ZIONISM AND THE ARABS

ZIONISM AND THE ARABS

ESSAYS

EDITED BY

SHMUEL ALMOG

JERUSALEM
THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF ISRAEL AND THE
ZALMAN SHAZAR CENTER
1983

Publications of
The Zalman Shazar Center for the Furtherance of the
Study of Jewish History

This publication
was made possible by a gift from
Mr. Martin Abelove

ISBN 965 227 010 5

Contents

Shmuel Ettinger
Foreword vii

Israel Kolatt
The Zionist Movement and the Arabs 1

Elyakim Rubinstein
Zionist Attitudes on the Jewish-Arab Conflict Until 1936 35

Yaakov Shavit
Revisionism's View of the Arab National Movement 73

Gabriel Sheffer
The Confrontation Between Moshe Sharett and
David Ben-Gurion 95

Joseph Nevo
The Palestine Arabs' Attitude
towards the *Yishuv* and the Zionist Movement 149

Yehuda Taggar
The Arab Revolt of 1936 in the Perspective of the
Jewish-Arab Conflict 163

Yehoshafat Harkabi
Arab Positions on Zionism 187

Nathaniel Katzburg
The British and Zionist Perspectives, 1939-1945 197

Glossary 209

Index 215

All articles included in this volume, with the exception of I. Kolatt's and G. Sheffer's, were translated by Arnold Schwartz. The articles by I. Kolatt and G. Sheffer were translated by Avi Jacobson and Ruth Rossing respectively.

Foreword

The essays in this volume are based on lectures delivered at a conference convened under the auspices of the Zalman Shazar Center. They are an important contribution to a possible scholarly analysis of the relationship between two national movements and add a dimension to the understanding of Zionist history. Although the number of historians dealing with Zionist history has increased considerably in recent years, little attention has yet been paid to the attitude of the Zionist movement towards the Arab national movement, and much of what has been written has dealt only with the policy or ideology of a particular party or trend in Zionism concerning the Arabs. What distinguishes this collection is its wide range of approaches and points of view. Furthermore, in order to assess attitudes towards the Arab movement, many aspects of Zionist ideology and policy, British policy, and the struggles between trends within the Zionist movement itself have also been examined.

All the authors refute the widespread contention according to which the Zionist movement as a whole – save for small and marginal groups within it – did not take into account the Arabs dwelling in *Eretz Israel* and ignored the "Arab question" altogether, and that consequently the possibility of mutual understanding between the two nationalist movements was precluded. At the same time, it is clear that all the Zionist executives, and virtually all streams of Zionism, wrongly assessed the strength of Arab nationalism and underestimated the weight of its opposition to Zionist aspirations. Some hoped that the influence of Great Britain and Jewish cooperation with her would suffice to overcome Arab opposition. Others pinned their hopes on the benefits and progress the Zionist development programs would bring to backward Arab society – which was divided

along class lines and in terms of ideas between conservative feudal elements (who supposedly were the core of the opposition to Zionism) and the masses of *fellaḥeen* and laborers – hoping for eventual cooperation with the progressive elements in that society. Still others tried to mollify the Arabs with plans for a federation or confederation with them, plans for a bi-national state, and even by fixing a numerical quota which the Jews would not exceed. Not a one of the groups that sought cooperation and conciliation – not even the most extreme of them – anticipated that the Zionist movement would serve as a model and guide for the Arab national movement, and that in the final reckoning it would even act as a central factor in its crystallization and the growth of its self-consciousness. Sooner or later, all trends in Zionism came to the realization that the Arabs – even the most moderate of them – would be satisfied by nothing less than relinquishment of the very essence of Zionism and of the aspiration to be an independent political factor in one form or another in *Eretz Israel*. With the exception of individuals who despaired of Zionism (in various periods these were not a few), the general conclusion was that there was no alternative but to fight the Arab opposition by force, although most of the Zionist streams did not accept Jabotinsky's doctrine of the "iron wall".

Despite the tragic situation of a clash not between "justice and injustice", but between "right" and "right", between a "greater justice" and a more crucial one (especially in the thirties and forties, when immigration to the country literally meant the saving of lives, and opposition to it – an abandonment to certain death) and a "lesser justice", the attitude to the opposite side in large measure defines the political course and moral approach of the two national movements. The naive belief of Zionist spokesmen and ideologues in the "return to the East", in the "kinship of the two Semitic peoples", and in building the land "shared by the two peoples", stemmed from the fundamental concepts of the Zionist ideology and from the aspiration of most of its streams to establish an improved society or a "socialist state" in *Eretz Israel*. Not only political pragmatism, but also the need for moral justification, impelled many within the movement to seek ways for compromise and to accept the partition plan. The very diversity and multiplicity of streams and polemics within Zionism caused a groping for ways and a striving to draw near to and understand the opposite

side. The absolute negation of Zionism by the Arab movement – from its inception and up to the Palestinian Covenant – the non-recognition of the existence of a Jewish national movement, the definition of it as a plot by the forces of evil (whether the "enemies of Islam", the "Bolsheviks" or the "imperialists"); the totalitarian nature of the Arab awakening, which led to a readiness to search for allies even in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany; and the repeated attempts to suppress, by the force of terror, opponents to the existence of one stream only, as a result of which more Arabs have been killed by Arabs than by Jews or the British – all these left their imprint on the Arab national movement in Palestine and on the Palestinian movement. It is an imprint from which they have not succeeded in freeing themselves to this very day.

The authors have not covered all of the problems in the relations between the Zionist movement and the Arab national movement; nevertheless, this collection makes a sizeable contribution to understanding of the subject and the historical course of the Zionist movement and its nature.

Shmuel Ettinger
Professor of Modern Jewish History
Hebrew University of Jerusalem

The Zionist Movement and the Arabs

Israel Kolatt

In recent years, scholars and the general public alike have taken great interest in Jewish-Arab relations. From the standpoint of Zionist history, the very change of emphasis from the various aspects of "the Jewish question" to the problem of Jewish-Arab relations is highly significant. It moves the area of discussion – and the field in which the problem is defined – from the history and distress of the Jews to the evolution of Middle-East relations. It changes the Zionist historical view from one in which the entire course of Jewish history was of the essence to one in which what was previously considered of local and relatively minor import becomes central.

Discussion of this subject puts the historian to the test – the test of his or her ability to examine the facts without distorting them or apologizing for them, and the test of dealing not only with the political, military, economic, and ideological facts, but with political systems and social structures as well. On a more abstract plane, an historical examination enables one to distinguish between a history possessing a predestined significance, on the one hand, i.e., the history of the realization of absolute values, and on the other, a history which is open to human choice and decision.

The example of other nationalist movements is likely to be of only partial aid to us in our discussion of the evolution of Jewish-Arab relations; the phenomenon at hand comprises not only a national conflict with regard to territory and population majorities, but also a religious and cultural one. The people in conflict intermingle, and the encounter is not only a theoretical one on a national plane, but a pragmatic encounter of individuals in their day-to-day life; injury and

* I. Kolatt is Professor of Modern Jewish History, especially in *Eretz-Israel*, at the Institute of Contemporary Jewry, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

deprivation are the lot not only of the population as a collective, but of the individual as well. Not only are Jews and Arabs embroiled in a dispute over the same territory (and this dispute is relevant not only to the destiny of the nation as a whole, but also to that of the individual); there is also the burden of the historical relationship between Islam and Judaism. In our times, there has emerged the further conflict regarding the very definition of nationality. The Arabs officially dissociate Arab nationalism from Islam, despite the admission of strong bonds between the two. On the other hand, they see in Jewish nationalism an illegitimate nationalism linked to a particular religion. This accumulation of conflicts has resulted in the non-recognition by the Arabs of the very existence of Jewish nationhood.

The Zionist position with regard to the Arabs and to Arab nationalism has undergone many transformations, engendered by both the nature of Zionism and historical reality. On the surface, these attitudes would appear to be derived from the extent to which various Zionist ideologies defined Zionism: the more maximalist the Zionism – insistence upon mass immigration, a Jewish majority in Palestine, and Jewish sovereignty – the less compromising it should be with regard to the Arabs. In fact, this is not the case.

In reality, the Zionist attitude towards the Arabs has also been influenced by other factors: the attitude towards the Orient, the attitude towards the use of violence, and the liberal or socialist elements which were added to the Zionist idea. An appreciation of the realities of Palestine also played a role in forging these attitudes. There have been maximalist Zionists dedicated to arriving at an agreement between the Jews and the Arabs, and more moderate Zionists who did not believe in the possibility of such an agreement. The evolution of these relationships will be discussed below.

Historical literature is replete with the accusation that Zionism ignored "the Arab problem"; this contention has been stated in an even broader form: that Zionism ignored the realities of Palestine and the area, and that Zionism is by nature an illusory movement. It is true that Zionism's point of departure was not in the actual realities of Palestine, but rather in the problem of the Jews and the Jewish people and in the notion of Jewish rights to and bonds with the Land of Israel. But this does not mean that the realities of Palestine were not considered at all. Both the "old" and "new" *Yishuv* certainly consid-

ered them. Those outside Palestine also took these realities into account. But what both groups took into consideration was the reality of the nineteenth century, and we must consider that period today if our discussion is not to be anachronistic.

I

In the middle of the nineteenth century, Palestine belonged to the Ottoman Empire and was not a separate political unit in the administrative division of that Empire. Arab nationalism had not yet developed, and Arab nationalism in Palestine was certainly non-existent. The local population was a patchwork of local, family-oriented, and religious loyalties. The population was united to a certain degree in its opposition to the reforms of the central regime, particularly the Muslim population. Opposition to the Jews was secondary to opposition to foreigners, mainly to the Christians.

The pre-Zionists of the 1860s and 1870s, and the Zionists from 1882 until 1914, could envisage Zionism's realization within the framework of the Ottoman Empire. The Empire had been subject to an ever-increasing influence by the world powers, restrained somewhat by the pan-Islamic policy of Sultan Abdul Hamnid (1876-1909). There took place, too, the gradual formation of units of limited autonomy on a religious and ethnic basis, with the occasional guarantee of European powers (as in the case of Lebanon). The demand for greater freedom for the various national groupings within the Empire after 1908 was interpreted by the Zionists as a chance for realizing the Zionist idea.

The first confrontations of Zionism were not with the Arab nationalist movement, but with the Ottoman regime, which limited immigration and land purchase, and with the local population. The latter clashes centered around the purchase of land, soil cultivation methods, and guarding the settlements. The Jews, ignorant of the way of life of the local population, occasionally offended its customs and feelings. At the turn of the century, these issues stimulated Jewish discussions of relations with the Arabs.

Around the time of the First World War, Zionist leaders (among them Arthur Ruppin, for example) recognized the mistakes that had

been made in this context during the first stages of settlement. They believed that if they would put an end to the dispossession of tenant-farmers, compensating those who had already been dispossessed, and increase the number of Jews able to speak Arabic and familiar with their way of life, Jewish-Arab tensions would be eased. And indeed, the end of the Ottoman regime saw the beginning of a policy – one that continued during the Mandate as well – aimed at compensating Arab tenant-farmers, together with payments made to the land-owners. But by that time the conflict had already risen to a higher level, attaining the status of a general national conflict.

Day-to-day friction was not the only factor which forced a discussion of Jewish-Arab relations. By the end of the nineteenth century the conflict also reflected European anti-Semitism which had penetrated Arab journalism and literature. Yet, despite this, more relevant to the discussion than any Arab challenge was the fate of the Zionist enterprise itself.

By way of a broad, imprecise generalization, one might say that the foundations of social and economic relations between Jews and Arabs were laid in the wake of developments during the Ottoman period. Political relations were forged during the Mandate.

The slow development of Jewish immigration and settlement in Palestine at the end of the last century together with the economic and social weakness of the *Yishuv* at the beginning of the next raised fears in the field of Jewish-Arab relations. The flow of Jewish capital to Palestine was liable to reach the Arab sector and accelerate its development; the small number of Jewish settlers was liable to be assimilated by the larger Arab population in terms of language and life style. The economic crisis of the Jewish agricultural settlements at the beginning of the century served only to increase that danger.

These considerations, in addition to others, more essential ones, led to the erection of economic and social barriers. The Jews and the Arabs who had been religiously separate now became further separated on a national level, both by the use of the Hebrew language and the new content given to Hebrew education. The first decade of the century saw the implementation of an economic policy aimed at creating a closed Jewish economy in which accumulated capital would go to further internal expansion rather than flowing outward.

The attitude of the workers' parties, which stressed "Jewish labor",

corresponded to this policy. The objective of Jewish labor and of "conquest of labor" had a double implication with regard to the Arabs: the Jewish workers struck at the Arab workers whom they meant to evict from their jobs; on the other hand, the Jewish workers intended to build a Jewish society that would not be dependent upon the labor of "outsiders". Jewish labor was intended to prevent the combination of a national conflict with a class-oriented one.

Within the workers' parties – *Poalei-Zion* and *Hapoel Hatzair* – the idea of Jewish labor was, from the very beginning, given different interpretations. The incipient *Poalei-Zion* version prescribed the broad, all-inclusive development of the land by Jews, which would give an advantage to educated workers (i.e., Jewish workers), but would also leave room for Arab workers. The members of *Hapoel Hatzair* advocated the conquest of labor as a precondition for the realization of Zionism, that is, the exclusive employment of Jewish workers. The limited possibilities of the Jewish economy justified the attitude of *Hapoel Hatzair*, but economic considerations – and, eventually, considerations regarding relations with the Arabs as well – limited the applicability of the principle of conquest of labor, and motivated many Zionists to advocate "mixed labor" in one ratio or another. In the context of Jewish labor, the Jewish workers became the expression of a general Zionist principle which conceived of the development of the *Yishuv* in Palestine in a unique way. Unlike the previous generation of settlers, they even wanted a public discussion of Jewish-Arab relations as well as of other problems of the *Yishuv*. They saw in Jewish labor not only the way to acquiring the real right and the moral right to Palestine and eliminating the danger of rebellion on the part of exploited Arab labor; they also claimed that the national character of the working class would determine the nature of Jewish society in Palestine. The existence of a sector both nationally *and* socially inferior would create a Jewish society that did not value freedom and human dignity, and have a negative influence on the entire character of the Zionist enterprise.

The Jewish workers, particularly those of *Poalei-Zion*, also changed the views on the question of guarding the settlements: instead of a professional, practical matter it became an expression of national dignity and national strength. In this area, the workers became the leaders of the *Yishuv* before they became leaders in the political

and social spheres. But the farmers, as well as many influential people in the *Yishuv*, protested this leadership as well as the nature of the workers' relations with the Arabs, in matters of settlement security and labor.

The Jewish workers in Palestine found themselves embroiled in some very paradoxical situations with regard to these two issues. They considered the establishment of a Jewish working class in Palestine a precondition for the realization of Zionism, and at the same time believed in international brotherhood and proletarian solidarity. *Poalei-Zion* represented a militant tradition, copied from the self-defense organizations in Russia and the socialist struggles there, and transferred to the national sphere.

The policies and methods employed by the Jewish workers became part of the trend towards an independent and separate Jewish economy and society, which took shape within the *Yishuv* at the beginning of the century and was later strengthened by the course of action of Arthur Ruppin, the father of Jewish settlement. The separation of the two communities in Palestine purported to prevent two distinct types of Jewish-Arab assimilation. One type was the blurring of differences between the communities and nations – which threatened the assimilation of the Jewish minority into the Arab majority. The nationally-oriented *Yishuv* was against this. The second possibility was that of a ruling class of Jews employing Arab masses. Mainly, it was the Jewish workers who were against this. Nor were they alone in their objections: even before the Jewish-Arab national conflict became prominent, the Zionists were aware of the possibility of revolt on the part of an oppressed population. They realized that social oppression itself, even without nationalist overtones, would create an excuse for incitement and rebellion. They were also aware of the negative possibility that Zionism might be compared with colonial and imperialist enterprises – such as the British takeover of South Africa – and hoped to prevent such comparisons.

Both concepts – separation and assimilation – were subject to widely differing interpretations: the loss of Jewish identity, Jewish control of the Arabs, arrogant Jewish self-isolation, the autonomous development of the two societies. There was also a marginal idea which suggested the possible assimilation of the Arabs among the Jews, whose economic and cultural level was deemed to be higher.

The Revolution of the Young Turks in 1908 and the renewal of the representative institutions of the Ottoman Empire added a new dimension to Jewish-Arab relations. The Zionists at first believed that the Revolution would create a constitutional framework that would remove the limitations on the entry of Jews to Palestine and purchase of land. Freedom appeared to them as freedom for Jewish development. The *Yishuv* also looked forward to a political partnership among all sectors of the Palestinian population. Within such a framework, the Jews would work hand-in-hand with the Muslims, perhaps even obtaining some sort of representation at the Parliament in Constantinople.

In fact, however, national and political developments in the Empire aggravated Jewish-Arab relations. Parliamentary elections became more a focus of Jewish-Arab conflict than a basis for partnership. Arab nationalism, encouraged at first by Christian Arabs, served to cement relations between Muslims and Christians. The acceleration of Arab national awareness brought about an emphasis on the Arab language, a desire for autonomy, and opposition to the pattern of Jewish separation. The Jews sometimes found themselves faced with the choice between supporting the Ottoman regime or supporting the Arabs. Furthermore, the hope of sowing dissension between Christian and Muslim Arabs failed to materialize. The routine conflicts that had existed between Jews and Arabs were raised to the level of a national conflict by the Arabs. Arab opposition to the Jews was expressed by aggressive articles in the press, attacks in Parliament, refusal to sell land, and even by violence.

The Jews had to soften Arab resistance for the sake of Jewish progress: it was indirectly causing the government to enforce and even tighten restrictions on the Jews. But even beyond the need to moderate Arab resistance, the issue of the relations between two peoples with nationalist aspirations, was being raised as a matter of principle.

The Jews adopted several courses of action to deal with Arab resistance during the years 1909-1911. Willing to appease the Arabs they continued to claim that the development of Palestine was to the Arabs' advantage and tried to convince them of the positive nature of Zionism. They also tried, as mentioned above, to undo the injustices in their land-purchasing methods and in their attitude towards the tenant-farmers, injustices that were attributed to the early stages of

settlement. Opponents of the "closed economy" increased, and many demanded moderation of the principle of Jewish labor. But there was very little willingness to consider the Arabs' accusations that the Jews were maintaining a segregated economy and a segregated society. The Jews were not willing to relinquish the Jewish character of their settlements, schools, and associations.

But the mainstream of Jewish reaction was not conciliatory. It was rather the acceleration of the purchase of land, increased investments, and stronger organization and education. Furthermore, the Zionists tried to strengthen their own legal and political status in the framework of the Ottoman regime.

In the wake of the Jewish-Arab confrontation, as it was even before 1914, the theoretical discussion of the subject revolved around relations between the East and West or relations between branches of the Semitic race. Zionist leaders like Ahad Ha'am and Menahem Ussishkin chose to consider the Jews a nation which dissociated itself from the West, which itself was attacking the Orient (as represented by the Ottoman Empire). They chose to consider the Jews an Oriental people which, returning to its roots, also served as a link between the two worlds.

The Sephardic Jews, on the other hand, sought linguistic, cultural, and social affinities with the Arabs, the two nations belonging to a common Semitic race. These attempts aroused the suspicion that the Sephardic Jews were trying to blunt the edge of independent Jewish identity and foster acculturation of the Jews among the Arabs.

Before World War I, the attitude of Zionism towards the Arab problem was a topic which was discussed both by the *Yishuv* and by the Zionist movement – and the connection between the two was not always constant. With the establishment of a Zionist delegation in Constantinople in 1908, the problem of relations with the Arabs became a concern of Zionist policy. Victor Jacobson and Richard Lichtheim, who represented the Zionist Organization, were in contact with the Zionist Executive in Cologne and Berlin, on the one hand, and with Arthur Ruppin in Palestine, on the other.

At the Seventh Zionist Congress in 1905, Max Nordau already expressed an opinion about the first stirrings of Arab nationalism. He suggested the existence of a conflict between the idea of Arab independence and the unity and integrity of the Ottoman Empire, and

proposed a partnership between the Empire and the Zionists to ward off Arab secession and the dissolution of the Empire. Nordau was expressing for the first time a political objective that would later be expounded by Richard Lichtheim and Ze'ev Jabotinsky, particularly during World War I. They would then attempt to have the *Yishuv* viewed as an entity allied to Europe and forming a breach in continuous Arab control from the Atlantic Ocean to the Persian Gulf. Richard Lichtheim favored Germany, Jabotinsky Great Britain, but the two assigned similar roles to the Jews with regard to the Arab world.

The Zionist representative in Constantinople, Victor Jacobson, as well as many of the Russian Zionists, were opposed to this trend. They wanted Zionism to be an integral part of the emancipation – even the renaissance – of the Orient. The democratization of the Empire after 1908 was supposed to justify this goal. Jacobson tried to negotiate with the Arab delegates in Constantinople, including those from Palestine. He did not want to create the impression that these negotiations were directed against the Ottoman authorities. They were mainly intended to convince the authorities to retract their opposition to Jewish immigration and settlement.

Recognizing the upsurge of Arab nationalism, Jacobson sought to maintain a dialogue with the Arab nationalists by diverting their interests from Palestine itself. He wanted to convince them that the benefits they would reap from cooperation with the Jews far outweighed their interests in Palestine – interests which were secondary from their standpoint.

Just before the outbreak of World War I, an attempt at top-level contacts was even made between a Zionist delegation headed by Nahum Sokolow, who came to visit Palestine in 1914, and Arab leaders in Syria and Lebanon. But contacts were broken off because of reservations on both sides. The Jews feared their loyalty to the Ottoman regime might be questioned; the Arabs, for their part, voiced demands that were insupportable.

An examination of the position of both sides before the negotiations shows that there was little hope of a successful dialogue. The Arabs might have been willing to cooperate with Jews prepared to relinquish their separate national features and contribute to a general Arab nationalism. But this, of course, was in contradiction to Zionist

aspirations and to the crystallization of a specific Jewish national identity. Furthermore, the Jews did not believe they possessed the means to develop significant social services – such as health and education services – in the Arab sector, and they opposed opening their Jewish institutions to the Arabs.

II

The changes that took place during the war put Jewish-Arab relations on a completely different plane after the war ended. A debate developed within the Zionist movement as to whether the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, the transformation of Palestine into a separate political unit, and the special, privileged status granted the Jewish people there were indeed an unambiguous achievement for Zionism. The Brit Shalom movement contended that the Zionists' bond to the great powers, particularly Britain, and the advantage given to the Jews by the Mandate served only to aggravate Arab resistance. But at the end of the war and during the first few years thereafter, it seemed as if the Jewish people had found a regime which enabled them to work for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, even though they comprised at the time only 10 per cent of Palestine's population.

The pro-Zionist regime in Palestine did not seem to the Zionists in 1918 to be opposed to the Arab movement. On the contrary, Britain was considered a power extending its good offices to the establishment of both an Arab and a Jewish state. Chaim Weizmann's Zionist policy towards the Arabs at the end of the war continued, to a certain extend, the line begun by Jacobson: helping to satisfy Arab aspirations outside Palestine in exchange for Arab support of a national homeland in Palestine. This is the fundamental idea inherent in the Weizmann-Feisal agreement as it was understood by the Zionists.

Towards the end of the war, the *Yishuv* also became politically more nationalist in contrast to its attitude during the Ottoman period. Action within the framework of the Ottoman Empire, cultivation of the Hebrew language, and autonomous organizational patterns now gave way to ideas of a Jewish state, ideas which contrasted sorely with the decentralized structure of Jewish society in Palestine.

The Arabs were to be given extensive autonomy in municipal government, as well as in the areas of justice, welfare, and education.

The years 1918-1920 represent the peak of Jewish claims from the standpoint of both government and territory. The Zionist program referred to a Palestine on both sides of the Jordan, in which a state would arise containing an overwhelming Jewish majority. Until this Jewish majority was attained, an interim government would serve. Responsibility for this interim government was given in theory to an international authority, and in practice to Britain. Britain was charged with the realization of the Jewish National Home, as stated in the Balfour Declaration. Maximalist Zionism was based on the political-national consciousness which had evolved among the Jewish people during the war, as well as on the national military activity of the Jewish Legion that had fought within the framework of the British Army. On the other hand, the revolutionary events in Europe created grave distress in Eastern Europe, leading to the expectation that Zionism would provide a solution to Jewish hardship.

Despite the belief that Britain and the other world powers would support Zionism politically, and despite the urgent need for a solution to the problems of the Jews in Eastern Europe – one that could compete with Communism – Chaim Weizmann prudently avoided defining the Zionist goal in terms of a Jewish state. He feared accusations that the Jewish minority was coming to dominate the Arab majority. He believed that the process of creating a Jewish majority was a gradual one which would culminate in the emergence of a state whose character would reflect that of the national majority. The immigration rate advocated by Weizmann was slower than that of other Zionist leaders (among them Max Nordau), who called for a mass influx, leaders who were associated with the school of "political" Zionism (as opposed to "practical").

Notwithstanding differences in formulation, the maximalist principle was shared in those years by Weizmann, the "political" Zionists, Jabotinsky and the labor movement. The latter called for a "greater" Zionism that would answer the needs of the Jewish masses of Eastern Europe, and consequently demanded wide borders, including both banks of the Jordan, immigration, and (ultimately) independence. They had reservations about cooperating with Britain, but believed in Jewish-Arab understanding. In the spirit of the socialist solution to

the problem of nationality, they believed national autonomy would satisfy the Arabs.

The years 1918-1920 saw only very small-scale intra-Zionist opposition to these positions, which aimed at the creation – rapid or gradual – of a Jewish majority in Palestine, a majority which would mold the character of the country. Among them were the school of Martin Buber in Central Europe and Haim Margalit-Kalvarisky in Palestine. Margalit-Kalvarisky proposed, in 1919, to the "Provisional Committee" of the *Yishuv* a plan based on a social and political binational state in Palestine and its integration within the Semitic region.

The Arab riots of 1921 brought about a new British interpretation of the Mandate and of the character of the Jewish homeland in Palestine, an interpretation expressed in the White Paper of 1922. While the future of the Palestine government was not explicitly determined, it was stated that it would not necessarily lead to a Jewish state. A pluralist state was hinted at, in which no nation would leave its exclusive mark on the country. The eastern bank of the Jordan river was implicitly excluded from the boundaries of the Jewish National Home.

The riots of 1921 also led to the polarization of Zionist attitudes, with Jabotinsky at one pole and, eventually, Brit Shalom at the other. Jabotinsky began to develop his positions during the controversy over the reestablishment of the Jewish Legion in 1921. He believed that there was no chance of a Jewish-Arab agreement while Jews were settling the country, and that Jewish settlement could take place in Palestine only under the protection of an "iron wall". This attitude was based on a realpolitik as regards relations with the Arabs and an orientation on Western culture rather than on Oriental culture. Still, Jabotinsky was a liberal insofar as relations between peoples within a single state were concerned. And he expressed this in the context of the future rights of the Arab minority in Palestine. His attitude towards the Arab independence movement outside Palestine was also an affirmative one. A different approach was that of Martin Buber, who called for Jewish-Arab partnership beyond conventional terms of national power policy.

At the Twelfth Zionist Congress in 1921, an acceptable formula was agreed upon with regard to relations with the Arabs. The formula

was firm in its adherence to the Balfour Declaration and the idea of a Jewish National Home, but also defined Palestine as "common homeland" and spoke of the unimpeded national development of Jews and Arabs together. At the Thirteenth Zionist Congress in 1923, a formula was even approved which referred to the participation of the Jewish people in the "rebirth of the Orient".

The mid-twenties were marked by relative calm in Jewish-Arab relations, but it was precisely during these years (1925) that the Brit Shalom was created. Its basic assumption was that agreement between the Jews and the Arabs was a necessary condition for the realization of Zionism. Brit Shalom critized Zionist policy that addressed itself to the world powers, rather than to the Arabs.

The members of Brit Shalom believed that eliminating the idea of sovereignty from the realization of the Jewish national idea, and working towards the establishment of a binational state in Palestine, would make Arab approval of Zionism possible. They also favored the development of a common Jewish-Arab society, and envisaged the slow growth of the Jewish national homeland in Palestine, a process that would help bring the two peoples closer together.

In the same year in which Brit Shalom was founded, the Revisionist Party was created. It developed Jabotinsky's political ideas from 1921 to 1923, and opposed Weizmann's refusal to define the goal of Zionism and the Mandate, as it took shape following the White Paper of 1922.

The conflict between those who supported a "common fatherland" for Jews and Arabs in Palestine and those who supported the "iron wall", was particularly troubling to the labor movement. The labor movement was faithful to maximalist Zionism: the Ingathering of the Exiles, a Jewish majority, and a Jewish state. But it was also faithful to democratic ideals and to the right of nations to self-determination. Its members believed that solidarity between the Jewish and Arab workers would insure rapprochement between the two nations.

Although the General Federation of Labor (the *Histadrut*) was established in 1920 exclusively as an organization of Jewish workers, the members of the labor movement in Palestine continually sought channels of cooperation with Arab workers. They believed that the socialist view could produce a political solution that would allow the realization of mass immigration and the establishment of a Jewish

state, while still preserving the rights of the Arabs – not only as individuals, but also as a national entity. In the social field, they predicted changes in Arab society which would put an end to the domination of the Muslim establishment and the *effendis*, and enhance the influence of workers and intelligentsia. These latter were supposedly more apt to accept Zionism, firstly, because of its development-oriented nature, and, secondly, out of recognition of the rights of the Jewish people.

The controversies within the large workers' party itself, *Ahdut Ha'avoda*, indicated that the socialist solution was not all that unambiguous. At the Fourth Convention of *Ahdut Ha'avoda* in Ein Harod in 1924, Shlomo Kaplansky proposed that *Ahdut Ha'avoda* approve the establishment of a democratic legislative council in Palestine, which would give expression to the Arab majority in the country. Kaplansky's condition for this was that the Arabs recognize the international Mandate and guarantee the invulnerability of the Jewish National Home.

Only in the atmosphere of the twenties and in the world of socialist thinking could it be imagined that the Arabs would not use a legislative council with an Arab majority to undermine the Jewish National Home. The opponents of Kaplansky's proposal inundated him with socialist argumentation in favor of Zionism, based primarily on the socialist right to develop barren land. This gave the Jews an unlimited right to develop Palestine. The leaders of *Ahdut Ha'avoda* further elaborated their position in accordance with the realities of Palestine. They claimed that establishing representative institutions at the present stage of development of Arab society would merely strengthen the class of notables. They supported the idea of a separation between Jewish and Arab society that would allow the Arabs to preserve their identity and the Jews to shape their own society. Berl Katznelson, in particular, elaborated the idea of autonomy to include an ever-increasing separation of the national entities, which would prevent exploitation of one people by the other. Ben-Gurion envisaged the crystallization of each national entity within defined territorial bounds. He claimed that the Jewish National Home could be developed "without wronging a single Arab child". He sincerely believed that the struggle for Jewish labor and for a Jewish state in no way injured the Arabs. Differing from Brit Shalom, he continued to demand

a Jewish majority and a Jewish state. But the state as he saw it would be "neither a Prussian nor Czarist state, but a socialist one". This meant local and regional self-rule, which would give the Arabs an outlet for national expression.

The workers' parties found themselves in a dilemma, not only politically, but also in the sphere of trade-unionism. Their members wanted both Jewish labor and class solidarity. In the wake of lengthy disputes which were carried on between 1923 and 1927, the *Histadrut* decided to carry out organizational work among the Arabs, but not to open the ranks of the *Histadrut* to them, as was demanded by the left-wing factions. The low wages demanded by the Arabs and the Zionist character of the *Histadrut* were the arguments used against a joint Federation of Labor. Activity among the Arabs was supposed to be carried out by an autonomous federation of Arab workers, which would cooperate with the General Federation of Labor within the framework of the Palestine Labor Alliance (*Brit Poalei Eretz-Yisrael*).

It was typical of the twenties that striking ideological differences within the Zionist camp did not make any difference to movement policy. In London, in part of Europe, and in Palestine, Jewish-Arab contacts were carried out by people who did not support the official positions of the movement with regard to the Arab question. We know, for example, of the negotiations with leaders of the Arab nationalist movement held by Asher Sapir at the beginning of the twenties, in which he tried to obtain Arab support for the Jewish National Home in exchange for Zionist support of the Arab independence movement. The Zionists were represented as a force conducive to development and progress, neither European in character nor dominating in behavior. On the other hand, the Zionists could not jeopardize their relations with Britain and France. Zionist policy in Palestine was handled by Frederick Kisch, aided by Haim Margalit-Kalvarisky, whose position lay far afield of the accepted Zionist program. They sought highways to those Arabs who opposed the leadership of the Husseinis, namely, members of the Hashemite family, particularly Abdallah, Emir of Transjordan, and the Nashashibi "opposition" in Palestine. Kalvarisky even tried to set up "friendly" organizations among the Arabs of Palestine, which would enjoy Jewish patronage and aid. The relative moderation of the Arabs during the

mid-twenties was attributed to this policy. Whatever the reasons for the moderation, it was shattered by the events of 1929.

III

The events of the late twenties generated changes in Jewish nationalist awareness within the Zionist movement. The crisis of the Fourth Aliya seemed to prove the impossibility of mass immigration and the transfer of the demographic center of the Jewish people from Europe to Palestine. Some of the German Zionists, and the members of Brit Shalom in Palestine, interpreted Zionism as the establishment in Palestine of a qualitative center for the Jewish people. The Revisionists, and the labor movement on the other hand, supported mass Zionism, a Zionism that would solve the problem of the Jews in Eastern Europe and compete with Communism for the souls of Jewish youth.

These differences of approach became significant in the wake of the events of 1929, when public discussion of the attitude of the Zionist movement to the Arabs was renewed. Ideological approaches that had begun to take shape in the early twenties acquired political significance. The enmity that exploded in riots in 1929 put an end to hopes of reconciliation between Jews and Arabs as a result of modernization, economic cooperation or limited cooperation on the governmental plane (as, for example, in the municipalities).

British commissions of enquiry brought out the fundamental problems of the Mandate, and Arab complaints claimed that even from an economic standpoint, the Arabs as individuals were disadvantaged by Zionism.

Zionist reaction to these events was a test of the way the *Yishuv* evaluated its own needs, what it considered to be the value of Jewish nationalism, and, further, an exploration of the nature of the realities of Palestine. The official Zionist position was that the Jews had no intention of dominating or of being dominated in Palestine. In other words, the Jews would not impose Jewish majority rule upon an Arab minority in the future, but at the same time refused to recognize the right of the existing Arab majority to rule in the present. This was an explicit retreat from the definition of the goal of Zionism as a Jewish State, and the question posed was a proper one: Did this mean surren-

dering the "Jewish majority" formula, or perhaps even the majority itself? Was the realization of Zionism dependent upon mass immigration which would solve the problem of Jewish distress in Eastern Europe, or could Zionism, in fact, do without mass immigration, do without a Jewish majority to substantiate the notion of a National Home? Were conflict and violence too dear a price?

The position of the Revisionists, the *Mizrahi*, and some of the members of the General Zionists was clear: they rejected any proposal that did not accord with Jewish majority rule of Palestine. Brit Shalom, on the other hand, demanded that an agreement with the Arabs be given priority over a policy which would attempt to broaden the scope of the National Home under Britain's auspices, and involve clashes with the Arabs.

The Palestine Labor Party (*Mapai*) belonged to the camp of maximalist Zionism from the standpoint of the demand for mass immigration, liquidation of the Diaspora, and a Jewish economy and society in Palestine. Its policy stressed neither constitutional nor political formulations but rather substantial progress in the areas of immigration, land purchase, and the construction of a Jewish economy. But many of the party's leaders were prepared to establish a state in Palestine which would be common to Jews and Arabs (in distinction to a mixed society and/or a binational state), a state that would not impose majority rule of one nation upon another. Basically, the post-1929 period represents the greatest willingness on the part of the Zionist movement to open a dialogue with the Arabs at the cost of far-reaching concessions, like relinquishing the idea of Jewish majority rule. Many Brit Shalom members even believed that their conception had captured the hearts of the Zionist movement.

