab territories—the battle of Karamah is a good example of this. Thus, the Palestinian military activities from Arab territories led to a new bloody Arab-Israeli confrontation in the form of the "war of attrition" between Egypt and Israel in 1969—70. This was another opportunity to confirm the strength of the armed Palestinian national movement.<sup>1</sup> Those events made, once again, the Middle East the most dangerous flash-point in the world.

Britain and other European countries urged the United States to cooperate and coordinate their efforts to avoid any potential superpowers confrontation. The situation, thereafter, became explosive and very serious. The American State Department sought to pursue a consistent Middle East policy with great patience and persistence to achieve an agreement between all conflicted parties. From 1969 to 1971, the American diplomacy took into account regional and international realities of the Middle East in searching for any peace agreement. It first sought to involve the Soviet Union in any peace effort that should be based on resolution 242. The next step was an American increased cognizance of the Palestinians as a people with "legitimate interests and aspirations."<sup>2</sup> This statement, however, did not indicate any recognition of the PLO or the Palestinian right to self-determination. Though the Rogers plan of December 1969 came

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<sup>1</sup> Abdallah Frangi, The PLO and Palestine, p.132

<sup>2</sup> Mohammed K. Shadiq, The United States and the Palestinians, p.96

in the line of such new American attitude, it could not mollify Palestinian suspicions, particularly after 1970-1 events in Jordan and the rumours of an invisible American hand in the massacre of the Palestinians.<sup>1</sup> The Rogers project of peace was not, however, to gain pace in front of the Israeli rejection of any "imposed peace." Moreover, the Arab opposition to any peace agreement with Israel that does not respect the Palestinian legitimate rights to self-determination vowed to oblivion the Rogers plan.

In the meantime, a new Arab-Israeli bloody friction took place in October, 1973. Both antagonists used the various sophisticated weapons of their superpower sponsors. For the United States an effective commitment in the Middle East affairs became a matter of vital interests. Britain and other European countries, however, opposed the American "stage three alert" during the October war, causing a temporary break within the N.A.T.O.<sup>2</sup> To iron-out differences between the members of the movement, the United States sponsored the Security Council resolution 338 which called for an immediate cease-fire, for the respect of Resolution 242 and for a peace settlement in the area.<sup>3</sup> The American call contained the use

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<sup>1</sup> Bichara et Naim Khader, Textes de la Revolution Palestiniene, p.56

<sup>2</sup> T.C.F. Prittie, R.I. Jones, "The British Role in the Middle East", Britain and Israel, p.4

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. As far as the United Nations Security Council resolution 338 of October 22, 1973 is concerned, it called on the belligerent parties to: a) cease fire and refrain from any further act of war; b) immediately after a cease-fire was agreed to comply with Security Council Resolution 242; c) take up negotiations immediately with a view to finding a lasting and just solution to the Middle East problem.



of passive methods to reach <sup>such objective</sup> an ~~and~~ between the parties to the conflict.

The effect of the October war on both superpowers was their reactions to their short military confrontation in the Middle East. Seeking to avoid further confrontations, a Soviet-American process of negotiations was set up to hold multilateral talks in Geneva about the Middle East problem. However, the Israeli absolute rejection to recognize the Palestinians as a legal interlocutor with their own national rights, and that they "are not a party to the conflict" adjourned the negotiations.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, having realized the extent of Western commitment to Israel, the members of the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting countries decided to use again what the Western politicians were used to call "the oil weapon" to press on the United States and its capitalist allies in Europe to consider their open and provocative Israeli alienation and their political positions toward the Palestinian legitimate rights.

The significance of the use of "oil weapon" by the Arab oil producers was to enhance the Arab position in the Middle East crisis. It was brought to the fore during the meeting of the Arab heads of states in Bludan in 1946.<sup>2</sup> Since then many attempts took place, but all remained ineffective, due particularly to socio-economic factors inherent to internal Arab states affairs, and to American self-sufficiency in this product. However, it should be noted that the Arab attempt of 1973 to embargo crude oil exports

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<sup>1</sup>Noam Chomsky, The Fateful Triangle, p.343

<sup>2</sup>Rahf el-Badaoui, "Arab Oil Weapon and the Palestinian Cause", Palestine Affairs, ed. Dr. Anis Sayegh, 47 ( July 1975), p.102

to the United States and Western European countries, was somehow more effective. The financial strength of the Arab oil producers allowed them, this time, to reduce their oil production without affecting their economies. Moreover, such decision made the Arab influence over the Western European countries more credible. Some of them sought therefore to earn the status of "friendly" nations in the Arab eyes. Thus, in November 1973 Britain and France accepted the Arab definition of resolution 242, as meaning that Israel should liberate "all" occupied Arab land, although the word "all" was not mentioned in the original resolution.<sup>1</sup>

Another important change took place when the United States sought to undertake a new process for peace settlement based on the personal diplomacy of Henry Kissinger, the Secretary of State, mixed with a global effort through Geneva Conference. Thus from 1973 to 1975, "step-by-step" diplomacy, as it came to be known, characterized the new American policy in the Middle East. It was based on general settlement of the Middle East problem, according to the Security Council resolutions 242 and 338.<sup>2</sup> But, like all the previous American prospects for agreement, this diplomacy also neglected the Palestinian element, as it built its objective on the search for a settlement between individual Arab states and Israel.

Henry Kissinger did not, however, hide his opposition to the creation of any Palestinian state dominated by the PLO, as it would

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<sup>1</sup>T.C.F. Prittie and R.I Jones, "The British Role in the Middle East", Britain and Israel, p.3

<sup>2</sup>Richard H. Curtis, A Changing Image, pp.98-9



endanger the region's stability.<sup>1</sup> His "step-by-step" process came to involve steadily the Soviet Union in the search for any broad-based settlement in the Middle East. Though the United States has never accepted a continuing and active Soviet presence in the Arab Middle East.

The underlying assumption of the opposition to a larger Soviet role is that Soviet influence will grow in the Middle East and American influence will wane as a result. This approach made U.S. diplomacy rejecting any power partnership in the region. Indeed, Kissinger declared in a private meeting that the American policy after the October war was "to ensure that the Europeans and Japanese did not get involved in the diplomacy concerning the Middle East."<sup>2</sup> He then referred to the danger; that the American allies might create a closed trading area consisting of the Middle East and North Africa from which the United States would be excluded.

It is highly dubious that any great power will be in a position to meet all of the political, military, economic, or social needs of the diverse Arab world by itself. In addition, neither superpower can be forced out by the actions of the other as the Middle East affairs continue to depend in large measure upon the denouement of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

We have already briefly discussed the transition in the U.S. Palestinian policy which has not yet recognized the legiti-

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<sup>1</sup>Noam Chomsky, The Fateful Triangle, p.339

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p.20

mate rights of the Palestinians. This American step forward was faced with Israel's refusal to go to Geneva Conference if attended by the Palestinians. Additionally, Kissinger centered his efforts to keep the PLO away from the Conference. This was a good motive for the Arab leaders to agree in Algiers in 1973 to create a Palestinian state under the leadership of PLO chairman Yassir Arafat.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the early 1974 Kissinger disengagement agreements between Egypt, Israel and Syria broke down. The American peace initiatives were profoundly affected by the recurrent civil wars in Lebanon. The point that needs to be made here is that the American diplomacy seemed to be so concerned with how to stop the bloody troubles created by its agents in the region.

The newly elected democratic president, Jimmy Carter, decided to enhance the "step-by-step" approach of Kissinger. He, publicly recognized the Palestinian rights for a homeland with Israeli withdrawal from the Arab territories.<sup>2</sup> He was also ready to involve the Soviet Union entirely in any possible peace settlement in the Middle East.

Arabs and Palestinians in particular hailed such new U.S. Palestinian policy and considered it as a "positive step".<sup>3</sup> Indeed, by 1977, the Soviet-American cooperation over the Middle East reached an advanced level. A joint peace settlement was agreed upon

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<sup>1</sup>Bichara et Naim Khader, Textes de la Revolution Palestinienne, p.78

<sup>2</sup>Edward W. Said, The Question of Palestine, p.226

<sup>3</sup>Richard H. Curtis, A Changing Image, p.107



by the two superpowers considering the legitimate rights of the Palestinians—the crux of the Arabs—as a basis for any peace negotiations.<sup>1</sup>

However, the initiative was soon overshadowed by the step in of Egyptian President, Sadat. On November 9, 1977 he announced that he was "ready to go to the Israeli parliament itself to discuss peace."<sup>2</sup> The United reacted positively to Sadat intention. It was a means to undermine the presence of Russia and West European states in the Middle East and their efforts for a global settlement (Geneva Conference). In December 1978, the United States sponsored a meeting between the Defense Ministers of Israel and Egypt, and later the visit of Israeli Prime Minister, Begin to Ismailia.<sup>3</sup>

The democratic President succeeded, finally, to convince Sadat to accept a separate peace agreements. These accords took the name of the place where they were signed and became well known as the "Camp David" agreements, comprising two major frameworks. One was "a framework for peace in the Middle East", and the other, "a framework for the conclusion of a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel."<sup>4</sup> Arabs and Palestinians in particular strongly rejected such separate agreements. They saw them as a betrayal

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<sup>1</sup>Richard H. Curtis, A Changing Image, p.107

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p.110

<sup>3</sup>Pierre Mirel, L'Egypte des Ruptures, (Paris: Sindbad, 1982), p.40

<sup>4</sup>Watkins David, The Exceptional Conflict, p.49

of the Palestinian cause. Whereas, the American policy-makers saw the agreements as a realization of their main objectives in the Middle East.<sup>1</sup> Thus, they ensured Israeli security "within her territories" as Sadat has mentioned in the Knesset.<sup>2</sup> Then, they kept off the threat of any possible war in which Egypt and her army would take part. In addition they recovered Egypt which, from now on, lost her leading position in the Arab world. Henceforth, the Egyptian military alliance with the United States offered the latter strategic advantages over the Soviet Union and the West European countries, in the Middle East.

Commenting the American dealings, the Kremlin regarded the "Camp David" accords as an obrogation of the joint peaceful settlement of 1917 and of Security Council resolution 338. Meanwhile, the Western countries made publicly known their Venice Declaration in June 1980, concerning the agreements. The Venice principles agreed upon by the member states of the European Economic Community were based, mainly on the two Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, and the Palestinian right to self-determination and Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories.<sup>3</sup> However, the American and Israeli influence in European political circles nullified the conference recommendations. Though the Venice principles were ineffective, they reversed most of the earlier European decisions concerning the Palestinians.

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<sup>1</sup> Abdallah Frangi, The PLO and Palestine, p.166

<sup>2</sup> Pierre Mirel, L'Egypte des Ruptures, p.39

<sup>3</sup> Watkins David, The Exceptional Conflict, p.50



On March 27, 1980 the foreign ministers of the ten members countries of E.E.C. met at Brussels and reaffirmed their attachment to the Venice principles.<sup>1</sup> Three years later, the General Assembly of the United Nations convened a conference in Geneva, with the participation of governments and non-governmental organizations, "to seek effective ways and means to enable the Palestinian people to attain and to exercise their inalienable rights."<sup>2</sup> Yet, clearly, the new international position and the larger Palestinian role in the Middle East should have altered American powers. Thus, Israel and the United States did their best to organize a boycott against such international attempt.

Israeli influence in the structures of American diplomacy made the United States support unchanging despite the change of administration. Moreover, there has always been an ascendancy in such support. Edward Sheehan pointed out in 1976 that "...Israel possesses a powerful American constituency..."<sup>3</sup> The America's special relationship with Israel was enhanced by the election of the republican candidate, Ronald Reagan. He, in the words of former president, Nixon, is "probably the strongest supporter of Israel to occupy the White House since Harry Truman."<sup>4</sup>

Indeed, president Reagan had from the very beginning of his term, an active role in reaching a "comprehensive" settlement between

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<sup>1</sup>Watkins David, The Exceptional Conflict, p.51

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Richard H. Curtis, A Changing Image, p.116

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p.174

the parties in conflict. His peace plan, however, excluded the PLO from being a decisive element in the Middle East crisis. Moreover, the peace process sought a total liquidation of the Palestinians. The aim of such American policy was to deprive the PLO from its political role as a legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.<sup>1</sup> The Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1978 and later, fell obediently into line with the new American Palestinian policy. Moreover, the Israeli adventure in Lebanon was supported, in real terms, by a massive surge of American military supplies. Thus the American imperial role allowed the U.S. to preserve to a certain extent her vital interests and to control the economic structures of most of the countries of the Middle East. Consequently, the Russians were "contained" and definitely frozen out of any peaceful negotiations concerning this regional conflict.

Washington, therefore, pursued to maintain the political status quo in the area that would permit her to provide Israel and the Arabs with weapons on the condition that they be used solely for defense. The sale of AWACS to Saudi Arabia was conform to such policy.<sup>2</sup> It is then clearly perceived that the American close concern to the Middle East is not simply limited to the usual support of Israel, but also includes regular Middle Eastern oil production. This to meet with the needs of the United States, Japan and Western Europe, and the control of Soviet penetration.

President Reagan plan of 1982 consisted of not more than

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<sup>1</sup>Noam Chomsky, The Fateful Triangle, p.108

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.



an association of the Palestinians with Jordan forming a confederation as a "final" and "durable" solution to the Palestinian dilemma.<sup>1</sup> Thus, the plan denied the rights even of the inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza to select and choose their political representatives. Reagan's proposals were immediately rejected by the Israeli government as it did not go with Israeli aspirations of annexation of new Arab territories. The Reagan plan was therefore stone dead from the very beginning.

In 1981, the United States and West European countries supported the Saudi Arabia's plan containing eight principles for a peaceful settlement in the Middle East.<sup>2</sup> The Fahd plan, as it came to be known, was based especially on resolution 242—rejected by the Palestinians—and two other additional features. The first one called for a United Nations trusteeship period that will be followed by the formation of a Palestinian state in the West Bank. The second one, reiterated the repatriation of the Palestinians or the right of compensation for their lost properties. The Saudi plan was described by president Reagan as "a hopeful sign" in the settlement of peace in the Middle East.<sup>3</sup> He, however, pointed out that the plan implicitly called for Arab recognition of Israel, a determined factor of any eventual peace. Such "raising hopes" have been vanished once more by the Israeli tough opposition to the plan. It was considered as a way of "how to liquidate Israel in

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<sup>1</sup>Noam Chomsky, The Fateful Triangle, p.342

<sup>2</sup>Watkins David, The Exceptional Conflict, p.12

<sup>3</sup>Richard H. Curtis, A Changing Image, p.180

stages."<sup>1</sup> The Arab heads of state, including PLO chairman Yassir Arafat, met in Fez in November 1981, could not unite behind the Saudi plan. This situation was in fact brought about by the apparent Western point of view in the plan. Some delegations even demonstratively boycotted the November 1981 summit. However, the second phase of the 12th Arab Summit meeting in Fez, from 6—9 September 1982 was rather positive. The discussions revolved around a reworked version of the Fahd plan. For the first time in the history of the Palestine conflict this conference was to put forward a united Arab peace plan known as the "Fez Charter". The main points of this plan are: the withdrawal of Israel from all Arab territories occupied in 1967 (point 1); the dismantling of settlements established by Israel on Arab territories after 1967 (point 2); the reaffirmation of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and the exercise of its imprescriptible and inalienable national rights under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), its sole and legitimate representative (point 4); the Gaza Strip and the West Bank were to come under United Nations control for a transitional period not exceeding few months (point 5); the establishment of a Palestinian state with Jerusalem (Al Qods) as capital (point 6); the UN Security Council was to guarantee peace between all nations in the region including the independent Palestinian state (point 7); the UN Security Council was to guarantee the respect of these

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<sup>1</sup>Richard H. Curtis, A Changing Image, p.181



principles.<sup>1</sup>

The "Fez Charter" was considered by the PLO as a threshold for political move of the Arab countries. This, however, should be completed by a military action to enhance militantism, and the Palestinian and Arab rights.

West European politicians showed a positive response to the Fez decisions and considered them as a "genuine basis for peace negotiations."<sup>2</sup> However, <sup>while</sup> the Israeli government responded with a loud and clear "no", the U.S. administration adopted a wait-and-see policy.