The immediate reason for the theoretical political debates of the thirties was the question of the legislative council which the Mandatory government was supposed to set up. Some of the leaders of *Mapai*, among them Haim Arlozoroff and David Ben-Gurion, were willing to discuss changes in the Palestine constitution through the establishment of a legislative council – on the proviso that there not be an Arab majority on the council and that the Jews' right to build a national homeland not be jeopardized. The British were considered the third factor in a proposed legislative council. Ben-Gurion even went as far as supporting the inclusion of Arabs in the executive branch of

government and proposed ideas for a federal state in the future. This was a revision of the position of *Ahdut Ha'avoda* in 1924.

This was not the only position in *Mapai*. Many members of the party had reservations with regard to the chances of cooperating with the Arabs. Their position was based not only on the right of the Jews to Palestine, but also on the "underdeveloped nature" of Arab society. At most, they agreed to a reform in municipal government that would give the Arabs more autonomy. After lengthy debates, the position of Berl Katznelson was accepted, a position which assumed constitutional changes (including the establishment of a legislative council), but with parity for the two national groups. Berl Katznelson's forecasts for the future envisaged the development of Palestine into a "state of nationalities", in which autonomous national societies would exist side by side.

At the time of the controversy over the Peel Plan in 1937, and even more so in 1942, Ben-Gurion contended that the notion of parity was limited to the period of the Mandate. This claim is not substantiated by the facts. According to several formulations, the federal state – the "state of nationalities" – was to fashion the character of the permanent government. Still, one must distinguish between two different sets of ideas, that of a "state of nationalities" or parity and that of the binational state, as advocated by Brit Shalom.

The differences were crucial in a number of areas and the labor movement was conscientious in stressing them. They were careful to point out that there was no equality between the attitudes of the two peoples towards Palestine. Palestine "belonged" to the *entire* Jewish people, on the one hand, and to the *Arabs of Palestine*, on the other. The practical interpretation of this theoretical postulate was that the Jewish population was a dynamic national group which would increase through immigration, whereas the Arab population was stable. The Arabs' affinity to the country was limited to those Arabs actually living there, while Jewish affinity attached to potential immigrants as well. Another difference between parity and binationalism concerned the makeup of the society and the economy: in these domains – in contrast to the political domain – *Mapai* negated the idea of pluralism, insisting on Jewish labor, Jewish manufacture, Jewish services and Jewish schools. The party supported the separation of societies, cooperation being possible only between autonomous societies. This

could be seen clearly in the fight over labor during the thirties. The left-wing factions in the *Histadrut – Hashomer Hatzair* and Left *Poalei-Zion* – were opposed to complete separation, particularly among workers, and supported one form or another of mixed Jewish-Arab labor. All the proposals for changes in the type of government and structure of society, however, from whatever quarter, were based on hopes for large-scale Jewish immigration which would create an overwhelming Jewish majority in Palestine – even if that majority did not attain sovereign power. In the thinking of that period, it would appear, the state was not a necessary tool for forging social policy.

From 1930 on, Zionist policy towards the Arabs operated on two levels, seeking an agreement with them and speeding up the realization of Zionism through increased Jewish strength in Palestine. Increased immigration – particularly of young people – as well as the acceleration of settlement, investment, and the building of the economy resulted in economic prosperity and a stronger defence potential. This accelerated rate of progress could have produced one of two reactions among the Arabs: a willingness to participate in the development of the country or an effort to undermine the increasing strength of the Jews as quickly as possible. It may be that the Jews themselves became less enthusiastic about the idea of Jewish-Arab parity in the administration of Palestine as their numbers rapidly increased, growing from 175,000 in 1931 to almost 400,000 in 1936.

The pressure of the Jews of Europe to immigrate, together with the total refusal of the Arabs to reach an agreement, led to a change in position in the early thirties. The hope for conciliation among the nations, as a result of economic and social progress, gave way to the stubborn struggle for independence in the region. The ascent of fascism and Nazism aggravated relations, not only because it increased Jewish pressure for immigration, but also because it challenged British influence in the region and encouraged extremist elements amog the Arab nationalists.

The demand of Brit Shalom that priority be given to Jewish-Arab cooperation over Jewish-British cooperation, was not accepted by the majority of the Zionist movement during the years 1929-1935. Nonetheless, policy was shaped on the assumption that such an agreement was possible. Arlozoroff, for example, expected that the Arab extremists would find themselves isolated while Jewish-Arab cooperation

was reached through the good offices of Britain. Ben-Gurion held talks with Arab leaders on the assumption that the Arab independence movement would benefit from a Jewish state incorporated in an Arab federation.

The Zionist orientation upon Jewish-Arab agreement failed during the first half of the thirties. The Arab political position and the social and political structure of Arab society led in the opposite direction. As early as 1931, Arthur Ruppin, one of the founders of Brit Shalom, who later dissociated himself from its position, defined Jewish-Arab relations as follows: "What we need we cannot get, and what we get we do not need".

Relinquishing the aim of Jewish majority rule in Palestine, offering maximum compliance with Arab demands for autonomy, and supporting the movement for Arab independence and unity were all considered by the Jews to be far-reaching concessions. But the Arabs were not satisfied. They demanded of the authorities that the Arab majority be given power. In fact, however, they would have been satisfied with the cessation of Jewish immigration and land purchase, even without the immediate establishment of representative institutions.

The Jews hoped for a change in Arab society, one which would lead to internal democratization and free it from the authority of the Supreme Muslim Council. But just as the hopes placed by the Zionists in the Nashashibi opposition had proved a disappointment in the twenties, so the Jews reaped no benefit from the changes which took place in Arab society in the thirties. The old leadership of the Arab Executive Council of the twenties did die out during the thirties, but as a result the leadership of the *Mufti*, Haj Amin al-Husseini, was strengthened. The politicization of Arab society during the thirties and the creation of the *Istiqlal* party, which protested British protectorship, openly aggravated Jewish-Arab relations. In one sector of Arab society, the idea of terrorism was beginning to ripen, not as an incidental phenomenon but as a political method. All this led to the outbreak of the riots of 1936, the so-called Arab Rebellion.

The riots of 1936 led to another change in the attitude of the Zionist movement towards the Arabs. In the wake of the 1929 riots, as we have seen, two parallel courses of action were adopted: the search for an agreement on the basis of constitutional concessions, and an accel-

erated pace of Jewish immigration and enterprise in Palestine. The search for agreement took place both with regard to Palestine and to the region as a whole, but reached an impasse. The ideas voiced during the early thirties advocating territorial partition or cantonal rule could not be implemented. Zionist policy was concentrated, therefore, on preventing British restrictions in the areas of immigration and land purchase, as well as on preventing the establishment of representative institutions embodying an Arab majority.

The riots of 1936 refuted once again the Zionist expectations with regard to the possible development of Arab society. Economic progress in Palestine did not produce an Arab social sructure more tractable to the Zionists. In light of the broad scope of the Arab rebellion of 1936, one could no longer claim that these were freak occurrences, the product of incitement by the *Mufti* of Jerusalem and the Husseini religious establishment. It became evident that the development of Arab society was leading towards stronger nationalist awareness, with progressively more acute anti-Zionist overtones. The Zionists were confronted with the distressing fact that what they faced was not a self-interested group of *effendis* or fanatic religious leaders, but a nationalist movement. The Jews were no longer the only ones calling for national emancipation. The Arabs, too, wished to take their place in this historical course, which in the thirties was considered progressive and unequivocal. The Jews reacted with the assertion that even if Zionism were faced with a nationalist movement, it was not a liberal movement, like Mazzini's, willing to recognize the rights of others. It was a fascistic nationalist movement, of the twentieth-century variety, demanding everything for itself. Berl Katznelson was the main proponent of this concept.

Not only did attempts to reach an agreement with the Arabs of Palestine fail; attempts to open a dialogue with Arabs outside Palestine also proved fruitless. The intervention of Arabs from neighboring countries in the relations between the peoples of Palestine, beginning in 1936, did nothing to bring Jewish-Arab agreement any closer. They did succeed in bringing about a certain degree of moderation among the Arabs of Palestine, but only with respect to the British and not with respect to the Zionists.

The choice facing the Zionists was either to utilize the riots of 1936 to extend cooperation with the British and strengthen the Jewish Na-

tional Home, or to seek an agreement with the Arabs based on further concessions.

The Zionist leadership chose the first option, realizing that all channels to Jewish-Arab dialogue were blocked. In effect, Zionist leadership was willing to propose parity – equal representation for Jews and Arabs – as a possible formula for reforming the administration of Palestine, but without any great hopes that this was really possible.

This time, Brit Shalom, or what remained of it, could not go on thinking its method had captured the hearts of the Zionist movement, as they had judged – mistakenly – after 1929. Nonetheless, the riots brought together a number of non-aligned public figures, impelled to seek new ways for Jewish-Arab conciliation. They did not believe that a violent confrontation was a test that Zionism had to pass, but rather a failure on the part of a policy that had not been able to avoid that confrontation. Pinhas Rutenberg, Gad Frumkin, Moshe Smilansky, Moshe Novomeysky and Judah Magnes, known as "the Five", sought an agreement on the basis of a regional arrangement, binationalism in Palestine, and stronger Jewish-Arab cooperation. They could not ignore the pressure of Jewish immigration in 1936, but hoped to divert at least part of it to countries adjacent to Palestine, thereby assuaging Arab fears of an overwhelming Jewish majority in Palestine. Within the bounds of Palestine itself, they proposed restrictions on immigration, even including a ceiling on the number of Jews in Palestine. They proposed that for ten years the Jews not comprise more than 40 percent of the population.

Their agreement to restrictions on immigration and to a fixed ceiling on the number of Jews in Palestine became the focus of their controversy with the Zionist leadership who saw the intensification of immigration as Zionism's function – regardless of the political situation. It was immigration that would determine the status of Zionism among the Jewish people and the chances of its realization in Palestine, and every plan was measured by that supreme yardstick. "The Five" also believed in opening the Jewish economy to the Arabs to a certain extent which, together with cooperation in the fields of capital and labor, would bring the two nations closer.

The year 1936 also saw the establishment of a public society for the advancement of Jewish-Arab relations, known as *Kedma Miz-*

raha. It was somewhat of a continuation of Brit Shalom, though its social makeup and intellectual trends were more varied. In addition to members of Brit Shalom, it included members of the veteran Sephardic community, new immigrants from Germany, and people from the left. The central figure was Kalvarisky. *Kedma Mizraha* did not condemn the Arab nationalist movement as negative as Berl Katznelson, for example, had done. It tried to open a dialogue with Arab leaders in the region on a very general basis, incorporating references to traditional relations, the desire to become an integral part of the Orient and national amity. They were particularly active in Egypt.

The sharpest change in the approach of Zionism to the Arabs came not as the result of Zionist initiative but as the result of British initiative when, in 1937, a Royal Commission headed by Lord Peel proposed the partition of Palestine and the establishment of two states – one Jewish, one Arab. It has been noted that during the twenties and early thirties, Chaim Weizmann and his followers believed the Mandate to be the most fitting framework for the realization of the Jewish National Home. According to him there was no Zionist formula (like a "Jewish state") that had the power to bring about constitutional change favorable to the Jews. On the contrary, any such formula could only incite the Arabs, and Arab insurrection came even without the Zionists' explicitly formulating their ultimate goal. Ideas for the territorial partition of Palestine had been voiced in the Zionist camp as early as the early thirties. These ideas had included many elements which were disadvantageous from a Zionist viewpoint, and the Mandate was preferable. In 1937 the choice was either a reduced Mandate or a Jewish state in part of Palestine. Differences of opinion in the Zionist camp over the recommendations of the Royal Commission reflected only partially the attitude towards an agreement with the Arabs. From the vantage point of today, the Zionist positions of 1937 were somewhat surprising. A large number of those who supported Jewish-Arab agreement were vociferously opposed to partition, while today "territorial compromise" is considered the highroad to Jewish-Arab agreement. Territorial partition in 1937 was considered an admission of the failure to reach an agreement, and the failue to remove the element of national sovereignty from the complex of Jewish-Arab relations, thereby harmonizing Arab and Jewish na-

tionalist aspirations. It was an admission of the failure to achieve accord between two peoples through a moral solution (Magnes), a Semitic solution (Kalvarisky, Rabbi Benjamin), or a socialist solution (*Hashomer Hatzair*).

Those who sought Jewish-Arab agreement saw partition not only as a failure with respect to the past but as a powderkeg for the future: the establishment of two sovereign states in such a small area would engender continuous strife between Jews and Arabs.

The point of departure of the proponents of partition, on the other hand, had nothing to do with Arab-Jewish relations whatsoever. Their main argument was that the establishment of a Jewish state – even in part of Palestine – was a better way of advancing the Zionist enterprise than any of the alternatives. But they also contended that a Jewish state would bring about Jewish-Arab agreement. The order of priorities of Jewish-Arab accord changed during the debate over the partition proposal: Jewish-Arab agreement would come after the realization of Zionism, as a product of it, and not before, as a condition for it. So, although the 1937 partition plan was not implemented, it nevertheless served as a milestone in the crystallization of Zionist policy towards the Arabs.

The partition proposal was born of British despair over the possibility of Jewish-Arab cooperation within the framework of a Palestinian state. It brought about a change in Zionist thinking which placed Jewish sovereignty above Jewish-Arab agreement. Nonetheless, it also produced new attempts at negotiations for such an agreement. Herbert Samuel, for example, the first high commissioner, strongly criticized the partition plan in the House of Lords. He foresaw an endless struggle between the two states, whose territories would be interlocked. Samuel recommended that the problem of Jewish-Arab relations be settled by means of a regional solution. At the same time, a number of other proposals were suggested by various mediators, such as Albert M. Hyamson and Col. S.F. Newcomb. (Hyamson was a British Jew who had served as an official in the Mandatory; Newcomb was a Briton with pro-Arab sympathies.) The trustfullness of these mediators was dubious. Jewish Agency leaders suspected that their proposals were aimed at preventing the establishment of a Jewish state in part of Palestine, as well as at forcing prior concessions out of the Jews in order to weaken their status in any future negotiations

with the government. Judah Magnes, on the other hand, saw the proposals as portals to an agreement.

The Hyamson-Newcomb proposal, which purported to represent Arab views as well, called for the establishment of a democratic Palestinian state, namely, one in which the existing majority would rule. According to them, the Arabs agreed to Jewish immigration to Palestine, even to Transjordan. Their proviso was that the Jews not comprise more than 50 percent of the population.

Even if this proposal had been at all practicable, it could only have been accepted by those whose primary interest was Jewish-Arab agreement. It provided the possibility of Jewish settlement in Palestine at a slow growth rate. But the primary interest of the overwhelming majority of the Zionist camp at that time was massive Jewish immigration which would solve the problem of European Jewry and allow the social and political realization of Jewish nationhood in Palestine. It may very well be that the proposal was intended to split the Zionist camp.

The White Paper of 1939 brought Zionist orientation on Britain to a point of crisis. It became clear that the advancement of the Jewish National Home as construed by the Zionists was no longer possible under the British aegis. Two plausible, and different, conclusions could have been drawn from this with regard to the question of relations with the Arabs. The first, which continued the Brit Shalom line, was that realization of the National Home would be possible only as an outgrowth of agreement with the Arabs. The absence of such agreement could only lead to an undermining of the partnership with Britain as well. The second, opposite, conclusion was that if a Jewish-Arab agreement was impossible even while Britain supported Zionism, it would be even more impossible once such a support was withdrawn. It could not be supposed that the Arabs would give the Zionists what the British had denied them.

The year 1939, therefore, witnessed a parting of the ways within the Zionist camp, a split which had begun in 1936 and ripened by 1942. The proponents of the first option organized themselves into the League for Jewish-Arab Raprochement. The proponents of the second represented the official Zionist line. Their first and foremost aim was to undermine the White Paper policy through active resistance. They did not address themselves to the Jewish-Arab problem,

but rather to the international scene and to world Jewry. Only after certain Zionist goals were achieved, they felt, could the ground be prepared for a Jewish-Arab agreement that would permit full Zionist realization. The conflict between these differing assessments was to become more acute in 1942.

IV

World War II broke out in September 1939, as the Zionist movement was preparing itself to do battle against the White Paper. The Zionist leadership hoped the war would lay the foundations for renewed cooperation between the Jews and Britain. The latter's need for a faithful ally in the region, and for the sympathies of the Jews, might suspend the White Paper. The change of government in 1940 and Churchill's rise to Premiership seemed to promise change. But the immediate needs of the war increased Britain's dependence upon the Arabs, a dependence which comprised one of the major contributing factors to the promulgation of the White Paper. The Arabs who supported Britain, like Nuri Said of Iraq, were not satisified with the publication of the Land Purchase Restriction Law of February 1940, and demanded implementation of the constitutional clauses of the White Paper. Their demands were not granted.

The orientation of the Zionist leadership on improved relations with Britain because of the war differed from that of those who sought Jewish-Arab agreement. People like Judah Magnes hoped that the mobilization of Jews and some of the Arabs in support of Britian would serve as a new basis for Jewish-Arab cooperation. The Zionist leadership, on the other hand, claimed that with regard to the war itself, the interests of Jews and Arabs were different, indeed conflicting, and each camp sought a different outcome.

The war opened up new areas of action for the Zionist movement, beyond the sphere of Jewish-British relations. The problem of the administration of Palestine became a subject of international interest. The United States and the Soviet Union became active in determining the destiny of the two nations in Palestine.

Ben-Gurion began to claim that the centrality assigned to the "Arab problem" was not justified, and not at all comparable to the "Jewish

problem". While the Jews had been uprooted from Europe and lacked a homeland, the Arabs ruled vast territories sufficient to house the existing Arab population, and more. The "Arab problem", in his opinion, was limited to the status of the relatively few Arabs living in Palestine, where "millions of Jews" would live.

During the first stage of the war, the objective of Zionist policy was the establishment of a Jewish army, an objective which did not materialize. For a while it seemed that the proposal would be approved, but at the end of 1941 the British government voiced its final rejection of the idea. Only in 1944 was a Jewish Brigade established.

The transfer of the decisive area of concern from Palestine and Jewish-Arab relations to the problem of the Jewish people and the world powers resulted in the formulation of a new political program. Since the failure of the Peel Commission's partition plan, the Zionist movement had been left without a program. In actuality, it demanded a return to the Mandate as originally defined, but it was clear that the Mandate was no longer practicable in light of the new political constellation. The reforms proposed to the Peel Commission by the Jewish Agency – like parity – had been rejected. For some time, the Jewish Agency had tried to advance a federal solution which would provide freedom of immigration to part of Palestine, but this proposal, too, was rejected and in its place came the White Paper of 1939. The struggle against the White Paper was a negative goal, without a positive objective. For the first time since the Peace Conference of 1919, the Zionist movement was obliged to draw up a political program.

In light of the realities of 1942, advancing a political formula had more advantages than risks. The position on Jewish-Arab relations expressed in the Biltmore Program of 1942 may be seen as the opposite of the Brit Shalom formula. A Jewish-Arab agreement was not the precondition for the realization of Zionism; rather the realization of Zionism, through the establishment of a Jewish state, would bring a Jewish-Arab agreement in its wake. The relationship between the possible establishment of an Arab federation and the establishment of a Jewish state changed. It was not a federation of Arab nations, expressing their desire for unity and independence, that would permit the establishment of a Jewish state; rather, the establishment of a Jewish state would insure the status of the Jews in case a federation was indeed set up. The creation of a *fait accompli* would, thus, insure

the inclusion of the Jews as a factor in any new regional constellation.

There was no difference between David Ben-Gurion and Chaim Weizmann on this issue. The differences between them had little to do with relations with the Arabs. Weizmann, who in 1931 had tended towards minimalist formulations in order to placate the Arabs, had, since 1937, accepted the conclusion of the Peel Commission: the only solution to the problem was separation. Weizmann considered the authenticity of the Arab movement to be even less significant than did Ben-Gurion. He believed that the Arab states and their leaders were bound to an alliance with Britain and that consequently a British or British-American decision would have to be accepted by the Arabs. He placed less weight than Ben-Gurion on the efforts towards Arab unity and independence as a factor independent of Britain or as a factor embodying a positive or negative potential from the Zionist standpoint. Weizmann linked the Zionist plan to a partnership with Britian and saw Zionist realization as a gradual process rather than as the revolution foreseen by Ben-Gurion. As a result, he considered the idea of Commonwealth less as a revolutionary change and more as a new stage in Jewish-British cooperation.

The Biltmore Program aroused opposition from various quarters. Abandoning the Mandate might jeopardize immediate demands for immigration; the establishment of a sovereign Jewish state in Palestine was contrary to the policy of "non-domination" of one people over another. The Program was interpreted as a death warrant for future prospects of a Jewish-Arab agreement.

The Biltmore Program spoke of the creation of a Jewish majority in Palestine and of the establishment of Palestine as a Jewish state; but declaring for sovereignty while the Jews were still a minority in Palestine implied the idea of partition – and aroused the opposition of those who had formerly opposed partition.

The representation of the Biltmore Program as the official program of the Zionist movement brought forth alternative programs from those who sought Jewish-Arab conciliation and cooperation. In 1942, the League for Jewish-Arab Rapprochement extended its influence and was joined by *Hashomer Hatzair*. The alternatives to Biltmore were based on proposals dating from the thirties, which had distinguished between nationalism and sovereignty. The authors of these alternative plans tried to give the old proposals a topical quality in

light of the political reality that had emerged during the war. The two proposals in question were the Kaplansky Plan and the Bentov Plan. The Kaplansky Plan was a summary of the work of a committee for research on Jewish-Arab relations set up by the Jewish Agency in 1940, while the Bentov Plan was a summary of the work of a committee appointed by the League for Jewish-Arab Rapprochement.

Both plans were based on different assumptions from those of the Biltmore Program. They did not demand state machinery in order to facilitate mass immigration. They insisted on an interim period under international supervision, the eventual establishment of a permanent regime incorporating elements of federalism, binationalism, representational parity for Jews and Arabs, and autonomy on both a national and territorial basis. Jewish immigration was made conditional upon the economic absorptive capacity of the country and on agreed ratios of population. The assumption was that the improvement of relations after the interim period would permit further agreement. Neither group could prove that their plan would be acceptable to the Arabs. But it was clear to them that the Biltmore Program put an end to any possibility for Jewish-Arab agreement.

The League for Jewish-Arab Rapprochement was not a homogeneous body after 1942. It included at least two clearcut groups. The members of *Hashomer Hatzair* considered themselves maximalist Zionists on questions of immigration and mass settlement. They disagreed with Ben-Gurion over the tempo of Zionist realization. Forgoing the idea of a Jewish state was, for them, not a way of reducing Zionism but of expanding it; Jewish-Arab agreement, they felt, was a prerequisite. The members of the second grouping, *Iḥud*, saw in Zionism the creation of an ethical Jewish society. They did not believe that Zionism could put an end to the Jewish problem and opposed its engagement in power politics. They were willing to forgo both a Jewish state and a Jewish majority. But they, too, would not be satisfied with the status of a minority in Palestine, and could only accept numerical equality between Jews and Arabs.

The Biltmore Program settled the question of Zionist priorities: mass immigration and Jewish nationhood were given priority over agreement with the Arabs, even over a dialogue with the British. But the program said nothing about the status of the Arabs in Palestine. Even the assumption that the Zionists would achieve a national

majority government in Palestine required them to define the status of the Arabs who would live there. If the Zionists expected the support of the victorious democratic powers, they would have to clarify the rights of the Arabs in the future Jewish state. From 1943 until the meeting of the Zionist Executive in 1945, various formulas were drawn up in which the Arabs were promised not only full civil rights, but also extensive autonomy. The Jewish state would pass laws and invest its resources in efforts to bring about gradual equality in the standard of living of the two populations. Equal rights, self-rule, and a rise in the standard of living were, then, to be the compensation granted the Arabs in lieu of the majority status they had lost.

The problem of the status of the Arabs uncoverd one of the contradictions inherent in the Biltmore Program. One could not speak of a Jewish state in Palestine as long as the Jews comprised only a third of the population. This was a clear contradiction in terms. Equal civil rights and democratic rule could not be commensurate with a Zionist government. The proponents of Biltmore dismissed this, claiming that the process of creating a Jewish majority would be a rapid and evolutionary one.

All of this notwithstanding, the Zionists had to clarify their reasons for rejecting the possibility of a Jewish minority in a majority-rule Arab state, while supporting a proposition that would make the Arabs in Palestine a minority. Zionists propaganda insisted that Palestine was the only place where the Jews would ever comprise a majority, while the number of Arab states was steadily growing. Furthermore, the preservation of the rights of the Arab minority in the Jewish state would be guaranteed both by the presence of the neighboring Arab countries and the vulnerability of the Jews dispersed throughout the world.

The war years witnessed the definition of the political goal of Zionism, and despite the fact that Jewish-Arab relations were relegated to a lower rung on the ladder of Zionist priorities, certain developments took place in that sphere too. There was a quest for contact with the Arabs on the regional, rather than the local, plane. The extremism of the Arabs of Palestine and the fact that some of them supported the Nazis, not to mention the deterioration of their political organization, prevented any possibility of dialogue with them. A study of Zionist policy in the region has yet to be made, but a number of

fundamental lines may nevertheless be discerned. British protectorship could theoreticaly have served as a point of departure for a Jewish-Arab dialogue. In fact, any British policy which favored Arab unity was contrary to Zionist policy.

For some time, the British tried to strengthen Ibn Saud's position in the region. They hoped to initiate negotiations in which he would agree to a Jewish entity in the region in exchange for becoming a key figure in the Arab world. Chaim Weizmann was attracted to this idea for a while. The attempt was illusory, and was rejected by Ibn Saud.

Zionist policy then addressed itself to the Maronites of Lebanon, to the Emir Abdallah of Transjordan, and to the Syrian National Bloc. Any one of these parties could have found interest in cooperating with the Zionists: the Maronites sought an additional non-Muslim element in the region; Emir Abdallah considered the Husseinis his enemies; and the National Bloc sought independence from France and could have been aided by the Zionists.

Parallel to these efforts, the League for Jewish-Arab Rapprochement looked for Arab parties who would be receptive to Jewish-Arab agreement along the lines of the League's own plan.

The post-war period saw a sharp decline in the chances for a dialogue between the Zionists and the Arabs. The Arabs of Palestine reorganized and the influence of the Husseinis remained strong, albeit more limited. Their opposition to Zionism also remained extreme. The formation of the Arab League in March of 1945, inter alia, frustrated Zionist attempts to find more moderate voices in the Arab world. Even Lebanon, which had been considered somewhat out of the ordinary in the area, joined the Arab League. Transjordan received its independence in 1946 and sought connections in the Arab world. Syria and Lebanon were granted independence, and held elections which strengthened the tones of their opposition to Zionism.

More independence and growing unity in the Arab world did not bring the Arabs any closer to accepting a Zionist entity in Palestine; on the contrary, opposition increased. The campaign against the Zionist enterprise, which was a heavy burden on the Arabs of Palestine, was transferred to the shoulders of the Arab League. But Arab independence and unity did strengthen the Jews' demand for independence because of the ever-increasing hostility which accompanied it.

The expectations upon which the Biltmore Program was founded

did not materialize at the end of the war. Britain and the United States did not join forces to effect a rapid, revolutionary solution to the population issue in Palestine by bringing hundreds of thousands of Jews from Europe. The fate of the "Arab alternative", proposed by the League for Jewish-Arab Rapprochement, was no better. Relinquishing the idea of a Jewish government in Palestine did not insure Arab willingness for an agreement.

With regard to the dispute that had existed within the Zionist camp since the end of World War I, as to whom the Zionist should address first – the world powers or the Arabs, Zionist policy continued to address the world powers. The summer of 1946 saw a breach in Zionist-British relations, and in August of 1946 the Executive of the Jewish Agency abandoned the original principles of the Biltmore Program and agreed to discuss partition. Agreement to partition, however, was not a concession to the Arabs, but to the United States – in order to obtain their backing against British anti-Zionist policy.

At the time of the dispute with Britain and the proposed partition plan, some new ideas flickered on the horizon regarding a new basis for cooperation with the Arabs. Based on common opposition to Britain and to imperialism and voiced within Lehi and even IZL circles, the ideas were not tenable. The Arab states at that time saw Britain as their chief ally. The idea of partition seemed to be an opening of a dialogue with Transjordan, and even with certain circles in Egypt. But it became apparent that such contacts could be fruitful only after partition was carried out. The first objective of partition was to establish a Jewish state as soon as possible. Such a state would provide the basis for agreement.

At the Twenty-second Zionist Congress in 1946 Ben-Gurion said: "I believe in peace with the Arabs and am entirely convinced that sooner or later we shall attain federation or permanent cooperation, but the necessary prerequisite is a Jewish state."

The value of the Palestine Arabs to Zionist policy lay in their extreme anti-Zionist position. This position frustrated even British policy, which was forced to allow some immigration and Jewish autonomy in a Palestinian state with an Arab majority. The Arab states were a bit more moderate, but they, too, would not allow concessions to the Zionists, largely because of pressure from the Arabs of Palestine.

The impasse into which the British government was forced, and the insuperable breach between Jews and Arabs, led the majority of the UN Special Commission on Palestine in 1947 to return to the idea of the Royal Commisssion of 1937 and to propose the partition of Palestine into two states – one Jewish, one Arab.

The State of Israel was founded in 1948 in the midst of a valiant confrontation with the Arabs of Palestine and the neighboring Arab countries. The development of relations both in Palestine and in the region did not lead to a solution, but to an overall conflagration.

From a Zionist standpoint, the ideology of maximalist Zionism – maximum immigration and maximum settlement – merge with the actual needs of the survivors of the Holocaust in Europe. The sucessful implementation of mass immigration necessitated a sovereign national framework, and the immediate attainment of a Jewish majority had to be accomplished by governmental institutions. The Jewish majority and Jewish government were not only an ideological tenet of Jewish nationalism, but were dictated by the need for the absorption of immigration, national development, and military defense. Those who demanded a state claimed that the act of relinquishing this demand would not advance the chances of a Jewish-Arab agreement, since the Arabs were not willing to accept even minimalist Zionist demands. Still, they hoped a decision in favor of a Jewish state would promote Jewish-Arab peace. The willingness to establish the state in part of Palestine came as the result of both the international constellation at the time and the urgent need for the state; the time factor took precedence over the question of area. The decision to accept a state in part of Palestine was not intended as a gesture to compensate the Arabs of Palestine, as they were the most extreme in their opposi tion to Zionism. It did, however, make a certain arrangement with Transjordan possible. The Zionist could not cite their agreement to partition as a concession to the Arabs, since the partition proposal was not theirs; had they proposed it, it might have been possible to reach an agreement on that basis.

Developments which took place after 1936 and in the wake of the Peel Commission were accelerated as a result of events during and after World War II. These events vanquished the ideas of the twenties and early thirties, which had been the fruit of a period marked by

hope for liberal pacifist developments in the relations between nations. Ideas of extensive autonomy for an Arab minority, mutual enjoyment of economic development, cantons, parity, federation, and binationalism, were all relegated to the archives of unrealized possibilities.

The State of Israel was founded in a manner unforeseen in the two previous decades – not as the product of an agreement with the Arabs and under the aegis of the British, but out of a military confrontation with the Arabs and a political confrontation with Britain. The state was established not in all of Palestine but in part of it, not for the mass immigration of all the Jews of Eastern Europe, but for the remnant of their decimated communities.

The Arabs of Palestine did not enjoy the social progress which the Zionist had presumed would reconcile them with Zionism; they were stricken in battle and their political community was shattered. Hundreds of thousands became refugees and were never integrated into the Arab countries to which they fled. Gaza came under Egyptian rule and the West Bank under Jordanian.

Israel succeeded in Palestine and maintained the balance of power in the region, but it became the focus of pan-Arabic opposition of a strength and depth unknown before 1948. The Arabs of Palestine did not disappear as a group with a collective national consciousness. The constellation of relations was not resolved in the wake of the establishment of the state. Arab protests were addressed to the very existence of a separate Jewish state and its bonds with the Jewish Diaspora.

Zionist Attitudes on the Jewish-Arab Conflict Until 1936

Elyakim Rubinstein

In order to understand the development of Zionist and *Yishuv* attitudes on the conflict until 1936, it is worthwhile to have a brief look at the institutional and political framework in which these attitudes developed. The Zionist and *Yishuv* leadership in Palestine (*Eretz Israel*) changed its composition at the beginning of the thirties with the rise to power in the *Yishuv* and in the Zionist leadership of the labor movement, following the close of the "Weizmann era" of the twenties.

The leadership in Palestine embraced two institutional systems. The first, and most important politically (for the Arab question too), consisted of the institutions of the Zionist movement. During the period of the Mandate, especially the first part, the Zionist leadership was headquartered partly in London and partly in Jerusalem. The period from 1918 to 1931 were the years of Weizmann's leadership of the Zionist movement, during which he left his mark as president of the Zionist Organization and as principal policy-maker and strategist of the movement. The Weizmann strategy at the time relegated the Arab question to a secondary place, while putting the main stress on relations with the British, who were regarded as the principal field of political action and as the executor of the Mandate and the Balfour Declaration.

1921-1929

In 1921 the Palestine Zionist Executive was established. This followed the three years (1918-1921) of the Zionist Commission,

* E. Rubinstein was born in Tel-Aviv, 1947. Is a member of the Department of Political Studies, Bar-Ilan University, Ramat Gan. He is author of books and articles on Israeli political history, the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Supreme Court of Israel.

which was to ensure the implementation of the Balfour Declaration by the British and to help rehabilitate the *Yishuv*. Until 1931 the Palestine Zionist Executive was in large measure an extension of the London Executive and of Weizmann's leadership, regarding itself as an executor rather than a policy-maker, and as subordinate to Weizmann in every way. The chief executive figure in the Palestinian leadership – after a brief transition period – was Lieutenant Colonel Frederick Hermann Kisch, who served as chairman of the Palestine Zionist Executive and headed the political department from 1922-1931. In contrast to the situation in the thirties, the leaders in the twenties looked to London for guidance. Kisch, his predecessors and colleagues (such as M.D. Eder and Harry Sacher) were people without any particular ideological bent, except for the basic Zionist ideology of the Basle Program. They belonged to no party (the dominant Weizmann faction in the twenties was not party-affiliated, although parties did join the Zionist Executive). Weizmann was revered throughout the *Yishuv* and by Jews everywhere, and those who worked with him banked on his prestige. Weizmann's policy, which was oriented above all towards the British, was shared by his people in Palestine, even though Kisch had gradually become disillusioned. The treatment of the Arab question at times was shelved – partly also because of the frustration it caused and the deadlock regarding the possibility of a solution.

The second system was formed by the institutions of the *Yishuv*: the *Va'ad Le'umi* and the institutions of *Knesset Israel*, which developed gradually from 1918 on, but were officially recognized by the British authorities only early in 1928. The *Va'ad Le'umi* was a weak body, particularly in the field of political relations with the British and the Arabs. It had few functions that mattered, although it did try to create a system of political activity for itself. The leaders of the *Va'ad Le'umi* until 1929 (David Yellin, Dr. Yaacov Thon and Yitzhak Ben-Zvi) struggled for years to win formal British recognition for the *Yishuv* institutions and exhausted themselves in this effort; their attempt to compete with the Zionist Executive was not successful.