This meant that another plan for peaceful settlement of the Middle East crisis was added to the open list of the failing plans. The Middle East conflict remains the single issue most likely to precipitate an unprecedented nuclear confrontation in the human history.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Abdelaziz Sebaa, "L'Heure du Choix", Algérie Actualité, 1071 (28 Février-6 Mars 1985), p.22

<sup>2</sup> Abdallah Frangi, The PLO and Palestine, p.243

<sup>3</sup> Richard H. Curtis, A Changing Image, p.185

## CHAPTER V

### SOCIALIST BLOC

Since a long time ago, the Middle East has been the world's prominent strategic area with a prestige far greater than that of much of the Third World. The area has been characterized by regional conflicts and continuing struggles for self-determination.

Throughout the post 1948 war period, what was seen as a regional conflict became steadily a superpower issue. The involvement of superpowers whether justified or not enhanced more than ever the prominence of the Middle East in the world's affairs. Moreover, it raised tension and increased risks of nuclear war that has begun to be seen as fightable and winnable by strategists of both sides.<sup>1</sup>

In spite of the intricacy of the subject matter, we would try to dissociate and discuss the major milestones of Russia's interest in the Middle East, since she and her allies have gained strong footholds in the Arab world—and in the Third World in general. In order to place this attempt in perspective, it may be worthwhile recalling briefly the situation and the attitude of the Soviet Union before the recent break out of the Middle East crisis, so that we can make some valid analysis when we come to look at her policy as it stands now.

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<sup>1</sup> R.D. Mc Laurin, Mohammed Mughisuddin, Abraham R. Wagner, Foreign Policy Making in the Middle East, p.12



Analysts do have different approaches over the motives for the intrusion of Soviet Union and her allies in the Middle East. They consider this involvement as longstanding and important to the Soviet Union's security in strategic terms. It is worth noting that Russia's involvement is no more than the projection of her traditional interest in the region. Furthermore, this importance lies in the fact that the Soviet Union aimed to extend some form of influence over the area or even control. Some other views link the current Soviet concern in the area with the centuries-old aspirations aiming at reaching "warm-water ports on the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean."<sup>1</sup> So as early as 1696, Tsarist Russia started expanding Russian borders to reach the shores of the Black Sea and the South of Central Asia later on. Another significant element on which relies an analysis is that the Soviet presence in the area South of its border was motivated by the nineteenth-century European power's attempt of domination, and which has always been mentioned as a major reason.

However, though the reasons for Russian interest differed, the expansion of Russian influence in the region has often paid off, due to the geographical proximity of the Middle East to Russia. Thus, by 1907 Russian move succeeded to set up "spheres of influence" comprising Turkey, Persia and other areas and therefore established a buffer zone of independent territories South of Russian borders.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>T.C.F. Prittie, "Soviet Political Involvement in the Middle East", Britain and Israel, 97( Sep/Nov. 1979), p.2

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

The Soviet Union also signed treaties with the governments of Afghanistan and Persia and established friendly relations with Turkey, seeking to set up the "Soviet Good Neighbor" policy in the region.<sup>1</sup>

In the meantime and until the Second World War, the Arab countries bordering Mediterranean, Persian Gulf and Red Sea were considered as European spheres of influence and the Allied victory in the war thought of making such areas enjoying permanent peace under their control, through the established mandate system. So until about 1950, the Soviet Union was excluded from the Arab-speaking regions of Asia and North Africa, dominated by old Western colonial powers (i.e., Britain and France), and with which, it had no economic ties or other. Moreover, Russian attempt to damage Britain's position in the Middle East especially, when supporting the Zionists to set up a Jewish state in Palestine and providing them with arms (through Czechoslovakia), had attracted much hostility from the Arab countries.<sup>2</sup> The fact that the Soviet Union was one of the first countries to recognize the newly-created state of Israel in 1948, made some analysts see its entry into the Arab world a far reaching attempt.<sup>3</sup>

However, Russian attitude was not to prevent, as it seemed, any penetration into the Arab world. Russian recognition of Israel can probably be put down to twin aims. Firstly, because Russia

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<sup>1</sup>R.D. Mc Laurin, The Middle East in Soviet Policy (Washington: American Institutes for Research, 1975), p.17

<sup>2</sup>Richard H. Curtis, A Changing Image, pp.31-32

<sup>3</sup>R.D. Mc Laurin, The Middle East in Soviet Policy, p.19



considered it as an anti-British attempt aiming at turning Israel into a satellite. Secondly, the creation of Israel precisely enhanced the Soviet Union's presence in the region, due to the exacerbation of Arab anti-Westernism. Because as we pointed out in a previous chapter, the Zionist state is viewed by the Arabs as a front and instrument of Western imperialism. The Soviets therefore took profit from the Arab turn away from the West. They soon publicly backed the Palestinian resistance movement in the occupied territories as a "just struggle", and claimed to put the problem on the Security Council agenda.<sup>1</sup>

In the early 1950's, the opportunities for the Soviet entry into the Arab world and in the Middle East in particular, were provided by the increase of anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist sentiments manifesting themselves in violent demonstrations of national assertiveness. There were several Arab states that seemed to hold out promise of better relations, the most important being Syria, Iraq and Egypt which showed strong hostility to the West. The Soviet Union undertook productive relations with such states. Hence, in September 1955, Russia sponsored arms agreement between Egypt and Czechoslovakia according to which military assistance for Egypt is assured.<sup>2</sup> The Soviet increasing influence in the area raised the fears of the Western powers, predicting a potential involvement of other key Arab states into the Soviet connections. They regarded the arms agreement as a turning-point in the Russian

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<sup>1</sup>David P. Forsythe, "The Soviets and the Arab-Israeli Conflict", Middle East Newsletter, eds. Robert Joseph Fraga, Anne Ricketson Zahlan, 3 (April/May 1971), p.4

<sup>2</sup>R.D. McLaurin, The Middle East in Soviet Policy, p.20

Middle East policy.

Meanwhile, the early objective of the Soviet Union to contain the Western influence in the area was still the driving force of her policy. Hence, she tried to undermine the Baghdad Pact, signed in 1955 and regarded as a crucial link in the West's effort to endanger Russian interests in the Middle East.<sup>1</sup> The Pact was perceived as a major threat to Soviet security. Thus, the Soviet Union promised to "support and develop cooperation with the countries of the Middle East and to work toward strengthening the national independence of these countries and consolidating peace and friendly cooperation among the people."<sup>2</sup> The Soviet Union clearly showed her intention to reduce the existing links of Middle East countries with the West and Western influence. The Soviet efforts were therefore centered on strengthening ties between the Arab states in the Middle East and the socialist bloc (except China). Such anti-Western attitude aimed at uprooting the aggressive alliances such as N.A.T.O. and C.E.N.T.O. with the countries of the Middle East and the Mediterranean basin.<sup>3</sup> Contrary to Western policy, Russia avoided to impose on the Arab radical

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<sup>1</sup>Maxime Rodinson, Israel and the Arabs, pp.70-71

<sup>2</sup>Adeed Dawisha, "The Soviet Union in the Arab World: The Limits to Superpower influence", The Soviet Union in the Middle East (London: Heinemann, 1982), p.9

<sup>3</sup>R.D. McLaurin, The Middle East in Soviet Policy, p.24 As far as the two military alliances are concerned, N.A.T.O.: is an organization formed in Washington D.C. in 1949, comprising the 12 nations of the North Atlantic Treaty together with Greece, Turkey (1951) and the Federal Republic of Germany, for the purpose of collective defense against aggression. C.E.N.T.O.: the Central Treaty Organization was founded in 1958 by the United States and grouped Turkey, Iran and Pakistan for the object of collective defense. Destroyed after Islamic revolution in Iran.



and nationalist anti-Western forces its political style and social system, at least during this period.

After the Suez Canal crisis of 1956 on which the Soviet Union had little impact, the Arab-Israeli conflict appeared as the crucial problem of the area. This made the Arab states very much in need of long term cooperation with a powerful nation like the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union therefore initiated its incursions into the Arab world at a most opportune time. It underwrote its initiatives with certain development projects, but more practically with large arms assistance programmes to the Arab armies, particularly in Syria and Egypt. The Soviets, then increasingly became the primary supplier of the Arabs with modern weaponry and economic and political support which made it definitely a major political actor in the region.

After the important 1955 arms accord with Egypt, the Soviet Union offered to supplant the West in the assistance in the Arab economic development. Such offer was in a form of aid granted to cover the costs of specific projects throughout the Arab world, as the Aswan dam in Egypt.<sup>1</sup> Such aid seemed to herald the Soviet economic assistance and to a lesser extent, trade with the Arab world.

Once established, Soviet-Arab relations continued to develop, somewhat fitfully, partly because they remained advantageous to the countries concerned, but partly also because the Arab states found themselves with little alternative. This analysis remains true as

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<sup>1</sup>R.D. McLaurin, The Middle East in Soviet Policy, p.22

the Western countries and America have always refused to favour any Arab cooperation to contain Russian influence at the expense of Israel. However, although one of the first states to recognize Israel, the Soviet Union quickly espoused the Palestinian cause, thus placing itself openly at the side of the Arab and Islamic worlds. The Arab populations could then contrast the deliberate Soviet support for what they considered to be Arab and Muslim legitimate rights with the West's attitude toward the Arab cause and its unbending commitment to the maintenance and defense of Israel.

By the mid 1960's, the Soviet involvement in the Arab world extended to the three core Arab states of Egypt, Iraq and Syria, and to Yemen and Algeria, where a "non-capitalist path development" was promoted.<sup>1</sup> During that stage, the Soviet influence was clearly on the ascendancy, and Russia's enemies were being pushed back on to the defense. The Soviet Union also enjoyed better relations with states as Iran and Turkey and attained to bring about a political situation in which the United States was unwelcome in the Middle East and in the Mediterranean basin.

From 1964 onwards, the Soviet Union's influence can be perceived more and more in the Middle East, but not as a specifically anti-Israeli influence. The contradictions in the Soviet and Arab positions normally meant that Israel was the only permanently safe currency for Russia to deal with. There was, for instance, no great Soviet reaction to the founding of the Palestine

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<sup>1</sup>R.D. McLaurin, The Middle East in Soviet policy, p.25



Liberation Organization in this year. Though during Khrushchev's visit of 1964 to Egypt, he recognized the "inalienable and lawful rights of the Palestinian Arabs."<sup>1</sup> Nonetheless, this recognition was still based on the plight of refugees rather than on the demands of a national liberation movement. Such Soviet hesitation made the Palestinian leaders of the new organization turning to China which responded in a more positive and concrete way. In fact, the Soviet Union had supposedly preferred to work with established governments in the Middle East, primarily Egypt. One official Soviet commentator asserted this approach when stating that "...the conditions for guerrilla warfare are highly unfavorable..."<sup>2</sup> Russia was focusing her attention, indeed, on progressive regimes in the area, such as Syria and People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, rather than on conservative ones such as Jordan and Saudi Arabia, the most loyal Arab allies of the West.

The period immediately after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war constituted another turning-point in Soviet policy. The Soviet leaders sought to increase their influence to Arab world as a whole, with breaking off diplomatic relations with Israel at the end of the war, as an instance of their good intention. They soon offered political, military and economic support to almost every Arab state. It is clear, however, that after the humiliating defeat of June 1967, the Arab states would accept greater Soviet participation in the economic and military reconstruction of their countries.

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<sup>1</sup> Galia Golan, "The Soviet Union and the PLO", Crisis Management and the Superpowers in the Middle East, p.138

<sup>2</sup> David P. Forsythe, "The Soviets and the Arab-Israeli Conflict", Middle East Newsletter 5, n<sup>o</sup>.3 (April/May 1971), p.3

Indeed this approach was motivated by an important number of considerations: firstly, there was an attempt to reduce Western influence through establishing greater conventional military presence to challenge Western domination in conventional arms in areas such as the Middle East. Secondly, Moscow was doing its best to reduce the potential for the superpowers confrontation in the area. Finally, it is conceivable that the attention and aid given to the PLO by the People's Republic of China with the extended amounts of economic and military help to both the Middle East and North Africa, made Russia taking up the challenge to compete with her.<sup>1</sup> To attain such an objective, Russia sought to involve her allies, East European countries (members of Warsaw Pact), and Cuba, in this rivalry.<sup>2</sup> Thus, these states were directing the main thrust of military, economic and technical assistance towards those countries that were of prime interest for Soviet foreign policy.

The Soviet Union's relations across the Arab world were reinforced by the deterioration in Egyptian-Soviet relations following the death of Nasser in 1970, as new objectives seem to have been established for the Middle East. Nonetheless, Moscow signed treaties of friendship and cooperation with Egypt in 1971, and Iraq in 1972. Consequently, Russia provided Egypt with the needed weapons in 1973. In the meantime, the Soviet Union was seeking for the development of close cooperation with Iraqi and Syrian societies and broadening relationships with the countries

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<sup>1</sup>Warsaw Pact: An organization formed in Warsaw, Poland, in 1955, comprising Albania (withdrawn in 1958), Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, Rumania and the Russia, for collective defense under a joint military command.

<sup>2</sup>Maxime Rodinson, Israel and the Arabs, p. 219



of the Gulf. However, despite the visible Soviet influence in the Arab world, it did not lead to bring about change in Arab policy. The Soviet-Arab difference of point of view can be shown by Algerian, Iraqi and Syrian rejection of United Nations resolution 242 and their support to the Palestinian guerrilla groups; and this despite the Soviet efforts to persuade all these Arab governments to accept the Soviet view which consists of the recognition of secure boundaries for a smaller Israel in return for her withdrawal from the occupied territories.<sup>1</sup>

The influence of the Soviet Union began to wane as the Arab conservative states went on the offensive to exclude her from the area. This hostile attitude was confirmed by Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Fahd in 1974 when saying: "I intend to get the Russian communists out of Somalia. My policy will be to help the moderate forces in South Yemen. I will help the Sudan resist communist subversion."<sup>2</sup> More difficulties arose by 1975, when Egypt faced a Soviet refusal to supply her with adequate offensive weapons to face the Israeli advanced military weaponry. Some analysts related such friction to the fact that Russia perceived a lack of commitment of the Egyptian government to stand as the "fulcrum" of Soviet policies in the Middle East.<sup>3</sup> In spite of Soviet opposition, in September 1975, Egypt signed with Israel, under the American supervision, a disengagement agreement about the Sinai. However, when

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<sup>1</sup> Galia Golan, "The Soviet Union and the PLO", Crisis Management and Superpowers in Middle East, p.140

<sup>2</sup> Adeed Dawisha, "The Soviet Union in the Arab World", The Soviet Union in the Middle East, p.21

<sup>3</sup> David P. Forsythe, "The Soviets and Arab-Israeli Conflict", Middle East Newsletter, p.5

considering Moscow's reaction to Egypt, we may depict the role played by the United States to bring about such situation. "The Soviet Union has been consistently continuing the policy of furthering friendly cooperation with Egypt in the military field in accordance with the existing agreements. But cooperation, of course, is a two-sided matter. It cannot develop if one of the sides is pursuing a policy of undermining it."<sup>1</sup> noticed the Soviet official commentator. Trouble and disappointment gained the Soviets, once the Soviet-Egyptian treaty was abrogated by Egyptian government, in 1976. The whole Arab world was seeming to slip irrevocably away from Moscow's grasp. Thus, among the Arab countries in which the Soviets had invested much time and efforts, the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen was the only one referred to as a "staging post" for the Soviet Union through which Moscow would threaten the Western interests in the area.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, the Soviet effort was soon concentrated on forging and setting up a "progressive front" composed mainly of Syria and Iraq as well as the Palestinians.