In addition to these two institutions, there was the *Histadrut* (The General Federation of Hebrew Workers in *Eretz Israel*) whose power was also growing apace in the twenties. The *Histadrut* and the labor movement in general were undergoing a burst of expansion and

development in preparation for the transition in the thirties from "class to nation" (a phrase coined by David Ben-Gurion) – that is, from activity within the labor movement proper to leadership of the entire nation.

1929-1931

When the 1929 riots broke out, most of the Zionist and *Yishuv* leadership was abroad, attending the Sixteenth Zionist Congress, at which the Jewish Agency was founded. The failure to assess the situation, on the basis of the events of the previous year, led to one of the first blunders in the political history of the *Yishuv*: when the riots broke out, there was almost no one from the Zionist leadership or the *Va'ad Le'umi* leadership in the country (Yitzhak Ben-Zvi had returned a day before the disturbances; all the others were at the Congress in Zurich). The upheaval that occurred in the Zionist Executive as a consequence of this came two years later. In the *Va'ad Le'umi* the outcome was immediate: David Yellin and Yaacov Thon were removed from their posts and a charismatic figure – Pinchas Rutenberg, a former revolutionary in Czarist Russia and now the owner of the Electricity Concession in Palestine, was brought in to replace them. Later, Rutenberg tried (unsuccessfully) to set the *Va'ad Le'umi* on an equal footing with the Zionist Executive in political matters. Rutenberg was a man of great personal power but his failure in the struggle with the Zionist Executive (after 1930 – the Jewish Agency Executive) led to his resignation in 1931. After that, the leadership of the *Va'ad Le'umi* was in the hands of the labor movement, with Yitzhak Ben-Zvi serving as chairman – and later president – until the close of the Mandatory period. In effect, a clear division of functions developed between the two bodies. The *Va'ad Le'umi* dealt with internal matters, primarily education, health and welfare, and also issued festive proclamations, while the key issues – immigration, settlement and the political question, that is, the relations of the *Yishuv* with the British and the Arabs – remained in the hands of the Jewish Agency Executive.

For the Jewish Agency Executive, the years 1929-1931 were years of transition and change. The ground was made ready for this by the shock felt by Weizmann and the leadership in the wake of the 1929 riots and the deteriorating relations with the British that followed.

This marked the beginning of Weizmann's decline. The unequivocal faith that had been placed in him until 1929 began to fade. After the difficult years of 1929-1931 and the political developments that took place then, Weizmann was not reelected by the Seventeenth Zionist Congress to the presidency of the Zionist Organization (in Palestine Kisch also resigned – for his own reasons). And when Weizmann returned to the presidency four years later, in 1935, his stature was no longer what it had been. Meanwhile, in Palestine, the sun was shining brightly on the labor movement, whose leadership was to take over the affairs of the *Yishuv* and of the Zionist movement. Thus it can be said that 1931 marks the beginning of a crucial turn in the Zionist leadership, linked to the decline of Weizmann and the ascent of the labor movement. The change became even more apparent between 1933 and 1935.

1931-1936

At the Seventeenth Congress, in 1931, Dr. Chaim Arlosoroff – murdered less than two years later, in June 1933 – was named head of the Jewish Agency's political department. That was the first time a labor movement figure attained the key position in the Jewish Agency Executive in Palestine. At the Eighteenth Congress, in 1933, David Ben-Gurion and Moshe Shertok both, but especially Ben-Gurion, prominent members of the labor movement, were elected to the senior positions in the Executive; they were to lead the state-in-the-making until 1948, and preside over the birth of the State of Israel. With the rise of Ben-Gurion and Shertok (Sharett) – in fact, even in Arlosoroff's day – the center of the Zionist movement moved gradually, but decidedly, from London to Palestine. During the Arlosoroff period, Weizmann was no longer among the active leadership. Arlosoroff, who regarded Weizmann as his mentor in a way, wrote him important personal letters, sharing his ideas and thoughts with him, but Weizmann was outside the decision-making apparatus. The vacuum created by his absence was not filled immediately. In London, Nahum Sokolov served as president of the Zionist Organization, but by then, notwithstanding his historic and literary rights, he was no more than a figurehead. From 1931 – and quite clearly after 1933 – the heart of the Zionist leadership was in Palestine, with David Ben-Gurion gradually emerging as chief policy-maker. The

new generation of leaders that had arisen in Palestine, with the backing and support of a clearly ideological movement, now took over.

The Leadership and the Arab Question

Prior to the First World War, Zionist activity in the Arab sphere was very slight. Relations with the Arabs deteriorated only after the Balfour Declaration, in time becoming a cardinal problem. But the Zionist Commission, the group of Zionist emissaries who had arrived in Palestine in 1918, knew virtually nothing of what was going on among the Arabs. The whole subject was a large blank for it. However, from then on, Zionist and *Yishuv* leaderships became aware of it but, for various reasons, the way it was dealt with politically went through rises and falls. The importance attached to relations with the Arabs in political activity was determined accordingly.

The Myth of Evasion

It is commonly held that the Zionists ignored the Arab question and tried to solve the Jewish problem by giving what they considered "a land without a people" to "a people without a land". That is simply not true. One can take issue with and criticize the way the Zionists dealt with the Arab problem, but what is certain, they did not ignore it. Zionist policy was of course aimed at solving the problem of the Jews, and when the difficulties in reconciling the Zionist solution with the Arab demands became evident, the Zionists chose to proceed with the building of the national home. But never did they desist from sincere attempts to resolve the dispute.

Evasion can here mean one of two things: a total refusal to acknowledge the very existence of the problem, or ignoring the possibilities of resolving it. Nothing could be simpler than to refute the charge if it refers to the first interpretation. Every Jewish newspaper in the days of the Mandate – daily, weekly or periodical – brimmed with articles on the Arab issue, including many written by Zionism's leading figures. Every collection of writings by Zionist leaders and publicists dealt at length with the Arab question. In the journals and memoirs of Palestinian leaders such as Kisch, Arlosoroff and Ben-Gurion it was almost the dominant topic. Even those leaders who, like Weizmann, did not spend most ot their time in Palestine dealt with it extensively.

Publicists like Berl Katznelson and Moshe Beilinson of the labor movement, and Moshe Glicksohn of the General Zionists, discussed the issue in the best of their writings. In general, the conflict was one of the most widely discussed issues in Hebrew current affairs writing in Palestine as well as in the Jewish press abroad – with the ups and downs following those in the heatedness of the issue itself. Any sampling of archival documents and files from the Mandate period will be found to abound in correspondence on the "Arab question" – further testimony to the centrality of the problem.

The charge of evasion of the second sort is more complex. What led to the propagation of the myth of evasion is apparently the fact that there was no practical way to resolve the conflict. Although charges of neglecting the Arab question had been raised in the early period of Zionism (Yitzhak Epstein in *Hashiloah,* 1907), they assumed a different character after the First World War, with the beginning of large-scale expansion of the national home.

Some of those who level this charge do so with the wisdom of hindsight, not having themselves taken part in the events. What they are saying is – had we been there, we would have solved the problem. For others, the levelling of the charge is an act of penance – we could have done something but didn't. However, those who accused the Zionist leadership of ignoring the question during the days of the Mandate itself could offer no alternatives to Zionist policy. They could not preserve the sheep whole – that is, build the national home – and at the same time satisfy the wolf – the other party to the dispute. The question is: Did the Zionists adopt the policy they did because they *understood* the Arab question or because they did *not* understand it? In other words, did they act as they did because they saw there was no solution to the conflict, and therefore felt that it was prudent to try to develop the National Home in the best possible way, or did they not understand the meaning of the conflict, and therefore not look for a direct solution to it?

The question was not ignored or evaded because it was impossible to ignore it. It was like a mountain just outside your window. That is why there was so much publicistic and diplomatic discussion of it as well as countless debates and interminable speechifying. However, Zionist action on the Arab question amounted to far less than what was written and said about it. Much continued to be written about

the need to reconsider the Arab question, to take a new look, the need for change – but little was done, largely because little could be done. Men of the stature of Kisch, Arlosoroff and Ben-Gurion sincerely hoped to succeed where their predecessors had failed, that is, in making head way on the Arab question. They tried – evidence of that is abundant – and failed.

Alternatives and Means

What alternatives did the Zionist movement have in the first period of the Mandate for dealing with the Arab question – and what were the means at its disposal?

The first alternative was not to do anything. This was a possibility, along with total denial of the importance of the Arab question. But the Zionists were not prepared to do this – and rightly so – for they recognized the fundamental and enduring importance of the Arab factor. They could also have avoided dealing with the problem directly by adopting a British orientation, based on a decision that it was more important to maintain good relations with those who had the say, particularly since the road through the Arab terrain was a long and arduous one; moreover, the British had been sympathetic to the Zionist cause in the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate document – and in fact obligated themselves to it – and ostensibly all that was necessary now was to cultivate that good will and obligation. The thinker Dr. Yaakov Klatzkin warned against such an approach in his article, "The Arab Question – or the Jewish Question", written at the beginning of the twenties. The policy adopted by the Zionists in those years in fact resembled the course criticized, and was deficient in many regards. Another possible approach might have been to take a strong Arab orientation, establishing ties of every kind, setting up frameworks of joint action and the like. The Zionists were roused to such activity in a serious way only belatedly. Budgetary constraints were one reason but the major reason was the position held, mainly by Weizmann, that relations must be maintained above all with the British. There were some – like Aaron Cohen[1] – who claimed that the British interfered with every serious attempt to reach an accord with the Arabs. But even if this was so in some cases, it did not apply to them all. The Zionists adopted a policy of compromise – and

[1] A. Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World* (1970) [1964 (Hebrew)].

compromise often is worse than a clear-cut decision for one side or the other; but compromise is usually also a necessity. So, on the one hand, they adhered to a British political orientation: the approach taken by Weizmann – the policy-maker of the twenties. He appointed his own man – Kisch – to the senior political post in Palestine because of his "British" characteristics. But because the Arabs in Palestine could not be ignored, he had to deal with them as well. For that, Kalvarisky – the expert on Arab affairs – was appointed. It was hard to believe that Kalvarisky alone – and he worked on his own until his dismissal in 1928 – could establish contacts, gather intelligence information and, in addition, undertake projects of Arab-Jewish cooperation. But essentially, Kalvarisky is about all there was.

Thus, from the beginning of the Mandate, the handling of the Arab question was improvised. A long-term program was not devised. Instead, the Zionists tried to put out fires that broke out. The Arab question was a vast mountain difficult to conquer, and so they tried instead to chip at it stone by stone.

What Were the Jewish Objectives?

The aims of the Jewish side in the conflict were the basic Zionist aspirations of official Zionist policy up until the Second World War, namely, the political and economic advancement of the *Yishuv* consistent with a program for the development of the Jewish national home. The nature of the national home the Zionists aspired to achieve at the time was not adequately defined by the architects of Zionist policy – and intentionally so. No one knew what form the Jewish development in Palestine would take, what role it would have within British imperial policy, and what size it would attain. The ancient and at the same time vivid desire and yearning for Zion was there, in Jewish hearts and prayers; no one knew the shape its implementation would take.

Zionist goals were defined in general terms both in the resolutions of the Zionist congresses and in the speeches of Zionist leaders, and appeared to the Zionists to be compatible with the promises of the British government in the Balfour Declaration and with the letter and spirit of the Mandate Document. The well-known resolution of the

Twelfth Congress (1921) on the Arab question was adopted in the period of the Zionists' naiveté about the Arabs, a time when they believed allies would be found among the Arabs because Zionism brought them great benefit. This belief was held despite previous failures in diplomatic negotiations and despite the first signs of political violence in Palestine (1920-1921). The resolution adopted by this Congress, although less forthcoming than a previous one (proposed by Martin Buber), was sincere; it had not yet become a rote formula. As disappointment following contacts with the Arabs increased, the resolution gradually became a slogan, a bench mark, a source to quote in proof of the sincerity of Zionist intentions – but could not serve as a guideline for practical policy-making.

Since the Zionists did not envision what the future Palestine would look like, and did not have a concrete political picture in mind of the Jewish national home, they felt no contradiction between what they said and what they did. The strategy of promoting the national home was in many ways vague, like the idea of the national home itself. But tactics were clear to the Zionist leaders, and became ever clearer: another Jew, another *dunam* of land, another goat in *Eretz Israel*. Indeed, the two most difficult problems in the Zionist political struggle during the Mandate period, around which revolved discussion, debate, white papers and woe, were immigration and land purchase: immigration – to increase the number of Jews in Palestine, as a solution to the pressing problem of rescue, mainly in Europe; and land – to increase the area of Jewish settlement, another *dunam* added and another Jew could raise another goat on it.

Zionism, as we have noted, did not set down definite political objectives. That was not a matter of concealing intentions, for the intentions themselves were not fully developed. There were those who gave the matter thought, those who drew up plans, and those who dared to speak out forthrightly: the Revisionists for many years, the labor movement at certain times. But the official Zionist leadership did not do so until the forties. When from time to time a problem arose that called for some new definition of strategic objectives, the Zionist movement, not surprisingly, tried to suppress it or obscure it, as for example, in the debate during the Seventeenth Congress following the Passfield White Paper. During the first fifteen years of the Mandate,

while Weizmann was at the helm, formal discussion of the political future was taboo.

The reasons for this are obvious. The *Yishuv* was at that time small and it was unreasonable to suppose it likely that a Jewish minority would rule over an Arab majority. It was best, therefore, to postpone these problems until the *Yishuv* was stronger, until the Jewish community in Palestine could be a serious counterweight to the large and growing Arab population. A Jewish majority was hardly envisioned.

It is not difficult at this point to understand the nature of the Arab-Jewish conflict. For the Jews, the overall objective was a national home; the means – immigration, settlement, and a political struggle to ensure both; and the tactic for postponing a decision about the political future of the country at a time when other Middle Eastern countries with Mandatory status were approaching independence – opposition to a legislative council. The perfect setting for the creation of a conflict, given what the Arabs were witnessing, was as follows: (1) while neighboring countries were approaching independence, Palestine was bogged down by the desire for a "national home" by an element they regarded as foreign; (2) the Jews were bringing more and more people into the country and buying more and more land; (3) the Jews were doing all they could – and they could do quite a bit – to fight for their point of view in London.

This, the Arab objective in the conflict – or that of the dominant stream in the Arab movement – also became clear: the use of all means to thwart the establishment of the national home, which the Arabs had very early considered a foreign and encroaching element; assailing its vital aims – immigration and land (even though some of the Arab leaders who spoke out most strongly against the sale of lands were not loathe to do so themselves, lining their own pockets). Even had there been moderate groups among the Arabs, willing to accept the existence of a Jewish national home – and that is very doubtful – their voices were not heard, and for the most part only responded to the tune and tinkle of Zionist money. Yet another means was to demonstrate the presence of the Arab majority in the country as a factor that would prevent the establishment of the Jewish national home. Violence became the name of the game. Extremist leaders prevailed, and the development of the conflict and the expressions of violence

were used as an excuse and an opportunity to settle old rivalries and feuds in the Arab camp.

Under the circumstances a chasm divided the two sides, wide enough to be unbridgeable save if one of the two national movements would abandon its distinctive claim. In the absence of such a possibility, the conflict could not be prevented. The tragedy was, that while in all Jewish parties the hand was stretched to the Arabs, there was no reciprocity on the Arab side. Extremism became a pattern of Palestinian Arab history.

What transpired was a process of disillusionment on the part of the Zionist leadership: disenchantment with the faith in a solution that would be acceptable to both sides in the conflict, adherence to the Zionist goals, and a downgrading of the Arab question from the level of strategy to that of tactic. At the level of strategy the objective was to solve the problem; at the level of tactic it was to reduce the conflict. From time to time, when a new Zionist leader took over, he would try to raise the problem once again to the level of strategy, as Arlosoroff and Ben-Gurion did. The desire to bring about peace between Arab and Jew was a natural yearning and desire for every Jewish leader. But after a renewed failure, the problem would return to the tactical level. The disillusionment of the Zionist leadership took place at different times, not all at once. Ruppin, who had begun to deal with the Arab question prior to the First World War, experienced his disillusionment only in 1928-1929, after the Western Wall incident had deteriorated into the August 1929 riots, and even more so following the riots. Ussishkin, who in his later years was one of the most radical Zionists on the Arab question, had initially hoped, in 1913, to win the Arabs over. He regarded them as "natural allies and partners (of the Jews) in the war of the Eastern world against the onslaught of the Western world". In fact, as Bernard Lewis pointed out,[2] the Arab national movement arose because of the Western world and its outlook – and as a reaction to it. But in Arab eyes, the Jewish national movement was part of the Western assault against them, against the Eastern world, and not a partner on their side.

Ussishkin was one of the first to be disenchanted. In 1919 he was still interested in and valued Kalvarisky's activities among the Arabs,

[2] B. Lewis, *The Middle East and the West* (N.Y. 1963), p. 73.

as his letters indicate. But even then, *Yishuv* old timers regarded him as believing that the Arab question was unsolvable. Gad Frumkin, the sole Jewish justice of the Supreme Court of Palestine during the Mandate, quotes him as having said, "Throughout the world there is a Jewish problem, and what is being done to solve it? Here there is an Arab question, and what can be done about it?"[3] After him most of the Zionist leaders followed in turn. M. Medzini, writing before the end of the Mandate's first decade, criticized the Zionists for failing to give the Arab problem serious enough attention: even if there was not much they could have done, they could have at least mitigated fears.[4] It seems, indeed, that that was the most the Zionists could have done, and that anything more belonged to the realm of dreamers like Kalvarisky and the *Brit Shalom* people. Others who tried were soon disappointed and backed away. The leading policy-makers – Kisch, Arlosoroff, Ben-Gurion – all came to the same realization, each in his own time. The conclusion drawn by all of the disenchanted was that if the conflict could not be solved at that stage, it would be best to try to reduce tension, and go on building, expanding and strengthening the *Yishuv*, so that it could hold its own in any future confrontation that might develop.

We shall sketch the disillusionment process in various periods – that of Kisch at length, and more briefly for the interim period of Arlosoroff and Ben-Gurion's early period.

Throughout the twenties no systematic attempt was made and only a few contacts were made to operate in the Arab sector outside Palestine, although people at all levels took great interest in the so-called Arab problem. Speeches at the Zionist congresses reiterated the need to take action and for new approaches to the problem. Public affairs commentators cried out against neglecting it, but the Zionist establishment in Palestine was not equipped to deal with the problem in a systematic way. And so, it tried to bypass the mountain rather than climb it. The number of people on the Palestine Zionist Executive during the twenties can be

[3] G. Frumkin, *Derekh Shofet Bi'rushalayim* (The Road of a Justice in Jerusalem) (1955), p. 219.

[4] M. Medzini, *Eser Shanim Shel Mediniut Eretzisraelit* (Ten Years of Palestine Policy) (1929).

counted on the fingers of two hands, three to five officials during each term of office with no supporting apparatus worth mentioning. And on top of that, the internal rivalries and quarrels in the Arab leadership made it almost impossible to find proper interlocutors among them.

The Years of Kisch and Kalvarisky

Kisch came to Palestine to head the political department in Jerusalem late in 1922.[5] Born in India to a family in the Colonial Service, he had no institutional ties with the Jewish community prior to the First World War. Before the war, Kisch had served in the engineering corps in India. He was wounded in the war and was transferred to the intelligence service in London. He was attached to the British military delegation to the peace conference at Versailles, where he met Weizmann. Later, at a time he was feeling frustration in the army, Weizmann suggested that he join the Zionist Executive in Palestine, as his "man in Jerusalem". Weizmann had taken note of Kisch's British ties. Relations between the Zionist Commission and the British authorities were not good, and Weizmann thought that an officer like Kisch would be suited to the task of keeping relations with the British administration in Palestine on calm waters; Weizmann was doing the same in London. Kisch was a loyal, talented and devoted man, who ran the Zionist Executive in Jerusalem as a branch of the London office until 1931. Unlike his predecessors, he remained in the country after stepping down. He lived as a businessman in Haifa until 1939, when he joined the British army in which he reached the rank of brigadier and served as chief engineering officer of the 8th Army. He was killed in 1943 in the Western Desert.

In his first period on the job, Kisch relied on the expertise of the man who had been handling Arab affairs in the field, Chaim Margolis Kalvarisky. Kalvarisky had chalked up his major achievements during the first phase of his work in the country – the settlement of the Galilee, an undertaking of which he had been one of the founders at the end of the nineteenth century. The second phase of his career in

[5] For details, see: N. Bentwich – M. Kisch, *Brigadier Kisch – Hayal ve-Tsioni* (Brigadier Frederick Kisch – Soldier and Zionist) (1978).

the country, which began before the First World War but lasted mostly after the war, was devoted to the relations with the Arabs. For twelve years, until 1931, Kalvarisky was the leading expert on the Arab question, the man in the field and in-house Orientalist of the Zionist Executive.

Kalvarisky himself acted from an ideological conviction about the kinship of the Semitic peoples, who, accordingly, ought to be united in brotherhood. But sincerity was not sufficient; his means were effective only in the short run and the course he took was studded with hazards and could not ensure success.

Kalvarisky believed that relations could be established with Arabs through various forms of local and regional activity – for example, by helping in the creating of parties opposed to the Arab establishment, with Zionist financial backing, or by offering loans to Arab farmers, or establishing Arab newspapers and getting favorable articles published in the Arab press. Much importance was attached to the supplying of funds, since the provision of money for social and political activities was accepted practice in the Arab society of the area. Kalvarisky acted with great enthusiasm and self-conviction tinged with naiveté. During the early twenties, and with the approval of his employers, the Zionist Executive and the Jewish Colonization Association, Kalvarisky spent vast sums on *mukhtars*, *sheiks* and heads of associations – or those posing as such – in order to encourage an opposition to the Husseini leadership. In this way he hoped to promote the interests of the *Yishuv* and achieve peace and friendly relations with the Arabs.

In his day Kalvarisky enjoyed a virtual monopoly as *the* expert on Arab affairs. Thus, when Ussishkin came to Palestine in 1919, he toured the Galilee and had a chance to observe Kalvarisky's activities. Afterwards he said that Kalvarisky was the man most knowledgeable on the subject and understood it best. A dozen years later, when Arlosoroff took over the political department of the Zionist Executive, he too discovered that Kalvarisky still almost monopolized the field (and decided to replace him). The interesting thing is that before this, during the 1929 riots – which had come as a great shock to the Zionists – the Zionist Executive had asked Kalvarisky to resume his post after having been dismissed in 1928; he was the only expert available to whom they could turn.

Kisch came to Palestine and found Kalvarisky involved already in Arab affairs. One historian has called the time of Kisch's arrival a period of "equilibrium" on the Arab plane, a time of calm during which the Arab leadership in Palestine was beset by internal problems and had slowed its activities.[6] The Arab issue did not seem to demand urgent attention and there still was a degree of optimism.

Kisch did not create an apparatus of officials for dealing with the Arab question nor an intelligence-gathering machinery. He had many contacts but they were sporadic. At the beginning he attributed major importance to the pan-Arab movement and to contacts with it. Like Weizmann, his mentor, he believed Arab nationalism was to be found only outside of Palestine. In 1930 Weizmann wrote that "The picture in the minds of those who drafted the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate was that Palestine was to be a Jewish state in which the Arabs would enjoy the fullest civil and cultural rights; but for the expression of their own national individuality in terms of statehood, they were to turn to the surrounding Arab communities".[7] Kisch's optimism in the early period, during which he encouraged efforts to establish an Arab opposition, gave way to skepticism, and the failures to a disdain bearing the stamp of his "colonial" education.[8] Kisch came to believe that most important in the Arab sphere was to maintain political and public peace and order. Some of his contemporaries also believed that no agreement could be reached. In 1928, Moshe Medzini, a well-known political analyst in Palestine, wrote that there was no possibility of agreement with the Arabs – for agreement could be reached with only one Arab party and that by itself would be pointless. The way to achieve a normal co-existence was through joint activities, local councils, chambers of commerce, etc.[9]

[6] N. Kaplan, "Negotiations and the Arab-Israeli Conflict", *The Jerusalem Quarterly*, 6 (Winter 1978), pp. 3-19.

[7] Weizmann to James Marshall, January 17, 1930, Weizmann Archives, Published in *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann* (Series A: *Letters*), Vol. XIV (Jerusalem 1978), pp. 205-211. See *ibid.*, p. 206.

[8] See, for example, Kisch to James Rothschild, August 28, 1929, Central Zionist Archives, S25/1. However, the strong wording there should be seen against the background of the shock caused by the August riots. For earlier, see Kisch to Brodetsky, December 3, 1928, *loc. cit.*

[9] M. Medzini, *ibid.*

Municipal elections were held in 1927 – the first elections since the British occupation. Most of the cities (other than Tel-Aviv) – as distinguished from smaller localites – were mainly Arab, a few of them (six) had a mixed Arab-Jewish population. The most important of these, and the most important of all, was, of course, Jerusalem. What distinguished the mixed-population cities was that their councils were virtually the only place – apart from the chambers of commerce – where Jews and Arabs formally sat together in Palestine during the Mandate period. Jewish-Arab cooperation succeeded in some of the mixed towns, but not in all. In Jerusalem it virtually failed. In 1927 the Zionists reached an agreement with the Nashashibis – the ostensibly more moderate "party" – trading Jewish support for a promise of Arab positions congenial to the Jews and of cooperation with them. The agreement was not kept, and Nashashibi practically ignored it. In the subsequent elections, in 1934, the Zionists reached an understanding with another group, the Khalidis, in order to oust the Nashashibis. This agreement, too, was not kept. The council of Haifa, on the other hand, was considered a relative success. Actually, however, a period of relative quiet generally spread to the local councils; in periods of tension, the tension was felt everywhere. Up until the 1929 riots, the twenties were a period of relative quiet on the Arab front.

In 1928, Kisch dismissed Kalvarisky and himself took over the work of daily contacts with the Arabs. In 1928-29, after seven years of quiet on the Arab front, and after the economic crisis of 1926-27, which had forced the Zionists to fight for the very survival of their enterprise in Palestine – the Zionist Executive found itself lacking information of what was going on among the Arabs. The organs of the *Yishuv* during the twenties – the *Va'ad Le'umi* and its institutions – were powerless to make decisions. In those years its leadership included a large number of old-generation Palestinian Jewish notables whose influence declined as the waves of Aliyah (immigration) increased and whose good intentions were frustrated by lack of funds and the consequent inability to take action. The labor movement tried to be active on the Arab plane. It published an Arabic-language newspaper and opened joint social centers. But because of their class outlook they did not try to establish contact with the Arab *effendis* (landlords), who, in fact, were the heads of the Arab national movement at the time.

It is of some interest to note that in the early twenties, *Agudat Israel*, the ultra-orthodox Jewish party, and members of the non-Zionist Jewish community tried to carry out anti-Zionist activities in conjunction with the Arabs. But these efforts came to a halt in 1924, with the murder of Dr. Jacob Israel de Haan, the moving spirit behind them. De Haan became the victim of his extremism, which was considered by many in the Jewish *Yishuv* as detrimental.

1929 – The Year of Deterioration

While Kalvarisky headed the "Arab Department", the Zionists were kept in touch with developments, at least to some degree. In the period between his dismissal and the 1929 riots no one actively dealt with the Arab question, even though the Western Wall incident occurred then and should have sounded an alarm for the Palestine Jews. In June 1928, on the eve of the Seventh Palestinian Arab Congress, meetings were held with various Arab groups to try to block the adoption of an anti-Zionist resolution like that adopted in the previous congresses up to 1923. This congress, however, called for the establishment of representative institutions for the Palestinian population. Had that call been met on the basis of the relative strength of the parties at the time, the Jewish national home would have been gravely endangered, because of the Arab majority in the legislative council (in 1922, the Jews had accepted the idea of such a council, but the Arabs rejected it then). The proposal was kept alive during 1928-1929 both by the repeated demands of the Arabs and by the controversy it stirred among the Jews. But the British government did not take up the idea or commit itself one way or the other. The Zionists were fearful that Arab pressure for it might be stepped up. They therefore set about clarifying their own position on the issue in internal discussions and circulated an informal questionnaire on the Arab question. The idea of the questionnaire had been raised shortly before the Western Wall incident, while its implementation extended into the following year, after the 1929 riots.

The questionnaire was distributed at the end of 1928 by the Zionist Executive – the project receiving impetus from the Western Wall incident – to its members and other Zionist leaders in Palestine, in an attempt to examine views on the policy to be taken towards the Arabs

and on the legislative council.[10] Most of the replies came in after the 1929 riots. The replies covered the full spectrum of Zionist positions on the Arab question, which held for the entire period of the conflict. On one end was the maximalist position, the Revisionist position in which there is little difference between strategy and tactics. At the other end were, of course, the minimalist positions of *Brit Shalom*. The most extreme such position was the willingness to give up the establishment of a Jewish political entity in Palestine and to settle for the creation of a spiritual center – all in order to prevent a serious confrontation with the Arabs. And in the center down through the years was the position of the Zionist leadership, committed to walking the thin line between strategy and tactics, wishes and reality, principle and daily political activity not always compatible with ideology. We have no way of penetrating the secrets of the leaders' hearts, but undoubtedly their strategy was far more daring than their day-to-day tactics. Vision and *realpolitik* had to be reconciled, and efforts were put into achieving such reconciliation.

When the Wailing Wall incident had occurred, the Zionists directed their anger chiefly at the government. While the British were certainly guilty of mistakes, the placing of blame on them alone was an indication of faulty vision that did not take in developments on the other side of the conflict – among the Arabs. In those years, official Zionist circles were not attentive enough to what was going on among them. The Zionists followed the deliberations of the Seventh Palestinian Congress, but failed to notice the growing influence of the *Mufti* and his supporters and the decline of the Arab Executive Committee, the former Arab leadership.

Things began to deteriorate when Arab extremist elements attained to hegemony and exploited the situation to create unrest under a religious guise. The *Mufti* seized his opportunity after the Wailing Wall incident, but the Zionists did not realize how serious the situation was. They relied on the British – in London and Palestine. During the ten critical months from Yom Kippur 1928 to the August 1929 riots, nothing substantial was done on the Arab plane. No attempts were made to hold talks with the Arabs. The snowball that began

[10] See, E. Rubinstein, "The 1928 Questionnaire on the Arab Question" (in Hebrew), in *Pirkei Mehkar B'toldot Hatzionut* (Studies in the History of Zionism Presented to Israel Goldstein) (Jerusalem 1976), pp. 311-347.

rolling on Yom Kippur 1928 had grown to avalanche proportions, but the Zionists leadership failed to notice. The developments of 1929 were accompanied by a strange bifurcation in the Zionist approach – awareness, on the one hand, that there was an Arab quesion (the questionnaire attests to that), but on the other hand, nothing was done in the way of Arab-related (as opposed to British-related) political activity. Practical security measures were also lacking, but this goes beyond our present sphere.

The Zionists were at a loss when the August riots broke out. During 1928-29 there had been much activity in London: contacts with the government of Palestine, protests and what not. But there seems to have been no serious attempts to deal with the Arabs themselves, despite the realization of the importance of the Arab question.

The events that followed the 1929 riots and the confusion among the Zionists tend to confirm this contention. Kalvarisky's reinstatement as savior-expert on the Arab question and the establishment of the United Bureau for Handling the Arab Problem were outgrowths of the trauma caused by the riots. The Zionist leadership came to the realization that to do something, even if it does not bring immediate results, is always better than to sit on one's hands and do nothing. Thus, when the political department in Jerusalem was transformed in the thirties, reinforced by Orientalists such as Eliahu Sasson, Reuven Zaslani (Shiloah) and Eliahu Epstein (Elath) – all of them were to become later senior diplomats in the foreign service of the State of Israel – it did not refrain from Kalivarisky-style operations; but now the aim was to obtain information and keep a hand on the Arab pulse, not to pursue essentially unimportant agreements and vacuous expressions of sympathy and support.

The trauma of the 1929 disturbances had both short- and long-term consequences. In the short run, the lesson was learned and late in 1929 the joint Zionist Executive and *Va'ad Le'umi* Bureau was established. It was the first attempt to deal with the problem intensively and to form a professional department utilizing the skills and knowledge of men who for dozens of years had been in contact with Arabs in various parts of the country and had a first-hand acquaintance with them. Although the attempt was not successful and the bureau limped along until early 1931, it was significant for a number of reasons.

First of all, because of the type of people deemed suitable for the job – veteran *Yishuv* notables, including members of the Sephardic community. Secondly, it represented an attempt at regional decentralization, employing people from different parts of the country – Tiberias, Haifa, Hadera and Jaffa – rather than having one national figure pulling the strings for all parts of the country. Although Kalvarisky was again on the scene, he was given far less authority by Kisch, his superior, than he had had before. Third, an attempt was made to keep systematic documentation and to establish an archive. Finally the Bureau was also a locus of cooperation between the Zionist Executive and the *Va'ad Le'umi* and *Agudat Israel*, which also participated in the Bureau, which marked a larger extent of cooperation within the *Yishuv*. The Zionist Executive, of course, retained its supremacy in dealing with the political question; the vital and fundamental issues of Zionist policy *vis-à-vis* the Arab camp were not in the hands of the Bureau. It dealt only with day-to-day and routine affairs and contacts. The establishment of the Bureau was a reply to the charges about the lack of information and the exclusion of *Yishuv* circles from consulting roles. As mentioned, the Bureau did not last long. It was not meant to deal with strategy and did not. Strategy was still British-orientated – first to fight the Shaw Commission, then the Hope-Simpson Commission, then to fight the Passfield White Paper and later to obtain the MacDonald letter. Both in Palestine and London the efforts were focused on that.

In the long run, the 1929 disturbances were one of the factors that led to changes in the Zionist leadership, to Weizmann's loss of his status as unchallenged leader, and to the rise of people with different approaches and emphases.

It should be mentioned that in March 1931, after MacDonald's letter, which constituted a retreat from the Passfield White Paper, Weizmann visited Palestine to put out feelers on the possibility of negotiating with the Arabs, including on the question of Transjordan. Nothing came of it, because of British opposition, but that is outside the scope of this article. Summing up the Weizmann-Kisch era on the Arab question, we can say that the period was marked by three phases. During the early phase the Arab question was handled in a number of ways; in the second, despair set in and the question was put on a low burner; attention was focused on it again after 1929. The

results were meager. As we have already said, the orientation throughout was towards the British; but real achievements may not have been possible in any event.

The Labor Movement and the Arab Question

The labor movement's position on the Arab question went through a number of changes. The first stage in its approach was in the twenties. In those years its position derived from a socialist analysis of the problem. The members of *Aḥdut ha-Avodah* in particular analyzed the question from a class point of view. As they saw it, the problem could not be resolved with the feudal *effendis,* the Husseinis and the Nashashibis, at the Arab helm. To a certain extent the labor movement projected on to the Arab side what they saw as the class struggle in the Jewish *Yishuv* between workers and property owners. When would talks be possible? Once the labor movement would dominate the Jewish *Yishuv* and would help establish a parallel labor movement to lead the Arab population – then the two sides would be able to reach an accord. This view, which was combined with great desire to promote good relations with the Arabs, ran through Ben-Gurion's writings on the subject during the twenties. In time this approach underwent two subsequent changes. One was in 1929-1931: the disturbances of 1929 led to the realization that there was as yet no Arab working class – and that even should one arise, the question is fundamentally between Jews and Arabs. Since the conflict was a national one, there was no real division between workers and *effendis.* The change, reflected in Ben-Gurion's writings in those years, was that now it was advisable to talk with the *effendis* as well. The second change, at least as far as Ben-Gurion was concerned, was to come in 1936, when he already headed the Jewish Agency. The position forming then stemmed from the realization that even if the ultimate aim must always be a peaceful settlement, the settlement was a long way off; furthermore, in this conflict violence was inevitable – that had to be understood and be prepared for.