From the foregoing, it is obvious that Moscow was searching for alternative "points d'appui" in those countries with a special reference to the Palestinians. Indeed, the Soviet Union had till then, considered the Palestinian issue as a refugee problem caused by the Arab-Israeli conflict. This is not to say that the Soviet Union did not acknowledge the Palestinians. Her attitude continued

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<sup>1</sup> Adeed Dawisha, "The Soviet Union in the Arab World", The Soviet Union in the Middle East, p.15

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.16



to fluctuate between referring to them as refugees and Arab people of Palestine.<sup>1</sup> Also, Moscow remained aloof from the fate of the Palestinians during the Jordanian events of 1970-71. The Soviet Union, it is suggested, places preeminent weight on her relations with the Middle East governments rather than on the plight of the Palestinians. These apparent conflictual approaches did not prevent the improvement of the PLO. Soviet relations with the PLO improved as a result of Arafat's visit to Moscow, in 1972, and the acquisition of Soviet arms supplies via Syria. A further improvement became more apparent after the October war of 1973.

As we have pointed above, the change in Soviet attitude toward the PLO, despite the differences and problems, was clearly influenced by the Soviet-Egyptian conflict of that year.

Iraq is another case in point. To the Iraqi Baathist leadership, the close cooperation with the Soviet Union represented "a strategic and ideological alliance between two regimes bound by a common revolutionary bond against Zionism and Western imperialism."<sup>2</sup> This statement reflected to a last extent, the strength of relations that seemed to exist between the two countries in the period of post 1972. The great hopes of the Kremlin in Iraq's revolutionary government soon waned. By 1980, the ideological alliance and revolutionary bond, which the Iraqis described as a bond between the regimes in 1972, seemed not to be well tightened. The gap between the two allied countries was

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<sup>1</sup>Galia Golan, "The Soviet Union and the PLO", Crisis Management and the Superpowers in the Middle East, p.139

<sup>2</sup>Adeed Dawisha, "The Soviet Union in the Arab World", The Soviet Union in the Middle East, p.16

gradually widening to the point that in 1981, the Baghdad government openly condemned the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

In the meantime, the Kremlin leaders were putting emphasis on Damascus to compensate the lost Iraqi alliance. However, and keeping in mind the unfortunate Iraqi experience, the Soviets showed a lesser extent of commitment to Syria with which they signed a Treaty of Friendship and cooperation in October 1980. So, Moscow did not hesitate to show her displeasure at the Syrian invasion of Lebanon to lead military operations against the Palestinian resistance and the Lebanese National Movement, the close Soviet ally.<sup>1</sup>

These are, indeed, few instances of the inability of the Soviet Union and other external powers to contain the internal Middle East political affairs. This interpretation supports the earlier conclusion by Charles Creameans that Middle East politics "demonstrated the waning power of the outside forces to determine the outcome of events in the Arab area..."<sup>2</sup>

Caught between the need to maintain its role as the primary external Arab friend and the more vital need to avoid a strategic confrontation with the United States, the Soviet leadership saw important potential advantages issuing from an Arab-Israeli settlement. The Palestine issue, it is commonly stated, has been the linchpin for the Soviet Union in the Middle East,

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<sup>1</sup> Adeed Dawisha, "The Soviet Union in the Arab World", The Soviet Union in the Middle East, p. 18

<sup>2</sup> David P. Forsythe, "The Soviets and the Arab-Israeli Conflict", Middle East Newsletter, p. 5



enhancing Moscow's argument that it supports the Arab interests. The Soviet leaders, however, were aware of the importance of the Palestinian problem in any lasting and durable Middle East peace settlement. This settlement precisely is consistently related to the occupied territories claimed by the Arab and Islamic worlds, and to the establishment of a Palestinian state in Palestine.<sup>1</sup> The Soviet policy regarding a Middle East settlement gave way to speculations in the West. Supporters of détente have the tendency to see the Soviet Union favoring in a responsible way a resolution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, while those who see the Soviet Union through their hostile attitude have usually reported Soviet impediments to the evolution of any settlement. They based such an approach on the fact that the return of the occupied territories is a sine qua non for settlement, and since settlement is probably a sine qua non of their return, Russia had therefore to work for a settlement if she hopes to maintain close relationships with the Arab countries.<sup>2</sup> However, the possibility of superpowers confrontation is a principal consideration of both American and Soviet policy makers. Thus, both have been inclined to favor the establishment of a settlement to keep the détente relationship alive.

Examined in terms of the comparative peace attempts, one can note that the Soviet diplomats have not consistently supported specific initiatives any more than their American counterparts

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<sup>1</sup> Galia Golan, "The Soviet Union and the PLO", Crisis Management and the Superpowers in the Middle East, p.146

<sup>2</sup> R.D. McLaurin, Mohammed Mughisuddin and Abraham R. Wagner, Foreign Policy Making in the Middle East (London: P. Reagers Publishers, 1977), p.28

have. The underlying assumption of such American advantage of having peace initiatives, lies in the fact that the United States is the only state with potential leverage over Israel-- the country that possess tangible keys that are both vital to peace and negotiable-- the Golan Heights, West Bank, and Sinai taken in 1967. However, Western official commentators revealed publicly--from 1970 onwards--the Soviet Union's attempts to control hostilities and her counsels to Arab states against war.<sup>1</sup> The Soviet Union, it is widely believed, refused to take part in any American proposals for peace settlement, on the pretence that they are only failing initiatives. However, after the six day war of June 1967, Moscow has made itself into one of the important factors in the Arab-Israeli conflict. It was definitely recognized by the United States as a co-responsible for regional stability and security and both had to deal together with the explosive situation in the Middle East.<sup>2</sup> It is worthwhile noting that the Soviet Union treated the Palestinian question with more interest than did the United States.

Despite the visible augmentation of Soviet support to the PLO, relations were not of the best. The Soviet commitment to the Palestinian statehood, claimed by the PLO, was ambiguous and slow in emerging. The Soviets almost totally ignored the Palestinian problem at the Geneva Peace Conference in December 1973, and relegated it to a secondary factor of settlement. It was until

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<sup>1</sup>R.D. McLaurin, Mohammed Mughisuddin and Abraham R. Wagner, Foreign Policy Making in the Middle East, p.30

<sup>2</sup>Peter Mangold, "The Soviet Record in the Middle East", Crisis Management and the Superpowers in the Middle East, p.93



1974, that the Soviets officially referred, for the first time, to the "right to establish their (Palestinians) own statehood in one form or another."<sup>1</sup> This was made public by the Algerian President, Houari Boumédiène, on 4 October 1974, and confirmed a week later by a Soviet official. However, the issue of Palestinian statehood was somehow problematic between Moscow and the PLO. While the Palestine Liberation Organization was claiming for a "secular democratic state" in all Palestine, Moscow made it clear that her idea of a state corresponds to the West bank and the Gaza Strip. Hence, the standard Soviet position, over the years, referred usually to the 1947 partition plan lines as the official borders of Israel. One important commentator, *Izvestia's* editor Lev Tolkunov described such Soviet position as a basis for a realistic and durable solution to the Arab-Israeli dispute.<sup>2</sup> The same policy was proposed and defended by the Soviet delegation in the two-power talks of 1970, and in response to the Rogers plan of December 1969. As a result of these superpowers talks, an agreement was reached concerning the shape of a potential peace settlement. However, such initiative was not endorsed by the Palestinian resistance, which caused its "failure". In fact, no Palestinian group was willing to capitulate and accept to "sell out" the Arab cause.

It has long been axiomatic that when several parties are in conflict, as it is the case in the Middle East, no agreement can

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<sup>1</sup> Galia Golan, "The Soviet Union and the PLO" Crisis Management and the Superpowers in the Middle East, p.141

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.143

can be reached without the consent of all sides. Russian policy makers assume that the appropriate way to reach a solution is to convene an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations. The October war of 1973 took both superpowers by surprise and established the Middle East as one of the major focuses of their diplomatic initiatives. A peace conference became an acute issue in the international relations. The Soviet-American reaction can be resumed in the passing of Security Council resolution 338, asking the belligerents for an immediate cease-fire and the implementation of Security Council resolution 242 in all its aspects through negotiations between the parties in conflict.<sup>1</sup> The Palestinians, soon, refused to conform to such appeal, as it implies Arab recognition of Israel as a state, while the Palestinian problem was still considered not as a national or political issue but rather as a mere refugee problem.

Notwithstanding that, the United States and the Soviet Union hosted a peace conference in Geneva, on December 21, 1973. This conference, to which the United Nations Secretary General, Israel, Egypt, Jordan and Syria were invited, was adjourned after three days and has not reconvened since.<sup>2</sup> Syria refused to attend the conference, whereas, the PLO has not been invited. Some analysts related the failure of the conference to the missing of Syria and the PLO in particular which America and Israel rejected its

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<sup>1</sup> Abdallah Frangi, The PLO and Palestine, p.134

<sup>2</sup> Bichara et Naim Khader, Textes de la Revolution Palestinienne, p.242



participation.

The PLO's status as the "sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians" was actually spreading on a large scale throughout the world and in particular among the Arab and the non-aligned countries. By 1973, about 103 countries had recognized the PLO as such.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the American diplomacy, soon became very active in the Middle East. Henry Kissinger's efforts aimed at bringing about gradual agreements for disengagement between Egypt and Syria on one hand and Israel on the other hand.<sup>2</sup>

Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that the Soviet diplomacy is disposed to make visible endeavors toward maintaining the Soviet influence in the Middle East as constant as possible. The Soviet leaders turned, therefore, to Yassir Arafat and the Palestinian issue which has always been a pan-Arab problem to get a Palestinian agreement to participate in Geneva Peace Conference—based on resolution 242—with a promise to include a specific demand for Palestinian "legitimate rights."<sup>3</sup>

In pursuance of this objective, Arafat was received twice by the Soviet Foreign Minister during his visit to Egypt and Syria in 1974. This step was the first towards the establishment of permanent contact between the two parties. Throughout 1974, a number of important meetings took place between the Soviet and

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<sup>1</sup>Farouk Kadoumi, "The Palestinian Political Struggle", Palestine Affairs 39, p.7

<sup>2</sup>Maxime Rodinson, Israel and the Arabs, p.279

<sup>3</sup>Galia Golan, "The Soviet Union and the PLO", Crisis Management and the Superpowers in the Middle East, p.148

Palestinian leaders that brought about the opening of the PLO office in Moscow.

Along the same line, encouragement was made by Moscow of some Palestinian groups, forming the Refusal Front within the PLO, to support the Soviet demand. Indeed the PFLP General Command and the Arab Liberation Front stood opposing any participation of the PLO in Geneva Conference based, as we have pointed out above, on Security Council resolution 242. However, given the ever-changing events in the Middle East, this time related to the Lebanese crisis in 1976, the Soviet deliberate pledge to the Palestinians became subject to the Soviet relations with Syria and America. The Soviet commitment to the Palestinians reached a very low level to an extent that it did seem that Russia would not insist on Palestinian representation in Geneva Peace Conference, in the face of American-Israeli refusal. Yet, the Soviet Union was even willing to jeopardize her relations with the PLO in the interests of gaining some footholds in Jordan to undermine American interests there.<sup>1</sup> The only thing she seemed willing to do, apart from backing a joint Palestinian-Jordanian delegation for Geneva Conference, is to reach a compromise with the United States about the Middle East crisis, that would be based on resolution 242.

For its part, the PLO and its various components have demonstrated their own awareness of the broad differences between themselves and the Soviet Union on basic issues, such as the Soviet desire to limit a "Palestinian state" to the occupied

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<sup>1</sup> Galia Golan, "The Soviet Union and the PLO", Crisis Management and the Superpowers in the Middle East, pp. 150-51



territories ( i.e., the West Bank and Gaza), when the Palestinians would prefer to create an independent state in Palestine. In addition, the PLO sought to preserve its independence as well as to maintain the Soviet aid and support. The PLO-Soviet relations remained unchanged since then, due to their different positions.

The attempt to control the fighting in Lebanon made all diplomatic efforts fully concerned with finding convenient solutions to the crisis. By that time, the various significant manifestation of the effort to reach a realistic settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict took place in the United States, Russia and the United Nations.

The year 1977 was according to certain views, like 1973, a "watershed year in the Arab-Israeli dispute."<sup>1</sup> In October 1977, a joint Soviet-American statement set out a basis for a peaceful settlement and supported "the legitimate rights" of the Palestinians and their participation in Geneva Conference.<sup>2</sup> But, once again, such agreement was left without further improvement. Because the American diplomacy was moving down on an entirely different track at that time. Hence, the road to Geneva was prolonged and proved to be full of tricky dilemmas.

The visit of Sadat to Jerusalem on November 19, 1977 expunged all the approaches to contain the Middle East conflict definitely. This trip, also cancelled the reconvening of Geneva Conference for a later date. Thus, it was evident that the Soviet

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<sup>1</sup> Richard H. Curtis, A Changing Image, p.105

<sup>2</sup> Mohammed K. Shadiid, The United States and the Palestinians, p.143

Union would reject such individual initiative at the expense of a global settlement. The Soviet Union, according to Yassir Arafat, will not take part in the Geneva Conference, if the PLO is not represented by an independent delegation that takes part in the conference from the beginning.<sup>1</sup> The concrete aspects of this Soviet position was characterized by the rejection of the Camp David accords and considering it merely as a new plot against the Arab world.<sup>2</sup>

In response to such an American diplomatic success, the Soviet Union proposed to hold an international conference about the Middle East. Such proposal is still a matter of passionate speculations nowadays, with the worsening of the Palestinian situation in the Middle East. The Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, added to the Lebanese holocaust, complicated any attempt for peace settlement. During that year, Moscow re-entered the Middle East negotiating scene, as Leonid Brezhnev presented a six-point peace plan, considered as a response to Reagan plan, by Western observers.<sup>3</sup> The plan stressed in particular the unacceptability of the acquisition of foreign territory by aggression. It went on to state that all conquered territories should be liberated and the Palestinian people had the right to self-determination and the establishment of its own, independent state. East Jerusalem must be given back to the Arabs. The state of war should be ended, with

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<sup>1</sup> Vladimir Beliaikov, "The Soviet Union and the Palestinian Revolution", The Question of Palestine: Aggression, Struggle and Ways of Settlement (Moscow: Soviet Academy of Sciences, 1983), p. 215

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 220

<sup>3</sup> Abdallah Frangi, The PLO and Palestine, p. 245



all states in the region including Israel and the Palestinian state, committing themselves to mutual respect of sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. The Brezhnev plan implies clearly, a substantial support from the Soviet and the heads of Eastern bloc states who approved it at a meeting of the Warsaw Pact Council in January 1983, to the legitimacy of the PLO to participate in all Middle East peace settlement.<sup>1</sup>

Western and American journalists and observers regarded the Soviet plan as a support and clear affirmation of the Fez resolutions. The sparks of peace, however, disappeared and all hopes disappointed with the refusal of Israel, backed by the United States, to sit at the table of negotiations. Despite all constraints, the Soviet union went on providing the Palestinian cause with necessary support and searching for an eventual meeting of Geneva Conference.

The role that the Soviet Union played in the Summer of 1982 to make the Palestinian armed groups leaving Beirut safe, revealed to a great extent, the Soviet desire to stop the bloodshed of the Palestinians and to avoid their disintegration. The Soviet leaders have been convinced that the Soviet-Palestinian relations are bound to a common struggle against international imperialism and its threat to the world peace.<sup>2</sup> These relations have been enhanced after the peace proposal put forward by the sixteenth session of the Palestine National Council in Algiers in 1983.

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<sup>1</sup> Abdallah Frangi, The PLO and Palestine, p.244

<sup>2</sup> Vladimir Beliakov, "The Soviet Union and the Palestinian Revolution", The Question of Palestine, p.217

It set a basis for the hereafter relations with Jordan that should be based on a confederation of the two independent states of Palestine and Jordan. This political statement was approved by all Palestinian organizations, despite the serious in-fighting between various wings about the PLO's future course. The National Council wholeheartedly backed the Brezhnev plan and appreciated the stands of the socialist bloc countries towards the Palestinian cause.<sup>1</sup>

It was therefore evident that the Palestinian Council's resolutions gave the Soviet Union's diplomacy a large option for future manoeuvring toward the reconvening of Geneva Conference, and the preservation of her status as a co-responsible for the Middle East stability.

The Soviet and American involvement in the Arab world and in the Middle East in particular, with the related assumptions have been discussed at length before. The focal point of this concluding analysis is on the framework for current Soviet-American interactions relative to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Although we shall not detail the constituents of the superpowers Middle East policies, it is necessary to discuss the driving forces of these policies and the elements of similarities and dissimilarities.

The interests of both the United States and the Soviet Union have substantially changed in the Middle East, since the Six-Day War. This event pushed them to make strategic decisions to

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<sup>1</sup> Abdallah Frangi, The PLO and Palestine, p.250



back the states in the area at both military and political levels and to thereby continue the efforts to build their influence there. Their goals and policies were promoted after the October war of 1973. The Soviet Union and the United States became, therefore, the sole great powers deeply involved in the Middle East, and entered into a wild regional rivalry at the expense of their ambitious attempt to grow rather a "global cooperation."<sup>1</sup> It should be noted here that the October war brought about a spectacular shift in international attitudes toward the Middle East dilemma. This was partly caused by the Arab military demonstrations during the war. Indeed, the close cooperation between the Arab states and between them and non-Arab Muslim states of the Middle East—Iran and Turkey—improved significantly between 1967 and 1973. Notwithstanding the political differences that existed between them; the Arab states surprised the whole world and the West particularly by their manifested unity during the war. This war revealed that the Israeli army, though well trained, equipped and motivated, cannot sustain a full-scale war against its Arab neighbours for more than a few days without almost total resupply from outside.<sup>2</sup> And partly by the effective use of "oil weapon" by the Arab oil-exporting countries in 1973, against the Western Israeli allies. Thus, the new oil wealth of the Arabs and the Iranians, and their close cooperation within the Organization of Petroleum Exporting countries (OPEC) brought about clear economic changes in the area. For the

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<sup>1</sup>R.D. McLaurin, Mohammed Mughisuddin and Abraham R. Wagner, Foreign Policy Making in the Middle East, pp. 30-31

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

Arabs, this newly acquired power was supposed to have great effect on their world-wide problem— the Arab-Israeli conflict. Already a number of European states and Japan have sought to enter the Arab markets and in the transfer of technology to the Arab countries.<sup>1</sup>

From the foregoing, both superpowers steadily intensified their competition in the area later on. They came to realize that their overlapping interests in the region are not guaranteed; and their brief military confrontation during the October war revealed their limits in containing the explosively dangerous situation and in preserving their fragile détente policy. They, however, showed their intentions to control hostilities and to avoid any further confrontation with each other. Although they were using the same channels (through the Middle East states) to determine their own roles and problems relative to the conflict, they differ over the means of doing so. Thus, while the United States is basing its tactical assessments on a case-by-case process to reach a general settlement; the Soviet Union rejected any bilateral approach and sought to base her efforts on a global (Geneva Conference) diplomacy.

Such divergent policies reflected the superpowers approaches to the region. Indeed, the American preservation of interests is linked to the extent of the Russian access in the area as well as the security of Israel, the security of the oil supply, the

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<sup>1</sup> Hans Maull, "Future Arab Options", Crisis Management and the Superpowers in the Middle East, p.25

<sup>2</sup> Mohammed K. Shadid, The United States and the Palestinians, p.106



the necessity to contain the Middle East arms race and of accommodating Arab economic power. However, the dominant regional issue—the Palestinian cause—and questions relating to the security of the Middle East made the superpowers unable to regulate their competition. The Soviet Union's meaning of "equal security" was to have an equal status, nuclear parity, a right to be a party in any settlement agreement, and the right to back national liberation struggles to establish a military balance of power in the area.<sup>1</sup>

The American strategy to expel the Soviet Union from the Middle East seems fully based on close relationship with the two principal countries in the area, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. The Americans, it is said, risked even a settlement in order to increase their role at the expense of the Soviet Union. It has been maintained that as a result of such American policy in the Middle East, the Soviet Union has been displeased and raised doubts about its intention to take part in the peace-making process suggested by the United States. This being the case, the American diplomacy started a mediation, as early as 1974, between Israel and its neighbouring Arab countries, to achieve a series of disengagement agreements with Egypt and Syria.<sup>2</sup> The triumph of the American diplomacy was enhanced by the Camp David agreements between Israel and Egypt, in 1978.

The Soviet Union being dominated by this American diplomatic system was not too dissatisfied to step back a little,

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<sup>1</sup>Shahram Chubin, "Soviet-American Rivalry in the Middle East: The Political Dimension", The Soviet Union in the Middle East, p.126

<sup>2</sup>Richard H. Curtis, A Changing Image, p.101

in the face of the changed situation. The Soviet Union, as has been argued, based its competition with the West on a long-term perspective; so long as it maintains strong ties with Syria, PDRY and the PLO--it will probably find it quite tolerable to accept the new situation. Russia still considers as its legitimate right to ensure its security South of its borders and to have a position of political preponderance over the region; hence, it has the right to exclude the Western powers and extend its influence over the states adjacent to the borders of its sphere of action.<sup>1</sup>

However, both camps seem to agree upon the need to establish security for the state of Israel within her recognized borders as defined by the Americans, the Israelis and the Security Council resolution 242. The point of divergence between the two remains then the borders of Israel, as the Soviet Union does not recognize such borders beyond those stated by the United Nations partition plan of 1947. It seems that both of them enjoy the state of "no war, no peace" in the Middle East, as it works their interests making the countries in the area dependent on the supply of new weaponry for the sake of the balance of power.<sup>2</sup> At the same time both superpowers are today more deeply involved in the Middle East than at any time in the past. Both are still drawn in as main arms suppliers and supporters of one side or the other.

Indeed with the emergence of the Arab world as an important

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<sup>1</sup> Malcolm Yapp, "Soviet Relations with Countries of the Northern Tier", The Soviet Union in the Middle East, pp. 32-33

<sup>2</sup> R.D. McLaurin, Mohammed Mughisuddin and Abraham R. Wagner, Foreign Policy Making in the Middle East, p. 21



element in the international economic and political system, both superpowers (in addition to Japan and West of Europe) sought to plough their ways through the Arab markets to reach afterwards the central resource of the Middle East, oil, on which world dependence is gradually increasing. Recently, the Arab states and the E.E.C. have put forward a framework for cooperation on a large scale. In this regard, it is suggested that the European's potential contribution is significant. Being sympathetic to the Palestinian cause—as in the Venice Declaration of 1980—the European ten can be helpful in solving the Arab-Israeli conflict with a more comprehensive policy for the area as a whole.

However, given the American diplomatic performance in the Middle East, the United States has succeeded to minimize the role of both Soviet Union and European countries in the area. Indeed, it has based its policy on searching resolutions to the Arab-Israeli conflict that would contribute to the security of oil supply for industrial and defense needs. But, it is widely believed that the achievement of such resolutions requires the consent of all parties, including the Palestinians, and the second superpower, the Soviet Union.

It is precisely the crucial point of divergence between the two superpowers. According to an analysis, it seems that "the American leaders refuse to accept the Soviet quest for parity between the two superpowers."<sup>2</sup> This process had been clear under

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<sup>1</sup> Abdallah Frangi, The PLO and Palestine, p.159

<sup>2</sup> John Gittings, "What the Superpowers say", Superpowers in Collision eds. Noam Chomsky, Jonathan Steele, John Gittings (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1982), p.10

President Carter with his Camp David accords, and also under President Reagan who is looking for separate peace settlement. Moreover, the Americans see the Soviet Union as the "major villain in the Middle East."<sup>1</sup> Some critics argued that the Soviet Union has sufficient power to singly and significantly affect the political and military developments in the Middle East and consequently, any settlement would be meaningless without its cooperation. We are still arguing that, as one expert has mentioned, "it still remains for the United States to accept in positive terms to co-exist with the Soviet Union as the latter is doing."<sup>2</sup> Be that as it may, it is clear that in an area of intensified super-power competition, any settlement requires a close cooperation and a full support by the superpowers. The Soviet leaders had in fact assured the West and the Americans that their co-management of the Middle East and their participation in the region's stability is necessary to avoid any danger of nuclear confrontation.<sup>3</sup> Though their goal of avoiding conflict has been an imperative of Soviet policy in the Middle East, and the need to reach some understanding with the United States on the Arab-Israeli conflict and on respective regional roles, was evident at least by 1977.

So far as the Arab-Israeli conflict is concerned, the Soviet policy is based on three main principles: first to contain the

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<sup>1</sup>Richard H. Curtis, A Changing Image, p.147

<sup>2</sup>R.D. McLaurin, Foreign Policy Making in the Middle East, p.16

<sup>3</sup>Shahram Chubin, "Soviet-American Rivalry in the Middle East", The Soviet Union in the Middle East, p.125



problem and keep it from exploding, through a perpetual search to reach a global settlement under the auspices of the United Nations; second, to control hostilities if they should occur, through a mutual superpower consultation when necessary to avoid the 1973 situation, and finally to work toward a settlement by reconvening Geneva Peace Conference.<sup>1</sup>

We have already discussed the Soviet policy regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict. However, it is clear the opposition of the United States to take part in Geneva Conference under the Soviet predispositions. Indeed the contrasting is the PLO participation in such conference. And it is precisely this point that provided Russia a smooth entry into the region, making the Arabs think that it supports their interests. The Soviet's assistance to liberation movements in general and PLO in particular, contrasted with the American rejection of dealing with the PLO, maintained Soviet credibility in the region. Thus, the Soviet Union is needed as a counterweight to make the Arabs negotiating with a certain strength and to provide them with arms to make their threat to Israel credible. Also, the Arab states and the PLO are aware that any settlement of the Palestine question requires secure assurances to all the parties concerned. To be credible, they need to be backed by a military power, highly committed and fully disposed to secure them under any circumstances.

These are therefore factors among others that are conducive to Soviet opportunities for the extension of influence

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<sup>1</sup>R.D. McLaurin, Foreign Policy Making in the Middle East, p25

throughout the Arab and Third Worlds.



PART THREE  
SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ALGERIAN  
POSITION

## CHAPTER VI

### ALGERIAN CONTRIBUTION TO THE PALESTINIAN CAUSE

It may seem quite understandable to admit that Algeria, which was sunk deep in her problems with French imperialism, was diverted from looking Eastward and from contacting the East politically, intellectually and even socially during the second half of the thirties. The assumption would have remained true if the Arab historians had not paid attention to some influencing factors in both areas.

As early as the last century, the uprisings of the Algerian Emir Abdel kader had their effects on the West of Asia long before his arrival in that region.<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that the Algerians reached the Arab East during the immigration of Emir Abdel Kader who settled down with his followers in North of Palestine. Moreover, the Palestinian revolt of 1936 is said to have enhanced the Algerian nationalism.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, Arab thought tended, later, to take the Algerian revolution of 1 November, 1954 as an example which should enlighten the way for the Arabs of the East, the Palestinians in particular.

From the foregoing, it must be clear that Algeria as well as the Arab East have been guided by their early events in shaping

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<sup>1</sup> Anis Sayegh, Palestine and Arab Nationalism, p. 63

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.



their relations. Algerians saw the Arab East as a bastion of Arab nationalism and therefore tried to have contacts with leaders like Shekib Arslan, Haj Amine Al-Husseini and others.

Yet, the interactions of the two Arab regions were modulated by their common struggle against Western imperialism. Historians generally divide these relations into three time-periods: the first covers up to 1948—the year of the great Arab disaster that came with the creation of a Jewish state on Arab soil, the second starts from 1948 and lasts to 1962, the year of the independence of Algeria; the third period is 1962 to the present.

Contacts between Algeria and the Arab East existed during all these phases, although the intensity differed greatly in each. During the first, pre-1948, phase, relations were limited to declaration of support for each other with chance meetings between the leaders of national organizations. Thus, the North African Star ("Etoile Nord Africaine") founded in Paris in 1926, by the Algerian Haj Ali Abdel Kader, to defend the socio-economic and moral interests of the North African Muslims, sought to establish links with those organizations having similar aims especially the Syrio-Palestinian Committee led by Shekib Arslan.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, the Star pursued some kind of pecuniary help in addition to moral one. Though with the label "North African", the Star remained particularly an Algerian organization, due to its membership. Moroccans and Tunisians preferred to join their own national

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<sup>1</sup> Mahfoud Kaddache and Mohamed Guenaneche, L'Etoile Nord Africaine 1926-37 (Alger: OPU, 1984), p. 108

organizations. Also, all the political decisions taken by the Star reflected and concerned the Algerians. The journal of the organization, "El-Uma", reflected to a large extent the ideas and political approaches of the membership of the Star.<sup>1</sup> These ideas and positions were shaped and given in form of information concerning the political situation in Algeria and other parts of the Arab world particularly Jerusalem and Palestine. On 27 August 1938, the journal published a series of articles analyzing the prevailing political situation in Palestine. Among these articles, one denounced the fact that the Judaeo-Zionists wanted the extermination of the Arab people of Palestine, the land which is an inalienable part of the Arab nation.<sup>2</sup> Hence, the ideological perspective of Arabism was well illustrated in the analyses of the Star. Moreover, the Star leaders considered Palestine as the main concern of all Arabs. Concerning the Jews of Algeria, the Star regarded them as the allies of imperialism and therefore playing the same role as the Judaeo-Zionists of Palestine.<sup>3</sup> To name but an example of the Algerio-Palestinian solidarity, we recall that the Muslim-Jewish relations in Algeria, deteriorated to the point of bloodshed during the incidents of Constantine (August 1934) as a consequence of the Palestinian events.<sup>4</sup>

The collapse of the North African Star, however, gave birth

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<sup>1</sup> Mahfoud Kaddache and Mohamed Guenaneche, L'Etoile Nord-Africaine, p.109

<sup>2</sup> Jean-Paul Chagnollaud, Maghreb et Palestine, p.59

<sup>3</sup> Ali Ibrahim Abdo and Khairieh, Jews of the Arab countries, (Beirut: PLO Research center, 1971), pp.87-88

<sup>4</sup> Anis Sayegh, Palestine and Arab Nationalism, p.63



to the Party of Algerian People ("le Party du Peuple Algérien"), in 1937, that carried the same ideology and principles of the Star. The new party soon reiterated its attachment to Arabism and its support to Palestine. Its leaders organized different popular meetings throughout Algeria, to explain their official position toward the question of Palestine, and to ask the Algerians for support.<sup>1</sup>

In the meantime, the Association of the Ulema ("Djamiat El-Ulema") was constituted by a group of religious intellectuals and reformists, who educated in Arab East or in Tunis.<sup>2</sup> Their aim was the revival of the Arab-Muslim personality of Algeria. Their nationalism was so influenced by Arabism to the extent that, it is misleading to analyze their cultural doctrine without taking into account the thoughts of Emir Shekib Arslan.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, they considered the Arab Middle East as their second homeland.

The emergence of these young intellectuals, under the guidance of Abdel Hamid Ibn Badis, developed the cultural and political ties between Algeria and the Arab East. The Ulema were very active and were considered as the pioneers of the revival of the Arab-Muslim culture in Algeria. Their cultural achievements and the development of their educational and social institutions were beyond expectations.

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<sup>1</sup> Mohamed Guenaneche et Mahfoud Kaddache, Le Party du Peuple Algérien (Alger: OPU, 1985), p. 111

<sup>2</sup> Jean-Paul Chagnollaud, Maghreb et Palestine, p. 63

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

In spite of the harsh French imperialism, the Ulema had never failed in their attempt for Palestinian support. In pursuance of this objective, their different newspapers were highly used to spread their views, in addition to their cultural and educational articles, information and declarations of support for Palestine.<sup>1</sup> In 1937, Al-Shihab published many articles analyzing the situation in Palestine in the light of its partition into three parts. It was stated that the Arabs of Palestine rejected the project with the support of the Arabs of the whole world.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, in August 1937, Ibn Badis asked the French Foreign Minister, through a written message, to interfere to avoid the dismembering of the sacred places.<sup>3</sup> The Algerian support for Palestine was, therefore, no more than the assertion of the Algerian national personality that should be Arab and Muslim.<sup>4</sup>

The Algerian national movement was enhanced by the foundation of the Elected ("Les Elus"); a new party that grouped people more or less attracted to Western culture than to the Arab one. The Party soon failed in the accomplishment of its aims. The journal of the Elected, "L'Entente Franco-Musulmane", tried to give some news about Palestine. Analysing the situation in Palestine and the partition plan of 1937, for example, the leader of the party, Ferhat Abbas, showed his freedom from any kind of Arabism in

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<sup>1</sup> Jean-Paul Chagnollaude, Maghreb et Palestine, p.63

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.64

<sup>3</sup> Jacque Berques, Les Arabes, p.84

<sup>4</sup> Jean-Paul Chagnollaude, Maghreb et Palestine, p.66



in solving the Palestinian problem.<sup>1</sup> He proposed to leave the Jews and the Arabs finding a "gentlemen's agreement" without the interference of Britain or others. According to him, old Jewish rabbis and the Muslim Ulema of Jerusalem are able to provide the land of Palestine with peace and security.<sup>2</sup> This analysis, clearly sustained Western concepts and therefore did not reflect the real Algerian point of view, concerning Palestine as it was shown by the Ulema.