In keeping with its earlier approach of fostering the Arab working class, the labor movement also carried out some practical attempts in the field. It tried, for example, to set up an Arab newspaper. That was one of the means used to help influence Arab public opinion during

every period of the Mandate. After every crisis, discussions were held and articles published calling for the establishment of such a paper. The trouble was that no editors or writers could be found for it – and perhaps no readers either. The labor movement established a short-lived newspaper called *Ittihad al-'Amal* (The Unity of Labor), which appeared from 1925 to 1927. It also set up joint workers' recreation centers, and tried to establish joint workers' committees. There was, of course, the difficult question of whether to organize the Arabs within the *Histadrut* or to establish a joint organization. The only joint trade union established which experienced even partial success was the Railroad, Mail and Telegraph Workers' Union in Haifa. The union, in one of the largest government services in Palestine where Jews and Arabs worked side by side, was formed in the early twenties. Although it was not very important politically, it served as a symbol of what seemed possible. Formally it existed until the forties, though it was active only up until 1936. None of the other attempts lasted for very long.

The Arlosoroff Period

In 1931, Dr. Chaim Arlosoroff was appointed head of the political department of the Jewish Agency Executive.[11] Arlosoroff had been interested in the Arab question prior to his appointment and had written about it extensively. Now he decided to take an active role in it, and established a new apparatus to deal with the question. He brought in Moshe Shertok (Sharett), who was later to be his successor. Shertok knew Arabic (and English) well and played a key role in the department. Arlosoroff also began to train specialists for the neighboring Arab countries, a matter until then handled haphazardly. Thus, he helped finance the Middle Eastern studies of Eliahu Epstein (Elath) at the American University in Beirut, and Epstein filed reports from there. In 1933, in another context, he sent Dr. Victor Jacobson, the Zionist Executive's representative in Geneva (seat of the League of Nations), to report on the mood in Syria and Lebanon. Kisch (and even his predecessors) had contacts with both countries, but they had not been maintained systematically. Arlosoroff also

[11] See M. Getter, *Chaim Arlosoroff – A Political Biography* (Tel-Aviv 1978) (Hebrew), p. 89.

tried to launch political activities which had been initiated by Kisch. He invested much of his resources and energy in these attempts, which were thwarted by the British and by friction within the Jewish camp itself. Especially significant was his drive to establish relations with Transjordan.

Hope of a new spirit in dealing with the Arab question radiated from Arlosoroff's statements in the early period of his term in office, ostensibly replacing the fatigue with the question that had existed until then. Arlosoroff's *Jerusalem Diary* contains ideas on the Arab question that never came to fruition. He spoke a good deal about a "plan of action" on the Arab issue and also assumed that a moderate option was forming within Arab public opinion.

Addressing the *Yishuv* Elected Assembly late in 1931, Arlosoroff declared that

> Zionist policy was in need of a political program for overcoming the problems that have prevented us from reaching a political modus vivendi with the Arab inhabitants of Palestine. I agree with those who say that things have taken a new turn on this. Within Arab public opinion the realistic trend is gaining strength, the trend that wants a realistic policy and is ready under certain circumstances to cooperate with the *Yishuv* in practical matters of mutual interest. It is prepared to distinguish between matters of fundamental policy, which are still in dispute, and vital issues on which immediate agreement is possible and on which disagreement would be catastrophic for the entire country . . . And this feeling is increasing. What we need is a new politics for the mutual relations between the peoples of this land, a practical plan for joint action and a political program for broader agreement, one which will clearly point out on what basis we are prepared to cooperate with the progressive Arab public. That is the order of the day.

However, no one knew how to draw up such a program, nor were the Arab partners for it actually found. Arlosoroff himself began to understand – and this understanding grew firmer the longer he served in the political department – that such a plan was visionary and, given the Arab stand, not about to be implemented. As a partial, intermediate, attainment, Arlosoroff considered an agreement on issues on which immediate agreement might be possible – such as municipal affairs and matters of commerce and economics – while postponing discussion of fundamental political issues, especially since a satisfactory

resolution to the hot question of a legislative council was not in sight.

In Arlosoroff's journal we see the familiar pattern – frequent tactical contacts with the Arabs, but no progress on the strategic plane. The optimism Arlosoroff exuded at the beginning dissipated in the course of his work. By mid-1932, after less than a year in office and after having experienced the frustration of the problem first-hand, he sent Weizmann – who at the time had no official capacity – a letter in which he despaired of any possibility of a settlement with the Arabs. After analyzing the possibilities of implementing the Zionist program in Palestine, Arlosoroff wrote:

> The fourth possible conclusion is that under the present circumstances Zionism cannot achieve its goals without a transition period during which the Jewish minority will rule in an organized, revolutionary way; that it is not possible to achieve a Jewish majority, or even a balance between the two peoples (or any other arrangement that could serve as the basis for a cultural center) by means of immigration and systematic settlements, without a transition period of a national minorty government that would take control of the state apparatus, the administration and the army – in order to forestall the danger of a take-over by the non-Jewish majority or of rebellion against us (which we could put down only if the state apparatus and the army were in our hands). During this transition period the systematic policy of development, immigration and settlement would be carried out. This conception may challenge many beliefs we have cherished for years. It is perhaps dangerously close to well-known forms of popular political thinking from which we have always kept distant. It may at first sight appear impractical, even fantastic. It requires discussion, which I do not wish to begin in writing. But one thing I feel with an enormous strength and that is – I shall never accept the defeat of Zionism before an attempt has been made equal in its seriousness to the difficulties we face in our struggle to renew our national life.

Arlosoroff was far from the Revisionist position, but there is no doubt that these thoughts – apparently never discussed in any official Zionist forum – represented a new way of thinking for the young and able Zionist leader. It is not surprising that he arrived at them after a period of practical experience of contacts with the Arabs.

At a press conference in Jerusalem in December 1932, half a year before he was killed, Arlosoroff no longer spoke with the optimism

that had marked him at the beginning of his term, nor did he even mention the "constructive Zionist program". In his fifteen months in office he had learned that for any plan to be carried out the cooperation of both sides was necessary – and in the situation prevailing in Palestine that was not possible.

He envisaged the development towards peace as a slow and drawn-out process, as can be seen from his remarks to a *Mapai* conference in November 1932:

> Against this I place the living process of development of the two nations in this land. Our development, and that of the Arab nation as a necessary consequence of our activity, a development we did not intend as it were and which has already raised the Arab community in the country above those of the neighboring countries . . . And through this process – not by any plan or any principle, but by our presence in the country and the way we work here – we are slowly heading towards a future which must end in a life of peace and understanding between the two peoples laboring in Palestine.

But in another lecture at that time, Arlosoroff cautioned:

> The Anglo-Jewish-Arab kingdom is growing, developing, expanding . . . The British administration alone is concerned with the conditions of the Arabs while the Jews stand on the sidelines – and that is not good. Here, this kind of politics, the politics of turning a blind eye, is liable to lead us into dangers and contradictions from which there is no way out.

The Zionists and the Arabs were caught in a tragic entanglement from which no way out was seen, and it seemed none would be found in the foreseeable future. Arlosoroff, who entered his post so hopefully, was himself caught in the net of slogans and formulas.

By this time Arlosoroff believed that the most Zionism could achieve was a period of peace and calm in the country. At a lecture delivered in Warsaw in 1933, he said:

> One of our most important principles is to maintain complete peace in the country over the next few years. That principle must guide our relations with the Arabs. It is sometimes necessary to forgo minor things, to compromise for the quiet we so badly need. We are in the midst of a period of building up the country and a period of that sort

> requires peace . . . If we can bring 100,000 more Jews to the country in the coming years, including 50,000 young Jews, that will be achieved. The Arabs will have to acquiesce in the situation created, just as they accept the laws of nature.

The talk was not of agreement, constructive plan or cooperation but of compelling the Arabs to accept a fait accompli. These ideas resemble those expressed in his secret letter to Weizmann. Obviously, Arlosoroff did not dare publicize the views expressed in that letter, because they were never discussed in any forum, and in fact ran contrary to the thinking of the Zionist Organisation at the time; their publication would have been detrimental to Jewish interests. Still, those views may have reflected not fleeting despair but long thought. His later public remarks, indicating a retreat from his earlier optimism, seem to suggest as much. Here too is evidence of a process through which more than one Zionist leader passed as a result of contacts with the Arabs and the "Arab question". The leaders of the labor movement were no exception.

Ben-Gurion and Shertok

The thesis of a dawning awareness seems to apply equally to the next stage as well – the early Ben-Gurion-Shertok (Sharett) period. As will be recalled, Ben-Gurion wrote a lot about the Arab question in the twenties and actively dealt with it as secretary-general of the *Histadrut*. Great frustration and disillusionment replaced the idealistic hopes of the early period. It is perhaps significant that in the memoirs he published during his lifetime, Ben-Gurion hardly mentioned his activity in the *Histadrut*, and made no mention at all of his activities in the Arab sector, to which he had devoted much thought during his *Histadrut* years, even writing a book entitled *We and Our Neighbors*.

After assuming the national leadership, Ben-Gurion began to see things in a different light. His *Talks With Arab Leaders* reflects his thinking during the first years in office. It expresses the change, mentioned briefly above, from thinking in class terms to an understanding of the conflict as a political and national one – and from that to an understanding that violent confrontation was inevitable. From the outset, Ben-Gurion decided to devote thought and

discussion to the Arab question and, as was typical of him, he began from the very beginning – as if before him there had been nothing. His meetings with Palestinian Arab leaders in 1933-1935, and his awareness of the political situation in Palestine from his work in the Jewish Agency, provided the base for the next stage in the development of his thinking. Ben-Gurion did not hold talks with the *Mufti*, or his aides, for the feelers he had put out in the *Mufti*'s direction had turned up nothing. Nor did he meet with the Nashashibis, whom he considered unimportant; he regarded them as corrupt and therefore not serious partners for talks. He held talks with people he thought had standing, even if informal standing, in the Arab camp, honest people who spoke their minds and were also capable of logic. Ben-Gurion emerged from these talks – with Musa Alami, Awni Abd al-Hadi and others – disappointed and doubting that the gulf between the two sides could ever be bridged.

In these talks Ben-Gurion proposed ideas for a solution that had been raised in internal *Mapai* discussions as a substitute for the "parity" ideas – namely, parity in government between Arabs and Jews – then in the air. A Jewish majority was axiomatic in Ben-Gurion's thinking about the future, yet the idea of a federation provided a possible modification. There would be a Jewish majority in Palestine and an Arab minority; but Palestine itself would be linked in a federation with other Arab states and in this federation Palestine would be a minority. In other words, the Arab community would be a minority within the Jewish majority of Palestine itself, but would be part of a federation in which the Arabs formed the majority.

These ideas never took the form of proposals by the Zionist Executive. Nor did Ben-Gurion's interlocutors have the authority to decide or conduct negotiations. The gap between the sides became patently clear, above all because the Jews were still a minority in the country and the proposals Ben-Gurion put forward seemed to the Arabs unwarranted arrogance.

After these talks with the Arab leaders, and especially after the 1936 disturbances, Ben-Gurion's already-changed conception was consolidated. At this point he explicitly stated that he had erred. In his written statements during the first stage of the 1936 riots,

Ben-Gurion observed that perhaps a settlement with the Arabs was impossible, especially in light of the basic political antagonism between the two sides; but he reiterated the need to search for any glimmer of a possibility – even one in a thousand – of achieving an understanding with them. What was needed was, first of all, a deep faith in Zionism, but along with it, an understanding of the Arabs and respect for their national aspirations. In a lecture in 1937 to the *Histadrut* Council, Ben-Gurion admitted that he had erred thirteen years earlier when he had said that the Zionists should direct their appeal only to the Arab workers and not to the *effendis* – for the workers did not yet hold the reins of Arab leadership, and it was not for the Zionists to decide who were the representatives of the Arabs. The nub of the conflict, as he explained in 1938 to the Zionist Action Committee, was that the Arabs regarded themselves as the "exclusive owners of this land. They do not acknowledge our right to a homeland, because they consider this to be their homeland."[12] Ben-Gurion believed that violent confrontation was inevitable – a belief that intensified when the conflict resumed, after having subsided during the Second World War, and which led him to dedicate himself from 1946 on to what he made the central focus of his work – the realm of defense.

Apart from Ben-Gurion's activities, there were the day-to-day dealings on the Arab question by the Jewish Agency Executive over which Shertok had command. Shertok, who had worked with Arlosoroff, continued activities begun in 1931-1933. He set up an apparatus for dealings on the Arab plane, which developed over the years to become the nucleus of the State of Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Eliahu Epstein (Elath), who had returned from his studies in Beirut in 1934, was put in charge of the political department's contacts with Syria and Lebanon; Eliahu Sasson became one of the department's leading Arabists in Shertok's time. Reuven Zaslani (Shiloah) joined it later. Shertok attached considerably less importance to activity in Transjordan than had Arlosoroff, and this became an issue in *Mapai*. Shertok explained that it was not possible to be active on all fronts. What Arlosoroff had seen not only as a political matter but also as another possible Jewish settlement option, between 1933 and 1935 became a matter of political relations only, and continued as such until

[12] D. Ben-Gurion, *Bama'aracha* (In the Campaign), vol. 1 (1957), p. 210.

1948 and even thereafter. Due to pressure from various quarters, the land purchase option was freezed and payments to Abdallah really served a political purpose.[13]

Positions on the Conflict

Schematically, Jewish positions on the conflict during the Mandate period can be divided into three types.

(1) The *maximalist* position, the position of the Revisionists. It called for an open declaration of the Zionist aim to rule over Palestine, with the Arabs enjoying full rights – but as a minority. This position was the most realistic in terms of goals, although in terms of means its contribution was relatively small, smaller when it came to colonization, greater in defense matters. The formulation of this position was harsh on the ears of Zionist statesmen of liberal or socialist background, including the most open-eyed among them. The internal conflict in the Zionist camp with the Revisionists, who were audacious enough to see themselves as an alternative to the Zionist leadership and to challenge it, prevented better understanding of their position.

(2) The *minimalist* position, the position of those willing to give up the attainment of Zionist objectives *in toto* as the price for assuaging the Arabs. It was held also by politicians and men of action in the early stages, but in time was confined to high-minded idealists. This approach was doomed to failure from the start because of Arab suspicions and the inability to find partners with matching views on the Arab side.

(3) The *position of the disillusioned Zionist leaders*. Inwardly they knew the true situation was one of prolonged conflict, for the Zionist interest was opposed to the Arab one. However, they denied that this was so, both for foreign-policy considerations and to soothe their liberal and socialist consciences – and also in the hope, or illusion, that despite everything the Arabs would agree to a settlement. Kisch despaired of it. Arlosoroff despaired of it in his letter to Weizmann in the middle of 1932. Weizmann despaired of it. Ben-Gurion, who at

[13] See A. Shapira, "The Option on the Lands of Emir Abdallah in Ghor el-Kabd – The Beginning of the Relationship Between the Zionist Executive and Emir Abdallah" (in Hebrew), *Hatzionut*, 3, pp. 295-345.

the outset of his political career had believed wholeheartedly in a settlement, despaired of it and realized that violence would be necessary. Sadly, he came to symbolize "anti-Arabism" and the conception that a Jewish majority and Jewish power were requisite for the implementation of Zionism. This stigma bore a great amount of injustice to him.

In considering the means at the disposal of the Jewish side, two sorts must be distinguished – resources and sources of support, on the one hand, and organizational tools on the other. Among the factors of the first sort was the sympathy for Jews and Zionists in the Allied countries from the days of the First World War. This sympathy included feelings of guilt for Jewish suffering throughout history at the hands of Christian peoples, and especially interests that in some way required the support of world Jewry. After 1933 and the rise of Nazism, a new dimension was added, and after 1945, when the scale of the Holocaust became known, there was the added feeling that the surviving remnants of the Jewish people be helped to rehabilitate themselves. This sympathy was felt by various groups, but primarily by the British in the first period and the Americans in the latter. In the period under discussion here, this element did not manifest itself in any clear way, except perhaps for the pressures applied during the deliberations of the League of Nations Mandates Commission.

The second type of resource included, first the great achievements of the Jewish community in Palestine and the success of the new, organized *Yishuv* – as opposed to the old one – in building itself up and developing the strength (including the armed strength) to withstand the Arab opposition. The technological know-how and the high intellectual level of many of the immigrants placed the *Yishuv* on a substantially higher footing than the Arabs. The turning of the desert into blooming fields, the revival of the country and its remarkable developments were an unprecedented phenomenon in the whole area in modern times. The democratic nature of the Jewish society was also a positive innovation in the era.

Second, the ability of Jews and Zionists to apply political power in various countries. This factor was most pronounced in the later years of the Mandate, especially in the United States with its Jewish lobby, but there were also clear signs of it at the beginning of the Mandate in

England and elsewhere. Along with this we should note the strength being garnered by the Zionist movement as a worldwide movement that knew how to assert its presence in various capitals and political centers, although frequently to a lesser extent than it seemed or Zionism's adversaries alleged. The strength and influence of the Zionist movement in London was not as great as it appeared to be. The Zionists, encountering difficulties, had to use all their persuasive powers and often that was of no avail because of unsympathetic attitudes in parts of the British civil service.

Third, the skills of the Zionist leadership. These leaders had European higher education and training and were the intellectual and educational peers of the heads of state with whom they dealt, especially in England. Dr. Weizmann, the leading Zionist figure in the first period of the Mandate and still very important in the second, enjoyed enormous prestige in British ruling circles, and benefitted from international renown and respect.

Fourth, the financial assistance of the Jewish people.

Fifth, the ability to overcome differences and internal disputes and, to a large degree, to present a united front to the British.

And sixth, the lack of any alternative, in front of the Holocaust and the threat of destruction.

Among the weaknesses of the *Yishuv* were its numerical inferiority *vis-à-vis* the Arabs, which had to be overcome by technological know-how and a high level of education; and the attitude of British officials, especially in Palestine, which steadily worsened over the years.

The Arabs' strength in the conflict stemmed from the following:

First, the pressure they could exert as the majority, which according to basic democratic theory warranted political expression. On the strength of their numbers they could also create disturbances, threaten peace and security and harass the government.

Second, the force of the example of the neighboring Arab countries, which won full or partial independence.

Third, the pressure they tried to exert as representatives of Islam, a universal religion which the British had to take into account (e.g., the Muslim population in India). The *Mufti* tried to exploit this by portraying the Palestinians as the protectors of the Islamic holy sites.

Fourth, they were part of the millions of Arabs of the Middle East, an important factor in the strategic considerations of the British

empire in the Middle East, as both the outcome of the St. James Conference (London, 1939) and the White Paper clearly indicated.

Their weakness stemmed from their being in many ways at a lower level of development than the Jews, and from internal divisions and a lack of organization and unity. All Arab writers noted this point self-critically and protested against the conduct of the Arab leadership. Indeed, the disturbances of 1936-1939, which began as a war against the British and the Jews, ended up as a fratricidal letting of blood in the Arab camp. They paid dearly for the extremism of their leaders.

The Time and Place Framework of the Conflict

Any attempt to get to the root of the Zionist position on the Arab question encounters difficult methodological problems. The Jewish-Arab conflict was marked from the outset by an asymmetry, which, it seems, has persisted throughout. While the Arab position in the conflict has been quite consistent, namely hostility to and negation of Zionism accompanied by fierce outbursts of violence – on the Zionist side there was a wide range of positions some of which were poles apart. The conflict spanned ideologies, and each side believed it was right. The Palestinian Arabs refused to understand why their fate should be worse than that of the Arabs in the neighboring countries, who won their independence without having any foreign element imposed upon them. Were it not for that element, Palestine would have shared in the independence granted to the Arab countries. The Jews, for their part, considered their demand to be a just solution of the Jewish question, while they sought to minimize the harm done to the Arabs. They did definitely not consider themselves a foreign element; nor were they. The development of the conflict, in fact, made Palestinian Arab nationalism, paradoxically, to a large extent the creation of Zionism.

Most Zionist leaders at one stage or another believed the conflict could be resolved. But those at the helm of the Zionist movement sooner or later arrived at a realistic appraisal of the situation. They reached the conclusion that a solution was beyond them and that, objectively, the conflict could not be settled in a way that would satisfy both sides. They therefore devoted their energies to the attainment of

Jewish objectives, which became patently urgent in the mid-thirties.

It is worth trying to set the time of the beginning of the conflict, though it is not easy to determine time boundaries for historical processes. The experts disagree, for example, about the dates and identities of Zionism's precursors. Some go as far back as the patriarch Abraham, others begin with the arrival in the country of Rabbi Judah the *Hasid* and his disciples in 1700. Still others go back no farther than the nineteenth century. As for the Jewish-Arab conflict, some take it back to the 1890s, to the petition of the Arab notables to the Ottoman authorities in 1891. That event was an indication of early Arab opposition, but that instance of Arab opposition to the Jews was limited to the landowner class, concerned, economically, with Jewish land purchases, and was in keeping with the policy of the Turkish government. More significant was the opposition expressed in the first Arab newspapers close to the outbreak of the First World War.[14] Still, a national conflict between Arabs and Jews can only be spoken of after the Balfour Declaration, after the war, when the Arabs of the former Ottoman empire had become independent political forces. It was then that the simmering conflict began to flare.

The twenties, which marked the beginning of the rapid growth of the *Yishuv*, were also the years in which the Arab question became an important issue in Zionist policy. It has been shown[15] that in their pre-First World War contacts with the Arabs, the Zionists were aware of the danger to their enterprise latent in the Arab question. But these were people not in the front rank of the Zionist leadership, but people like Jacobson or Ruppin, or like Kalvarisky, who knew the Arabs at close hand. The problem emerged full-blown, however, only in connection with the negotiations with Feisal at the peace conference, and especially in the twenties. Until 1936, the conflict was more or less confined to Palestine proper, though some efforts were made by outside Arab bodies to intervene by lobbying at the League of Nations. The *Mufti*, Haj Amin el Husseini, tried to make the

[14] See Y. Porat, *The Emergence of the Palestinian Arab National Movement 1918–1929* (London 1974), p. 26.

[15] See, for example, P.A. Allsberg, "The Arab Question in the Policy of the Zionist Executive Before World War I" (in Hebrew), *Shivat Zion*, 4, pp. 161-209; Y. Roi, "The Zionist Attitude Towards the Arabs" (in Hebrew), *Keshet*, 42 (1969), pp. 113-169; *ibid.*, 43, pp. 169-181; see also, N. J. Mandell, *The Arabs and Zionism Before World War I* (1976).

Palestine issue a pan-Islamic issue by stressing the problem of the holy places. After 1936, on British urgings, some of the Arab kingdoms outside Palestine began to intervene in the conflict – and in 1948, with the establishment of the State of Israel and the Arab attack on the new state, the conflict became one between states.

Palestine stood at a crossroads of ramified international activity at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, as the Ottoman empire neared its demise. Afterwards it became a focus of important international diplomatic deliberations, during and following the First World War. The friction between Jews and Arabs in Palestine was never cut off from the international setting, not from the point of view of the two sides directly involved nor that of the third party, the British.

The conflict should not be considered only two-sided, but in some ways as multi-sided. During the Mandate period the British were an important party to the conflict – no less than the other two, although theirs was a very special role. Formally, Palestine had been given to them as a Mandate, an international charge they were to prepare for independence. In actual fact it was an important strategic junction for them. Some even believed that the British themselves were at the root of the conflict. Though I do not ascribe to that view, the fact remains that the loves and hates of the British civil servants in Palestine and in the Colonial Office had considerable influence on the diplomatic moves of both the Jews and the Arabs.

The Palestinian conflict was essentially a fight between two national groups over one piece of land. When two individuals dispute the ownership of some object – each genuinely believing that it is his alone – the court can rule that they divide it. But in the case of a conflict between two peoples, such a ruling means painful surgery and ultimately – many a time – the spilling of blood. The conflict was further complicated by the character of the two national groups. One, the Arabs, was nationally still in its infancy; as for the other, the Jews, most of them lived outside the contested land. Thus, while the Arabs claimed that the other side was a small Jewish minority in Palestine, whose numbers did not entitle it to many rights, and certainly not to a standing equal to theirs, the Jews argued – and that was the conception that underlay the Mandate – that Palestine was destined to serve as the national home of Jews everywhere.

In the final analysis, the conflict was inevitable. This is easily said today with the benefit of hindsight. Still, there were many Jews during the Mandate – political leaders, writers, scholars – who saw this clearly even then, though many tended to deny it. The political leaders, as we have noted, gradually lost their belief that a peaceful settlement was within reach.

But even after their disillusionment, these leaders continued to yearn sincerely for a solution. It was hard for them to accept that the Jewish people's renascence necessitated a conflict with another nation and the inflicting of suffering. At the beginning of his career in the country, Ben-Gurion had said that should Zionism harm even one Arab child, its activity would lose its ground. But Zionism was forced into the conflict unwillingly, it should be stressed. But the yearning for peace did not vanish. This is well represented in a letter by Joseph Sprinzak – a veteran leader of the labor movement in Palestine and in the early twenties already a member of the Zionist Executive – written in 1958, a few days before his death, to Eliahu Elath. The aged statesman, on his deathbed, with a half century of political activity behind him, the Speaker of the *Knesset* at the time, wrote:

> A Herzl arose among us and revived our will to achieve statehood: a Joseph Vitkin arose among us and awakened our dormant capacity for pioneering, building, staying on the alert; a Chaim Weizmann arose among us and led the way for the achievement of statehood (more and more I am convinced that the Weizmann period was the most important in the history of Jewish national rebirth). But no Herzl or Weizmann has arisen among us in the field of relations with the Arabs.
>
> The Arab people is alive and rises up in its strength, and grows larger – alongside us and against us . . . We had, of course, Kalvarisky and Epstein, Moshe Smilansky and Magnes – but they were no more than amateurs with great hopes. My question has only pessimistic answers. *No creative leader could have arisen in the field of relations with the Arabs, because there is no basis or hope for these relations. The Arabs' hostility and rejection cannot be reversed* [emphasis added]. Even when Rosh Pinna and Zichron Ya'akov were founded, there was opposition, and the owner of the *Carmel* [Arabic] newspaper fought us. That was then, and how much greater is it during the state's existence. There is a point to considering whether we made genuine, systematic

> and consistent efforts. No, instead there were fleeting improvisations, declarations . . . Why the disappointment? Did anyone from among us come forth to devote his life and talents and been disappointed? Do we have the right or the choice not to be optimistic about it?
>
> Why do I write to you about this? The answer is very simple. I am one of those who felt the pain of this problem ever since I began, forty-nine years ago. My going to Beirut [to study in the American University; the same was done many years later by Elath himself] was to prepare myself, along with others, for tasks that would help promote relations with the Arabs. What happened to others also happened to me . . . I write to you, for you, too, at the beginning, prepared yourself for work on the Arab question . . . And if I write once again now on our *tragic problem* [emphasis added], it is on the assumption that we must think about paving the way for a reawakening of forces and a dedication of talent – that they try their ability in systematic thought and action, even to the point of Sanctification of the Name, to find solutions . . . for a matter that may endanger our future.[16]

Remarks by Weizmann written in 1930 to James Marshall (the son of Louis Marshall), an American "non-Zionist" and one of the heads of the Jewish Agency, can serve as a fitting conclusion. Writing with deep sincerity in reply to Marshall, who argued that there were "two sides to the Palestinian problem", Weizmann asserted that the intention of the Balfour Declaration was a Jewish state in Palestine in which the Arabs would enjoy cultural and civil rights; but if they wanted a state, they would have to turn to the surrounding countries. This was accepted by the responsible Arab leaders (King Feisal in 1919):

> I mention these facts . . . as history only . . . Let them stand as a landmark of the ground which has been lost these ten years, and lost not for us only.

The possibility of equality between two parties who are not equal numerically requires thought. Palestine must be shared by two peoples – one in its full strength, whereas only a pioneering group of the other is presently in the country.

[16] J. Sprinzak, *Igrot* (Letters), vol. 3 (Tel-Aviv 1969), pp. 125-126 (letter dated 8 *Shevat*, 5719 [1958]).

> . . .The force of inertia works in favor of the Arabs . . . While we accept the principle of equality between Jews and Arabs in the future Palestinian state, the Arabs press for having that state constituted immediately, because circumstances would enable them now to distort it into an Arab dominion from which no path would lead back to real equality.
>
> We do not require political dilettants, or adventurers. . . to teach us how desirable it is for us to come to a friendly understanding with the Arabs. And it is downright mean on their part to try to create the impression as if we were not aware of the need for such an understanding, or not anxious to reach it . . . If ever we had to displace an Arab tenant – roaming over the wide areas which we needed for intensive cultivation, or pasturing his bullocks on swamps which we had to drain – we paid compensation, and ample compensation, long before there was any law which bid us do so.

And here is the crux of the matter, the moment of truth:

> In fact, all the Arab objections to what we have done in Palestine during the last ten years, ultimately boil down to one single thing; that we have come, are coming, and mean to come in increasing numbers . . . The Arabs, when they speak out the truth, say to us: "We do not ask you to deal fairly with us, but not to come" . . . Whoever thinks that our claim to a National Home – to one spot on the face of the earth – is unjustified, that we alone among the nations must forever be wanderers, driven out from one land, refused access to another, and despised and treated as inferiors where we remain; whoever thinks that the Mandate was a mistake and an injustice to the Palestinian Arabs, let him say so. If any Jews feel that way, let them say so too . . . [but] they should have thought of that twelve years ago . . . If on the other hand, our right to a National Home is acknowledged, such acknowledgement must not be hypocritical lip-worship. If we enter Palestine, we cannot live in the air, or on air . . . We must not be expected to eternally apologize for our existence and to make amends for the fact that we live . . .we must not be driven into the position where any Arab complaint directed merely against our being there at all is considered sufficient grounds for impeding our work and cancelling our rights. . .[17]

[17] Weizmann to James Marshall, January 17, 1930. See note 7 *Supra*, pp. 207-209.

From the Arab nationalist point of view, all efforts to reach agreement in which the Zionists were not willing to give up basic Zionist goals were doomed to failure from the start. A solution acceptable to both sides was not in the offing, and every increase in immigration made it more remote. The implementation of Zionism made the conflict inevitable, and as far as the Arabs were concerned, Zionism's achievements further extended the conflict. It has been like that to this day, and that is what has necessitated the development of Jewish self-defense as Ben-Gurion understood it and made the focus upon. An acceptable political solution has not yet been found.

Revisionism's View of the Arab National Movement

Yaakov Shavit

Two ideological and political axioms set the Revisionist movement off from other political movements and parties within Zionism: the principle of the terriorial integrity of *Eretz Israel* (i.e., Mandatory Palestine) within the boundaries delineated in the Paris peace agreements – meaning the unity of *Palestine* on both sides of the Jordan – and the principle of an openly proclaimed desire to establish a sovereign state on that territory – even if that sovereignty was qualified. That is not to say that other schools within Zionism did not at one time or another hold these same principles, only that Revisionism was the one school of Zionism whose position was firmly rooted in them, and did not stray from them for any tactical reasons whatever. Revisionism did not insist that the principle of sovereignty be implemented immediately, only that it be set as the ultimate goal declared in a public proclamation of both moral and political import; at the same time it never wanted to obscure the fact that the objective of the Zionist movement, in its conception, was the establishment of an independent state within the boundaries of historic *Eretz Israel*. These clear and fixed positions created a problem for Revisionism with respect to its attitude to the Arab national movement and its conception of Zionist policy on the Arab title to Palestine. The problem was simple, because Revisionism totally rejected all Arab claims to political and national sovereignty in Palestine and likewise rejected any Zionist tendency to compromise with the Arab demands either in principle or for tactical

* Y. Shavit is a Lecturer in the Department of the History of the Jewish People at Tel-Aviv University. He is one of the editors of *Kathedra* (a quarterly dedicated to the history of *Eretz Israel)* and the editor of the ten-volume series on the History of *Eretz Israel*, now coming out. He is the author of many books and articles on the Revisionist movement.

reasons. The problem was at the same time complex, because this uncompromising position required that Revisionism find a way for the Zionist movement to contest the Arab claims to Palestine and with British policy, which acknowledged them, without leading Zionism into a confrontation with Great Britain, and Zionist policy into a cul-de-sac and total bankruptcy.

In attempting to deal with these questions, Revisionist ideology displayed a measure of flexibility, but only a measure and in no way comparable to the wavering and doubts, the contradictions and compromises that developed within the *Yishuv* labor movement. Although Revisionism is often described as a monolithic and consistent ideology that did not adjust its positions to the political changes of the moment, closer inspection uncovers a process of dynamic, at times even dramatic, development within Revisionism. It brings to light the influence of various cultural and political traditions within Revisionism on its attitude towards the Arab nationalist movement. It will also reveal, so we assume, that within the fundamental uniformity of attitude within Revisionism *vis-à-vis* Arab nationalism there were two incompatible and to some extent opposed currents. These differences have no practical significance when the ideology is that of an opposition to the official policy. They become significant however, when the ideology functions as the guiding idea of a ruling party.

Furthermore, Revisionist ideology – the set of values, beliefs and symbols that guided the members of the movement and shaped their world – is not identical with the national and political teachings of Ze'ev Jabotinsky, although his influence on the movement was, of course, very considerable.

Many within the political and ideological circle that encompasses the members of the Revisionist movement would distinguish the UZR (Union of Zionist Revisionists), which was founded in April 1925, from Jabotinksy the man, his ideas and inspiration. Many of the members of the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* (IZL) viewed their organization as a new organizational and ideological phenomenon linked to Jabotinsky but having no ties with Revisionism. The term they would prefer by which to describe the broad circle of members of the Revisionist movement, together with disciples or admirers of Jabotinsky, is 'the national movement'. 'Revisionism' fails to express

the revolutionary character of the movement and seems to suggest a kinship with a 'conservative' formal and legal framework. This is not the place to deal with the problematics of continuity and change between the UZR and *Betar*, on the one hand, and the *Irgun* (IZL), *Lehi* (Israel's freedom fighters, the so-called Stern group) and other ideological groups, historically related to Revisionism, on the other. The concern of this essay is the UZR and *Betar* and the views expressed by major figures who belonged to these two organizations or influenced their members. However, an official program, the work of publicists, manifestos and songs enjoy the same status within the Zionist political subculture called 'Revisionism' as in the national movement. Jabotinsky's views occupy a central but not exclusive position.

II

Two dimensions are discernible in the position of the various schools within Zionism on the 'Arab question'. The first relates to the interpretation of the actual historical situation. In this case: Who are the Arabs? What is their real strength in the given situation? What is their social structure? What future awaits them? The second dimension relates to how the school defines its own national and political objectives and their implication for its relationship to other historical factors. Jabotinsky, more than once, warned Zionism of too close an acquaintance with the Arabs: the more numerous the points of contact, the more numerous too the points of friction. Perhaps also, the deeper the acquaintance, the more complex it becomes intellectually and emotionally. For Zionism to be able to succeed in the political, emotional and ideological contest with Arab nationalism, the situation must be portrayed in simple colors, by clear and sharp lines; if not, Zionism would get entangled in a net, from which there is no escape.

Did Revisionism and Jabotinsky describe Arab nationalism, its goals and strength, consistently? Did they have unambiguous things to say about Islam, Pan-Arabism, the Arab nationality and, specifically, the Arab nationality in Palestine?

One element shared by all factions within Revisionism and the 'national movement' during the Mandate period was a process of

deromanticization of the East. In various ways Revisionism rejected the romantic depiction of the Levant and adopted a conception of the superiority of the West as a society and civilization. "The East and everything associated with this concept is alien to me . . . even among the Eskimos in the far north I would feel more at home", wrote Jabotinsky. Orientalism is a reaction, born in the West itself, to industrial civilization. The British middle class sees in the Levant a romantic picturesqueness that ought not be spoiled. Jabotinsky acknowledged that the 'Orient' was a unique spiritual entity – but an inferior one. The Zionist call 'To the East!' thus had only geographical but not spiritual significance. Zionism has no reason to escape from Western civilization. On the contrary, Zionism will bring the 'West' to the 'East': "We, the Jews, have nothing in common with what is called the East, thank God". The Islamic spirit, as Jabotinsky called it, must be swept from *Eretz Israel*, for it is a spirit of social and cultural decay, and of fatalistic psychology (as opposed to Zionist vitality). It is oppressive, by its poverty, political despotism, theocratic rule and the oppression of women. Like Marx in his writings on the 'Eastern Question', Jabotinsky did not believe in the possibility of an authentic reawakening of the East. The East is characterized by a backward unity of state, nationality and religion, which is a low stage of culture. Progress will therefore be brought to the East by means of imitation and borrowing, and change of this sort is necessarily slow and painful. True, there are Eastern elements in Jewry as well (such as the role of religion in life), but the movement of enlightenment, the *Haskalah*, came to change that. Essentially Zionism is a daughter of the West. The values of the subjugation of nature, the idea of the Golden Age and the messianic idea – all these are Jewry's contribution to the West. In this historical portrayal by Jabotinsky there is no trace of the totally autarkic and self-contained conception of Jewish history, as was formulated in the poetry of Uri Zvi Greenberg and which left its mark on Jabotinsky's disciples.

Ensuing from the deromanticization and rejection of the 'East' is Revisionism's Western orientation. Zionism is not on the side of the Eastern peoples and of 'Orientalism' in their struggle against the Western and 'European' powers. Since Islam is defined by Revisionism as anti-Western, Zionism is opposed to Islam. It was a paradox

of the sort Revisionist ideology and policy excelled in that Jabotinsky had to warn Great Britain that it was setting up the force that in the future would destroy it. The British were putting power into Islam's hands and Islam would ultimately rise up against Great Britain (and the West as a whole) in an attempt to bring about its destruction. From the end of the 1920s on, for Uri Zvi Greenberg Great Britain was the wicked kingdom of 'Edom' and was justly destined to awful calamity. But in 1930, Abba Ahimeir asserted the very opposite: "In any conflict between the West and the East we will always side with the West, because for a thousand years or so now, since the Mongols destroyed the Baghdad caliphate, the West has been the symbol of a human society, more sublime than the East . . . Furthermore, today we are not only the foremost and most loyal bearers of "Westernism . . . we are interested in the flourishing of the British Empire more even than the British themselves".

III

The deromanticization of the East was directed against a major school in British policy as well as against important streams in Zionism. A political assumption derived from it, namely that Islam is not yet a consolidated force that needs to be taken into account politically: "Islam as a unified factor in international relations does not exist in reality". The myth of the Muslims of India was begot by British officials in Cairo, Baghdad or Calcutta. As a political movement Islam is reactionary and a bogey. There is no 'Islamic world' and, as of now, it poses no danger. The French took over Syria with ease, and the Italians Libya. The Islamic world has no military strength, and, like Marx, Jabotinsky also maintained that "war is a scientific and financial matter, and is beyond the capabilites of backward peoples". Europe can dominate the Middle East effortlessly. The question is not what Europe can do in the East, but what it wants to do.[1]

While Jabotinsky dismissed Islam and Islamism, and on that

[1] From the point of view of Zionism this argument suffered from an internal weakness: if Great Britain can dominate the East without any real effort on its part, what need did it have for a Jewish garrison force in Palestine to ensure its positions *vis-à-vis* the Arab world?

Revisionism as a whole followed him, the situation with regard to Arab nationalism was somewhat different. Does Arab nationality exist? Is it a broad Arab nationality or a local one, and are there several Arab peoples?

In contrast to the view of Revisionism's successors, Jabotinsky maintained that Arab nationalism as a unified political movement does not exist in fact. He was less decisive on this than on his attitude towards Pan-Islamism. The Arabs in various lands do not have very much in common, he wrote; the concept of an 'Arab nation' is a vague one. A common language and territorial contiguity do not create national unity. That is why he assumed that during and after the First World War the Arabs could establish several national states. It was conceivable that an Arab movement for national and political unity might arise someday, but that day was hidden in the mists of the future. If it does come, the bitter irony is that it will come under European inspiration and leadership: "It cannot be denied that important conditions are appearing in the Arab world, which one day are liable to develop into national unity. But the formation of an Arab empire will be a terrible disaster for Europe". At the beginning of the First World War, Jabotinsky already discerned that the Arab problem would become a central issue in international relations. He did not ignore early Arab national aspirations, which were appearing in North Africa, Syria and Egypt. In 1924 Joseph B. Schechtman wrote in *Raszvet*, the major Russian-language Revisionist organ, of the enduring inner tension between local Arab nationalism and Pan-Arabism, and held that this tension was being exploited in the struggle between Arab dynastic houses and British interests.[2] In August 1920, in the wake of the Syrian crisis and Feisal's expulsion from Syria by the French, Jabotinsky wrote in the daily *Ha'aretz* that Syria was the most European of the lands in the East and that the national movement in Syria was the most serious of the Arab national movements. The right of the Syrian national movement, "just like our right, rests . . . not on the force of arms but on the force of universal morality and justice". The Arabs of Syria have "the eternal basis of national revival", for they are "one nation living in its country, working its land, speaking its language, a

[2] The task of Zionism, wrote Schechtman, is to remove *Eretz Israel* (Palestine) from this conflict, for "*Eretz Israel* is not a negotiable currency".

nation healthy and vigorous in body and spirit, rich in talent and with a propensity for and inclined to progress and development" and, moreover, recognized by the League of Nations. But, noted Jabotinsky, in 1920 the Syrian nationality had not yet matured sufficiently and was not yet fit for national and political sovereignty. "There is one truth, not pleasant to the national palate, but it must be digested, for it is the truth. This paper has no place for flattery – not for the Arabs and likewise not for the Jews. Like them, we too, although for different reasons, have not yet matured sufficiently for political self-rule in the full sense of the term. The ruling of a state today is not the simple matter known to earlier generations. Today, kingdoms cannot be created by a word, like Serbia or Bulgaria in their time – free and parliamentary kingdoms cannot be founded where the proper and rooted cultural tradition is not yet established. What will succeed in Czechoslovakia and Poland will not succeed in Syria and Palestine. The tasks of political rule in our day are much more complex than they were half a century ago. Only one path leads to the threshold of political freedom, and it is called 'culture' – it is the one and only path, there are no shortcuts. Spiritual education, the creation and improvement of material and communal order, in other words, slow, continuous and diligent work – that is the path to political liberation".

Jabotinsky thus acknowledged the authenticity of the growth of a Syrian Arab nationality, and indeed also that of an Egyptian or North African nationality. He viewed it not as part of a general and uniform Arab nationalism but as a local and distinct nationality. From this position he was less inclined than the other leaders of the Zionist movement to grant the Syrian or Egyptian nationality a role in the affairs of Palestine. As a rule he viewed the Arabs of Palestine as being a separate national and political factor, that is, not integrally related to a general Arab nationalism or to the Syrian nationality.

IV

Our concern, then, is with the difference between image and reality – the image of Revisionism, at least as it was formulated by

Jabotinsky, as a movement that denies the Arabs of Palestine a separate national existence and regards them as part of the general or Syrian Arab nationalism.[3] Indeed, the fundamental question confronting Revisionism was whether there exists a distinct Arab nationality in Palestine, and if so, what is its political status, and how should Zionism act with regard to it?

In the two well-known and widely quoted articles, "The Iron Wall" and "The Ethics of the Iron Wall", written in 1923, Jabotinsky laid down what were to be the basic assumptions of Revisionism on this question for a long time. These articles helped crystallize the world-view of Revisionism, but, paradoxically, also provided the materials to undermine it, preparing the ground for the rejection of Revisionism's political conclusions by groups that ideologically were offshoots of the movement. In any event, readers and citers of the articles often overlook the fact that Jabotinsky unequivocally asserted that the Arabs of Palestine are a distinct national entity and not an invention of British imperialism or Pan-Arabism, or someone else, but an authentic historical entity. Jabotinksy stated explicitly that the Arabs of Palestine had a natural national feeling and consciousness and that they were not merely an inseparable part of another national entity. Neither were they lacking a national identity or a consciousness of historical continuity, unity or destiny. Theirs was not the national consciousness of a rabble; it was patriotism. This patriotism was gathering all its strength to prevent Palestine from being turned into *Eretz Israel*. Precisely because of the existence of an Arab nationality in Palestine, a politics and morality of an "iron wall" was necessary. The politics – a Jewish legion and explicit British commitment; the moralilty – a Jewish national will that is whole, consolidated and confident in itself, its historic right, its justice, and its existential historical necessity.

This interpretation of the two articles is based on Jabotinsky's distinction between the national problems of the Arabs in Syria, Egypt or Iraq and the national problem of the Arabs of Palestine. "Even were it possible (and I doubt that it is) to convince the Arabs of Baghdad and Mecca that for them Palestine is but a small and unimportant piece of land, for the Arabs of Palestine it would still be

[3] That assumption appears even today in all the statements emanating from *Herut* and *Likud* circles.

not some outlying district but their homeland, the center and foundation of their independent national existence." That is a historical conception and a political position. The question of Palestine must be isolated from other problems that arise in the Middle East, and it must be understood that the Arabs of Palestine are a living nation which is not prepared to make concessions on issues crucial for its survival.

And in 1938, when he formulated the "ten-year plan" of the New Zionist Organization, and sought to reestablish the Zionist claim to the east bank of the Jordan, he wrote:

> An end must be put to the widely accepted but definitely mistaken view. Many believe that in the eyes of the Arabs, Transjordan is more hallowed than western Palestine . . . That is a lie. The holy places of Islam are found only in western Palestine, in Jerusalem and Hebron. In the Islamic tradition Transjordan has no recognized position. In the history of the Arabs as a people, Amman or as-Salt cannot be likened to Jaffa or Acre . . . If an Arab nationalist would have to choose one of the two sides of the Jordan, on the assumption that one of them had to come into Jewish hands, there is no doubt that he would give up Transjordan.

It was precisely this recognition of the rootedness and vitality of the national feeling of the Arabs in Palestine that underlay the assumption that the struggle between them and the Jewish national movement was going to be a protracted and difficult one. This formulation of uncompromising struggle between two national movements gave rise to two polar possibilities. One was derision of the national strength of the Arabs, denying their national character and describing them as a society lacking in organization and power, whose main political function was as an invention of British interests. Unlike the respect Jabotinsky felt for the Palestinian Arab nationality, here was disdain and dismissal. The second option was to maintain that Arab nationalism in Palestine was embodied in reactionary forms, in violence and murderous terror. Even if it was not a deep-rooted and authentic nationality, it would develop rapidly in reaction to the Zionist undertaking and might even consolidate politically and evince an active national will before *Yishuv* society does.

Thus, Revisionism contained a rejection of the assumption that the

Arabs of Palestine would consent to an arrangement that is less than national sovereignty over the country, as well as derision of the Arabs' ability to maintain a national society there; a view of Arab nationalism as an authentic independent entity, as well as a view of it as a fictitious and artificial one, unable to survive on its own. These two faces of Revisionism regarding the Arab national question led, in the course of time, to different solutions and formulations.

V

The first Revisionist position on the Arab question stemmed from the basic assumption already noted, that the Palestinian Arabs were an embryonic national society, in process of formation. Only such an initial assumption could have led Jabotinsky to formulate a solution that recognized the Palestinian Arabs' right to national autonomy and equal civil rights. If the Arabs of Palestine were not defined as an ethnic-cultural national minority, there would have been no reason to apply to them the principle of the rights of national minorities. Jabotinsky's view that the Palestine Arabs are an independent national unit stemmed from three major sources: (a) analysis of the national situation in Palestine; (b) the 1906 Helsingfors program; and (c) the theoreticians of nationalism in Eastern and Central Europe, such as Renner-Springer, Jellinek, Mazzini and others.

The Helsingfors program called for maximal autonomy for national minorities within the society of the national majority; not integration, rather the full maintenance of national distinctiveness in all its aspects and manifestations, and its institutionalization by law. Jabotinsky never qualified his support of the Helsingfors program, nor had he reservations about its relevance to Palestine. In the Helsingfors program, nationalism is defined not only as a shared historical language but also as a common destiny which is expressed in all spheres of life – from the Parliament to the street corner. It should also be recalled that Jabotinsky viewed the Helsingfors program in its day as a program taking Zionism down from the heights of *Ḥibbat-Zion* [4] utopia to pragmatic work in the present. From this it may be concluded that the application of the Helsingfors program

[4] *Ḥibbat Zion*, literally: "Love of Zion".

to Palestine seemed to him a realistic program and not a utopian vision. The program's realism was expressed, in part, in the assumption that it was inconceivable (and not necessary) that the sovereign nation absorb or swallow up the other smaller and weaker nations.

The historical outlook of Jabotinsky and of Revisionism was anchored in a recognition of the vitality of nationalism, which is a subjective force that requires no justification or affirmation from outside, but does need juridical objective expression. Nationalism is a supreme value, an expression of cultural progress, of the will to live, reflecting recognition of the unique and distinctive character of a shared destiny, and is maintained by a consciousness of continuity, identity and belonging. The Helsingfors program sought to grant Jewish nationalism an autonomous political and cultural expression anchored in law. Application of the Helsingfors program to Palestine would mean granting the very same rights to Arab nationalism there. Within the context framed by this principle the distinction was born between national territory and national realization, between nationalism and sovereign nationality. In Jabotinsky's view, as it had already been shaped prior to the First World War, the world cannot be neatly divided into nation-states fully coincident with the residence of the various nations and exclusive for each of them. Such a division is not possible, and self-determination does not have to be interpreted as sovereignty. There are binational and multinational states, and the fundamental question is which nation and nationality determines a country's national character. Jabotinsky was always aware of reservations and restrictions on the operation of sovereignty, and did not view it as an expression of autarky, isolation, a distinctiveness that is free of all restrictions and constraints. But what is decisive in all this is the national majority. It is the majority nation that gives the state its national physiognomy. Thus, Zionism's prime political task is to create a Jewish majority in Palestine, not a state but a majority, not a state but the political tools for the creation of a demographic majority. The national character of the territory is determined not by social and cultural quality but by quantity and by the culture in all its manifestations and levels. The autonomous nationality has many rights; the sovereign nationality has the same rights – and in addition has the decisive right to determine national policy on fundamental matters.

Jabotinsksy formulated a legal-constitutional structure. In doing so he paid no attention to social, economic and other differences, or to the dynamics that are a basic feature of the relations between national groups. While he did not ignore the tension that would exist in the future between the majority and the minority, and believed that the autonomous nation would seek to consolidate itself in terms of law, society, finances, economic interests and the like, he nevertheless believed that a harmony would develop as a result of the formal and fixed framework regulating the relations between the two entities.

Thus, Jabotinsky did support autarky and segregation of the economy and society of the Jews from that of the Arabs in Palestine. The existence side by side of a national majority and a national minority does not mean integration. Segregation is necessary in order to prevent Arab labor in the Jewish economy, to prevent Arabs from benefitting from imported Jewish capital, and also to prevent the purchasing of private Arab lands, which would create both an Arab proletariat and Arab finance-capitalism. At the same time, he understood that there was no way of keeping the *Yishuv* from enriching the Arabs and fostering their development. "From us they learn how to build modern industry, and they will easily acquire the capital from our people, for their labor is cheap. By our example we raise their national consciousness, their youths want to imitate our *ḥalutzim* (pioneers), the legionnaires, Trumpeldor – all for the Arab cause."

Jabotinsky's political solution is therefore based on the distinction between "nationality" and "citizenship", between autonomous national rights and sovereign national rights. The territorial integrity of Palestine should not be impaired, but there is no ignoring the reality of another nation spread throughout the land and not concentrated in some small section of it. The partition solution and the canton solution were not effective solutions. The territorial integrity should not be impaired, but within that integrity there is a basis for a legal-constitutional arrangement. Jabotinsky set down these assumptions in a learned composition written in 1912 called "Self-Rule of a National Minority":

(1) A national minority is a group of citizens of a particular nationality who cannot be granted political sovereignty in a specific territory.

(2) The national minority has a right to self-rule – regional, cultural, religious, as well as the right to unite on a country-wide basis in an association designed to ensure its rights in matters of education, health, labor, law, self-taxation; these rights are laid down and anchored in law.

VI

Following the events of 1929, a powerful and influential stream of thought arose within Revisionism. Its sources had, of course, existed before that, but the year 1929 provided the push for its emergence in a crystallized form. The Arabs of Palestine were no more conceived of as a national minority living on its land and entitled to equal national rights. Such a conception was considered a dangerous illusion. The Palestine Arab was viewed as one who impairs the sense of mastery, ownership and spiritual-territorial integrity of the Jew in his land. This, for example, is what Uri Zvi Greenberg wrote in "Vision of One of the Legions" (1928):

> And in the byways of Zion lives the Canaanite, his
> many wives, children, camels.
> Extracts bread from my ground,
> Presses honey from his trees . . .
> Cuts down every ancient wood
> And gives it to his goat to munch . . .
> Will devour every good parcel
> Lay waste all the land

Uri Zvi Greenberg's poetry contained harsh criticism of Jabotinsky's political positions (a fact often ignored), but Greenberg's disciples saw in it mainly scathing criticism of the official Zionist leadership, of Weizmann and the labor movement. In Greenberg's poetry the Arab has become an existential threat, a murderer who rises up against the Jew living in *Eretz Israel*, a "wolf-Arab" or "animal Arab", whereas Jabotinsky regarded the opposition between native and settler to be the root of the conflict. Greenberg viewed the Arabs as a rabble of murderous rioters. The events of 1929 put an end to the naive faith in cooperation between the two branches of the Semitic race:

We believed
Her a sister of our race, the daughter here of Arabia –
Behold the *abbaiya* . . . like the Jew's prayer shawl.
Has she our sister forgotten the family tree?
We, tried and great of wisdom, will teach her
The race's secret:
The teaching of the children of Shem.
Oh, how we erred;
When we returned home tried, great in wisdom and
ruddy-spirited,
Not a race sister speaking Arabic did we find
She still belonging to the house of Shem . . .
No, we found sister and concubine of the Edom race
And the crescent winking to the cross at Golgotha.
"Speech of the Son of Blood" (1929)

In 1929 Ahimeir wrote that British policy in Palestine was turning 160,000 European Jews into 'natives'; at the same time Greenberg was calling for the reestablishment of mastery by vengeance and by the building anew. This call was expressed most powerfully and impressively in "The Book of Accusation and Faith", which appeared against the background of the Arab revolt.

Revisionism interpreted the Arab revolt in diverse ways. On the one hand, it was met with scorn and seen as rioting imported from outside, and not as a national revolt; on the other hand, there was exaggeration of its power and recognition of it as a genuine national revolt. It was Jabotinsky who held the first view and believed that Great Britain could easily put down the revolt, although he was not unaware of the fact that the revolt was planned, and that the Arabs were attempting to prevent Palestine from becoming a haven for East European Jews; he was heedless of the social source of the violent confrontation. And it was Greenberg, who viewed the Arab as backward and barbaric, who saw the revolt as an Arab attempt to establish Arab national ownership and mastery over Palestine by means of armed struggle and terror. In his version, the Arabs were creating their "history" in *Eretz Israel*; they were trying to take over the country and in doing so, make it their homeland. That is a spiritual conquest and a war of national liberation. For that reason the policy of Jewish restraint (*havlagah*) was politically disastrous; more than that, it was an abnegation of the

active national will. In the national struggle, only the nation that brings to bear the full potential inherent in it becomes the victor and the sovereign. Against the rising tide of Arab nationalism, what was sorely needed was not a British iron wall, but an iron wall of active Jewish will.

In 1937 Uriel Halperin, known as Yonatan Ratosh, wrote in *ha-Yarden*:

> Lights in the salt-waste desertscape: Warning!
> The people dwelling in oases
> Holds me in scorn!
> The edge of the plain stretches out,
> Wherefore?
> By the sword thou shalt live,
> In strength be born.

The sons of Arabia, the children of Kedar, are primitive murderers embodying the primal national urge. Uri Zvi Greenberg wrote:

> And I say: A land taken by blood,
> Only such taken by blood, weds the people
> In holy blood tie.
> Blood will decide who rules here.

While at the same time Halperin (Ratosh) wrote:

> O visionary, the heavens are the heaven of God
> And the earth unto man is given;
> To the line of heaven man's eyes long
> And on earth it is blood for blood . . .
> O visionary, in heaven is God the all-powerful,
> On earth it is fire for fire.
> The heavens are heaven for all,
> And the earth to the conqueror belongs.

Behind the *Irgun Zvai Leumi*'s break from the policy of restraint were two not always reconcilable assumptions. There was the Jabotinsky assumption, that the British must be shown that the Jewish *Yishuv* had a greater combat potential than the Arabs, that the *Yishuv* was not "mud and rags". And there was the maximalist assumption, that if national activism, pride, the national will to live – mastery – were not demonstrated, the Arabs would become the masters of *Eretz Israel* politically and spiritually. The partition plan was conceived as a

Jewish readiness to accept a Jewish ghetto in *Eretz Israel*, and the Arab opposition to it as proof of the spiritual national wholeness of the Arab side, which was not prepared to make concessions. Arab nationalism was successful because it operated in a vacuum, but let it encounter Jewish force and it would immediately break apart. The *Nili* legend – that of a small group of people, native to the country and able to conquer and take control of it – was cultivated by the maximalist circle, and in no small measure it undercut the Revisionist principle of cooperation with Great Britain on the basis of the 1917 Balfour Declaration. The activities of the *Irgun*, and later of *Lehi*, were sustained in no small part by the assumption that Arab nationalism was basically weak and ultimately lacking in fiber, and that to prevent the Arab population from joining the military struggle of the Arab gangs it would be enough for the *Yishuv* to display strength and respond vigorously. All branches of Revisionism shared the belief that it was in Zionism's power to reshape the face of the Middle East, for Jewish nationalism had features of much superior quality than those of Arab nationalism.

VII

What were the solutions proposed by Revisionism in light of this analysis of the Jewish-Arab national conflict in Palestine? Ostensibly the solution most congenial to Revisionism is partition: whoever advocates absolute segregation betwen the two nations should not, it seems, find it difficult to consent that this segregation also be manifest in territorial separation. It is not surprising, therefore, that in the 1950s people of Revisionist background reached the conclusion that if the Arabs of Palestine were defined as a national minority, and there was a readiness to grant them autonomous national rights, it was best to carry this through to the end and agree to the establishment of two national states within Mandatory Palestine. However, Revisionism as an ideology and as a political movement opposed the partition plan and the idea of partition.

Jabotinsky's opposition to the partition plan was essentially political, although at a deeper level idea and principle were also at work. Basically Jabotinsky felt that the plan had no chance of being

implemented because the British had withdrawn from it, and Zionist consent to partition would be an admission that the British Mandate was no longer viable. But Revisionism as a movement rejected the plan because it undermined the emotional foundations and ideas upon which the movement developed as a social and ideological movement since 1925. For the vast majority of its members, partition was an assault on the territorial integrity of *Eretz Israel*, on the historic unity between the Jewish nation and the land of Israel. Jabotinsky used pragmatic arguments in 1937 (also used today) when he spoke of Arab cannons positioned fifteen miles from Tel-Aviv and twenty miles from Haifa, of Arab irredentism, of an Arab movement wishing to abolish partition, and the like.

It should be recalled that Ben-Gurion favored the 1937 partition plan, in part because it proposed a transfer of the Arab population to beyond the borders of the Jewish state. Jabotinksy rejected this population transfer program, for such a program could boomerang. There was enough room in Palestine on both sides of the Jordan for all the Jews of East Europe and for all the Arab inhabitants of the country. It is not surprising that maximalist Revisionist circles vehemently accused Jabotinsky (and even Ahimeir) of not reaching the conclusion demanded by the situation, that only a planned population transfer would lead to a full solution of the national conflict.

The transfer idea was adopted by only a small minority within the "national movement", which regarded it as a solution that would give the Jewish people the exclusive hold over *Eretz Israel.* Another small group, of a different tendency altogether, advocated a new form of Jewish-Arab integration in Palestine as one nation. Another variant spoke of an alliance with the non-Muslim national elements in the Middle East, such as the Copts, Maronites, Kurds and Druze. Some circles emerging from Revisionism spoke of the establishment of a separate state for the Palestinian Arabs residing on the West Bank of the Jordan. This approach could base itself on Jabotinsky's ideas; the two nations, the Jews and the Arabs, who both want national sovereignty, must reach a compromise based on territorial partition. This approach, although obviously very far from the Jabotinsky conclusions, is a possible and logical development of the Jabotinsky analysis.

VIII

However, as a movement and ideology, Revisionism developed along two main lines in its attitude to the problem of Arab nationalism in Palestine.

One approach, rooted in the Helsingfors tradition, acknowledges the existence of an Arab minority with rights in Palestine and, while rejecting this minority's claim to national sovereignty, is willing to grant it broad autonomy. This approach is based on recognition of the quantitative (and qualitative) advantage of Jewish nationalism over Arab nationalism and on the greater justice of the Jewish national claim as compared to that of the Arabs. A different formulation, further from the Helsingfors formula but to some extent close to it in spirit, speaks of respect for the Arabs of Palestine and granting them equal civil rights, but without the legal-constitutional arrangement described in the Helsingfors program. This variant also adopts the description of Arab society in Palestine not as a national society, constituting an independent national entity, but as a cultural-religious society, very much a part of the Arab nation beyond the borders of Palestine; therefore, it is proper to speak not of a separate national minority but of a section of a large nationality that enjoys sovereignty outside the country's borders. At the base of this formulation, as noted, is a rejection of Jabotinsky's historical interpretation of the national character of the Arabs of Palestine.

The second approach denies altogether the existence of a Palestinian Arab nationality, and demands that Jewish national sovereignty be implemented without any restriction.

Both approaches assert that Palestine in its entirety is to be under Jewish sovereignty. The first approach,which lost its following after the Mandate came to an end, is fully continuous with Jabotinsky's position. The second position, which predominates among Revisionism's successors today, and is related to Jabotinsky's positions in a much more complex way, recognizes only an Arab minority, but not a national history or national rights. The heirs of Revisionism rejected Jabotinsky's basic assumption that there exists a separate Arab national entity in Palestine, but their political conclusions are identical with his.

IX

What are the implications of this for the conduct of the political and national struggle to achieve full and recognized Jewish sovereignty over Palestine?

First of all, fortification of the national will and of a national consciousness that is free of doubts, and the implantation of an unshakeable awareness of the historical justice of Zionism. There is no symmetry! Although there are two national movements in the area, there is no symmetry, and Zionism will tip the scales decisively whatever the consideration. Revisionism had to contend with a long row of weighty agruments: anti-national, pacifist, pragmatic and moralistic. Does not the claim to sovereignty over Palestine mean the dispossession of a people rooted in its soil? Isn't it an unrealistic claim? Doesn't it contradict the principle of self-determination? In his appearance before the Peel Commission in 1937, Jabotinsky spoke in both political-strategic terms as well as historical-moral terms. After the First World War, he argued, the globe was redivided and national borders redrawn. The revision was between peoples with land and peoples without land; those who have a great deal must relinquish some of it for the sake of those who have none. The fact that the Arabs live in Palestine and the Jews were expelled from it and wish to return does not accord the present inhabitants an advantage over those who were expelled and wish to return. The Jews' moral argument is stronger, for Jewish nationalism has only one land. In light of the grave situation of the Jews of Europe, Jabotinsky began to abandon his assumptions of earlier years about Palestine also being a center for Arab national aspirations, and asserted – in no small part because of the pressing current political need – that the Palestinian Arabs could find an outlet for their national aspirations outside of Palestine, whereas the Jews could realize their nationalism only in *Eretz Israel*. It can thus be said that Jabotinsky's historical analysis was marred by internal contradictions, just as Revisionism's historical analysis has many sides. But the subjective dimension, the definition of Jewish nationalism and its aspirations, is a stable and consistent dimension, and there is but one national political solution.[5]

[5] This is the source of the immanent tension between the pressure to realize the national sovereignty *immediately*, and the profound political dimension in

From this it should not be surmised that with the politics of the "iron wall" Jabotinksy foresaw inevitable and protracted war between Jews and Arabs. As long as he believed in Zionist-British cooperation, he trusted in Great Britain's ability to impose the desired political solution on the Arabs without any trouble. Nor did he believe in the Arabs' military strength, or that they posed a real military threat, provided the Jews would be allowed to organize in military formations. Jabotinsky envisaged continued Arab opposition but not continuous warfare, as envisioned by maximalists of eschatological bent within Revisionism. His pessimism about the possibility of compromise was rooted in a great optimism, namely, that the Jewish-Arab opposition would not be a violent one, and would be decided not by war but on the strength of the demographic and political realities. The maximalists among his disciples did not share this optimism. As they saw it, there would be a long and difficult war.

Jabotinsky's optimism presumed that final compromise with the Arabs – a compromise that was essentially Arab acquiescence to Jewish sovereignty over Palestine – would come after the Arabs realized that they could neither prevent nor detract from this sovereignty. In 1923 he wrote that "it is impossible to dream of a voluntary agreement between us and the Arabs of Palestine, not now and not in the foreseeable future". No people is willing to relinquish its national home, and therefore a moderation of Zionist aspirations or declarations will fool no one. Any compromise would mean Arab supervision of *aliyah* (Jewish immigration to Palestine), and the inclusion of Palestine in an Arab federation would turn the country into a small Jewish ghetto surrounded by Arab states. A Jewish state right now (in 1931 or 1937) was a renunciation of the Mandate and an abandonment of the Jews and the entire Middle East to the forces of Arab reaction, and perhaps also to the Comintern. "Peace will prevail in *Eretz Israel*, but only when the Jews will become the majority or when the Arabs will be convinced that this solution is necessary and inescapable".

Revisionism which acknowledges the importance of agreement and support (and commitment) by a powerful international party (Great Britain or the United States).

The way to conclude the Arab-Jewish conflict was by stages. First, "total abandonment of all attempts to come to an agreement in the present". Second, the attainment of the political conditions needed for the consolidation of the Jewish *Yishuv* in Palestine. It is clear, therefore, that the focus of Revisionist policy was how to achieve cooperation with Great Britain and the political conditions for consolidating the *Yishuv*. As a political movement Revisionism had to deal with heavy pressures of two sorts: the pressure to create a basis for talks with Great Britain and the pressure within the movement to remain faithful to ideal and political formulas. As a statesman, Jabotinsky himself confronted a dilemma of this sort when Weizmann asked (in 1923) that he consent to the separation of Transjordan from Western Palestine, fearing that Great Britain might not approve of the Mandate. Later, it is true, he charged Weizmann of failure, but that dramatic instance no doubt made him aware of the relationship between political demands and the conduct of policy under conditions of pressure. The fact is that Revisionism's successors gave up the demand that Western Palestine, *Eretz Israel*, and Transjordan be united and the return to the original boundaries of the Mandate is no longer part of the political and ideological lexicon of *Ḥerut*. In the program of the Temporary Executive Committee of the Jews of *Eretz Israel* in 1919, Jabotinsky, on the defensive *vis-à-vis* maximalists and minimalists alike, maintained that a British trusteeship regime was required for Palestine and Transjordan and under such a regime "every national and religious group, in every colony, would be considered a national community", and would therefore be accorded self-rule in internal matters. That, he asserted, was the most Zionism could demand in 1919. On this basis his "parity plan" of December 1922 was born. According to this plan Jabotinsky was prepared to recognize the Hashemite dynasty and agreed to a federation with Transjordan in order to prevent partition of the country, viewing the arrangement as only temporary and as one that would no longer be in effect after the balance of forces changed. Thus, Jabotinskian Revisionism as a political method was not devoid of the element of compromise and of tactical maneuvering that takes into account changing political circumstances and pressures. However, as an ideological movement, Revisionism exposed the Zionist movement as a whole to the sharp edge of a basic question: does not the tactical

concession ultimately also mean a concession of principle? And what is the proper tactical concession – a relinquishment of sovereignty over part of the territory or consent to a certain diminishment of sovereignty over the entire territory?

Revisionism bequeathed to the Zionist movement not only fixed and clear basic rules but also internal dilemmas and tensions. From a purely historical point of view the encounter between "ideology" and "reality" in a quasi-Revisionist policy in its most recent manifestation is intriguing and of considerable interest. It should be recalled that towards the end of his life Jabotinsky raised an almost utopian vision of international society, limiting the sovereignty of national societies *vis-à-vis* other nations, without impairing domestic sovereignty, although supervising it, and asserted that the solution to the Arab-Jewish conflict would be part of the general universal arrangement. The universal arrangement would enable the local conflict to be settled, and only the settlement of the local conflict would make possible a new, effective and just universal order.

The Confrontation Between Moshe Sharett and David Ben-Gurion

Gabriel Sheffer

In the 1950s, the political elite of Israel was shaken by a confrontation between two political leaders of outstanding stature, David Ben-Gurion and Moshe Sharett. They clashed over a variety of issues, stemming mainly from their disparate attitudes towards the Jewish-Arab conflict. The conflict was the central problem facing Israeli society, involving the very survival of the nation. It created objective problems of major proportions and consumed enormous human and economic resources. It perforce became an emotional issue as well, and Israeli society developed divergent attitudes towards the nature of the conflict and its future. The political elite of Israel devoted much of its energy to matters connected with the conflict.

Like Israeli society at large, the established political elite was not in agreement as to the diagnosis or prognosis of the conflict. There was no consensus on the policy likely to lead to a solution. The organized parties and the various ideological groups formed a full spectrum of attitudes and approaches to the conflict, its significance for Israeli society, and the best and most practical ways of solving it. At one extreme were socialist views, such as those of *Hashomer Haza'ir,* and humanist attitudes represented by the heirs of *Brit Shalom*. These groups advocated supranational or binational solutions to the conflict.[1] In the center were a variety of similar attitudes and political platforms held by the Labour movement and by the liberal General

*G. Sheffer is a graduate of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and holds a D. Phil. degree from Oxford University, England. He is the author of several books and articles on British policies in Palestine and on the Arab-Israeli conflict. He teaches political science at the Hebrew University, and is Associate Director of the Leonard Davis Institute for International Relations, Hebrew University, Jerusalem.

[1] S.L. Hattis, *The Binational Idea in Palestine During Mandatory Times* (Haifa:

Zionists. From the mid 1930s, most of these groups adopted the idea of the partition of Palestine west of the Jordan River, conceived as the solution not only to the Jewish problem, but also to the Jewish-Arab conflict as a whole. At the other end of the spectrum lay the attitude of the religious groups and the Revisionists. With certain variations, these groups advocated the preservation of the integrity of Palestine at almost any price. A strong Jewish state within the boundaries of pre-1948 Palestine seemed to them the only answer to the conflict. The various solutions offered by these groups envisaged an "iron wall" against the perceived implacable hostility of the Arabs towards the Zionist movement.[2]

In spite of the divergence between the attitudes current in the Jewish political system, they had one thing in common: almost all groups believed that the conflict could ultimately be solved. Each group claimed that if its own view were adopted, the conflict would be comprehensively resolved and peace would be established or would come about in the region.

The differences between the views of the various parties and ideological factions was of great importance until the establishment of the state in 1948. Their "fundamental ideologies" influenced the "operative ideologies" that they adopted.[3] In turn, the "operative ideologies" determined the coalitions that ruled the Zionist movement and the Jewish community in Palestine. Even if the different fundamental ideologies had only an indirect effect on the immediate development of attitudes towards the Jewish-Arab conflict, they had great influence on the political structure and decision-making processes within the Jewish side to the conflict.[4] After the founding of

---

Shikmona, 1970); A. Margalit, *Ha-Shomer ha-Za'ir – From an Adolescent Group to Marxist Revolutionarism, 1913-1936* (Tel-Aviv: Hakibbutz Hame'uhad, 1971); A. Keidar, "The Attitudes of Brit Shalom", in A. Keidar and B.Z. Yehoshua, eds., *Ideology and Zionist Policy* (Jerusalem: The Zalman Shazar Center, 1978) (All in Hebrew.)