Despite this failing element in the early Algerian nationalist movement, Algeria nationalists went doing their best to convey the message of support to the Palestinians. After the Second World War, Arabism seemed to have reached the apex of triumph. Indeed, on 22 March, 1945, the Arab league was founded in Egypt, with the task to develop and extend Arabism throughout the Arab world. The Arabs of the Maghreb and of Algeria in particular, received the event with great enthusiasm and regarded it as an Arab acquisition and a substantial political hope.<sup>3</sup> Many Algerian nationalists approached its Middle Eastern members, seeking support for their own cause and inquiring about the powers of the Arab league.

The significance of the event was visible in the resistance of the Algerians to French colonialism and through the

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<sup>1</sup> Jean-Paul Chagnollaud, Maghreb at Palestine, p.68

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.69

<sup>3</sup> Anis Sayegh, Palestine and Arab Nationalism, p.31

convergence of opinions concerning the Palestinian problem. It is worthwhile noting that before the Second World War, the Algerian political movements had different analyses, as we have already discussed, on the Palestinian issue. However, the creation of the Democratic Union of the Algerian Manifest ("Union Démocratique du Manifeste Algérien") by Ferhat Abbas, in 1946, who left aside the idea of assimilation of the Algerians and the entente between the Judaeo-Zionists and the Muslims in Palestine, extenuated all these differences.<sup>1</sup> Though the political decisions of the movement had no link with Arabism, they reflected to a certain extent an autonomous nationalism. They protested against the Partition Plan of Palestine and asked for the establishment of an independent state for all Jews and Muslims. However, such hope waned few months later, when Ben Gurion announced the birth of the Israeli state in Palestine that caused the immigration of thousands of Palestinians.

The new far reaching development in Palestine provoked a profound malaise within the Arab nationalist movement.<sup>2</sup> The Second phase of the Algerio-Arab East contacts was characterized by a convergent political position of the Algerian nationalist movements, concerning the 1948 war in Palestine. They all sought to assist the Palestinians in their struggle against the Zionists and their European and American allies.

On 6 June 1948, the Ulema created the Algerian Committee for the support of Palestine composed of Sheikh BaShir Al-Ibrahimi,

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<sup>1</sup> Jean-Paul Chagnollaud, Maghreb et Palestine, p.83

<sup>2</sup> Jacque Berques, Les Arabes, p.151



Ferhat Abbas, Sheikh Tayeb Al-Okbi and Ibrahim Bayoudh.<sup>1</sup> The first concern of the Committee was to gather funds to be sent to the Palestinians and then to send letters of protest at the United Nations, concerning the imperialist dealings in Palestine. In the meantime, the committee published an "appeal for calm" of the Algerian people.<sup>2</sup> The Algerians were asked to behave intelligently i.e., to work for their independence and for the independence of Palestine, without causing problems for their movements. The situation in Algeria was becoming worse, and the Algerian nationalists felt deeply the holocaust of 8 May, 1945. Some Algerian newspapers ceased to publish reports and information about Palestine, due to the critical situation in Algeria. However, the position of the Ulema remained unchanged. They continued their reliance on Arabism. Thus, on the eve of 15 May, 1948, their journal *El-Bassair* published an article which was a kind of warning and appeal to the Algerian and the rest of Arab people to resist the imperialist aggression in Palestine.<sup>3</sup> The young Arab states could not save Palestine as their armies were destroyed by Zionism and its allies.

The year of 1954, constituted a turning-point in the history of Algerian nationalism. The National Liberation Front ("Front de Liberation National") appeared as a strong party representing the whole nation and standing as the symbol for independence. The

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<sup>1</sup> Bashir Al-Ibrahimi, "The Algerian Committee of support to Palestine", *EL-BASSAIR*, n° 41 (June 21, 1948), p.1

<sup>2</sup> Idem. "Call and Warning to the Arab Algerian Muslim People", *El-Bassair*, n° 40 (June 21, 1948), p.2

<sup>3</sup> Jean-Paul Chagnollaude, *Maghreb et Palestine*, p.87

FLN newspaper, El-Moudjahid ceased to publish articles and news about Palestine. The main objective of the leaders of the FLN was how to lead the struggle against a stronger French army. In the meantime, the Nasserian revolution in 1952 in Egypt polarized the Arab hopes.<sup>1</sup> The Palestinian problem was left to Nasser to deal with it. Thus, the FLN leaders avoided purposely to deal with the affairs of Nasser. This does not mean that during that period the FLN had no Palestinian policy. Exchange and mutual help existed during the war of independence. We can give the example of the collection of funds by the Palestinians for the Algerian revolution.<sup>2</sup>

Toward the 1960's, secret contacts were established between the Palestinians through Yassir Arafat and the leaders of the FLN. In fact, the Palestinian national liberation movement, Al-Fatah, was formed in 1956, following the Israeli-French-British aggression on Egypt and during the occupation of the Gaza Strip. Since then, young Palestinians were trained and arms were collected secretly until the set off of the Palestinian revolution on 1 January 1965, under the name of the General Command of the Al-Assifah forces. The first contacts with the Algerian revolution began by 1959, declared Yassir Arafat to Radio Algiers reporter, Harrath Bendjedu, on 5 June 1968.<sup>3</sup> During these years, the Palestine national

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<sup>1</sup>Jacques Berque, Les Arabes, p.89

<sup>2</sup>Fatiha Akeb, "Oum Meyessa, à l'Ombre d'un Leader", Algérie Actualité, n°1125, 7-13 May 1987, Section: Médias & Société, p.39

<sup>3</sup>C.H. Dodd and M.E. Sales, Israel and the Arab World (New York: Noble Incorporation, 1970), p.195



liberation movement and Algeria's ruling revolutionary party, the FLN, established firm ties of friendship. Through the FLN leaders, and while Al-Fatah was still in the formative process in the early 1960's, Arafat set up the first training, fund-raising and recruiting sections for Al-Fatah in Algeria.<sup>1</sup> Since then, the PLO has been able to train selected cadres in Algeria's military academy at Cherchell and at a military camp in Blida.

It is clear that during the Palestinian efforts to organize military operations and guerrilla activities inside Israel and in the occupied West Bank and Gaza, in the late 1960's, the Algerian models of fighting were uppermost. The Algerian leaders advised the Palestinian leadership on everything from how to use the privileged sanctuaries—now lost—of Jordan and Lebanon to the formation of a provisional government-in-exile.<sup>2</sup>

Most Algerian leaders involved in the 1954-62 revolution agree that the proclamation of the Algerian provisional regime—the GPRA ("Gouvernement Provisoire de la République Algérienne") meaning an Interim Government of the Algerian Republic, in September 1958, gave the Algerian nationalists a door to world recognition, to negotiations with the French, and to the freedom they eventually won in 1962.<sup>3</sup> The historical parallels between the two revolutions, both dissension-ridden, but one victorious and the other not, are numerous, although superficial in many instances. Like the PLO in

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<sup>1</sup> Jay Kent, "The Algerian Revolution: The Lesson for the PLO", Middle East International ed. Michael Adams, 203, November 1984, p.12

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

in the years of Ahmed Shukeiry's windy rhetoric (1964-67), the F.N.'s own "historic period", which most historians consider to be the 1954-57 span, was marked by the need to make sympathisers and zealous supporters, absorb extreme leftist elements (like the Algerian communists or the Palestinian Democratic and Popular Fronts) win over the non-secular, conservative Muslim elements (like Messali Haj and his Algerian National Movement - "Movement National Algérien" - and the Muslim Brotherhood - "les Frères Musulmans" - inclined right wing of Fatah) and, last but not least, win international respect and support.<sup>1</sup> To some extent, the Algerians, during their critical years just before and after the formation of the GPRA in 1958, were able to achieve all these things. The Palestinians, however, have simply not done so. Asked by hundreds of statesmen and journalists, why Al-Fatah could not do the same, Arafat's consistent answer has been, "because I cannot get a consensus for this in the Organization."<sup>2</sup> This may be largely due to the fact that while the French colonial regime had virtually no lobbyists of any consequences in the West, the Israelis have had and still have one of the most effective blocs of lobbyists, sympathizers and supporters in the world. Hence, we understand the Algerian position towards the Jews during the Algerian revolution. Thus, to stop such a Jewish activity by the Algerian Jews, the FLN tried to keep them distant from the Zionist-

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<sup>1</sup> Jay Kent, "The Algerian Revolution: The Lesson for the PLO", Middle East International, p.12

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.



Israeli activities. Indeed the FLN asked the Algerian Jews to affirm officially their belonging to the Algerian nation. Those tactics avoided a conflict between the Muslims and Jews not until 1961.

The third phase of the Algerian relationship with the Middle East was characterized by the independence of Algeria and the rise of the PLO as a political force in the Middle East. As early as May 1962, the Algerian Government declared that the Algerian <sup>National</sup> Liberation Army ("L'armée de Libération Nationale") will help Nasser to recover Palestine.<sup>1</sup> In the meantime, Israel was following the wait-and-see policy. She tried not to be identified with those Algerian Jews who were members of the anti-independence Secret Army Organization ("O.A.S."), who tried unsuccessfully to bring down President de Gaulle and then embarked on a scorched-earth policy; murdering, burning and looting in a vain last-ditch effort to leave nothing behind which the Algerians could use to build a modern, secular state.<sup>2</sup>

Algeria, of course, rejected the Israeli overtures. By June 25, 1962, Israel sought to establish friendship relations and sent a team of the Israeli Red Cross to secure the Algerians. Such offer was immediately rejected by the Algerians.<sup>3</sup> The Algerians were not ready to establish any kind of relations with Israel, declared one of the leaders of the Interim Government of the

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<sup>1</sup> Jean-Paul Chagnollaud, Maghreb et Palestine, p.119

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 89

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p.90

of the Algerian Republic.<sup>1</sup>

The independence of Algeria was seen as an Arab victory over imperialism. For the Palestinians, the Algerian revolution had been one of their greatest sources of inspiration in their armed struggle against Israel. According to Yassir Arafat, the triumph of Algeria of Algeria ended the Algerian revolution in the Maghreb so that the Palestinian revolution should begin in the Arab East.<sup>2</sup> The example of Algeria was in every Palestinian's thought—a country which had just won its independence through guerrilla warfare and "terrorism", defeating a great nation and an extremely powerful army. Following the FLN victory against the French, Al-Fatah achieved its first "foreign policy" success as it set up its first foreign branch in Algiers, in 1963.<sup>3</sup>

During the early years of independence, Algeria could not yet develop a separate Palestinian policy as Egypt or Syria. However, as early as 10 October 1962, the Algerian delegate at the United Nations, seeking Algerian membership, called for the respect of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination.<sup>4</sup> The same ideas were reiterated on 24 November of the same year, by the Algerian Foreign Minister of the day, at the National Assembly. In the meantime, the Palestinians <sup>intensified</sup> their contacts with the Algerians seeking advice and support. Thus, Algeria backed

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<sup>1</sup> Jean-Paul Chagnollaude, Maghreb et Palestine, p.90

<sup>2</sup> C.H. Dodd and M.E. Sales, Israel and the Arab World, p.193

<sup>3</sup> Abdallah Frangi, The PLO and Palestine, p.98

<sup>4</sup> Jean-Paul Chagnollaude, Maghreb et Palestine, p.118



Shukeiry's project for the creation of a Palestinian Organization, during the first Arab Summit Conference in 1964, in Cairo. This was followed by the opening of a branch office of the "Voice of Palestine", in Algiers in 1964.

By 21 January, 1964, a Palestinian political bureau was created in Algiers; it organized different kinds of cultural activities. For the first time, a week of solidarity with Palestine was organized in Algeria. In the meantime, the Algerian National Assembly adopted a resolution about Palestine. It disapproved the imperialist dealings in Palestine and affirmed the Palestinians of the Algerian total support to the Palestinian cause. During the meeting of the PLO in May, 1964, the Algerian Foreign Minister declared that there is no liberty for Algeria without that of Palestine.<sup>1</sup>

Further development of the links between the Palestinians and Algerians was pursued by the Algerian leaders after 1965. They wanted, however, the PLO to be independent vis-à-vis, the Arab states, and to represent the aspirations of the Palestinian people. The Algerian Palestinian policy was in transition. The Algerian government though officially supported the PLO of Shukeiry, granted Fatah of Arafat a bureau in Algiers. Moreover, the Algerian mediation brought about a reconciliation between Arafat and Atassi of Syria, to give birth later to a fertile alliance between Fatah and Baath party.

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<sup>1</sup>Jean-Paul Chagnollaud, Maghreb et Palestine, p. 118

The sudden deterioration of the situation in the Middle East made the Algerian government react immediately. It assured both of the governments of Egypt and Syria of the unconditional support of Algeria.<sup>1</sup> The Algerians became very active as they got wind of the danger that Israel and her allies were formulating against the Arab nation. On 29 May 1967, Algeria decided to send military units to the Middle East.<sup>2</sup> The mobilization of the Algerians morally and politically was perfectly achieved. On 2 June 1967, the FLN called the Algerians for the liberation of Palestine. Hundreds of Algerian young volunteers were sent to the Sinai. The whole nation was determined to participate in the battle with all means on the side of the Arab nations of the Middle East.<sup>3</sup> Imperialism and its agents in the area were the main targets. On 4 June, 1967, the Algerian President Houari Boumedienne called the Algerians to participate in the sacred battle for the liberation of Palestine. He added that this battle is against the interests of imperialism, Zionism and colonialism in the region. Thus, on 5 June, the first Algerian soldiers left for the Middle East as well as many flights of Mig 21 for Egypt. During the six day war, the Algerian newspapers considered the Zionist aggression as an extension of the imperialist aggression

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<sup>1</sup> Khalfa Mamari, Citations du Président Boumedienne (Alger: SNEB, 1979), p.385

<sup>2</sup> Groupe D'Etudes et de Recherches, La Palestine en Question, Tome II, p.104

<sup>3</sup> Lawrence L. Whetten, "The Arab-Israeli Dispute: Great Power Behaviour", Crisis Management and the Superpowers in the Middle East, p.54



against the Arab nation. The Israeli forces were victorious on all three fronts. Algeria like the Arab countries broke off diplomatic relations with Washington and London over charges of American and British bias in favor of Israel.<sup>1</sup> The American cultural center and the British council in Algiers were attacked by demonstrators. Crude oil exports to these two countries were embargoed by the Algerians and the port of Algiers was closed to the enemies of the Arab nation, i.e., Britain and the United States of America.

Oil policy was a new theme in inter-Arab polemics, which was particularly evident during the days after the war. The U.A.R., Syria, and Iraq with Algeria accused Saudi Arabia and Libya of infringing the oil boycott, while the latter argued that it did more harm to the Arabs than to the West. Both Syria and Algeria wanted a commitment by all Arab states to take a strong anti-Western line.