[2] Y. Shavit, *From a Majority to State – The Revisionist Movement, the Settlement Plans and the Social Idea* (Tel-Aviv: Yariv-Hadar, 1978); W.Z. Laqueur, *History of Zionism* (Tel-Aviv: Schocken, 1974), pp. 269-304; D. Horowitz and M. Lissak, *From Yishuv to State* (Tel-Aviv: Am Oved, 1977), pp. 194-197. (All in Hebrew.)

[3] M. Seliger, "Fundamental and Operative Ideology: The Two Principal Dimensions of Political Argumentation", *Policy Sciences* 1 (1970).

[4] Horowitz and Lissak, *From Yishuv to State*, pp. 233-242, 305-309.

Israel and the establishment of its formal political institutions, the official platforms of the parties for the most part created the atmosphere in which the political elite operated.[5] The great measure of independence that the political elite acquired was particularly evident in the spheres of foreign and defense policies. Because of the existence of a dominant party, *Mapai,* without which it was impossible to form a government by democratic means, the importance of the party's elite, which was directly engaged in the determination of foreign and defense policy, was greatly enhanced. This elite was small and self-contained; it operated in conditions of almost total secrecy and jealously guarded its independence.[6]

The rules of secrecy were applied by this elite not only against hostile elements at home and abroad, but also against parties that did not participate in the ruling coalition and against its own supporters. Thus the shades of opinion and the controversies within this elite are important: because of its self-imposed isolation, the views it held were hardly a reflection of public opinion; rather, the leaders of *Mapai* molded the attitudes of their followers.

One aim of this article is to examine the extent of the homogeneity of this elite in its attitude towards the nature of the Israel-Arab conflict and the possibility of its resolution. This will be pursued by the examination of the internal debates and confrontations between Moshe Sharett and David Ben-Gurion in the period between the establishment of the state (1948) and the Sinai Campaign (1956). The period has a special significance, as it was when both Ben-Gurion and Sharett were at the apex of their political careers; each had achieved fame, credibility and recognition among Israelis, in the Jewish Diaspora and the non-Jewish world, and they saw themselves – and were regarded – as the senior leaders in the Israeli political hierarchy.

[5] Horowitz and Lissak, *ibid.*, pp. 147-180, 309-316; E. Gutmann and Y. Landau, "The Israeli Political Elite – Its Characteristics and Composition", in M. Lissak and E. Gutmann, eds., *The Israeli Political System* (Tel-Aviv: Am Oved, 1977), pp. 192-228 (Hebrew); P.Y. Medding *Mapai in Israel* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1972), Chaps. 7, 8; M. Aronoff, "Party Center and Local Branch Relationships: The Israel Labor Party", in A. Arian, ed., *The Elections in Israel, 1969* (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Academic Press), 1972, pp. 150-182.

[6] See in particular E. Gutmann, "Camps and Parties – Stability and Change", in Lissak and Gutmann, *The Israeli Political System*, pp. 164-170; and Horowitz and Lissak, *From Yishuv to State*, pp. 272-316 (in Hebrew).

This article also examines the premise that Ben-Gurion and Sharett were the most prominent representatives of two concepts of the nature of the conflict and of the best and most feasible ways of solving it. It examines the assumption that, despite an agreement between the two men on domestic political and social issues, and on the political strategy that should be adopted, there was a profound division between them on precisely the most critical issue for the young State of Israel. To better understand this, we will trace and analyze the origins of the differences of opinion between the two leaders, who had been close colleagues in the same political movement for about forty years, had worked shoulder-to-shoulder for more than twenty years, and together had molded the political strategy and tactics of the Zionist movement and the *Yishuv*. The last objective of this paper is more theoretical: it will study the influence of the organizational positions, held by the political leaders, on their political attitudes and the policies they adopted.[7]

It has long been known that there were deep divisions and frequent clashes between the two leaders, but the scope of the controversy, its depth and its long- and short-term political implications have not yet been fully examined. In particular, the reasons for the controversy, with respect to the factors that molded the political views and acts of the two men, have been somewhat neglected, as has the question whether it was a broader confrontation between more or less clearly defined political groups supporting each of the two leaders.

In light of these considerations, the first part of this paper will deal with the existing interpretations on the divergences of opinions and policies between Ben-Gurion and Sharett, and with the attitudes of the protagonists themselves towards the roots of their dispute. The second part will deal with the origins of the dispute during the two leaders' formative years. The third part will reexamine the attitudes and views of the two in the period 1948-56. The fourth section will deal with the political and military implications of the dispute, and will present a review of the tactical issues over which the two men clashed in the first decade after the establishment of Israel. The fifth part will be devoted to the question of the organizational positions of

[7] See the vast literature written after the publication of G. Allison, *Essence of Decision* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1971).

the two men and the influence of their status on their opinions and outlook with regard to the Middle East.

Interpretations of the Confrontation

For many reasons, the question of Sharett's role in policy-making has not received broad or sympathetic treatment by the historians of the *Yishuv* or the State of Israel. It is not the aim of this paper to examine these reasons, nor will it discuss the quite separate issue of whether an injustice has thereby been done to Sharett's personality and views.[8] However, the dearth of studies on the Ben-Gurion – Sharett controversy has resulted in the commentaries on the dispute being one-sided. This paper will attempt to balance the picture.

Evaluations of the roots of the conflict have come mainly from the "Ben-Gurionist camp". Without entering into a full and detailed analysis of each of the commentaries in this school, it is clear that they are based on a few fundamental assumptions which have also become widely accepted by the public and have contributed to the conventional images of the two leaders, particularly the less favorable image of Sharett. The three main premises are: first, that the controversy was conducted mainly between the two leaders themselves, that the total number of people involved in the dispute was small, and that it did not go beyond a personal political struggle between the two central figures in *Mapai;* second, that the "Ben-Gurion line" prevailed in terms of the specific encounters and – what is perhaps more important – that this line was correct or preferable also in terms of its long-term historical implications; and third, that in the period after the establishment of Israel the dispute was conducted mainly on the tactical level – in other words, that it was mainly over the nature of Israel's responses to the actions of the great powers and the Arabs – and that its content centered mainly on the problem of political activism and on the use of Israel's military forces.

To a large extent this interpretation was created by Ben-Gurion himself; at any rate, he laid its foundations at the height of his political

[8] See I. Kolatt, "Moshe Sharett – A Palestinian Zionist Politician", *Betfutzot Hagola,* No. 75-76 (1975) (Hebrew). A political biography of Sharett is being written by the present author.

struggle with Sharett. There were variations in the manner in which Ben-Gurion described the clash in different circles. To his associates, the habitually introverted and secretive Ben-Gurion unveiled motives connected with the dispute; he did not disclose these to the public. In these closed circles it was well known that his criticism of Sharett was not confined to personal political struggles inside the party, or to the tactical aspects of foreign and defense policy. His closest followers were aware of the ideological differences and the complex psychological relationship between the two men. To them Ben-Gurion spoke about what he called Sharett's intellectual and political weakness and insisted that he, Ben-Gurion, would not allow Sharett to inculcate generations of young Israelis with his outlook. Party circles got only general information on the power struggle and the clashes between the two. In fact, in 1953, on the eve of Sharett's appointment as Prime Minister and again when he was finally ejected from the Israel government in 1956, part of the drama took place before party institutions and with their participation. Without mentioning his adversary by name, Ben-Gurion made public references (in some cases before huge audiences) to his encounters with Sharett.[9] Ben-Gurion refrained from explicitly naming his rival because of his adherence to the unwritten rules of party decorum. However, observers understood who and what Ben-Gurion was talking about. In his public statements Ben-Gurion's veiled criticism focused on two aspects of Sharett's thinking: the fact that Sharett attached paramount importance to "what the gentiles will say", an attitude Ben-Gurion rejected with open contempt, and Sharett's views on the circumstances and conditions for the use of military force by Israel. These two aspects were lumped together in such a way that it was impossible to separate them either emotionally or analytically. The "Sharett line" became synonymous with fear of the great powers and international organizations and timidity over the use of Israel's military power. In contrast to Ben-Gurion, Sharett scrupulously refrained from discussing his conflict with his rival in broad party or public arenas. Only his most intimate friends were privy to Sharett's innermost thoughts. Some of these feelings were expressed

[9] See, for example, Ben-Gurion's speech on Israel's Independence Day, 1955; D. Ben-Gurion, *The Vision and the Way* (Tel-Aviv: Ayanot, 1957), Vol. 5. pp. 166-171 (Hebrew).

only in his diary.[10] Consequently, most of the commentators on the struggle between the two leaders have accepted the basic premises of the "Ben-Gurion school" without reservation and without bothering with detailed examinations.

It was not unnatural, for example, that Moshe Dayan, who served as Chief of Staff between 1953-58 and was a close associate of Ben-Gurion, evaluated the "Sharett line" in the same way as his mentor, also concentrating on the two aspects of political and military activism. Dayan claimed:

> The differences of opinion between Ben-Gurion and Sharett arose out of their divergent attitudes to foreign policy, as well as their contrasting personalities. "Ben-Gurionism" meant forcefulness, activism, leadership, concentration on the essentials, and fearless determination, even in the face of dangers and difficulties. "Sharettism" symbolized compromise, excessive caution, making do with what was on hand at the expense of what was desirable.[11]

Dayan briefly summarized the major incidents that highlighted points of disagreement between the two, once again on the basis of Ben-Gurion's statements: Sharett's hesitations in 1948 whether to establish the Jewish state forthwith; Ben-Gurion's accusations that Sharett had hindered military operations in Judea and Samaria that would be mourned for generations to come; the proclamation of Jerusalem as Israel's capital against Sharett's judgment; Ben-Gurion's opposition to Sharett's appointment as Prime Minister; his opposition to Sharett's activities with regard to relations between the Foreign Ministry and Defense Ministry; Sharett's opposition to preemptive strikes and to a military operation to open the Straits of Tiran in 1956; and what was for Ben-Gurion the last straw, a "party matter": the appointment of Sharett as Secretary General of *Mapai*.[12]

In his comprehensive biography of Ben-Gurion, Michael Bar-Zohar for the most part follows the interpretations of Ben-Gurion

[10] See M. Sharett, *A Personal Diary* (Tel-Aviv: Ma'ariv, 1978), Vol. 4, pp. 919-925 (Hebrew).

[11] M. Dayan, *Milestones* (Tel-Aviv: Yediot Ahronot, 1976), p. 208; see also pp. 137, 139 (Hebrew).

[12] *Ibid.*, pp. 208-209.

and Dayan. He concludes that in the early 1950s a "third period" of estrangement began in the relations between Ben-Gurion and Sharett (the "first" having occurred in the mid-1930s and the "second" during the early 1940s) and left its imprint on the hostile relations between the two.[13] Bar-Zohar does not diverge from the "Ben-Gurionist interpretation" when he states that "the controversy over 'what the gentiles will say' was the key to most of the disputes which began to poison the atmosphere between Ben-Gurion and Sharett in the 1950s".[14] However, Bar-Zohar links this controversy to the general question of how to deal with the Arabs. According to Bar-Zohar, Sharett regarded foreign powers and international public opinion as essential instruments through which Israel's main problems could be solved: negotiations with the Arabs leading to the signing of a peace treaty. Ben-Gurion, Bar-Zohar writes, was a stranger to the Arabs and the Arabs were strangers to him; Ben-Gurion neither understood nor liked the Arabs and was convinced that they sought to destroy the State of Israel. Therefore Ben-Gurion believed that Israel must demonstrate her military power to the Arabs time and again. In contrast to Ben-Gurion, Bar-Zohar writes, Sharett was much more sympathetic to the Arabs and believed that Israel could change Arab hostility through conciliation, self-restraint and refraining from military reprisals as much as possible.[15] Like Dayan, Bar-Zohar puts strong emphasis on a confrontation between "two leaders who were totally different in most of their personal traits".[16]

When Bar-Zohar discusses the background to Sharett's ejection from the government and, in retrospect, from the political leadership altogether, he advances two main reasons for this. "One had to do with personalities, and the other – which was the more fundamental – arose out of the central issue of whether Israel ought to embark upon a preemptive war against Egypt". Ben-Gurion supported those who argued that such a war was necessary, i.e., Dayan, while Sharett was opposed to such a war because he did not wish to damage the network of relationships Israel had created with the great powers and international organizations. "The basis of

[13] M. Bar-Zohar, *Ben-Gurion* (Tel-Aviv: Am Oved, 1977), Vol. 2, pp. 965-967 (Hebrew).

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 967. [15] *Ibid.*, pp. 967-971. [16] *Ibid.*, p. 696.

the controversy was substantive", Bar-Zohar writes. "A forceful defense policy – yes or no? A preemptive strike – yes or no? A bold and unequivocal decision, or a renewed effort to explain our position?"[17]

While this interpretation bears a wider perspective than that of Moshe Dayan's, it is still not comprehensive. Although Bar-Zohar notes the extent of the controversy and its complexity, in his conclusions he returns to the basic, simplistic elements of Ben-Gurion's argument against Sharett and the "Sharett line". In his essentially sound evaluation of the connection between the Sharett – Ben-Gurion confrontation and the nature of the Arab-Israel conflict, Bar-Zohar follows the assessment of Yaacov Herzog, an outstanding intellectual who for many years worked in the civil service and was very close to many Israeli leaders. Herzog, as quoted by Bar-Zohar, argued that "the dispute between Ben-Gurion and Sharett that was conducted in the years 1953-56 was rooted in the question of whether there was any possibility whatsoever of breaking through the wall of Arab resistance to achieve peace. Sharett believed that the possibility existed. Ben-Gurion held that it did not. Looking back over the events of the past fifteen years, I have to conclude that Ben-Gurion was right".[18] These are also the central issues dealt with in the present article, which will attempt to examine whether this interpretation is valid.

In writing Ben-Gurion's biography, Bar-Zohar consulted the work of Michael Brecher, who adopted a broader approach in his analysis of the confrontation between Ben-Gurion and Sharett as it figured in Brecher's search for the patterns of the formation of Israel's foreign policy. Brecher's point of departure in explaining the difference of attitudes lies in the concepts of Jewish revival held by the two leaders.[19] He argues that for Ben-Gurion, the Jews' own efforts and

[17] *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, pp. 1185-1188.

[18] *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, p. 968; and cf. U. Bialer, "The Israeli-Arab Conflict Through the Eyes of Ben-Gurion and Sharett", *Medina Umemshal* 1 (No. 2, Autumn 1971), pp. 71-84; Y. Donietz, "Basic Principles in Ben-Gurion's Political and Defense Concepts and his Attitudes Towards the Arab-Israeli Conflict", *Medina Umemshal* 1 (No. 1, Summer 1971), pp. 60-76; I. Kolatt, *Fathers and Founders* (Tel-Aviv: Hakibbutz Hame'uhad, 1975), pp. 23-63. (All in Hebrew.)

[19] M. Brecher, *The Foreign Policy System of Israel* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), pp. 257-261.

their physical presence determined the nation-building processes. For Sharett, the spiritual and intellectual revival was the central factor that stimulated gradual processes of national revival that were, in turn, dependent on the historical, international and regional situations. Brecher maintains that the two held similar images of the global system, yet argued bitterly over aspects about which they differed,[20] the most serious and profound differences being their respective images of the "Arabs". The political implication, in Brecher's opinion, was the dichotomy between reprisals, preferred by Ben-Gurion, and the creation of an atmosphere conducive to peace, which was Sharett's strategy.[21] Both before 1948 and after the establishment of Israel, the two leaders represented two opposing approaches to the cardinal question of Israeli relations with the neighboring Arab countries. But a successful formula eluded them, as it continues to cause turmoil among their heirs.[22] On this last aspect, Sharett himself wrote: "This unceasing and malignant psychological contrast, which has lasted for so many years, continues to create crises even in this period of [Ben-Gurion's] retirement".[23]

When the controversy was at its height (from 1953 to 1956), the protagonists themselves sensed, and were perhaps fully conscious of, the extent and depth of their differences, even if they did not fully air them in public until years later. From a reexamination of their statements, it is evident that the two were in agreement about one issue: they both regarded their political relations since 1930 as a "coalition" forced upon them by historical circumstances, and by their party, *Mapai*. They preserved this coalition to maintain the unity of the Labour movement, particularly their own party. The term "coalition" and the analysis of its meaning recur frequently in the letters they exchanged and in their conversations in the late 1950s. They knew well the fragility of their cooperation and the ease with which it could be broken. On this Ben-Gurion wrote to Sharett:

> Our political cooperation, even in the early days when we served together in the Jewish Agency, was a kind of a coalition, for we held different attitudes. This "coalition" continued after the establishment of the state. Despite the distance and differences between our attitudes, I consciously held to it out of necessity and because of the advantages to

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 289. [21] *Ibid.*, pp. 280-290. [22] *Ibid.*, p. 290

[23] M. Sharett, *A Personal Diary*, Vol. 5, pp. 1445-1454 (entry for June 17, 1956).

> be derived from that coalition. And it is not a matter of this or that speech or statement; I do not need to hear your speeches to know your opinion and approach, just as you do not need to hear my speeches to know that my attitude is different.[24]

Sharett replied to Ben-Gurion: "Your lines about our coalition during the Jewish Agency years and after the establishment of the State of Israel are correct and precise".[25] And once again, Ben-Gurion: "[Our] 'coalition' is not a personal but a party matter [for the] different attitudes are not only personal. I am more or less familiar with our public, and I know that both attitudes are widespread."[26]

Both leaders sought to elucidate the background and the reasons for the controversy; this was important from an internal political standpoint, for an examination of the origins might have facilitated removal of the obstacles to continued cooperation and the maintenance of the cohesion of their party. According to Sharett, the dispute started during World War II in the context of a series of incidents with Ben-Gurion regarding Sharett's relations with his "Dear Chief", Dr. Chaim Weizmann, then President of the World Zionist Organization. In particular, Sharett referred to a clash with Ben-Gurion concerning Sharett's 1943 visit to the United States to help Weizmann in his contacts with the American administration.[27] At that time the Americans were initiating talks between representatives of the Jewish Agency and emissaries of King Ibn-Saud of Saudi Arabia. Ben-Gurion was categorically opposed to Sharett's trip and asked Sharett not to go; he well understood the potential threat to himself of a close political alliance between Weizmann and Sharett, and hence he sought to reduce the ties between the two. Sharett paid no attention to Ben-Gurion's request and set out to help Weizmann. His return signalled the beginning of a studied coolness in Ben-Gurion's behavior towards Sharett. The damage to Sharett was both political and personal, which was what Ben-Gurion had intended.

On the other hand, Ben-Gurion saw the controversy with Sharett as a long-standing one that did not break out over a technical or tactical

[24] Ben-Gurion to Sharett, March 26, 1954, *ibid.*, Vol. 2, pp. 418-419.

[25] Sharett to Ben-Gurion, April 4, 1954, in *ibid.*, pp. 435-437.

[26] Ben-Gurion to Sharett, April 8, 1954, *ibid.*, p. 453.

[27] *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, pp. 179-190 (November 23, 1953). Cf. M. Bar-Zohar, *Ben-Gurion*, Vol. 2, pp. 962-964.

question such as Sharett's journey to the United States or his relations with Weizmann. Ben-Gurion dated the beginning of the dispute to the period when they first began to work together in the Jewish Agency Executive in the early 1930s. Ben-Gurion wrote to Sharett: "I know of political activities you have conducted . . . with which I am in total agreement, and I appreciate the ability and dedication with which they were carried out. But I have disagreed with your approach to political affairs not since the establishment of the state, but almost from the earliest times we worked together."[28]

Indeed, from the early 1930s there were profound differences of opinion and open arguments between the two men over a number of issues. But the true origins of the controversy over foreign policy should be sought even earlier than their work together in the Jewish Agency – in the formative years of their personal and political careers, when the two began to devote serious attention to "the Arab question", i.e., the Arab-Jewish conflict, which was beginning to emerge in Palestine.

Origins of the Different Concepts of the Conflict

Controversies accompanied the development of relations between Ben-Gurion and Sharett from the 1920s. At that time neither was regarded as a national leader or even the most prominent leaders of their party, *Aḥdut ha-Avodah*. During the 1920s, Ben-Gurion put most of his energy into activity in his party and in the *Histadrut*, the General Federation of Labour, of which he was Secretary-General.[29] At the time, Sharett was completing his academic studies in England. While Sharett was studying at the London School of Economics, he also was frequently engaged in purchasing arms for the *Haganah*, as is evidenced by his extensive correspondence with Eliahu Golomb, then one of its leaders.[30] After Sharett returned to Palestine in 1925, he became an associate of Berl Katznelson, the prominent leader and ideologue of the Labour movement. Sharett

[28] Ben-Gurion to Sharett, April 16, 1955, in M. Sharett, *ibid.*, Vol. 4, pp. 937-938. Cf. M. Bar-Zohar, *Ben-Gurion*, Vol. 2, p. 965.

[29] Y. Shapira, *The Historical Aḥdut ha-Avoda*, (Tel-Aviv: Am Oved, 1975) pp. 45-101; M. Bar Zohar, *Ben-Gurion*, Vol. 1, pp. 160-199.

[30] See correspondence in the Sharett files of *The Labor Archives* (Beit Berl), 104/IV.

joined the political and cultural activities of Berl Katznelson and became a member of the editorial board and a regular contributor to *Davar*, the *Histadrut's* newspaper. He also edited its English edition. Sharett's association with Berl Katznelson contributed to his promotion in *Mapai* later in the 1930s. Although great importance should be attached to the 1920s in the development of the political concepts of Ben-Gurion and Sharett, it was not until the 1930s that circumstances converged to give rise to an open confrontation between them. It was only after Sharett left his post on *Davar* and reluctantly joined the Political Department of the Jewish Agency that it assumed discernible proportions. At that time, the two leaders began to play key roles in the policy-making process of the Zionist movement and the *Yishuv*, and devoted most of their time and attention to foreign and defense policies. While Sharett immersed himself almost totally in foreign affairs, Ben-Gurion had sufficient time and energy left for party activities to enable him to consolidate his position there. Sharett had no similar solid constituency inside their party. In a sense, Sharett was co-opted to the national leadership mainly because of his executive functions in the Jewish Agency.

The views of the various factions in the Labour movement on the nature of the "Arab question" and how it should be solved did not remain static. Since the establishment of *Po'alei Zion* in 1906, about the time Ben-Gurion arrived in the country and joined this party, there had been frequent changes in its basic diagnosis of the "Arab question" and consequently in its proposals for a solution. But despite the various transformations of the party's concepts and attitudes, one thing remained constant: its belief that a comprehensive, lasting solution must and could be found. This general pattern of changes of view on Arab-Jewish relations dovetailed with other changes in Ben-Gurion's general outlook. Six stages can be identified in the development of his thought on the Arab-Jewish problem from the time he came to the country until the 1950s. In retrospect, we can see that the modifications in his diagnosis of the Arab question and in their normative political implications closely followed the development of his approach to other political questions, such as the class struggle, the impact of nationalism, or the *Yishuv*'s relations with world powers. To elucidate the changes that occurred with

regard to the Middle East conflict, some of the broader ideological principles that guided his political reactions will be examined here.

The first stage in the development of Ben-Gurion's concepts determined the general direction and the total framework of the changes in his view up to the late 1940s. Although this stage is not entirely clear, and M. Bar-Zohar and Sh. Tevet, Ben-Gurions's two major biographers, do not agree on this period,[31] it is evident that he was preoccupied by the Arab-Jewish conflict from the time he arrived in the country. Like most Jews coming to Palestine, Ben-Gurion's views were formed as a result of his encounter with reality in Palestine.[32] That first crucial stage was molded by two mutual influences: the socialist ideology out of which *Po'alei Zion* arose, and Ben-Gurion's personal experience in face-to-face contacts with sections of the Arab population in Palestine and with the problems of the *Yishuv* in that period. This stage saw no substantive variations until World War One and Ben-Gurion's expulsion from the Ottoman Empire and exile in America.

In those early days, when the Labour movement was just beginning to become organized, a controversy developed between the two very young and small workers' parties, *Po'alei Zion* and *Hapo'el ha-Za'ir*, each of which was in the process of formulating its own political ideology. To a certain extent this initial debate was reflected in the later dispute between Sharett and Ben-Gurion. Ben-Gurion and *Po'alei Zion*, of which he was a member, had not yet discarded social-revolutionary theories. In Palestine, these socialist views underwent a process of adaptation to the needs of the Jewish community. The debate and the struggle inside *Po'alei Zion* focused on the wish to synthesize the contradictory elements of nationalism and socialism, and on the methods whereby this synthesis should be translated into daily policies. The early platforms of *Po'alei Zion* reflected the debate between nationalism and socialism and the painful efforts to reconcile these two basic ideologies.[33]

[31] Sh. Tevet, *David's Envy* (Tel-Aviv: Schocken, 1977), pp. 90-104, 420-432 (Hebrew); M. Bar-Zohar, *Ben-Gurion*, Vol. 1, p. 303-320.

[32] A. Shapira, *The Futile Struggle* (Tel-Aviv, 1977) pp. 20-24 (Hebrew).

[33] Sh. Tevet, *David's Envy*, pp. 94-104; A. Yasur, "The Resolution of National Conflicts – Dov Ber Borochow's Marxist Approach", Workshop on the Study of International Conflicts, Haifa University, June 1978.

Ben-Gurion was among the leaders of the group that tried to ensure that nationalist elements were included in the first political platforms of *Po'alei Zion* in Palestine. At the same time, the solution envisaged by the majority of *Po'alei Zion* with regard to the Jewish problem was, in its early stages, orthodox socialism. Until World War One, these notions also determined the main parameters of their solution to the Arab problem. For years, this concept changed only in nuances that reflected the confrontation with reality in Palestine.[34]

The "Arab question" was not ignored in the early stages of the development of *Po'alei Zion*'s political ideology,[35] although most of its thinking was concentrated on the Jewish problem. The leadership put more effort into developing a socialist ideology for the *Yishuv*, and equal time and energy on formulating practical tactics for dealing with day-to-day problems facing the *Yishuv*. The premise, based on the socialist elements in their ideology, was that the solution to the Jewish problem must not be at the expense of the Arab inhabitants of Palestine. Already at this early stage, a distinction was drawn between the *fellaheen* – the Arab peasants – and the richer sectors of the Arab Palestinian community, particularly the *effendis* – the landlords. The sympathy of the leaders of *Po'alei Zion* lay naturally with the Arab workers, with whom they hoped to establish links and whose status they hoped to improve. Ben-Gurion accepted this basic attitude. He believed that the first step to a comprehensive solution to the "Arab question" would be to uncover the common interests of the Jewish *Yishuv* and the Arab Palestinian community, particularly the common interests of the working people in both communities.[36] Above all, he was optimistic about the possibility of finding a solution that would meet the needs of both communities.

This optimistic stage in the development of Ben-Gurion's doctrine on the "Arab question" is connected with his attitude to Turkey. His adoption of Turkish citizenship and his attempt to study law in Turkey had their sources in the tendency of some of the Second

[34] Sh. Tevet, *David's Envy*, pp. 94-104, 420-432; M. Bar-Zohar, *Ben-Gurion*, Vol. 1, pp. 303-320.

[35] A. Shapira, *The Futile Struggle*, passim; W. Laqueur, *History of Zionism*, passim; cf. I. Kolatt, "The Zionist Movement and the Arabs", in this volume.

[36] A. Shapira, *ibid.*, pp. 16-18.

Aliyah immigrants to integrate the *Yishuv* into the multinational Ottoman Empire. On the basis of the *millet* system, which permitted cultural autonomy of minorities, they intended to fight for Jewish autonomy in Palestine. They wished to defend the rights of the *Yishuv* in the framework of the new Turkish Imperial Parliament established after the Young Turks' revolution of 1908. For this purpose Ben-Gurion and Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, who later became Israel's second President, decided to study law in Istanbul. They regarded their studies as a vital national mission, as they believed that through law it would be possible to protect and promote Jewish interests in the Ottoman Empire.[37] They also envisaged the possibility of progress towards cooperation with the Palestinian Arabs, who would also receive autonomy in the same framework. Inevitably, World War One and the collapse of the Turkish Empire brought about a change in their attitudes.

The second period in the development of Ben-Gurion's attitudes to the conflict began during World War One, and lasted until the conquest of Palestine by the British and the publication of the Balfour Declaration in 1917. Ben-Gurion undertook historical-ideological research for a book on Palestine during his stay in the United States after being expelled by the Turkish government from the Ottoman Empire. He worked in collaboration with Ben-Zvi, also an exile from Palestine. During that period Ben-Gurion made a systematic attempt to develop a "scientific" ideological framework with regard to the Palestinian Arabs. His point of departure was a study of their ethnic and historical origins, and he adopted a theory fashionable at the time: that the Arab *fellaheen* were in effect the remnants of the Jews of the Second Temple period, who had never left the country. This alleged common ethnic origin implied that it was possible to find an appropriate comprehensive solution for the complex and uneasy relations between the *Yishuv* and the Palestinian Arabs. He believed that the Arab question would be solved through close cooperation not only on the basis of the similarity of interests between the working people of the two communities, but also on the basis of this ethnic factor which, it was argued, had been scientifically proven.[38] Ben-Gurion thus believed that there existed a potential

[37] Sh. Tevet, *David's Envy*, pp. 237-238.

[38] *Ibid.*, pp. 421-422; M. Bar-Zohar, *Ben-Gurion*, Vol. 1, p. 304.

solution to the grave clash of interests between the two communities.[39]

The third stage in the development of Ben-Gurion's attitude was prompted by the Balfour Declaration and the British occupation of Palestine. There was a similarity between the impact of the Balfour Declaration and that of the First Zionist Congress (1897). Both events fired the imagination of the Jews in the Diaspora and in the young *Yishuv*, as though the coming of the Messiah were at hand. The end of the war and the subsequent British occupation paved the way for a more rapid development of the *Yishuv* and brought about a renewed optimism and vigor in the attitude of the Zionist movement towards such development. It was a time of high expectations about the possibility of realizing Zionist dreams by promoting and implementing mass immigration and settlement.

In short, a time of growth and expansion accompanied the next wave of Jewish immigration to Palestine, the Third *Aliyah,* together with great hopes for finding a solution to the problem of relations with the Palestinian Arabs.[40] Chaim Weizmann, who was beginning to assume a central role in the Zionist movement, sought a solution in the diplomatic sphere and conducted negotiations with Arab kings and leaders. The Jews' optimism at this period of diplomatic efforts was characterized by the rejoicing over the signature of the 1919 Feisal-Weizmann agreement.[41] As in the period before World War One, and in later periods, close connections existed between general historical developments and the molding of the Labour movement's perception of the conflict and its conception of a solution. After the end of World War One, Ben-Gurion and his colleagues thought the establishment of a Jewish political entity possible in a foreseeable future, with the help of international organizations, such as the newly formed League of Nations, in which great hopes were placed.[42] Still emphasizing his socialist views, he preferred aid to come from the Socialist International, but did not reject out of hand any aid the League of Nations might extend. When these hopes proved to be in vain,[43] Ben-Gurion was not alarmed by the possibility of a colonial

[39] G. Sheffer, "A Theoretical Framework for the Analysis of Conflicts", *Medina Umemshal* 2 (No. 1, Winter 1972): pp. 65-80, (Hebrew).

[40] A. Shapira, *The Futile Struggle*, pp. 20-24; W. Laqueur, *History of Zionism*, pp. 246-251.

[41] W. Laqueur, *ibid.*, pp. 190-196.

[42] I. Kolatt, *Fathers and Founders*, p. 31.

[43] *Ibid.*, p. 32.

power such as Great Britian helping in the establishment of the Jewish National Home. He saw no reason why the Palestinian Arabs should show implacable opposition to the establishment of such a Jewish entity, as it seemed to him that both communities should, and could, compromise and shape their future in one country.

In this spirit he coined the slogan "Palestine for the Jewish people and for the Arabs living there".[44] In opposition to Shlomo Kaplansky, one of the leaders of *Iḥud* – the World Union of *Po'alei Zion* – who, in the spirit of Herbert Samuels' proposals, advocated the development of a joint Arab-Jewish legislature on the basis of the relative numbers of the two communities.[45] Ben-Gurion called for the parallel development of the two communities. "We do not demand Palestine for the purpose of dominating the native Arabs", Ben-Gurion wrote, "nor are we seeking to use it as a market for the products of the Jewish economy in the Diaspora. The conquest of Palestine by the Jews is not for domination or exploitation, but for settlement. It is our hope that our regeneration in Palestine will be accompanied by the revival of the Arabs living there".[46] Among the principles that should have guided the founders of the *Yishuv*, Ben-Gurion felt, was the prevention of the displacement of Arab *fellaheen* from their land; the constant fostering of cooperation was necessary to create bridges between the parallel classes of the two communities.[47] The formation of the Federation of Palestinian Workers in 1927 was a conscious attempt to implement these concepts: "The encounter of the Jewish immigrants with the Arab working people must be a meeting of working comrades. Only between two self-sufficient independent national groups of free workers can harmony and friendship be established. We, the Jewish and Arab workers, belong to the same country, and our lives will always be linked."[48]

Yet in this period a substantive change occurred in Ben-Gurion's understanding of the "Arab question", marking a decline in his belief

[44] D. Ben-Gurion, *We and Our Neighbors* (Tel-Aviv: Davar, 1931), p. 105 (Hebrew); Sh. Tevet, *David's Envy*, pp. 422-423.

[45] I. Kolatt, *Fathers and Founders*, p. 33; A. Shapira, *The Futile Struggle*, p. 25; Y. Goldstein, *Mapai - The Reasons for its Establishment* (Tel-Aviv: Am Oved, 1975) (Hebrew).

[46] D. Ben-Gurion, "Towards the Future", *Hatoren*, No. 5, 1925 (Hebrew).

[47] M. Bar-Zohar, *Ben-Gurion*, Vol.1, pp. 304-305

[48] D. Ben-Gurion, *We and Our Neighbors*, p. 55.

that Jews and Arabs could live together in a single political unit, and that socialism would supply the sole and standard framework for an unequivocal solution of the problems existing between the two communities. The desire for autonomous territorial development of each community was the new element in his thinking.[49] In the early 1920s, particularly after the establishment of the military government in Palestine, whose staff included anti-Semitic British officials who were hostile towards the establishment of the Jewish National Home, Ben-Gurion argued that British imperialism had become a cause of discord between Jews and Arabs. He was especially incensed at the fact that relations between the working people in the two communities had become embittered as a result of the policy of the military government,[50] including the administration of the first High Commissioner, Sir Herbert Samuel (1920-25). For political reasons, and to avoid being accused of favoritism towards his co-religionists, Samuel pursued a "balanced" policy towards the two communities. The Jews, however, interpreted this balanced policy as restricting the development of the Jewish National Home, which had received a new impetus after World War One. After the failure of Samuel's efforts to achieve a solution to the escalating Jewish-Arab conflict by introducing the idea of a legislative council, and when the two communities began to pursue separatist policies, Ben-Gurion proposed the creation of an organization for intercommunal class cooperation as a way to improve relations with the Arab working people, an "Arab-Jewish Joint Organization".[51] This proposal marked the beginning of a great debate inside the Labour movement, in which Ben-Gurion played a major role. Throughout the 1920s Ben-Gurion held the view that there was a need for both territorial autonomy and dialogue and the creation of joint organizations for Jews and Arabs. These concepts accorded with his main function at the time, Secretary-General of the *Histadrut,* but his position was not the most significant factor in the formation of his views; his diagnosis of the problem and its solution had been shaped before he came into office.

The riots in Palestine in 1929 led to an incremental change in Ben-Gurion's view of the Arab question. Once again the shift was not

[49] A. Shapira, *The Futile Struggle,* pp. 25-26; Y. Goldstein, *Mapai,* pp. 109-110.

[50] M. Bar-Zohar, *Ben-Gurion,* Vol. 1, p. 306.

[51] A. Shapira, *The Futile Struggle,* pp. 53-54.

influenced by his official function, which remained the same, but rather by environmental changes that Ben-Gurion viewed as crucial. At the same time, he retained elements of his fundamental ideology, which he did not adapt to the current situation. In the light of the events in Palestine, Ben-Gurion was forced to admit openly that the driving force for the Palestinian Arabs was a nationalist tendency that precipitated the outbreaks of violence and hampered any political and diplomatic contacts between the two communities. Ben-Gurion argued that this Arab nationalism clashed with Jewish nationalism:

> The Arab in Palestine need not be, and cannot be, a Zionist. He cannot desire that the Jews become a majority. Therein lies the real contradiction, the political contradiction, between us and the Arabs . . .The debate over whether there is an Arab national movement or not is so much futile verbiage. For us the essence is that this movement commands the support of the masses. We do not see it as a movement for regeneration, and its moral value is dubious; however, in the political sense it is a national movement.[52]

Thus his public remarks reflected a modification, although the difference between his 1929 diagnosis and that of the previous period, when he argued that a process of territorial separation between the two peoples was taking place, was not great.

Nevertheless, Ben-Gurion did not give up the hope of finding a comprehensive solution to the conflict. On the basis of information that similar ideas were emerging in the Arab camp, during the early 1930s Ben-Gurion consistently supported the notion of developing legislative bodies in which Jews and Arabs would have equal representation, regardless of the relative numerical strength of the two communities.[53] Unlike others in the Labour movement, he considered the formation of a Jewish-Arab federation to include the entire Fertile Crescent.[54] He believed that in such a federation it would be easy to find a place for a Jewish canton in which Zionism could realize its national aims unimpeded. He drew up detailed programs for the

[52] Ben-Gurion in a debate in the Joint Secretariat of *Aḥdut ha-Avodah* and *Ha-Po'el ha-Za'ir*, November 1, 1929, *The Labor Archives* (Beit Berl), 23/30.

[53] Y. Goldstein, *On the Way to Hegemony* (Tel-Aviv: Am Oved, 1980), p. 78; A. Shapira, *The Futile Struggle*, pp. 56-57.

[54] M. Bar-Zohar, *Ben-Gurion*, Vol. 1, p. 311.

transitional period and the final implementation of the federation. These plans were discussed on the eve of the establishment of *Mapai* in 1930 by joint committees of *Aḥdut ha-Avodah* and *Hapo'el ha-Za'ir*; after the new party's establishment, the plans were also submitted to its governing bodies. Although his concept was never formally adopted, Ben-Gurion continued to advocate it during the early 1930s and, after he joined the Jewish Agency Executive, he sought political ways of implementing these ideas. Throughout the first half of the 1930s, he stressed the federative and cantonal solutions in meetings with Palestinian Arab leaders.[55]

The next gradual change in Ben-Gurion's attitudes occurred after the rise to power of the Nazis in Germany and with the outbreak of the Palestinian Arab rebellion in 1936. Ben-Gurion could no longer avoid the almost self-evident conclusion that intercommunal separation was continuing and had become almost total. From this point of view, he accepted the basic conclusions of the Peel Commission on the national struggle in Palestine and thus had no difficulty in accepting its operative recommendations on the partition of the country. Ben-Gurion argued that in view of the accumulation of disturbing new factors in Europe and Palestine, the need to establish a Jewish state, even if only in part of the country, had become urgent.[56] The Jews in Palestine and abroad had to be persuaded to accept the idea of partition, and had to accept its implementation, before the ingathering of the Jews from the Diaspora, before the transformation "from a class to a people", and before the realization of Jewish-Arab reconciliation.[57] At this stage Ben-Gurion placed the national interest of establishing a Jewish state at the top of his priorities, but no less important were Ben-Gurion's ultimate objectives, about which he wrote to his son with disarming frankness:

> A . . . Jewish state [in part of Palestine] is not the end but the beginning. The establishment of such a Jewish state will serve as a means in our historical efforts to redeem the country in its entirety. We shall bring into the country all the Jews it can contain; we shall build a sound Jewish economy, with agriculture, industry and shipping. We

[55] *Ibid.*, pp. 312-320; and see D. Ben-Gurion, *Meetings with Arab Leaders* (Tel-Aviv: Am Oved, 1967) (Hebrew).

[56] M. Bar-Zohar, *Ben-Gurion*, Vol. 1, pp. 357-366.

[57] I. Kolatt, *Fathers and Founders*, p. 45.

> shall organize a sophisticated defense force – an elite army. I have no doubt that our army will be one of the best in the world. And then I am sure that we shall not be prevented from settling in all the other parts of the country, either through mutual understanding and agreement with our Arab neighbors, or by other means. Our ability to settle the country will increase if there is a state, our strength in relation to the Arabs will grow . . .the Jewish state must be established immediately, even if it does not include the entire country. The rest will come – must come – in the course of time.[58]

Ben-Gurion's socialist views at this stage influenced his perception of a solution to the Arab question. This assumes special significance since precisely at this time (1937) he began negotiations with *Hashomer Haza'ir* towards unification with *Mapai*, in the course of which he elucidated his concepts of socialism, which for him was not a matter of tactics or convenience but a deeply felt belief. He adhered to the notion of "constructive socialism" – a gradual evolutionary process of building a socialist society. Despite the fact that he hoped for Jewish settlement throughout Palestine, and despite his territorial demands and his views on the use of the military force that the *Yishuv* had built up, Ben-Gurion still believed it possible to find a comprehensive solution to the Arab-Jewish conflict based on socialist tenets. "Our aspiration for peace between the Jewish people and the Arab people is one of the organic elements of Zionism, and without this aspiration Zionism becomes distorted and a sham". In 1937 he wrote, "If we were unable to foresee in the near or distant future any possibility of living in peace with the Arab people, it would be very bitter indeed".[59] From this point a new motif entered his concept of how to resolve the conflict: the need to obtain legitimacy for a Jewish state within clear territorial boundaries. The various means of obtaining this legitimacy became the focus of many internal controversies in the Labour movement.

After 1937 Ben-Gurion sharpened the various elements of his view on Zionism and its proper implementation. The 1942 Biltmore Plan adopted by the Zionist movement – a plan he was instrumental in formulating – marked a peak in Ben-Gurion's political career and

[58] D. Ben-Gurion, *Letters to Paula and the Children* (Tel-Aviv: Am Oved, 1968), pp. 210-213 (Hebrew).

[59] I. Kolatt, *Fathers and Founders*, p. 48.

buttressed his position as the most prominent Zionist leader of the day. In its aim of obtaining legitimacy for the Jewish state while establishing a lasting settlment with the Arabs, the plan hallmarked another step in the evolution of Ben-Gurion's vision of the creation of a Jewish state in part of Palestine. But even at this stage, Ben-Gurion had not entirely abandoned his thoughts about a Middle East federation to include the Jewish state. At the Biltmore Conference he declared: "Whether Palestine remains a separate political entity or it will be a part of a broader framework – a Near East federation, the British Commonwealth, an Anglo-American union, or some other union – will depend on circumstances and conditions which will not be determined by us and which cannot be foreseen".[60]

In sum, throughout his political career before the establishment of Israel, a clear pattern can be discerned in his thinking, enduring elements of which did not vanish with evolving political circumstances, developments in Ben-Gurion's career, or his changing position in the political elite. First of all, Ben-Gurion avoided unequivocal or sharp deviations from the essentials of the line to which he adhered, gradually altering his diagnosis of the conflict and his proposed solution on the basis of his overall beliefs and the obligations they implied. Consequently, each new stage in his thinking contained elements of his outlook in the previous stage. Secondly, Ben-Gurion did not abandon the principles of his socialist creed with regard to the solution of the conflict, even if he fought harder than many of his generation for the inclusion of nationalist elements in the party platform and in its operative political plans. Third, his total approach altered not as a result of changes in his position in the Labour movement or the national leadership, but in response to changes in the circumstances in Palestine and the international arena. And finally, despite modifications in his outlook, there always remained a link between a solution to the "Arab question", the solution to the Jewish problem and the supports that the Jews would get in the international arena.

Contrary to the accepted image, Sharett was at first most skeptical about the possibility of solving the growing Jewish-Arab conflict. His service in the Turkish army during World War One, together with the impact of the events that overtook the *Yishuv* – and his family – in

[60] D. Ben-Gurion, *In the Struggle* (Tel-Aviv: *Mapai*, 1949), Vol. 4, pp. 38-39 (Hebrew).

the course of the war (they were among the Jews evacuated from the southern part of the country) left him most pessimistic. At this early stage Sharett (who had not yet changed his name from Shertok) argued that the basis for negotiations with the Arabs must be Arab acceptance of the Jewish National Home and recognition of the basic political principles underlying its establishment. Shortly afterwards, he was profoundly influenced by the 1920-21 disturbances in Palestine.[61] Thus, at a time when Ben-Gurion was still optimistic about a comprehensive solution, Sharett adhered to the view that the problem was intractable and perhaps insoluble. He saw Ben-Gurion's proposals for the establishment of joint Arab-Jewish workers' organizations as doomed to failure, the two communities already having parted company and going their separate ways. Unbridgeable cultural differences – "racial and nationalist instincts, the force of language, the sanctity of tradition and the force of inertia"[62] – divided them.

Unlike Ben-Gurion, Sharett did not attach great importance to economic or other material factors in the intercommunal conflict – not a suprising view, since Sharett had not been a Marxist in his youth.[63] Sharett's operative conclusions were that:

> Even the clearest declarations in our favor [on the part of the great powers] will not suppress the power of the Arabs now. On the contrary, they will only arouse the Arabs to prepare for a real war. God knows that the only way open to us in the meantime (and how long will the "meantime" continue?) lies in immigration, fortification and defense – defense, fortification and immigration.[64]

This fundamentally pessimistic attitude, with its stress on settlement and activism, did not change over the years.

Additional evidence of the development of Sharett's pessimism can be found in his reaction to the 1929 disturbances. Sharett took part in the debate conducted by the joint secretariat of *Ahduth Ha'avoda* and

[61] Interview with Yehuda Sharett, March 1973.

[62] Sharett to Ben-Gurion, September 24, 1921, in *The Labor Archives* (Beit Berl), 104/IV.

[63] B. Ben-Yehuda, *The Story of the Herzlia Gymnasia* (Tel-Aviv: Herzlia Gymnasia, 1970), p. 79; E. Golomb, *Hevion Oz* (Tel-Aviv: *Mapai*, 1950), Vol. 1, pp. 85-86. (Both in Hebrew).

[64] Sharett to Ben-Gurion, September 24, 1929, in *The Labor Archives* (Beit Berl), 104/IV.

Hapo'el ha-Za'ir (which were in the process of amalgamating and establishing *Mapai*) aimed at drawing conclusions as to the effects of the disturbances. Sharett, faithful to his earlier views about the pattern of relations between the two communities, interpreted the disturbances as a clear expression of Arab national rebellion. In his speech to the joint secretariat, he reaffirmed what he had set out in his letter to Ben-Gurion in 1921: that the Arabs had a sense of being a community, a nation and a race, that they were involved in a head-on cultural collision with the Jews, whom they perceived as threatening to flood the country and transform it from Arab territory to a Jewish state based on the Western political model. Sharett also claimed that it was no longer possible to heal the split and that the organizations of the Zionist movement and the *Yishuv* (such as the joint committee of the *Va'ad Le'umi* and the Jewish Agency), to which the matter had been entrusted in the past, were inadequate to meet the task and held out no hope. On the question of what tactics the *Yishuv* should adopt, Sharett continued to deny that there was any objective possibility of reaching an agreement with the Arabs directly.

> Why is there no agreement? Because the Jewish people has not given up its demand for mass immigration, and the Arab people has not abandoned its opposition to mass Jewish immigration, which would alter the demographic character of the country and transfer the decisive power from one people to another. Moreover, the Arab aspiration in Palestine was and remains exclusive Arab sovereignty over the entire country, and this deepens and sharpens the contradiction between us even more.[65]

One of the conditions that Chaim Arlosoroff, then a brilliant young leader of *Mapai,* set for his acceptance of the post of head of the Jewish Agency's Political Department in 1931 was Sharett's nomination as secretary of the department. This appointment involved moving Sharett from the editorial board of *Davar* and from the post of editor of *Davar's* English-language edition, which he had held since his return from England in 1925. Arlosoroff gave several reasons for this demand, emphasizing that everyone expected *Mapai* to place the Jewish Agency's Arab policy on new foundations. He reminded his colleagues that it was their party that was called upon "to determine a

[65] Sharett in the discussion in the Joint Secretariat of *Aḥdut ha-Avodah* and *Ha-Po'el ha-Za'ir*, October 10-11, 1929, *ibid.*, 23/30.

political line" and that he himself had promised a new program for dealing with the Arab problem, but could not carry out the task on his own. Here he turned to the members of the *Mapai* Central Committee with a question:

> Can we really say that for such a task we have any candidates other than [Sharett] . . .the fate of the political work depends, therefore, on the party's making an extraordinary effort on behalf of the department, and although I thoroughly appreciate the arguments put forward by Berl Katznelson [who was opposed to Sharett's transfer from the English edition of *Davar*] I cannot see any man for the department but Moshe [Sharett].[66]

Ben-Gurion supported Arlosoroff's arguments about the importance of political initiative in general, and added:

> I regard the campaign among the Arabs as a great mission. Despite our clear position on this question, our movement does not yet show sufficient regard for persistence in this field. We are faced with Arab aspirations and political force and we must find a way of coming to grips with these phenomena. In this area we have no surplus of [qualified] people. To be more exact – we have none at all. And it would be out of the question to forgo the abilities of Moshe [Sharett] in this activity, for few understand the issue as well as he or are so well suited to the work. We must change the attitude of Moshe [Sharett] to this question, and this will be achieved when he enters into the work itself.[67]

The last sentence referred to criticism that Sharett had voiced regarding the efforts of the Zionist movement to arrive at an agreement with the Arabs, and the unsystematic and ambiguous activities of the joint bureau of the *Va'ad Le'umi* and the Jewish Agency Executive to create contacts between Jews and Arabs. Sharett bitterly criticized the dominant position enjoyed by *Brit Shalom* on the one hand and the "*bakshish*" school of thought on the other, which believed in simply bribing Arab leaders.[68]

Despite his ingrained pessimism, despite his disagreement with the policy of the Zionist movement and *Mapai* towards the Arabs, despite his fears about the fate of the English edition of *Davar* and his

[66] *Mapai* Central Committee Protocol, October 20, 1931, *ibid.*, 23/31, p. 5.

[67] *Ibid.*

[68] *Ibid.* pp.4-5.

reluctance to leave the immediate circle of Berl Katznelson, Sharett accepted the decision of the party. In October 1931 he was appointed Secretary of the Jewish Agency's Political Department with special responsibility for contacts with the Arabs.

At the beginning of his tenure in the Political Department, Sharett devoted much of his energy to improving relations with the Arabs. He helped mold the department's policy towards the problem, initiated and organized information dissemination among the Arabs, and established *Shai*, an information service on developments in the Arab camp. Many regarded these activities as long overdue, since an effective information service was indispensable if the Zionist movement and the *Yishuv* were to improve their policy-making on the Arab question.[69]

Up to 1931, Sharett was one of the few leaders (Arlosoroff and Ruppin were others) of the Zionist movement and the *Yishuv* who openly recognized the profound cultural and social gap between Jew and Arab, a gap whose dimensions were widening as a result of strong opposing political trends in each of the two communities. In Sharett's opinion, the Arab struggle was aimed at wresting political concessions from the British Mandatory administration to reduce the chance that the Jewish National Home would develop and expand. His familiarity with the Arabs and their customs did not alter his consistent skepticism on the possibility of a settlement between the Jewish and Arab communities. Once again, his operative political conclusions were that the *Yishuv* had to be strengthened through immigration, land purchase and the development of its underground military force (to which he devoted his energy) and that close contacts had to be maintained between the two communities, despite their differences, to prevent outbreaks of violence or to contain them if they should occur. To achieve these aims, a systematic and thorough mode of operation was needed, not a sporadic approach based on bribes to Arab leaders. He advocated propaganda campaigns and contacts with central figures in the Palestinian Arab community and with leaders in the neighboring Arab countries. Sharett held the view that all undertakings must be based on precise knowledge of developments in the Arab world. In examining relations between the Arab community and the *Yishuv*, Sharett was to a large extent free of socialist ideology and the psy-

[69] Ch. Arlosoroff, *Jerusalem Diary* (Tel-Aviv: *Mapai*, 1949), passim (Hebrew).

chological inhibitions of other leaders of the *Yishuv* (e.g., Shlomo Kaplansky, Y. Ben-Zvi and D. Ben-Gurion). Sharett was unique as a leader of the *Yishuv* in that he had acquired his education in Palestine and knew the Arabs well. He was aware of the gravity of the conflict and the impossibility of achieving a fundamental and comprehensive solution to what he saw as an elemental clash; he thus advocated a strategy of conflict management. In his statements and writings on the disturbances of 1936, he argued that the violent resistance of the Arabs should not be regarded as an artificial phenomenon because "there is something at its heart that turns the Arab movement into a mass movement. The masses know that it is because of us that all this storm has blown up". Sharett was bitterly opposed to the view current in *Mapai* that an agreement could be achieved on the basis of cooperation between the working people of the two nations.

In 1937, in vew of the partition plan proposed by the Peel Commission, Sharett argued:

> In my opinion, the Peel Report is fundamentally correct in saying that the Jewish and Arab aspirations in Palestine are irreconcilable. If there are elements in the Labour movement that believe in the possibility of a full agreement which will solve the Jewish-Arab problem on the basis of cooperation between the two peoples, I think they are utopists. So long as the interests of the Jews and the interests of the Arabs, as two ethnic national groups, are opposed, the workers of the two nations will also remain enemies . . .With regard to contacts with the Arabs, I have differences of opinion with Ben-Gurion. I claim that we must act, but out of an attitude of skepticism. Ben-Gurion says: 'It is forbidden to be skeptical. We must have faith and act as though agreement with the Arabs will be achieved tomorrow.' [70]

Sharett continued to hold these beliefs until the establishment of Israel. His pessimism about a comprehensive solution to the conflict, as well as his view of the forces that were determining the shape of the Jewish National Home, clearly explain the emphasis he placed on seeking aid from the great powers and from international organizations, and on cooperation between the Jews in Palestine and those in the Diaspora. In view of the possibility that the conflict might go on indefinitely, Sharett wished to ensure that the National Home con-

[70] M. Sharett, *Political Diary* (Tel-Aviv: Am Oved, 1971), Vol. 2, pp. 251-252 (Hebrew).

tinue to grow stronger through such aid, which was dependent on attaining legitimacy in the eyes of extra-regional forces, particularly as the Arabs in Palestine and in the neighboring countries were unlikely to recognize the aspirations of the Zionist movement and of the Jewish community in Palestine.

Continuity in the Political Concepts of Ben-Gurion and Sharett

Ben-Gurion's basic concepts did not change after the establishment of Israel, at least not in public. In fact, however, there was a clash between two elements of his outlook. One was the belief that a comprehensive solution to the Jewish-Arab conflict was feasible in a foreseeable future. The other was that since the hoped-for comprehensive solution was not at hand, Israel had to continue its efforts and rely on its own strength in the struggle. On the eve of the establishment of Israel he declared:

> We decided the fate of the country. We laid the foundation for the Jewish state and we shall establish it. We have never had any quarrel with the Arab nation, and if the Arabs want peace, the hand of the Jewish state is held out to them [in friendship]. Our political program is the same as it was a year ago, or six months ago: security, a Jewish state, and a Jewish-Arab alliance.[71]

The theme of a Jewish-Arab alliance recurred in Ben-Gurion's pronouncements during and after the War of Independence.[72] After the signing of the 1949 armistice agreement, and during the first period of calm that the new state had known, Ben-Gurion said, "I have always believed and I still believe, that the conflict between us and the Arabs is transient, based on misunderstanding, not on a historic conflict of interests".[73] About a year later, when his first efforts to achieve a comprehensive peace had failed, he said: "We must never be reconciled to a deadlock. There is a chance of not only a formal peace, but also of cooperation between Jews and Arabs."[74] His use

[71] D. Ben-Gurion, *When Israel Fought* (Tel-Aviv: *Mapai*, 1950), p. 75 (Hebrew).

[72] M. Bar-Zohar, *Ben-Gurion*, Vol. 2, pp. 693, 702, 774.

[73] Cited in *Divrei Haknesset [Knesset Protocols]*, Vol. 2, pp. 1227-1233, August 2, 1949 (Hebrew).

[74] *Ibid.*, Vol. 10, p. 301, November 5, 1951.

of the term cooperation suggests that he still believed it possible to go beyond a cessation of hostilities and the legitimization of the borders.

But Ben-Gurion's cautious optimism was shaken by the revolution in Egypt that brought Gamal Abdel Nasser to power. Ben-Gurion's first naive assumption was that peace could be achieved with Egypt in the course of one short meeting between himself and Nasser.[75] However, as Nasser's function and status in Egypt and in the Arab world began to change, and as he accumulated power and reoriented his foreign policy, Ben-Gurion became more skeptical. At this point Ben-Gurion began speaking about defusing the situation and "establishing good neighborly relations" rather than achieving peace: "We should not talk about peace too much. If the Arabs agree to peace it will be regarded as a concession on their part, while we shall have to pay for the substance of peace."[76] Herein lies one of the sources of the bitterness between Ben-Gurion and Sharett, for one of their most fundamental controversies was over the question of territorial settlements. Ben-Gurion estimated that for any attempt to achieve peace, Israel would be required to pay a very high price in terms of territory returned to the Arabs. Sharett, on the other hand, attached major importance to gaining legitimacy in the eyes of the international community, to achieving a balance between political and military activism, and to reducing tensions between Israel and the Arab countries, for all of which he was prepared to pay in territory. Paradoxically, precisely at the time when their basic concepts on the nature of the conflict and its solution were drawing closer, the differences of opinion between them on the personal, political and tactical level became irreconcilable.

After the Sinai Campaign, Ben-Gurion returned to his basic view that a comprehensive solution to the conflict could be achieved swiftly. Ben-Gurion of course attributed the renewed possibility of peace to his own policy or "line". At this time Ben-Gurion revived his idea of a Middle East federation.[77]

Once again, and contrary to what is generally believed, Sharett remained pessimistic about the possibility of a quick comprehensive

[75] M. Bar-Zohar, *Ben-Gurion*, Vol. 3, p. 1163.

[76] Ben-Gurion's Diary, April 30, 1953.

[77] M. Bar-Zohar, *Ben-Gurion*, Vol. 3, p.1163

settlement after the establishment of Israel as a state. In 1951 he told the *Knesset*: "We have not been running after peace, nor are we doing so now. What we do have is only willingness. We are willing to make peace if it is possible and if the other side is willing, and we are ready for war if it is forced upon us." Three years later, when Sharett became Prime Minister and was more at liberty to express his own views and less restricted by diplomatic and party discipline, he told the *Knesset*: "For the present – and who knows for how much longer [cf. p. 118 above, his declaration from 1921] – the hostility of the Arab countries is undiminished. And our special character in this corner of the world, as a people that lives alone, constitutes the basic problem of our future as an independent nation and of our survival."[78] And again, shortly after assuming office: "The problems . . .are how to maintain the armistice agreements in such a way that they do not harm or suffocate us; how to strengthen our security while causing as little damage as possible to world Jewry; and how to fight for our most vital interests against forces incomparably more powerful."[79]

The most bitter expressions of his consistently pessimistic views were made after the Sinai Campaign. At that time Sharett wrote in his diary: "We are warning Egypt not to miss a unique opportunity to make peace. But what makes us think she is so eager for such an opportunity, or eager to make peace at all? It is a wild Israeli version of the worst British-style wishful thinking." The paragraph that followed is perhaps one of the most revealing passages ever written by Sharett on the Arab-Israel conflict:

> It could be argued that I also preach peace in all my public statements; but the difference is that for me it is a political posture and a tactical argument, whereas our people in Jerusalem [the Israeli cabinet] have apparently been overcome by a mystic belief that peace really is around the corner simply because we have struck Nasser a fearful blow on the head and because we ourselves do not see any other political solution for the situation that has been created.[80]

A few days after he wrote these words, Sharett recorded in his diary:

> Self-deluding continues – people are talking about peace as though it were really possible, and the intention is to hold on to or demilitarize

[78] Cited in *Divrei Haknesset [Knesset Protocols]*, Vol. 16, pp. 2547-2551, August 30-September 1, 1954. [79] *Ibid.*, Vol. 15, A. pp.268-271, November 30, 1953.
[80] M. Sharett, *A Personal Diary*, Vol. 7, pp. 1839-1842 (November 8, 1956).

> the Sinai peninsula. I have listed seven illusions that have taken hold of the people in Israel: (a) peace will come; (b) we shall not withdraw from Sinai; (c) if we withdraw it will be of our own free will, and we shall continue to hold the coast [of Sinai] and the [Tiran] islands; (d) an international force will be stationed in the [Suez] Canal Zone; (e) the international force will be responsible for the operation of the canal and charged with ensuring freedom of navigation for all; (f) the international force will not come to Sinai; (g) the Sinai peninsula will be demilitarized. And there are other illusions . . .

Sharett, who, it will be recalled, had been accused of lacking political insight in complex situations, added: "I have learned that the State of Israel cannot be ruled in our generation without deceit and adventurism. These are historical facts which cannot be altered. They are not in my power. I have power only over myself. I am not in the habit of indulging in self-justification. I am prepared to assume that in the end history will justify both the stratagems of deceit and the acts of adventurism. All I know is that I, Moshe Sharett, am not capable of them, and am therefore totally unsuited to lead the country."[81]

Thus the basic differences of opinion between the two leaders, and the different orientations that each represented, were derived from their views about the nature of the conflict and its possible solution. They also stemmed from the concomitant political and military tactical conclusions thereby dictated. In contrast to Ben-Gurion, Sharett did not believe in the possibility of an overall solution, and accordingly adopted the approach of trying to contain and tone down the conflict. This approach called for a constant balance between foreign policy and defense, between the use of diplomacy and of military force, and the willingness to concede territories. In this connection Sharett wrote to Ben-Gurion: "My view that defense should be integrated with foreign policy has been clear to you for some time. The controversy between us over these questions has been going on for years. It is essential to balance our policy between the one extreme of relying on our strength and the other extreme of yielding to international sensitivities."[82]

Sharett regarded military power as a means of deterrence only.

[81] *Ibid.*, p. 1858 (November 16, 1956)

[82] Cited in *ibid.*, Vol. 2, pp. 408-410 (March 22, 1954)

"Political defense acts as physical defense. First and foremost it is a deterrent influence against violence and thus represents a way to peace. [But it] is not by force that we shall tip the balance [in the Middle East conflict]. The question lies in the impression that we are making and not in the actual military victory."[83] Contrary to the image Sharett seems to have projected, he was not in principle opposed to the use of force or to military reprisals: "I conducted a most heated argument with those *opposed* to reprisals. It was strange that I, a skeptic about the positive value of reprisals, had to defend it against those who dismissed them out of hand. This categorical rejection stemmed from seeing the problem only in terms of foreign relations, totally ignoring considerations of defense and the psychological effect on the people in the border settlements and the country as a whole.[84]

Sharett's rationale for cultivating special relations with the great powers and international bodies is well expressed in the following passage:

> I voiced concern over the glaring inconsistency between our total objective dependence . . .on the support and understanding of the world, since the conflict shows no sign of ending, and our subjective mental isolation from the world . . .We have turned in upon ourselves and acquired a total insensitivity towards the reactions of world public opinion to our actions. I deplored this narrow-mindedness with which we have become afflicted. We stubbornly refuse to budge from a position we have adopted in one sector of the front, thereby jeopardizing all the other sectors, and running the risk of total defeat.[85]

His approach to the containment and moderation of the conflict was determined by this rationale. "The assumption that we are interested in aggravating the crisis to bring it to an explosion is erroneous and counter-productive. We shall welcome even the slightest improvement. We do not initiate any escalation; we only respond."[86]

In contrast to Sharett, Ben-Gurion believed in the possibility of a comprehensive resolution of the conflict. He thought that this justified confrontations as they occurred, the use of military force, preventive

[83] *Ibid.*, pp. 401-402 (March 16, 1954).
[84] *Ibid.*, p. 455 (April 12, 1954).
[85] *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, pp. 47-53 (October 18, 1953).
[86] *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, pp. 463-468 (April 16, 1954).

wars, and massive reprisal actions, all in the interest of achieving a full solution to the conflict. From political and military activism, it was only a small step to a stance in which the issue of security and strengthening Israel's defense forces assumed overriding importance while the mechanisms for determining and implementing foreign policy were relegated to a subordinate position, as they were thought to have little power to influence events.

Tactical Clashes After 1948

From the eve of the establishment of Israel until Sharett's retirement from the Israel government in 1956, the two leaders had a number of clashes, most of them unknown to the public. As the system of proportional representation and the coalition governments that existed in Israel at the time served to insulate the policy-making process,[87] and as the senior political leadership was committed to the preservation of the political hegemony of the Labor movement, these clashes were often successfully concealed. Sometimes they involved Sharett and Ben-Gurion alone (in which case they were clearly personal political struggles) and sometimes other figures as well. Our aim in the following pages is not to determine who prevailed in each of the clashes, nor to provide new information or expand the analysis of each confrontation, but to collate evidence to illustrate and clarify the variety of disputed issues and the intensity and scale of the clashes.

The direction which the political relations between the two men would take was already apparent on the eve of Israel's Declaration of Independence. The precise positions adopted by each of the two in the weeks before are not clear,[88] but the general outline of events is known. In the early months of 1948 Sharett was in the United States. Most of his activity centered in Washington and in the corridors of the United Nations. In light of the opposition of segments of the US administration to the declaration establishing the State of Israel, Sharett was recalled. For Ben-Gurion, who feared that Sharett would join the ranks

[87] See, for example, Horowitz and Lissak, *From Yishuv to State*, pp. 305-309.

[88] M. Sharett, *In Front of the Nations* (Tel-Aviv: Am Oved, 1966), pp. 225-226, 226-229, 229-238 (Hebrew); and cf. M. Bar-Zohar, *Ben-Gurion*, Vol. 2, pp. 689-693, 721-750.

of the hesitant who wanted to postpone the declaration, Sharett's return was crucial. Sharett could fill the need for first-hand information on the latest intentions of the American administration and, holding a senior position in the political elite of the Zionist movement and the *Yishuv*, he in a sense possessed veto power on political decisions. On many occasions Ben-Gurion related that he was determined not to let Sharett appear before the Political Committee of *Mapai* or the Jewish Agency Executive unless it was clear that Sharett would support the policy of establishing the state forthwith. Ben-Gurion alleged that he managed to influence Sharett so that he would refrain from voicing the doubts and apprehensions prompted in him by the stubborn opposition of American Secretary of State George Marshall to the establishment of the state.[89]

Sharett's version of these events was different. He claimed that he had stood firm against the pressures of Marshall and of American Jewish leaders. Sharett stressed that neither pressure nor persuasion had to be applied to him because he was convinced of the urgent need to establish the state precisely at this juncture in history.[90] The two leaders' markedly different recollections reveal a great deal of tension and mistrust between them. Although there was no open confrontation, the differing versions of the incident illustrate the negative image that each held of the other. One should also note the controversy among historians with regard to this affair, at least the tendency of the "Ben-Gurion school" to idealize Ben-Gurion's political stature, his far-sightedness and his flair for seizing the historic opportunity that had arisen, thus creating the myth that it was Ben-Gurion alone who took the crucial decision to press for the declaration of statehood.[91]

Only a few days after the establishment of the state, a new confrontation between Ben-Gurion and Sharett took place over the formulation of the Declaration of Independence. Whatever his role was in the decision to declare Israel's statehood, after his return from the United States Sharett became a senior partner in the decision-making process and played a leading role in drafting Israel's Declaration of

[89] M. Bar-Zohar, *Ben-Gurion*, Vol. 2, p. 732.

[90] See M. Sharett, *In Front of the Nations*, pp. 224-228.

[91] Chapter 4 of M. Bar-Zohar's biography of Ben-Gurion is entitled, "15th May – One Man's Decision".

Independence. Sharett wanted that document to include clauses related to the sources of international recognition that had been accorded to the new state, and the draft he prepared was along these lines. Ben-Gurion altered the text that had been submitted by Sharett, deemphasizing the connection between the establishment of the State of Israel and the "benevolent" actions of the great powers and the United Nations.[92]

In 1948, during Israel's War of Independence clashes between the two increased. In September they had a violent argument over a plan for a massive Israeli offensive to capture what is now known as the West Bank. The plan, rejected by the government, called for the capture of the Hebron Hills region.[93] Sharett wrote that he had managed to have the military operation cancelled because of the negative ramifications the Israeli offensive was likely to have on the impending session of the United Nations in Paris.[94] He was prompted less by fear of the international community's anger than by the desire to find a better combination of political and military conditions for such an attempt. Indeed, soon after these plans were cancelled, Ben-Gurion tried to persuade the cabinet to approve other military operations in the northern Negev and to open the road to Jerusalem. Ben-Gurion well understood that these would not be approved until endorsement by Sharett (who was attending a UN General Assembly meeting in Paris at the time) was received.[95] Ben-Gurion also knew in advance that Sharett would approve the operations and therefore agreed that Sharett be approached for his endorsement.[96] Bar-Zohar cites this as an illustration of Ben-Gurion's "cunning"; but the episode serves also to undermine the "Ben-Gurion school's" thesis of the unchallenged authority and centrality of "the old man", as Ben-Gurion was known, in the political decision-making process.

In November 1948 Ben-Gurion was obliged to send Yigael Yadin, then Chief of Military Operations, to Paris, where Sharett was still posted, to explain the various moves the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) were planning and to obtain Sharett's approval for them. At that

[92] M. Bar-Zohar, *Ben-Gurion*, Vol. 2, p. 745.

[93] S. Nakdimon, *Yediot Ahronot*, [Daily], September 30, 1970 (Hebrew).

[94] M. Sharett, *In Front of the Nations*, p. 132.

[95] M. Bar-Zohar, *Ben-Gurion*, Vol. 2, pp. 828-830.

[96] *Ibid.*, p. 830.

stage, Sharett endorsed only limited military actions,[97] continuing in his tendency to preserve, at almost any cost, the "balance" between military and political efforts in order to safeguard what he regarded as vital national interests, and viewing military action as a last resort to be used only when national goals could not be achieved by diplomatic means. Here Ben-Gurion's biographer concedes that at this critical point there were great limitations on "the old man's" political power: "These were first and foremost domestic limitations. He (Ben-Gurion) was forced to wage an incessant struggle against the moderate group (apparently including Sharett) in the leadership of his party."[98]

During the armistice negotiations at the end of 1948 and beginning of 1949, the tensions between Sharett and Ben-Gurion eased; in retrospect it appears that they had agreed upon a policy that was entirely to Sharett's liking. The policy tallied with Sharett's preference for an approach of conflict management, and on many different occasions he voiced his wholehearted agreement to these moves.

Confrontations between the two surfaced again in the period of calm that followed the signing of the armistice agreements. Towards the end of 1949 Sharett opposed the proclamation of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. On this issue he lost; Ben-Gurion achieved his aim despite Sharett's pressure, which included submitting his resignation.[99] Nevertheless, Sharett was consistent, continuing until 1953 to run the Foreign Ministry in Tel-Aviv and refusing to allow its transfer to Jerusalem.[100]

The controversies between Sharett and Ben-Gurion reached a climax between 1953-56. At the beginning of this period it appeared that Israel had arrived at an impasse in her relations with the Arabs, tension with the United States was simmering over a number of issues, and domestic political instability and social unrest were growing – all sharpening the disagreements among members of the political elite. In September 1953 there was an acrimonious debate over the project to divert the waters of the Jordan River. Sharett demanded that the

[97] Sharett's telegram to Ben-Gurion, November 9, 1948, in the Ben-Gurion Archives, Sdeh Boker.