Algeria rejected the cease-fire proposed by the big powers through the United Nations, and considered it as a "historical blunder."<sup>2</sup> This proposal was, however, accepted by the countries of the front (Jordan, Egypt and Syria). The Algerians claimed that they were ready for a war of attrition and would work for a just solution which will restore to the Palestinians their sacred rights.<sup>3</sup> They rejected what they considered as a defeatist

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<sup>1</sup> Dishon Daniel, "Views and Policies", Middle East Record (Jerusalem: Israel University Press, 1968), p.239

<sup>2</sup> Lawrence L. Whetten, "The Arab-Israeli Dispute", Crisis Management and the Superpowers in the Middle East, p.54

<sup>3</sup> Jean-Paul Chagnollaude, Maghreb et Palestine, p.117

solution and believed in Arab solidarity provided this was a militant solidarity, the solidarity of combat. The Algerian President who had led the Arab attack on 9 June, followed it up by his subsequent visit to Moscow in July.<sup>1</sup> He tried to reach a reconciliation between the Soviets and the Arabs. In fact, the Soviets were accused by the Arab countries of the Front, mainly Egypt, of having let them down in their hour of direst need. Moreover, the Arabs remarked that there had been no unusual Soviet naval build-up before the war that might have indicated precautionary or provocative intent, and when the Sixth Fleet steamed toward Syrian waters, Soviet vessels merely maintained their trailing positions and did not attempt to screen or block American movements.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, the seven Soviet airborne divisions were not put on a high state of alert that might have indicated imminent intervention. The Soviet Union's only recourse was political pressure that did not go beyond breaking diplomatic relations with the state of Israel, argued some Arab observers. The Algerian President, Houari Boumedienne, was deceived by the Soviet passivity.

Despite these setbacks of the war, new Algerian military troops were sent to the Suez Canal. Algeria considered the struggle for the liberation of Palestine as an inseparable part of the struggle against imperialism. The Algerian policy was based on

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<sup>1</sup>Lawrence L. Whetten, "The Arab-Israeli Dispute", Crisis Management and the Superpowers in the Middle East, p.55

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p.54



two assumptions; the first being that armed struggle was the only way to achieve Arab victory and true and complete independence for the Palestinians, and the second, that the fidayee action was, at that time, the main assurance to this basic approach.<sup>1</sup> Hence, the Palestinian military organizations received the "absolute solidarity and sincerest support" from the Algerian government.<sup>2</sup> The Algerian President promised all the Palestinian organizations "effective help" and that he would make every effort towards their unification, so that they could gain in strength. On leaving Algeria, on 8 November 1967, Shukeiry stated that he had found full understanding in his talks with the Algerian President and full readiness on the part of the Algerian people to "mobilize all resources for the Palestine question."<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that the Algerian support to Palestine was pursued in a variety of ways. Hence, the Congress of Arab Lawyers was organized in Algiers, in 1970, and was fully dedicated to the question of Palestine and its international status. Speaking at the Congress, the Algerian President rejected any peaceful solution to the conflict. On the contrary, he said, "escalating the battle will lead inevitably to the real basic solution which will put an end to the oppression and aggression. What has been taken by force cannot be restored other than by force."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Daniel Dishon, "Views and Policies", Middle East Record, p.239

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Idem., "The Palestinian Organizations", Middle East Record (Jerusalem: Israel University Press, 1967), p.318

<sup>4</sup>Idem., "Views and Policies", Middle East Record, p.11

Convinced of the fact that the Arabs were entitled to continue the struggle to recover their usurped territories, Algeria backed Syria in the rejection of the big powers suggestion that of recognizing Israel, in exchange<sup>n</sup> for Israeli withdrawal. Algeria rejected the Security Council resolution of 22 November 1967, by pointing out that it allowed Israel to interpret it as a solution to the conflict and as implying her formal recognition by the Arab states in return for withdrawal from the territories she occupied in 1967.<sup>1</sup> Algeria rather demanded that the withdrawal would be unconditional with no termination of the conflict, nor an end to the state of belligerency. For the Algerians, a political solution to the Palestinian problem was both impossible and dangerous. Thereafter, Algeria was the only Arab country which advocated the same general policies as Syria. This was particularly noticeable during the period from the end of the war until the Khartoum Summit.

The defeat of June affected to a large extent the Inter-Arab relations. The Khartoum Summit Conference of 29 August 1967 stood as a forward step toward the Arab unity. Despite the absence of Syria, the Summit adopted a hard-line, "no recognition, no negotiations, and no peace", stance that governed Arab policies for the next three years.<sup>2</sup> The final resolution of the Summit was approved not without fierce conflict between the members of the Arab league. Indeed, both Egypt and Jordan developed a policy based on "realism",

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<sup>1</sup> Jean-Paul Chagnollaud, Maghreb et Palestine, p.60

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.



that is the cost of the war and the prevailing bad socio-economic situation in these countries may lead to the recognition of the state of Israel, whose existence has been guaranteed by the big powers.<sup>1</sup> This theory was strongly rejected by the PLO and Algeria which considered any talk of a political settlement with Israel as a "blunder, a lie and an act of hypocrisy."<sup>2</sup> For the Algerians, the 1967 war cast doubt on the renaissance aspired to by every Arab. An Arab victory could have led to the birth of a "new Arab man."<sup>3</sup> They would have preferred to see the battle continuing and not stopped by certain obstacles emerging from some Arab government policies, "at a time when Arab masses were demanding its continuation."<sup>4</sup> The Arab revolution would have erupted and the Arabs would have crossed the most difficult hurdle on the road to Arab unity, losing a battle did not mean losing a war, according to them. The Algerian position disturbed the Egyptian government and increased the gap between the two states.

The defeat of the June war had confirmed the correctness of Al-Fatah analyses. The Arab armies were too weak to resist the Israeli army. The need to have a Palestinian organization under Palestinian leadership to set on the path back to Jerusalem was claimed by the Palestinian people. Fidayee action was the only positive element which emerged from the defeat of June 1967. The

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<sup>1</sup> Jean-Paul Chagnollaud, Maghreb et Palestine, p.153

<sup>2</sup> Daniel Dishon, "Views and Policies", Middle East Record, p.239

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Jean-Paul Chagnollaud, Maghreb et Palestine, pp.159-60

danger that the Palestinian struggle might be used by Arab governments for their own ends, seemed so remote as these governments forfeited all claims even to speak or negotiate on behalf of the Palestinian struggle. However, the call of Al-Fatah to continue the armed struggle had a good response among the Palestinians, so much so that the military training camps in Damascus and Algiers were too small to cope with all the volunteers.<sup>1</sup> At the Arab level, Algeria hailed and encouraged such initiative. The FLN officials received with enthusiasm popular armed resistance of the Palestinians against the imperialist Zionist domination. The resistance constitutes the sole means of permitting the liberation of the usurped Palestine and the return of Palestinians to their own country.<sup>2</sup> Hope was expressed that the Palestinians would follow the Algerian example and unify "within the framework of the organization which is conducting the armed struggle on the soil."<sup>3</sup> According to Arab observers, the organization that the Algerians considered as capable of playing such role was Al-Fatah of Yassir Arafat.<sup>4</sup>

In April 1968, the Algerian President reexpressed his country's support for the Palestinians, especially for the fidayeen of Al-Fatah. Moreover, he promised more Algerian guerrilla warfare instructors. Skillful Al-Fatah leaders succeeded in getting

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<sup>1</sup> Abdallah Frangi, The PLO and Palestine, p.108

<sup>2</sup> Jean-Paul Chagnollaude, Maghreb et Palestine, p.159

<sup>3</sup> Daniel Dishon, "Views and Policies", Middle East Record, p.240

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.



the permission to open an office in Algiers. Al-Fatah thereafter stood as the only legal representative of the Palestinians in Algeria. It received Algerian help on a larger scale, in view of playing an important role at the Palestinian level. The ties between the Algerian government and Al-Fatah leaders became close. The Algerian armed forces were training an increasing number of Fatah units in special bases for guerrilla warfare, which were believed to be in an isolated mountainous region about 80 kms, West of Algiers.<sup>1</sup>

The Algerian support to the Palestinians, as we indicated before, took different forms. On 27th day of Ramadhan of 1970, the Algerians were called upon by the FLN party to contribute in and support the armed struggle in Palestine. It called upon Muslims to make sacrifices "during this sacred month" for "Bayt al Quds (Jerusalem) to be liberated" and to consecrate "Aid-al-Fitr (the holiday concluding the month of Ramadhan) to the Palestinian cause."<sup>2</sup> Moreover, in December of the same year, Algeria proposed to the Arab Regional Committee for Human Rights that special taxes be imposed on entertainment, also one day's salary be deducted from workers and employees and a monthly sum levied on merchants in order to collect funds for the fidayeen.<sup>3</sup>

Along the same line, the Algerian support to the Palestinian resistance involved Al-Fatah. Indeed, this group emerged

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel Dishon, "Views and Policies", Middle East Record, p.240

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

after the six day war as the most important and most powerful fidayee organization, to carry out military operations in the Occupied Territories. In the meantime, the PLO of Shukeiry came under increasing attacks in the Arab press, even in countries which had previously supported the Organization. An Egyptian newspaper, for example, wrote: "It is Known that revolutionary organizations do not come into existence by an order or a decision...this is the source of the PLO's weakness because it was called into existence ...by the Arab league. For this reason, the PLO had suffered from internal contradictions and quarrels."<sup>1</sup> It is noteworthy that Arab criticism of PLO was that it was "an instrument in Cairo's hands."<sup>2</sup> Moreover, it was considered as the Palestinian branch of Nasserism. Shukeiry was its nominal head, but Abdel Nasser was its real leader.<sup>3</sup>

The dissension within the PLO grew more acute. Shukeiry's personal prestige within his organization sharply declined. On 24 December 1967, he announced his resignation. Commenting on this resignation a Lebanese newspaper wrote that Shukeiry's tragedy had been that of demagogy and verbiage with no action to back them up.<sup>4</sup> Some other Arab commentators summed up the reasons for the dissension within the PLO as follows: 1) Shukeiry's personal conduct and character; 2) the fact that the PLO had been created not by the people, but from above; 3) Shukeiry's enmity towards

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel Dishon, "The Palesti<sup>n</sup>an Organizations": Middle East Record, p.317 Quoted in Al-Musawwar, 25 August 1967.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.316 Quoted in Lebanese Newspaper, Jadid, 24 Feb. 1967

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p.318 Cited in Lebanese Newspaper, Nahar, 31 Dec. 1967



other Palestinian organizations and his reservations about fidayee activities; 4) the PLO's interference in inter-Arab affairs.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, Al-Fatah was gaining pace on both Arab and Palestinian levels. The main elements of its policies won much sympathy. They consisted in continuing the armed struggle to liberate Palestine and recover the Occupied Territories, since political and diplomatic means had failed. In addition, only fidayee activities, carried out from within the Occupied Territories, could free the Palestinian people from their feeling of powerlessness.<sup>2</sup> Thus, Al-Fatah had become a strong and popular fidayee organization, and was now drawing all genuine fighters into its ranks. By February 1969, Al-Fatah obtained the majority in the Executive Committee of the PLO which chose Yassir Arafat as its new president. Al-Fatah, nonetheless, apprehended that the struggle is, in essence, similar to that of the Algerian and Vietnamese people for national liberation.

It should be noted that Algeria had hardly played an active role in inter-Arab affairs before the war. The prominence she gained in this field during the months immediately following the war, gave rise to Palestinian admiration. In reality, Algeria's stand was the result of the "revolutionary wave" sweeping through the Arab nation. The Algerians explained that their country's policy towards the Middle East was that imperialist strategy had

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel Dishon, "The Palestinian Organizations", Middle East Record, p.316

<sup>2</sup> Idem., "Views and Policies", Middle East Record, p.240

been directed against Syria and Egypt and Algeria's turn would have come soon after.<sup>1</sup> Algeria, however, continued to base her policy on two assumptions; the first being that Israel had no right to exist, and second the armed struggle was the only way of regaining the lost Palestine back to the Palestinian people.<sup>2</sup>

These Algerian approaches did bear great resemblance to Al-Fatah policies to liberate Palestine. This justified the Algerian open support to this group. Indeed, on 15 May 1968, the FLN party, for the first time in independent Algeria, published a ten-point resolution concerning the Palestinian problem. The main points of the resolution are: the popular armed struggle should lead the Palestinian people to the recovery of their homeland and dignity and unify all liberation forces of Palestine into an organization similar to the FLN; the Palestine cause depended on the extent of Arab support and participation in the battle as much as on the Palestinians themselves; the Arab states should, however, initiate a coherent policy of information and explanation, to make the world public opinion pressing on the United Nations Organization to correct the mistake done in 1948.<sup>3</sup>

The analysis of the FLN resolution intended to show the existence of a clear analogy between the Algerian and the Palestinian revolutions. The new Palestinian National Charter of 1968

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<sup>1</sup> Ahmad Taleb Ibrahim, From Decolonization to Cultural Revolution: 1962-72 (Algiers: SNED, 1972), pp. 65-7

<sup>2</sup> Daniel Dishon, "Views and Policies", Middle East Record, p.

<sup>3</sup> Palestine: 20 Years after the Disaster. Algiers: FLN Information Center, (1968).



was ideologically inspired in some measures by the Algerian published principles. It was revealed that Al-Fatah played an important role in the adoption of the new Charter based on the FLN themes. Thus, the Algerian political resolution was regarded as giving a further support to the organization of Yassir Arafat.

The significance of the Algerian role before and after the war was illustrated by the creation of the Algerian Committee for the support of Palestine and the arrival, in September 1968, of the first group of Palestinian students to Algeria.<sup>1</sup> The Committee was created in 1968 by some political members of the FLN and some members of the national organizations. The Committee was to back the Palestinian resistance at the political, moral and material levels. In addition, the Committee tried to reach the European public opinion with the aim of explaining and giving more information about the Palestinian dilemma. In pursuance of this objective, the Committee published the "solidarité Palestinienne" review to be diffused throughout Europe.<sup>2</sup> However, this review was censored in its main targets of European countries like France, Belgium and Switzerland. This of course made its existence useless and stopped to be published after the second issue. The Committee therefore made another attempt in 1973, when it published the "Documents of Palestine" which consisted of a number of articles selected from different newspapers allowed to appear in Europe.<sup>3</sup> In addition,

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<sup>1</sup> Jean-Paul Chagnollaud, Maghreb et Palestine, p.179

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p.180

the Committee established regular links with the European Committee for the support of Palestine and the World Conference of the Christians for Palestine

At the national level, the Committee collected funds and organized meetings for the support of Palestine. From the beginning of the academic year of 1968, Algerian universities received the first group of Palestinian students sent by Al-Fatah organization. They went to the universities of Algiers and Oran.<sup>1</sup> Later, new wave of Palestinian students came to Constantine. After the opening of the university of Annaba in 1975, Palestinian students were admitted to this new university. In addition to the important number of Palestinian students (which reached about 2500 in 1987), there has been a sizeable Palestinian population living in Algeria.<sup>2</sup> According to the estimation of 1970, there were about 400 Palestinians in all Algeria.<sup>3</sup> This population is composed mainly of teachers, engineers, doctors and others.

The Palestinian teachers played an important role in the process of Arabization that was undertaken by the Algerian government. In addition, they contributed to the various cycles of education. Concerning the engineers, they were engaged in the big national companies of different industrial fields. For the Palestinian doctors, they compensated to a certain extent the lack of Algerian cadres in hospitals. It should be noted also that a

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<sup>1</sup> Jean-Paul Chagnollaude, Maghreb et Palestine, p.180

<sup>2</sup> Source: PLO Information Center, Algiers.

<sup>3</sup> Jean-Paul Chagnollaude, Maghreb et Palestine, p.180



considerable number of the Palestinians living in Algeria got married to Algerian women and were therefore fully integrated in the Algerian society. Among the Palestinian population there are also some politicians who established in Algeria, assuming different political tasks. However, as we indicated previously, most of the Palestinians living in Algeria are linked to Al-Fatah organization.<sup>1</sup> Thus, Al-Fatah got more influence in the Algerian governmental circles than the other Palestinian groups.

By 1969, the Algerian support to Al-Fatah came to involve the cultural field.<sup>2</sup> Palestinian intellectuals and artists came to organize various festivals and cultural demonstrations. The theatrical group of Al-Fatah had a great effect on the Algerians when in 1968, it presented the two significant plays reflecting the struggle for the liberation of Palestine. In the meantime, many Algerian and Palestinian cities were coupled as a symbol of communion between the two peoples. Moreover, the Algerian mass media were fully committed to the Palestinian cause, and followed its development seriously. They gave daily information and published various analyses on the imperialist dealings in the Middle East.<sup>3</sup>

At the political level, Algeria provided Al-Fatah with the necessary support since the fifth Palestinian National Congress. On the inter-Arab relations, the Algerian Palestinian policy was

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel Dishon, "Views and Policies", Middle East Record, p. 240

<sup>2</sup> Jean-Paul Chagnollaud, Maghreb et Palestine, p. 181

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 214

based on four main principles.<sup>1</sup> The first one considered the armed struggle as the only way to liberate Palestine. Secondly, the Palestine resistance had to be unified. Thirdly, neighbouring Arab countries should allow the Palestine resistance freedom of operation. Finally, the Fidayeen were the "sole representative which can speak on behalf of the Palestinians." Such an Algerian policy was at the international level. During the international conferences, Algeria has always been the surest supporter of the Palestinian cause. In September 1969, for example, Algeria succeeded to influence the participants of the Islamic Conference, held in Rabat, to grant the PLO the observer status, at least.<sup>2</sup> The same Algerian determination was displayed during the fifth Arab Summit Conference in Rabat, in 1969. The Algerians rejected any peaceful solution to the Palestinian problem and reaffirmed their unconditional support to the Palestinians. Such an Algerian position was illustrated immediately after the Arab Summit by organizing the international Congress of the Committees of support to the Palestinian people, attended by Yassir Arafat. Later, the Algerians rejected both the Rogers plan and Rogers initiative as did the Palestinians.<sup>3</sup> The Algerian government criticized the Arab states which accepted the plan, namely Egypt and Jordan. The Algerian rejection of the plan as well as the cease-fire of 1967 was dictated by the Algerian apprehension of the aim being the liqui-

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<sup>1</sup> Ahmad Taleb Ibrahim, From decolonization to Cultural Revolution, pp. 64-8

<sup>2</sup> Jean-Paul Chagnollaud, Maghreb et Palestine, p. 182

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.



dation of the Palestinian resistance. Algeria considered the plan as a new attempt of the de facto recognition of the state of Israel as well as the liquidation of the sacred rights of the Palestinian people. According to the Algerian analysis of the plan, it was designed to perpetuate Zionist aggression in the Middle East.<sup>1</sup> Thus, the Algerians strongly refused to adhere to such American initiative which was "partial to Zionism."<sup>2</sup>

In the meantime, Algeria increased its criticism of the Egyptian acceptance of the Rogers plan. By 1970, she demanded the return of her forces from the Suez front. They were repatriated by August of the same year. The acceptance of Rogers plan by the countries of the front made the sacrifice of the Algerian soldiers useless. During the same year, the Palestinian resistance was a target of Jordanian troops. King Hussein, wanting to get rid of the Palestinians, ordered their liquidation. The Algerian government, immediately after the beginning of the Palestinian massacre, declared its full support for the Palestinians against the King.<sup>3</sup> The Algerians were regularly informed about the evolution of the situation, by the bureau of the PLO in Algiers and by the Algerian Ambassador in Beirut. The Algerian government relied upon the mobilization of the Algerian population. Various public meetings, for the support of Palestine, were organized throughout Algeria. The Algerian newspapers described the event as a new plot organi-

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel Dishon, "Views and Policies", Middle East Record, p.111

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Jean-Paul Chagnollaud, Maghreb et Palestine, pp.207-8

zed by the imperialist countries with their agents in the area, against the Palestinian resistance. The Algerian commitment soon became apparent.<sup>1</sup> Since 14 September, a medical team of 14 members were sent to Jordan with seven tons of medicines to help the Palestinians. A national collection of funds was organized mainly in the administrations. On the military level, it was said that the PLO bureau in Algiers received hundreds of Algerian volunteers to fight in Jordan. But Algiers rather preferred to send arms and amunitions, needed by the Palestinians.

As a retaliation to such Algerian support of the Palestinians, the Algerian embassy in Amman was destroyed by Jordanian army. Consequently, Algeria denounced the reactionary position of the King whose attitude would never permit any Arab common attack against Israel. On 23 September, the French newspaper "le Monde" published a declaration made by the Algerian Minister of Information and Culture, Dr. Ahmad Taleb Ibrahimi, that can be summed up in four principles. First, the origins of the conflict and the objectives of the struggle should never be neglected. Second, this long struggle should bring justice back to the Palestinians with the help of Arab states in an organized way. Finally, as long as the big powers have not accepted to put in practice the fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter, we should say that what has been taken by force cannot be restored other than by force.<sup>2</sup> This Algerian position was a logical derivation of the Algerian

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<sup>1</sup> Jean-Paul Chagnollaud, Maghreb et Palestine, p.209

<sup>2</sup> Ahmad Taleb Ibrahimi, From Decolonization to Cultural Revolution, p.65



struggle for independence and of other popular struggles of the world.

However, in the face of the Palestinian extermination in Jordan, the Algerian government decided to break off relations with this country. Few weeks later, Algeria hosted the Sixth Congress of the Palestinian students in Algiers. Its motto was the liberation of Amman as a first step toward the liberation of Palestine.<sup>1</sup> Also contacts between the Algerians and Palestinians were intensified. Yassir Arafat came to Algiers anytime the Algerian advice and support were needed.

By 1971, Algeria was still trying to convince the Arabs that armed struggle is the only means for the restoration of the stolen rights of the Palestinian people. During the visit of the new Egyptian president, Sadat, and the Libyan leader, Muammar Kadafi to Algiers, a common agreement was reached between the three presidents to establish an Arab plan for the liberation of Palestine.<sup>2</sup> Hence, by 1972, the Algerian help to Egypt and Syria became consistent. Algeria intended to support a war of attrition against Israel. By the beginning of the war in 1973, Algeria reacted determinedly. On the second day of the war, an Egyptian newspaper revealed the arrival of the Algerian military planes and an important number of military units to Egypt and Syria.<sup>3</sup> But the Arab military success that was realized at the beginning of the

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<sup>1</sup> Jean-Paul Chagnollaud, Maghreb et Palestine, p. 212

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 214

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 244

war seemed to be vanishing. Indeed, the Israeli troops recovered most of the lost territories and succeeded to conquer new Arab territories. The Algerian president, Houari Boumedienne, flew to Moscow and paid weapons and spare parts that may enable Egypt to carry on military operations and contain those of Israel.<sup>1</sup> However, the reversed situation made Israeli troops gaining more space and regain the upper hand in the battle with the help of the United States. On 22 October, Israel rejected the cease-fire proposed by the United Nations as part of resolution 338. Though the Arab side stopped the attacks, Israeli troops moved to acquire new territories. The American-Soviet orders for a worldwide alert of their military forces restrained the Israelis.

The size of the Algerian military supplies to both Egypt and Syria was estimated at several dozens of military planes, hundreds of tanks and armoured vehicles and some 25 000 soldiers.<sup>2</sup> This, in addition to the medical teams and tons of medicines. The Algerian reaction to the cease-fire was somehow moderate if compared to that of 1967. The Algerian president declared that he would have liked the war to go on, though this would be done at the expense of the Arab internal economic development.<sup>3</sup> He also shared the Arab point of view that the war was politically successful. The Arab countries had seized the initiative and forced Israel to fight mainly on their terms, thereby destroying the myth of Israeli

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<sup>1</sup> Pierre Mirel, L'Egypte des Ruptures, p.29

<sup>2</sup> Jean-Paul Chagnollaude, Maghreb et Palestine, p.246

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p.252



invincibility that had haunted the Arabs for a quarter of a century.<sup>1</sup> Arab confidence had therefore been restored, and national honour vindicated sufficiently for limited political concessions to be risked. This, in addition to the fact that the war allowed the Arabs to have a great influence on European countries through the use of "oil weapon" for political ends. The latter's main interest now was to bring about a peaceful settlement of the Middle East problem. The Arab countries, in their part, expected the Europeans to make a substantial contribution.

The Algerian position in the international affairs and the weight the Algerian diplomacy acquired, were demonstrated by a series of meetings held in Algiers since the Autumn of 1973.<sup>2</sup> In September of that year, the Algerian president played host to the Conference of Non-Aligned nations. Being the President of the group, the Algerian leader sought to use to the last extent the newly acquired power, for the benefit of the Palestinian cause. It was revealed that all the resolutions adopted by the conference had been drafted by Algeria as the host country, and were only marginally amended by the heads of state. The Palestinian problem was made the major topic of the conference. Thus, the Non-Aligned states expressed their "full recognition of the Palestine Liberation Organization as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and its struggle..."<sup>3</sup> The resolution on the Middle

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<sup>1</sup> Pierre Mirel, L'Egypte des Ruptures, p.30

<sup>2</sup> Paul Balta, "Algeria's Vital Role", Middle East International, ed. Michael Wall, n°16, 1975, p.6

<sup>3</sup> Abdallah Frangi, The PLO and Palestine, pp.139-40

East consisted also of the demand for breaking off diplomatic relations with Israel and support for the Arab states in their struggle for the liberation of the Arab territories from foreign occupation and imperialist domination. Immediately after, Cuba broke off its diplomatic relations with the state of Israel. The Non-Aligned Movement call received a large response. Between 22 and 30 October 1973, more than ten African states broke off their diplomatic relations with Israel.<sup>1</sup>

However, the Algerians remained very active on the political and diplomatic scenes. They received the fifth Arab Summit Conference in November 1973, in which the Algerian president played a key role.<sup>2</sup> In fact, he had given the Arab states generous support during the October war and his proposal to recognize the PLO carried considerable weight, thus, the Summit Conference recognized the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Moreover, the Algerian president convinced the Arab leaders of the need to create a Palestinian state that will be ruled by a government-in-exile, under the leadership of the PLO chairman, Yassir Arafat.<sup>3</sup> The PLO had, however, gained strength as a political factor in the October war. It was determined to seek further international recognition for its claim to be the sole representative of the Palestinians.

The same Algerian determination to provide the PLO with

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<sup>1</sup> Jean-Paul Chagnollaud, Maghreb et Palestine, p.247

<sup>2</sup> Mohammed K. Shadiq, The United States and the Palestinians, p.102

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.



strong support was displayed during the Rabat Summit Conference in October 1974. In fact, the Conference confirmed the Algiers resolutions (denying King Hussein the right to speak for the Palestinians) and asked the Arabs not to interfere in the Palestinians' internal affairs, to preserve the unity of the Palestinian people and to support the PLO in its national and international tasks.<sup>1</sup> Thus, this Arab recognition marked the end of the period in which the Palestinian people had been ignored, without rights. At last, the Palestinians were equal with other states and the Palestinian leadership status was equal to that of all the other Arab heads of states.

In 1974, the wave of terrorism was raging in Europe and the Middle East. PLO political members were the target of the Mosad (Israeli secret intelligence). The Israeli government's objective was to destroy the Palestinian identity and liquidate the PLO. Mosad sent parcel bombs to PLO representatives throughout the world. In Algiers also, the PLO representative was seriously wounded when a parcel bomb addressed to him exploded.<sup>2</sup> This was only an example of many other assassination attempts on PLO leaders. Israel and her allies accused the Palestinians to be the source of the international terrorism. They considered the Palestinians as responsible for any hijacking action, and the countries in which hijackers were willing to land their hijacked planes as their supporters. As a result, the Algerians were subjected to

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<sup>1</sup>Maxime Rodinson, Israel and the Arabs, p.285

<sup>2</sup>Abdallah Frangi, The PLO and Palestine, p.132

fierce criticism from the West for providing a "haven for terrorists."<sup>1</sup> The United States initiated an effort at the United Nations calling for international action against what they considered as "terrorism." The draft treaty consisted of punishment and prosecution, in addition to the suspension of all air services to countries which failed to punish or extradite hijackers or saboteurs of civilian aircrafts.<sup>2</sup>

The Third World nations did not agree with the U.S. initiative against terrorism, feeling that it served those in power. They therefore strongly opposed the plan as likely to impede wars of national liberation. Algeria, instead, submitted a substitute resolution calling for a study of terrorism and affirming the right of people to free themselves from foreign rule.<sup>3</sup> This resolution was passed by the General Assembly, 76 votes to 34, with the United States opposed. The American delegation felt that it did not condemn terrorism and that action, not study, was needed. It should be noted that the American efforts to combat terrorism were to contain the PLO operations which were considered as terrorist actions. However, the American goal in the Middle East remained the same, i.e., to eradicate the source of revolutionary violence represented by the PLO. Such eradication policy was clearly evident in the American role in the attempt to destroy the Palestinian resistance in Jordan and later in Lebanon in 1975-6.

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<sup>1</sup> Samuel Young, "Algeria and National Liberation", Middle East International, ed. Michael Wall, n°51, 1977, p.16

<sup>2</sup> Mohammed K. Shadid, The U.S. and the Palestinians, p.126

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.



The period following the Egyptian-Israeli negotiations, was characterized by the mounting of mutual attacks between the PLO and some Arab states. On 4 September 1975, Egypt signed a disengagement agreement with Israel calling for the two parties not to use anymore force in settling their differences.<sup>1</sup> The agreement aroused the anger of the Syrians and the PLO. It was felt to be separatist move and not at all an arrangement that may lead to an overall settlement. The Arab bloc, that was formed during and after the October war, was in split. The contradiction between the Arab states were to increase during the Lebanese civil war of 1975. The conspiracy of some Arab states against the Palestinian revolution was flagrant. However, the Palestinian resistance came out of the Lebanese crisis without much danger, due to a compromise reached between the Palestinians and the Maronite Nationalists.<sup>2</sup>

In the meantime, the Palestinian resistance <sup>was</sup> enlisting the unconditional support of the Algerians. They did their best to end the fight between the Arabs in Lebanon. During the Non-Aligned Summit Conference that was held in August 1976, in Columbo (Sri Lanka), the resolutions of Algiers concerning Palestine were kept, due to the influence of the Algerian participants.<sup>3</sup> In addition, the conference expressed the necessity to find a political solution to the Palestinian problem, through an international peace

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<sup>1</sup> Pierre Mirel, L'Egypte des Ruptures, p.33

<sup>2</sup> Maxime Rodinson, Israel and the Arabs, p.282

<sup>3</sup> R. Sadmi, "Si l'OLP", Révolution Africaine 1208 (Avril 1987), p. 17

conference, sponsored by the United Nations Organization and the five permanent members of the Security Council. The PLO was redesignated as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people in this conference. The PLO, immediately, declared its readiness to attend the peace conference "as an independent entity and on a footing of equality."<sup>1</sup> The Palestinian National Council of 1977 gave full powers in this matter to the Executive Committee, without any preliminary meeting of the National Council being required.<sup>2</sup> However, such Palestinian readiness was derailed by Sadat's dramatic trip to Jerusalem in November 1977. This initiative was concluded by the signing of the Camp David accords, in September 1978. This event split once more the Arab world. Algeria, Libya, PLO, Syria and South Yemen held a rejectionist conference in Tripoli to counter this initiative.<sup>3</sup>

The Algerian government played an important role in the Steadfastness Front. It professed unconditional support for the PLO. The Algerians decided to back the PLO in whatever policy it decides to adopt, in accordance with the principle of freedom of the PLO. Hence, Algeria's identification on the side of the PLO and Syria in their hostility to President Sadat's visit to Jerusalem. In the same year (1978), Israel invaded Southern Lebanon. Her primary goal was to weaken Palestinian resistance by military means. Israel occupies part of Southern Lebanon and then handed

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<sup>1</sup> Maxime Rodinson, Israel and the Arabs, p.282

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Abdallah Frangi, The PLO and Palestine, p.167



it over to the Lebanese Major Saad Hadad.<sup>1</sup> In the following years, Israeli army carried out a number of military operations against the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. These were concluded by a massive bomb attacks on the Lebanese capital, Beirut, and on Palestinian bases in the South of Lebanon. The West Beirut siege lasted for about 90 days, in the Summer of 1982. The United Nations Organization which had already proclaimed in 1979, the 29 November — the anniversary of the U.N. partition of Palestine—a day of international solidarity with the Palestinian people, remained passive.<sup>2</sup>

Algeria followed the Lebanese tragedy with great interest. Five months later, the sixteenth session of the Palestinian National Council took place in Algiers.<sup>3</sup> The Algerian contribution was highly appreciated by the Palestinians, specially during this difficult phase of the Palestinian revolution.

Before the session proper, the leaders of the Palestinian resistance organizations met for discussion in Algiers. With the help of the Algerians, a convergent point of view was reached. The opening ceremony was attended by the Algerian President, Shadli Bendjedid (as host), Habib Shatti, Secretary-General of the Islamic Conference and Shadli Klibi, Secretary-General of the Arab league.<sup>4</sup> President Shadli's speech—several times interrupted by applause—

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<sup>1</sup> Abdallah Frangi, The PLO and Palestine, p.197

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.144

<sup>3</sup> R. Sadmi, "Une Etape Décisive", Révolution Africaine 991 (18-24 Février 1983), p.6

<sup>4</sup> Abdallah Frangi, The PLO and Palestine, p.249

deal once again with the Algerian unconditional support for the Palestinians.<sup>1</sup> Algeria was therefore demonstrating an Arab and international solidarity for the survival of the Palestinian cause. "Stay united, be responsible", was the advice given to the Palestinians by Shadli Bendjedid.<sup>2</sup> Algiers, as the Algerians proudly say, is the place where the PLO would be free from all pressures and interferences.

Speaking to the Palestinian combatants who were released by Israel, after the siege of Beirut, the Algerian president criticized strongly the passiveness of the Arab world toward the Palestinian tragedy. He reaffirmed the Algerian commitment to the Palestinian cause and the PLO leadership, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. He assured the PLO leaders of the Algerian complete readiness for any further help to save the Palestinian resistance.<sup>3</sup>

However, the decisions taken by the sixteenth Palestinian National Council, concerning the preservation of the Palestinian National unity were swept by the new dissident offensive within the PLO. The cause of such a dissidence was the agreement between Arafat and King Hussein, in April 1983, on a common action, was considered by some of the Palestinian organizations as a violation of the decisions taken in the sixteenth Palestinian National

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<sup>1</sup>"L'Algérie sera toujours à vos côtés", Discours du Président Chadli Bendjedid le 14 Février 1983 Révolution Africaine 991 ( 18-24 Février 1983 ), pp.8-11

<sup>2</sup>G.H. Jansen, "Arafat holds the PLO Together", Middle East International, ed. Michael Wall, n°194, 1983, p.3

<sup>3</sup>Jean-François Legrain, "Cronologie Palestinienne", Revue d'Etudes Palestiniennes 11( Printemps 1984), p.170



Council. This, in addition to the dissidence within Al-Fatah itself caused by the visit of Arafat, in December 1983, to Cairo. According to them, such "personal initiative" was a step forward toward accepting the American solution to the Palestinian problem.<sup>1</sup> The Palestinian national unity that was asked for, became a remote dream. Nevertheless, the initiative of some factions as the FPLP and the FDLP to set up a dialogue between all opposing groups was well received by the Palestinians. Hence, the "democratic alliance" composed of the FPLP, FDLP, PLP and the FLP tried to reach an agreement with the central committee of Al-Fatah. Five months later, the PLO groups signed the Aden-Algiers agreements by the end of June 1984.<sup>2</sup> The agreement was a real charter that may resuscitate the Palestinian national unity. Thus, the Algerian efforts to unify the Palestinians were somehow rewarded.

Meanwhile, on 1 October 1985, the headquarters of the PLO in Tunis was attacked by Israeli planes. The Israeli plan to liquidate the PLO leaders was not effective. Indeed, some 70 persons died and about one hundred were injured, but the resistance survived.

The Algerian government, a day after, hurried to support both the Palestinians and the Tunisians. Moreover, the Algerian President moved to Tunis to inquire about the situation. In addition Algeria supported actively the United Nations condemnation of the Israeli action. However, Washington and Israel considered Yassir

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<sup>1</sup>Maachou Blidi, "L'OLP Face à Ell-Même", Révolution Africaine 1207 (Avril 1987), p.31

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

Arafat as a nuisance for peace settlement in the Middle East, and therefore should be liquidated.<sup>1</sup> The whole world denounced such Israeli dealing, helped in that by the United States, Britain and other European countries. However, it has been Reagan's belief that every Palestinian is a terrorist and that terrorism should be eradicated from its source.<sup>2</sup>

The Algerian government continued its constant support whenever the Palestinian issue was discussed. The Algerian recent effort can be illustrated by the convening of the Congress of the Palestinian writers and journalists, on 8 February 1987.<sup>3</sup> It was another opportunity for the Algerians to ask the Palestinians to unite themselves with the freedom of action and decision. The motto of the congress was the unification of the Palestinian ranks. The congress ended with great successes at national and international levels. The congress of the Palestinian writers and journalists prepared way for the Palestinian National Council, on 20 April 1987. In the meantime, the Algerian diplomacy was very active. The Palestinian reconciliation, between the different factions, was revealed to be not an easy task. The Algerian president called them to unite themselves within the PLO to save the Palestinian resistance from collapse. During one year, negotiations and discussions between the various dissident groups went

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<sup>1</sup> Simon Malley, "Raid contre l'OLP et Tunis", Afrique Asie 359 (October-November 1985), p.13

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ahmed Cheniki, "Culture en Liberté", Révolution Africaine 1198 (Février 1987), p.17



on. Helped in that by Libya, the Democratic Republic of Yemen and the Soviet Union, the Algerians succeeded to convince the various Palestinian leaders to meet in Algiers and discuss their problems.<sup>1</sup> On 20 April 1987, the eighteenth Palestinian National Council took place in Algiers. The Algerians attended as guests. They respected the principle of the Palestinian freedom in decision-making. The Algerian initiative put into motion the process of unity-which was the motto of the eighteenth National Council.

The opening of the Palestinian National Council was with the presence of the Algerian president. Yassir Arafat thanked the Algerian people and its president for the commitment toward the Palestinian cause. He added that whenever the Palestinian resistance is in danger, it is secured by the Algerians.<sup>2</sup> Thereafter, the PLO leader called the Participants for the unification of all the Palestinian factions to fulfill the hopes of the Palestinian populations in the refugee camps and in Palestine. The eighteenth National Council lasted one week during which, discussions and negotiations went on. They were based on a platform prepared beforehand and agreed upon by the eight Palestinian organizations in the preparatory session in Algiers. It reaffirmed the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to repatriation, self-determination and the establishment of of an independent state under the leadership of the PLO, its sole

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<sup>1</sup>Fatiha Akeb, "La Voix des Camps et des Territoires Occupés", Algérie Actualité, n°1123, 23-29 Avril 1987, Section: L'Evenement, p.10

<sup>2</sup>Maachou Blidi, "Une Etape Nouvelle", Révolution Africaine 1208 (Avril 1987), p.14

legitimate representative, and rejected the United Nations resolutions 242 and 338 and abrogated the accords of Amman.<sup>1</sup> Concerning the Palestino-Egyptian relations, it called the Executive Committee of the PLO to set up these relations according to the different resolutions of the Palestinian National Council in particular the eighteenth one.

The platform presented to the eighteenth Palestinian National Council<sup>u</sup> was finally adopted and the Palestinian national unity was saved.<sup>2</sup> The PLO demonstrated once more that it is capable of adapting its policies within the given situation to save the Palestinian cause. It also showed its political maturity and its legitimacy as the sole representative of the Palestinian people. The PLO with its Algiers resolutions preserved Palestinian national unity. Algiers guaranteed the democratic nature and the unity of Palestinian decision-making. The PLO, and in particular its leadership under Yassir Arafat, who was unanimously re-elected chairman, emerged even stronger than before.

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<sup>1</sup> A. Sebaa, "L'Unité Retrouvée?", Algérie Actualité, n°1123, 23-29 Avril 1987, Section: l'Événement, p.11

<sup>2</sup> Mohamed Saidani, "Le Jour d'Après", Révolution Africaine 1209 ( Mai 1987), p.47



## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The aim of this work has been to give a broad outlines of the Palestino-Israeli conflict, its background and development. The study has been historical in essence, and at times comparative. We have selected and evaluated some facts that we considered to be relevant and supportive to our aim. However, we admit that we are no more effective than anyone else in the selection and evaluation of facts. The facts which have been advanced with the argumentation accompanying them, were intended to enable us to form a judgement of the Middle East conflict.

The facts to illuminate the different aspects of the Palestinian dilemma could be discussed endlessly. Nevertheless, we have tried to go beyond the current assertions related to the conflict. The origin of this conflict lies essentially in the settlement of a new population on a land already occupied by people not keen to accept that settlement. It is true, that the newcomers claimed that they had inhabited their promised land (Palestine) in ancient times and had founded a state there, and that they had been dispossessed and deported out of the region by force. However, Palestine was conquered by different occupiers like the Romans, the Crusaders, the Turks and the Arabs who succeeded to Arabize the indigenous population. The Arab success was due to the Muslim religious ideology which is traditionally, of course, hostile to present Judaism, but less so than Christianity. It

allows Judaism, as Christianity, a certain share of essential validity, as being a monotheistic religion. Under the Muslim domination, the Jewish communities in particular had their socio-economic situations flourishing and they were not compelled to convert to Islam. The whole population of Palestine wanted to live under the rule of an Arab state in Palestine to keep its Arab identity.

The Arab opposition to Jewish settlement in Palestine was expressed the moment the Zionist intention to set up a Jewish state became apparent. The Palestinians became by the end of the First World War, the feeding source of the Arab nationalism and showed the way forward to lead struggle against colonial powers and their agents in the region.

The new population, that came from Europe, was the remnant of Nazi persecution. It was radically different from the natives. The great majority of this population had different language, attitudes of life, customs, culture and modes of behaviour from the indigenous population.

The Zionist movement led by Herzl and others succeeded to attract this population and to convince the persecuted Jews to go to Palestine. They exploited to the last extent what was left of the religious hostility to Judaism and European anti-Semitism. However, the realization of the Zionist scheme was not to be achieved, without the commitment of West of Europe and the United States to the Zionist movement. This was partly due to the strong influence of the powerful Jewish lobbies, in these countries. Thus, in 1948, and against the will of all Arabs, the Zionist plan to transform an Arab land into a Jewish state was agreed upon by the



United Nations, under the pressure of the Zionist leaders and their allies, though the majority of the Jews had been reticent towards such Zionist achievement.

The Arab Palestinians rejected this new domination or annexation imposed from outside. Indeed, their reaction against Israel began well before its creation. Since 1948, the Arab world has been deeply concerned by the question of Palestine. In the meantime, Palestinian politics has been dominated by the emergence of the politico-military organizations— of which the most prominent are those grouped together in the PLO, namely, Al-Fatah, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine ( an offshoot of the PFLP), Saiqa and a number of smaller groups. In recent years, the PLO under the leadership of Yassir Arafat was able to face its enemies in the area and to get international hearing. The increasing influence of the PLO in the Arab world and in the Middle East in particular became a threat to the strategic interests of the allies of Israel. Thus, the PLO became the target that should be liquidated in the Middle East. Jordanian events in 1970, the Lebanese recurrent crises and the Camp David agreements are instances of this policy.

The non-recognition of the Palestinian organizations by the allies of Israel is not new to the Palestinians, who were treated until recently as a non-people. The American policy, for instance, toward the Palestinians remained for a long period of time neglecting the Palestinians as a fact, whereas, in the pre-1948 period, the American policy supported Zionist aspirations in

Palestine. After 1948, the Americans tried to accommodate their Palestinian policy, according to new circumstances. They regarded the Palestinians, for a long time, as mere refugees and therefore continued their financial support of U.N.R.W.A. Moreover, they developed economic proposals for refugee resettlement in the Arab countries.

The emergence of a strong Palestinian resistance after the June war of 1967, brought about a new American attitude toward the Palestinians. The American financial aid was reduced and the Palestinian military operations against Israel were seen as terrorist actions. However, the Arab use of the "oil weapon" in 1973, affected the European allies of Israel and the United States. In addition, the PLO gained the status of observer in 1974, in the United Nations and its leader was allowed to take part in the debates concerning the Palestinian question. As a result, the Europeans started to accommodate their Palestinian policies with the given situation. The European members of the E.E.C. recognized the Palestinian right to self-determination. In the meantime, the United States began to recognize a Palestinian national entity with its legitimate rights and aspirations. It still refused, however, to recognize the Palestinian right to self-determination. The advent of the Camp David agreements and the election of Reagan imperilled the hope to engage the Palestinians in any talk for peace settlement. Moreover, the United States froze the Russians and the Palestinians out of negotiations and particularly the Geneva Peace Conference.

It is worth mentioning that the Jewish state of Israel was



assigned the task of containing the Arab liberation movements and Arab unity. This, in addition to the fact that it allows the Western colonial powers and especially the United States to consolidate their strategic interests and reinforce their influence in the area.

It is now more than thirty years since the Soviet Union first emerged as an important actor in the Middle East. This coincided with that period in which Western influence was on the defensive. Once established the Soviet-Arab relations continued to develop because they remained advantageous to the two parties.

Though the Soviet Union has suffered a number of setbacks in the Arab world, partly due to her Western rivals, she remained the only alternative power for the Arabs in their confrontation with Israel. In recent years, the Soviet Union developed close relations with the PLO. This connection has a great value at a time when the Palestine issue must be an integral element of any viable settlement, and when Washington is still deprived of direct contact with the PLO. The Soviet Union subsequently became a co-chairman of peace conference on the Middle East crisis. It is in this context that the joint Soviet-American declaration on the Middle East of October 1977, took place. Two months later, the willingness to cooperate of the two great powers, was obstructed by Sadat's trip to Jerusalem.

The global cooperation on which the two superpowers were embarked was jeopardized by the American attempt of domination in the Middle East. This is obvious since the United States places preeminent weight on the containment policy toward the

Soviet Union. The regional rivalry over the consolidation of strategic interests in the area, and the commitment of the great powers to their clients increased the possibilities of a confrontation—though both of the superpowers seek to avoid any military confrontation over the Middle East. It is necessary that the Soviet Union and the United States would continue movement toward reaching a durable peace settlement through global cooperation and negotiations to avoid a nuclear war. The United States could no longer afford to adopt separate and partial solutions to this explosive situation. The time has come for the United States to recognize the natural rights of the Palestinians to self-determination and an independent state. Furthermore, the Soviet-American joint agreement on the Palestinian representation at the Geneva Conference should be enhanced the moment when the PLO is ready to sit for negotiations. The United States should rely on the Arab states and PLO, and overcome the Israeli intransigence to get further moves in the settlement process.

The creation of the independent Palestinian state in the occupied territories, from which Israel would withdraw, seems to be a key element for a durable settlement in the Middle East. The United Nations should then guarantee the territorial integrity of all states in the former Palestine, for example, by the presence of foreign combat forces if necessary. Though such "concessions" on the part of Israel seem quite impossible, as Israel made it clear that she is only willing to discuss Palestinian affairs with Palestinians under her control, and that the giving up most of the West Bank territory, she holds, is simply not acceptable.



The importance of the Palestine issue allowed the Arab nationalism and Islamic revivalism to join each other. They were bound to reach a compromise, to provide Palestine with adequate support against Israel. Hence, every Arab state was required to assist the Palestinians in the way that suits it.

The Algerian support to Palestine has, for instance, been continuous since the advent of the problem. The long Algerian war resulted in an Algerian revolutionarism that has been intransigent on the Palestinian cause. The Algerians are committed to back the Palestinians. This is the political line put by the Algerians long before their independence. The different Algerian political parties showed a great concern to Palestine.

After the independence, Algeria reiterated her full support to the Palestine cause. The Algerian assistance thereafter took a different shape. In addition to weapons and amunitions, the Algerian government was very active at the political and diplomatic levels. Algeria backed the Palestinian cause in every occasion. The Algerians played major role in the different Arab-Israeli wars too. They sought to embark on a war of attrition till the defeat of Israel—in the last war. Unfortunately, this did not occur due to the bad organization of Arab troops and the hesitant Arab leaders.

To finish, we should mention that this study is based on the documentation available to us. It, however, suffered from the the lack of enough varied material, specially concerning the Algerio-Palestinian relations. There are materials in PLO representation in Algiers and in FLN centers, but they are not in

published forms out yet. We hope to continue the work on this  
theme and then exploit these sources <sup>when</sup> made available.



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