[98] M. Bar-Zohar, *Ben-Gurion*, Vol. 2, p. 872.

[99] M. Brecher, *Decisions in Israel's Foreign Policy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 30.

[100] M. Bar-Zohar, *Ben-Gurion*, Vol. 2, p. 892.

work be suspended in view of protest by the Arab states, the United States and the United Nations.[101] At about the same time, Sharett unsuccessfully opposed the appointments of Pinhas Lavon as Minister of Defense and of Moshe Dayan as Chief-of-Staff.[102] Sharett calculated that each of the appointments, and the two together, would create great political tensions at the top of the policy-making pyramid. Relations between Ben-Gurion and Sharett deteriorated further because of the hardline policy adopted after the two appointments were approved.[103] For example, Sharett opposed the policy of massive retaliation in Jordan because the Jordanians had indicated to Israel that they would try to prevent the activities of the *fedaiyun* by military force. After the Kibiya reprisal – over which Sharett wrote to Ben-Gurion, "One day someone will resign over this"[104] – Sharett succeeded in obtaining changes in the procedures for approving reprisals, establishing a precedent whereby it was necessary to gain the approval of the Cabinet Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defense for operations of this nature.[105]

At about the same time, Sharett abandoned his resistance to the project for the diversion of the Jordan River.[106] Ben-Gurion's policy, which favored continuation of the work in the Syrian demilitarized zone despite resistance from Syria and the international community, was finally approved after a prolonged debate; thus even in the realm of such delicate and complex relations as existed between the United States, the United Nations, Syria and Israel, struggles went on behind the scenes among the Israeli policy-making elite.

In October 1953, on the eve of his retirement to Kibbutz Sdeh-Boker, Ben-Gurion drew up his now famous political testament containing basic guidelines for the restructuring of the defense system, particularly the IDF. [107] Not to be outdone, Sharett drafted an alternative:

> I felt that a solution to the threat should be sought in non-military measures: the implementation of solutions to the refugee problem by a

[101] *Ibid.*,p. 972, and M. Sharett, *A Personal Diary*, Vol. 1, pp. 18-24 (October 10, 1953).

[102] M. Sharett, *ibid.*, pp. 27-32 (October 12, 1953).

[103] *Ibid.*, pp. 34-38 (October 14, 1953); M. Bar-Zohar, *Ben-Gurion*, Vol. 2, pp. 974-978.

[104] M. Sharett, *ibid.*, Vol. 1 pp. 18-24 (October 10, 1953).

[105] *Ibid.*, pp. 39-41 (October 15, 1953); M. Bar-Zohar, *Ben-Gurion*, Vol. 2, p, 981.

[106] M. Bar-Zohar, *ibid.*, p. 982. [107] *ibid.*, pp.983-984.

> bold and genuine offer on our part to pay compensation; the restoration of our good relations with the great powers; and an incessant striving for understanding with Egypt. Any one of these modes of action might involve us in a vicious circle; nevertheless, we cannot escape the obligation to use them.[108]

The growing military tension in the area and the sense of inaction felt in Israel had their effects on political considerations, especially regarding Ben-Gurion's expected retirement and the consequent search for his successor. Quite naturally, relations between the two leaders deteriorated. Ben-Gurion was categorically opposed to *Mapai's* appointment of Sharett to the Prime Ministership. The struggle between Ben-Gurion and those tho supported Sharett's appointment began early in November 1953, but by the end of the month, despite Ben-Gurion's resistance, Sharett succeeded Ben-Gurion as Israel's second Prime Minister.[109]

During Ben-Gurion's retirement at Sdeh-Boker, there was no improvement in his relations with Sharett, who now held the offices both of Prime Minister and of Foreign Minister. At the request of cabinet ministers and members of the *Mapai* leadership, and on his own initiative, Ben-Gurion frequently interjected himself into the decision-making process, including areas that fell within Sharett's immediate responsibilities. Towards the end of February 1954, another clash took place, one that had repercussions throughout the entire political system. It began after Ben-Gurion's recommendation to the Sharett government that a preventive strike be launched against Syria and Egypt. The proposal, which was supported by the IDF command, was rejected by the cabinet.[110] Alternative proposals – to send limited forces into the demilitarized zone on the Syrian border or to southern Lebanon – were also rejected by Sharett,[111] who preferred the use of mediators in order to ease tensions, and favored negotiations over the immediate use of force. Since he and Sharett could not agree on these issues, Ben-Gurion demanded that their party, *Mapai*,

[108] M. Sharett, *A Personal Diary*, Vol. 1, pp. 53-57 (October 19, 1953).

[109] *Ibid.*, pp. 18-27 (October 10-11, 1953) and pp. 109-114 (November 3, 1953); see also M. Bar-Zohar, *Ben-Gurion*, Vol. 2, pp. 984-986.

[110] M. Sharett, *ibid.*, Vl. 2, pp. 408-410 (Sharett to Ben-Gurion, March 22, 1954); and M. Bar-Zohar, *ibid.*, pp. 1024-1027.

[111] M. Sharett, *ibid.*, pp. 415-416 (March 27, 1954) and pp. 454-456 (April 12, 1954).

replace Sharett and his colleagues in the government. The demand was rejected (for the time being), but the controversy continued.[112]

In the context of the "Cairo Trial", which resulted in the execution of members of a Jewish espionage ring in Egypt (since referred to in general as the "Lavon Affair"), and in view of the conclusions of the Olshan-Dori Inquiry Committee appointed by Sharett to examine the role of Defense Minister Pinhas Lavon in the Lavon Affair, Sharett sought to replace Lavon with his own brother-in-law, Shaul Avigur.[113] Ben-Gurion vetoed Sharett's proposal,[114] and the internal and external tensions generated by these incidents brought "the old man" out of retirement to head the Defense Ministry, Sharett continuing to serve as Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. On the eve of Ben-Gurion's return to government, he met Sharett at Sdeh-Boker with the aim of coming to an agreement on the "rules of the game" once Ben-Gurion had returned to the Defense Ministry – his "natural domain" – and to the cabinet table. They concentrated on the extent to which the Prime Minister would have control over defense affairs; and Ben-Gurion succeeded in ensuring the independence of the Defense Ministry, as well as his own independence from the Prime Minister's authority and from domination by the Foreign Ministry, an office created and shaped by Sharett.[115] Despite the arrangements between the two leaders, tensions between them escalated progressively from the time Ben-Gurion returned to the Defense Ministry in February 1955. Ben-Gurion did not even try to conceal his desire to become Prime Minister again.[116] With only brief interludes, the struggle continued, the greatest friction being their differing attitudes towards military reprisals and retaliation.

One of the first steps Ben-Gurion took on his return to the Defense Ministry was to initiate the Gaza Operation, which the cabinet had approved but on a more limited scale.[117] When Sharett learned the actual scope of the operation carried out and the number of casualties

[112] *Ibid.* (January 4, 1954); M. Bar-Zohar, *Ben-Gurion*, Vol. 2, pp. 1030-1031, 1038-1039.

[113] M. Sharett, *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, pp. 617-627, 652-655, 670-673, 675, 691-693 (January 2-4, 14, 18, 20, 28, 1955).

[114] M. Bar-Zohar, *Ben-Gurion*, Vol. 2, pp. 1059-1061. [115] *Ibid.*, p. 1125.

[116] M. Sharett, *A Personal Diary*, Vol. 4, pp. 919-925 (April 11, 1955).

[117] *Ibid.*, Vl. 3, pp. 670-673, 799-803 (January 18, 1955 and February 27-28, 1955); M. Bar-Zohar, *Ben-Gurion*, Vol. 3, pp. 1127-1131.

suffered on both sides, he vented his anger at a cabinet meeting where he claimed that the political moves leading to the operation constituted an act of deception.[118] The confrontation assumed major proportions[119] because it came precisely when Sharett and the Foreign Ministry were assiduously promoting the possibility of contacts with the Egyptian government towards what would today be known as an "interim agreement".[120] But, while Sharett sought to reduce tensions between Israel and Egypt through direct and indirect diplomatic activities, Ben-Gurion was trying to exacerbate the relations to prevent what he regarded as a decline in Israel's status. Ben-Gurion urged that Israel defeat Egypt to deny her the possibility of initiating an all-out war.[121] After a bloody *fedaiyun* attack on Moshav Patish in the Negev at the end of March 1955, Ben-Gurion proposed that Israel initiate a large military offensive to drive the Egyptians from the Gaza Strip – a proposal bitterly opposed by Sharett. The issue was raised at several political levels, the most important of which were meetings of the leaders of *Mapai* and cabinet sessions. At the cabinet meeting held at the beginning of April 1955, nine ministers, who constituted the majority, opposed the preventive strike.[122] This political defeat for Ben-Gurion aggravated the tension already running high between Ben-Gurion and Sharett. From then on, their confrontations openly encompassed a growing number of internal and external issues, such as Israel's relations with the United States and with the UN, the policy of reprisals, and more generally, what was then known as "the armistice regime".

In the spring of 1955, at the outset of the internal debate on the armistice agreements, Sharett argued:

> The armistice agreements are not purely a military affair or a matter of security alone. They are a political matter of the utmost importance to us. The [UN] Armistice Commissions are the only forum of

[118] M. Bar-Zohar, *ibid.*; Sharett, *ibid.*, pp. 809-813 (March 3, 1955).

[119] M. Sharett, *ibid.*, pp. 803-807 (March 1, 1955).

[120] *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, pp. 431-433 (April 4, 1954); Vol. 3, pp. 677-679, 688-693, 836-839 (January 24, 27-28, 1955; March 12, 1955); M. Bar-Zohar, *ibid.*, pp. 1139-1140.

[121] M. Sharett, *ibid.*, Vol. 3, pp. 816-818 (March 6, 1955); M. Bar-Zohar, *ibid.*, p. 1137.

[122] M. Sharett, *ibid.*, V. 4, pp. 919-925 (April 11, 1955); M. Bar-Zohar, *ibid.*, pp. 1139-1140.

> regular contact between us and the Arab countries. The Armistice Commissions are arenas for constant contacts and struggles between us and the United Nations, and it touches on our relations with the great powers. It affects public opinion in the entire world with regard to Israel. On this issue it is inconceivable that there should be a rift between the Foreign Ministry and the Defense Ministry. On the contrary, the closest cooperation is needed.[123]

Ben-Gurion, on the other hand, had developed a theory on the decisive role played by the defense establishment in the life of the nation and on the need to educate the nation to understand that its security depended first and foremost on itself, not on the United Nations or the great powers. To this Sharett replied:

> I am already tired of arguing with this attitude that does not practically solve any problem. Of course Israel's rights and positions must be protected, and Israel must not be expected to accept just any policy: but there is a world of difference between seeing force as something to be used when it is the lesser of two evils, and a policy of military intervention for its own sake, with the aim of bringing matters to a head so that after the crisis explodes, so we are told, redemption will come.

Sharett went on to write in his diary:

> This philosophy – which holds that recourse to the United Nations is degrading, harms our prestige and insults our national honor, and that every problem must be solved by our own strength – expresses in a nutshell the doctrine of the leadership of the Israel Defense Forces. It refuses to admit the legitimacy of our international ties and views any attempt to enlist the influence of overseas elements, including the UN, to ease our defense as an admission that Israel's policy is bankrupt and as an insult to our national honor. . . The question is, what is the lesser of the two evils – to try to ease the tension while running the risk of further incidents in which we shall be the injured party, or to launch a large-scale, vigorous [military] operation aimed at putting an end to the problem [of terrorist raids], an operation which will cause grave damage to the [international] standing of the country and will not achieve its direct objective. For the present, and I lay great stress on the words "for the present", the government is of the opinion that the former course of action represents the lesser of the two evils.

[123] M. Sharett, *ibid.*

Sharett did not limit himself to writing in his diary and decided to have it out with Ben-Gurion.

> I went into Ben-Gurion's office after the meeting [of the cabinet on April 11, 1955] and I said roughly the following: "You will of course have noticed that I am very concerned about the problem of authority with regard to the armistice agreements. For me this is a very serious problem of responsibility with which I am charged as Prime Minister. Don't worry, for the moment I am not thinking of resigning, at least not until the elections. What will happen after the elections – I don't know. The ways are parting, and I do not know if it will be possible for us to continue together for long. But I am postponing such an extreme decision.[124]

In his clash with Sharett, Ben-Gurion did not confine himself to the cabinet sessions or their interactions within the party. He decided to voice his opinion in public, and he did not conceal this from Sharett. "After a further study of the question I decided to express . . . in public my opinion on the central problems of our foreign policy (without attacking the position adopted by the government or voicing disagreement with your known opinions). For there will soon be elections and under certain conditions I could be asked to form a government – and I will do so. I must tell the nation the basic outlines of the foreign policy I shall adopt."[125] On April 27, 1955, in a speech at the Ramat-Gan stadium on the eve of Independence Day celebrations, Ben-Gurion stated that "to many citizens of Israel it appears that we have already arrived at tranquillity and that we can settle down to a peaceful life. The only thing that continues to worry those people is what the gentiles will say in London, Washington, Moscow or Bandung. There is no foundation for this panic over what the gentiles say. History is not made by such statements, but by deeds: We shall not succumb to panic and cowardice in the guise of wisdom and bogus practicality."[126]

In the elections of July 1955, *Mapai* lost five seats in the *Knesset*. This loss prompted Ben-Gurion to take immediate steps to return to the office of Prime Minister: getting rid of Sharett had become a matter of urgency. The initial attack on Sharett was made in the *Mapai*

[124] *Ibid.* [125] Ben-Gurion to Sharett, April 12, 1955, *ibid.*, pp. 927-928.
[126] D. Ben-Gurion, *The Vision and the Way* (Tel-Aviv: *Mapai*, 1957), Vol. 4, pp. 166-171 (Hebrew).

Central Committee. Sharett wrote that "he [Ben-Gurion] presented to the Central Committee not only a distorted version but a ridiculous caricature of my policy. My entire world contains nothing but what will the gentiles say, and my entire political approach consists of finding favor in their eyes. His method, by contrast, is to look after the security of the state, its independent status and the education of its youth."[127]

At the end of August 1955, Ben-Gurion and Dayan threatened to resign as Defense Minister and Chief-of-Staff respectively unless new, large-scale reprisals were approved. This time Sharett bowed to the pressure, and the cabinet approved a large operation against Khan-Yunis in the Gaza Strip.[128] It was indicative of the bitterness of the controversy that Dayan demanded to know in unequivocal terms what the policy was: "either the 'Sharett line' or the 'Ben-Gurion line', for switching from one to the other causes nothing but damage."[129] Because of the deterioriation of the relations between Israel and Egypt and of the aggravated security conditions on the border, discussions were resumed at the highest governmental levels on whether it was necessary or possible to embark on a preemptive war against Egypt. It was clear to the protagonists that a political and military move of this kind was inconceivable, given the cabinet structure that existed up to the end of 1955; so long as Sharett was a senior member, such a policy would never receive cabinet approval.[130] Yet paradoxically, when the coalition was formed after the elections, Ben-Gurion declared he would return to the government only if Sharett were included.[131] Ben-Gurion demanded of Sharett total political surrender, but he stopped short of eliminating him from the political scene as he was aware of Sharett's power in the party and needed him in the Foreign Ministry.

Ben-Gurion was appointed Prime Minister in November 1955; this did not reduce the strife between the two groups in the *Mapai* leadership. On December 5, 1955, Ben-Gurion's proposal for a preventive war aimed at opening up the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping was

[127] M. Sharett, *A Personal Diary*, Vol. 4, pp. 1113-1119 (August 8, 1955).
[128] M. Bar-Zohar, *Ben-Gurion*, Vol. 3, p. 1147.
[129] M. Dayan, *Milestones*, pp. 151-152.
[130] M. Bar-Zohar, *Ben-Gurion*, Vol.3, pp. 1156-1158.
[131] M. Sharett, *A Personal Diary*, Vol. 4, pp. 1126-1128

defeated. The *Mapai* ministers who opposed the move were Sharett, Zalman Aranne, Kadish Luz, and Pinhas Sapir, who were joined by Israel Barzilai and Mordechai Bentov, the Mapam ministers; by Moshe Shapira and Yosef Burg, the National Religious Party ministers; and by Pinhas Rosen of the Progressive Party – in effect, the "Sharett group" in the cabinet.[132] The sources of discord lay not only in differing definitions of the immediate and long-range security needs of Israel, but also in some fundamental issues in Israel's international relations. The problem of Israel's orientation towards the United States came up time and again in cabinet debates. Differences arose on whether, in light of Washington's refusal to supply Israel with arms, Israel should continue to foster her close relations with the United States or should instead adopt a totally different orientation, such as the development of close relations with France. Ben-Gurion and Sharett exchanged heated messages on this question, Sharett supporting the continuation of the American orientation, Ben-Gurion favoring a search for a different connection, both out of defiance of the United States[133] and because of the problems of arms acquisition and the possibility of opening new export markets. Inevitably, this clash led to a renewal of the dispute over responsibility for arms purchasing between the Ministry of Defense, technically qualified in this sphere and ultimately responsible for using the arms, and the Foreign Ministry, heretofore charged with conducting negotiations for purchasing arms, as this was considered an issue of foreign relations.[134]

Towards mid 1956, the clashes between the two leaders and their followers came to a head. Ben-Gurion had concluded that Israel had no choice but to launch a preemptive strike on the southern front and that closer relations with France should be sought, as there was little to be gained from the United States.[135] Ben-Gurion's conclusions were unequivocal, and he knew that in order to implement his policy unhindered he would have to force Sharett to resign. He calculated that under the existing political and party conditions in Israel it was enough to remove the head of the group for the entire faction to collapse and the "line" to be eliminated. But the struggle to remove

[132] M. Bar-Zohar, *Ben-Gurion*, Vol. 3, p. 1157.

[133] *Ibid.*, pp. 1179-1181; see also exchange of letters between Ben-Gurion and Sharett in M. Sharett, *A Personal Diary*, Vol. 4, p. 1386-1388 (April 3-4, 1956).

[134] M. Bar-Zohar, *ibid.*, pp. 1181-1182.

[135] *Ibid.* p. 1187

Sharett was not an easy one, for in the *Mapai* Central Committee it emerged that a large group supported Sharett and his policies.[136] Ben-Gurion began a series of maneuvers that eventually led to Sharett's downfall in 1956 (see below).

From this review of the confrontations between the two leaders and their followers in the elite, it is evident that the struggle was waged over a number of aspects of domestic and foreign affairs. These may be categorized in the following manner:

(a) *Attitudes towards extra-regional international factors*, including how to react to decisions of the UN; whether it was essential for Israel to maintain special relations with the United States and, if so, how far these relations should go; foreign alignments alternative to that with the United States, i.e., relations with France and Britain; relations with Third World countries; sources of armaments; and how to react to pressures resulting from Israel's dependence on external factors.

(b) *Israel's attitude to the Arab countries in the region*, encompassing the question of military activism versus the "Sharett line" of moderation, avoidance of hasty reactions, and stress on the element of deterrence; reprisals; preventive war; political activism and its coordination with defense policy; separate negotiations as opposed to comprehensive negotiations with the Arabs; the initiation of preemptive moves to resolve issues such as the problem of the refugees, land ownership, abandoned property, etc.

(c) *Domestic and party politics*, including the connection between defense and foreign policy and their influence on the general elections in Israel; a variety of questions on the relations between the defense and foreign ministries and the division of functions between them; the problem of the nature of the relationships among the political elite; the influence of the party's rank and file in foreign and defense policy-making.

(d) *Personal relations*, the confrontation focusing on the evaluations and images each leader held of the other. Ben-Gurion regarded Sharett as a politician bereft of political and personal courage: "He [Sharett] is breeding a generation of weaklings here, and I shall not allow it. It will be a fighting generation."[137] Moreover, Ben-Gurion saw Sharett as a leader of limited imagination, lacking strong

[136] M. Sharett, *A Personal Diary*, Vol. 5, pp. 1429-1432, 1432-1435, 1440-1456 (June 13, 15-18, 1956). [137] M. Bar-Zohar, *Ben-Gurion*, Vol. 3, p. 1055.

analytical ability and out of his depth in complex political situations. In short, Ben-Gurion pinpointed and attacked Sharett's lack of "charisma". From this point of view, Ben-Gurion partly agreed with Weizmann, who once wrote: "Sharett has the best brain of the young leadership in Israel. But he lacks the magnetic quality of leadership."[138] Unlike Ben-Gurion, Sharett generally refrained from criticizing the qualities and personality of his rival, at most sometimes accusing him of disloyalty and lack of empathy in difficult moments. When pressed, Sharett simply said that "The reason for our mutual alienation lies in certain deepest recesses of the mind, and all that is material for psychoanalytical research".[139] In private, on the pages of his diary, Sharett was particularly critical of Ben-Gurion's inability to analyze complex international situations, his outbursts, and his tendency to compartmentalize, which led him to place methods and considerations of defense above every other calculation. Sharett also attached great weight to Ben-Gurion's boasting and concern with prestige: "It is clear that his [Ben-Gurion's] aim is to defeat Nasser, and his motives and considerations are not free of the personal element to hatred of Nasser and competition with him. I thought – though I did not say so – that this tendency is heightened by the impatience of a seventy-year-old to bring about a far-reaching change while he is still vigorous and in possession of his faculties."[140] On the other hand, Sharett saw himself as the representative of political sanity, of pure and clear political logic, and of leadership characterized by political seriousness. In this connection he wrote: "Very wide circles in the country and for that matter in the Diaspora, see in me the guarantor for a government of good sense and level-headedness."[141]

Patterns of Political Promotion, Organizational Status and Attitudes to the Conflict

Since the political personality of Sharett, like his attitude to the conflict, was formed long before the confrontation with Ben-Gurion, the

[138] N. Rose, ed., *Baffy; The Diaries of Blanche Dugdale* (London: Vallentine, Mitchell, 1973).

[139] M. Sharett, *A Personal Diary*, Vol. 1, pp. 154-160 (November 17, 1953).

[140] *Ibid.*, pp. 98-99 (October 30, 1953).

[141] *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, pp. 652-655 (January 14, 1955).

influence of political recruitment and promotion on his political behavior should be reconsidered. A sound understanding of these patterns can help elucidate what later appeared as political weakness in the critical year of 1956, when the struggle reached a peak and Sharett and his "line" were eventually eliminated.

Moshe Sharett belonged to what can be called "the Palestinian group" in the political leadership of the *Yishuv*. It was not that they were actually born in Palestine that characterized the members (most were not), but that they received the major part of their education in Palestine, spent their formative years in the country, and were influenced by the various processes intrinsic to the development of the Jewish national home. Of the factors that usually influence the development of a political personality – his home, formal education, peer group, profession in life, the characteristics of the existing political culture, the established leaders, changing environmental conditions – it was the peer group that influenced Sharett most, particularly two men who later became his brothers-in-law, Eliahu Golomb and Dov Hoz. Sharett was the product of the social and educational activities at the Herzlia high school in Tel-Aviv at the beginning of the twentieth century,[142] and his political career was profoundly influenced by his membership in "The Association of the Graduates of the Herzlia High School", founded in 1913 by the graduates of the first class.

At first the group was apolitical; not only did it not align with any of the parties active in the *Yishuv* at the time, it consciously aspired to keep out of *Yishuv* politics.[143] It was only gradually, through meetings with members of *Hashomer* and with other pioneer settlers in Palestine, that some members of the group began to move hesitantly towards the Labour movement.[144] They were impressed by the creativity, pioneering spirit and self-sacrifice of *Hashomer*, though not with the political activism that characterized its policy, and by the idealism, simplicity and readiness to put principles into practice that characterized the thinking and way of life of A.D. Gordon, a leader and source of inspiration for the early twentieth-century Jewish settlers in Palestine. At first the group was attracted more to *Hapo'el*

[142] I. Kolatt. "Moshe Sharett".

[143] Y. Shapira, *Hapo'el Haza'ir* (Tel Aviv: Ayanot, 1957), p. 35 (Hebrew).

[144] Various letters from Golomb to Sharett and Hoz in 1914, 1915, in A. Golomb, *Hevion Oz*, passim.

Haza'ir than to *Po'alei Zion*, the former being marked by political moderation, flexibility and pioneering values – ideological components that accorded with the group's attitude to *Yishuv* politics.[145] Only later did they join *Aḥdut ha-Avodah*.[146] The written constitution of the group reflected its acceptance of the principle of service to the emerging national home. It emphasized "complete loyalty to the national home", activity for the benefit of the collective, discipline, and the right of the group to determine its members' occupations, studies, etc.[147] The group attached great importance to action and much less to what was referred to as "idle speculation". Despite differences in individual temperament, the members were bound by many ties. The association created a base for strong emotional bonds and mutual moral responsibility. Sharett sought to re-create this kind of relationship with Ben-Gurion, but in vain.[148]

After World War One, Golomb, Hoz and Sharett thought that *Aḥdut ha-Avodah* would be the movement that would consolidate, defend and develop the *Yishuv*, which had suffered traumatically in the last stages of that war, and concluded that they had to join the new party. Intellectually and culturally, Eliahu Golomb (later the head of the *Haganah*) and Sharett were on a level with other members of the elite of the Labour movement. However, they preferred not to engage in the development of theories and doctrines; instead they chose to commit themselves to action and practical Zionism, building and strengthening the physical power of the *Yishuv*, developing its economic base, overcoming dissension and schism, and supporting party discipline and the national – not socialist – elements in the doctrine of the movement.

Looking back, Sharett wrote:

> Just as it [the period of *Aḥdut ha-Avodah's* consolidation] contains people who were destined to create *Aḥdut ha-Avodah* [Berl Katznelson and Ben-Gurion], it also contains people whom *Aḥdut ha-Avodah* created, set on their road, and opened a future before. It was not only out of cognitive awareness, or purely due to the pressures of the realities of life,

[145] B. Ben-Yehuda, *The Herzlia Gymnasia*, p. 79.

[146] A. Golomb, *Hevion Oz*, p. 170; M. Sharett (Shertok) in *Kuntres*, Vol. 19, p. 362 (Hebrew).

[147] See the constitution of the organization in A. Golomb, *Hevion Oz*, pp. 137-138.

[148] M. Sharett, *A Personal Diary*, Vol. 4, pp. 919-925 (April 11, 1955).

> that people joined *Aḥdut ha-Avodah*, but because they fell in love with it: they fell in love with Zionism, which *Aḥdut ha-Avodah* brought to a new golden age, they fell in love with Jewish Palestinian socialism, of which *Aḥdut ha-Avodah* raised the standard. The magic of *Aḥdut ha-Avodah*, which attracted new forces to the movement, lay in the declaration that the future of the nation and the land lay within the Palestinian Labour movement.[149]

The "brothers-in-law" felt that *Aḥdut ha-Avodah* was destined to establish a just society in Palestine. As Sharett rose in the political and party hierarchy and in the policy-making system of the *Yishuv*, he adopted some of the basic operative and ideological premises of *Aḥdut ha-Avodah*. He supported the concepts of "Palestinocentrism", of the Labour movement's hegemony, of modern evolutionary socialism, of a centralized leadership and great discipline on the part of the members of the movement. He attached major importance to the power of the *Yishuv*, including its military organizations. He developed a pragmatic political approach and well understood the mechanisms of coalitions at the various levels of the political system, advocating a collective but centralized leadership with effective control over national resources. In his ascent to national leadership, his unreserved loyalty to the movement, his willingness to undertake missions, and his commitment to service to the nation were particularly evident. His commitment to day-to-day activity, which, he believed, would determine the power of the *Yishuv* and later of the state, characterized his dedication. As a Palestinian Jew who had witnessed the humiliation of the *Yishuv* during the final stages of World War One, he believed that action should be taken pragmatically, in response to developments as they occurred.

These elements deeply affected Sharett's struggle with Ben-Gurion. Matters reached a climax in June 1956, on the eve of his removal from the cabinet. But when Moshe Shapira, leader of the National Religious Party, tried to persuade Sharett to return to the Premiership, Sharett described horrors that would be let loose, in Sharett's opinion, if Ben-Gurion were outside the government.[150] To those who argued that there could be no public campaign against the removal of Sharett from the cabinet unless Sharett himself led it,

[149] M. Sharett (Shertok) in *Kuntres*, p. 364.

[150] M. Sharett, *A Personal Diary*, Vol. 5, pp. 1421-1426 (June 10, 1956).

Sharett replied: "To all of you I say that my embarking on a public campaign would be by far the worst thing. It would end in the destruction and disintegration of the party [*Mapai*] and the last vestige of responsible political behavior in Israel".[151] When the way to unseat Sharett had been planned and it had been decided that a statement would be made before the party's Central Committee, a question arose: what would happen if a debate were demanded? Sharett refused to make such a demand: "I felt totally cut off from this question and indifferent to it. The discussion was tortuous, painful, and futile. In effect these good and important people were sitting and trying to think of ways to muzzle the Central Committee and delude the party – all this under the covert threat of the man at the top [Ben-Gurion]. I thought to myself: what we are now witnessing is tyranny – *Mapai*-style, or Israeli-style."[152] Sharett's resignation before the *Mapai* Central Committee marked the culmination and conclusion of a political career that had begun with the foundation of "The Association of Graduates of the Herzlia High School".

> Here I performed an act of piety. Perhaps it was foolish, but I felt that my silence throughout the fragmented debate might be interpreted as moral pressure on the members not to surrender but to insist on a debate in the Central Committee. I knew that in the Central Committee I would not speak – I would not begin to unfold the entire canvas before this body which, in any case, suffered from excessive publicity. More-over, I had talked to Ben-Gurion about the question of a debate. We agreed that a debate open to the general public was out of the question, and in the end I dropped even the idea of a debate in the Political Committee.

Finally, Sharett replied to Ben-Gurion's statement after the vote with these words:

> Did the members of the Central Committee listen to these perverted statements? Did they understand their full significance? Did they see the distortion . . . Why does the speaker not admit that the responsibility lies with him – that he, Ben-Gurion, the Prime Minister, he and no other, initiated my resignation, decreed it, forced it, forced his colleague to submit to it under the threat of a crisis and an imbroglio from which there would be no way out, muzzled him irrevocably – once again by pressure in the same forum – and forced him to be cut down

[151] *Ibid.*, pp. 1429-1432 (June 12, 1956). [152] *Ibid.*, pp. 1432-1435 (June 13, 1956).

without uttering a word? What kind of truth is that, to portray me as responsible for the resignation? And after this comes the demand that "the entire movement" grant moral endorsement to a shocking development forced upon it, against its wish, and at the arbitrary will of one man![153]

Conclusions

In the early years after the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, two orientations towards the Israel-Arab conflict existed within the political elite. These orientations took shape around two outstanding political leaders, Moshe Sharett and David Ben-Gurion. Between 1953 and 1956, the clashes between the two men escalated, climaxing with Sharett's ouster from the government and from the political leadership. During these years the dispute was not exclusively over the Middle East conflict; it also included tactical issues, such as the policy of reprisals, the importance of foreign policy as opposed to the centrality of defense, the autonomy of the various governmental agencies, and Israel's relations with the United States and with France. However, all these issues related directly to the two leaders' different perceptions of the Middle East conflict as a whole, and their confrontations were a function of their opposing viewpoints.

Any discussion of the differences between the two orientations is incomplete without an examination of their respective origins and the accompanying operative implications. These differences evolved with the personal political development of the two leaders. Sharett's views were formulated and consolidated in the 1920s on a pragmatic nationalist base. Ben-Gurion's views were in a state of constant development based on his fundamental socialist ideology. Although Sharett was well acquainted with the Arab community in Palestine, he was deeply and fundamentally pessimistic over the possibility of solving the Israel-Arab conflict. Nevertheless, he persisted in seeking ways to contain the conflict and lower its profile. Ben-Gurion, on the other hand, always sought a comprehensive solution because he believed it possible to achieve one, even forcing it on the Arabs if necessary. From these two basically divergent orientations, the two leaders developed their concomitant tactical steps. Operationally, Ben-Gurion did not

[153] *Ibid.*, pp. 1445-1454 (June17, 1956).

hesitate, on the one hand, to exacerbate the conflict in order to bring about a solution or, on the other hand, to stress Israel's potential close relationship to the Arabs. Sharett, however, was consistent in his search for ways to prevent outbreaks of violence.

Differences in political outlook – pragmatism vs. socialism – also influenced the actions of the two leaders. Both men had solidly formulated their concepts before rising to prominence in the ranks of the political elite, Sharett in foreign policy and Ben-Gurion in the field of defense.

In 1956 Ben-Gurion instigated Sharett's removal from the government, enabling Ben-Gurion to embark on a preventive war against Egypt. From this period, conflict within the elite over Israel's orientation was eliminated, for with the ouster of Sharett, the loose group he had headed disintegrated, and the attitude towards managing the conflict that he had represented disappeared. However, the controversy between the two men broke out anew with the public revelation of the "Lavon affair" in 1963.

After the Yom Kippur War, Sharett's orientation towards the Israel-Arab conflict found new voice in the Israeli government. It received credible support from Henry Kissinger's concept of "step-by-step" diplomacy. To this day, Israeli policy-makers struggle with the question of whether to adopt a method based on stages in order to create a *modus vivendi* with Arabs (the Sharett formula), or whether to work for a full-fledged peace, using military force when necessary (the Ben-Gurion formula). Thus the real controversy was not the conflicting interests between the defense and foreign affairs establishments, or clashes between individual leaders, but rather basic attitudes towards the manner by which the Middle East conflict can be solved.

The Palestine Arabs' Attitude towards the *Yishuv* and the Zionist Movement

Joseph Nevo

When examining the attitude of the Arabs of Palestine towards the *Yishuv* and the Zionist movement, an important basic fact must be borne in mind: after the First World War a Palestinian Arab national movement had developed in *Eretz Israel*. This was a movement with its own unique features, different and distinct from the general Arab movement or the respective national movements in the neighboring countries.

There is no point in repeating and detailing here the diverse reasons and processes that led to the growth of the Palestinian movement. What should be done, however, is to note in telegraphic fashion the most prominent factors that promoted the crystallization of a separate Arab Palestinian nationalism within the broader Arab nationalism, namely:

(a) the encouragement of Palestinian nationalists by British officers, members of the military government;
(b) the collapse of Feisal's regime in Syria in 1920;
(c) the special situation of the Arabs of Palestine as compared to that of their counterparts in the neighboring countries: whereas the Arabs of Syria, Lebanon or Iraq contended against an alien mandatory power, the Arabs of Palestine fought against both foreign rule and the Jewish *Yishuv*, which had every intention of being a permanent fixture in the country and of founding its national home there.

Once the Palestinian Arab movement had been established, its leaders and spokesmen raised two parallel sets of arguments in the course

* J. Nevo teaches in the Department of Middle East History, University of Haifa. He is engaged in research of the political modern history of the Middle East, with special interest in Jordan, Saudi-Arabia and the Arabs of Palestine before 1948.

of their struggle against the *Yishuv*. One was to prove the Arab right to the country; the other to rebut the Jewish claim.

The gist of the arguments of the first set can be summarized as follows:

(1) the historical continuity of Arab or Muslim rule and presence in the country;

(2) the Arabs constitute the majority of the country's inhabitants;

(3) reliance on President Wilson's Fourteen Points, and especially the paragraph referring to the right to self-determination;

(4) reliance on Article 22 of the League of Nations Covenant, which – in the context of the Mandate system – noted that the inhabitants in the territories of what had been the Ottoman Empire were nearly ripe for the establishment of independent states;

(5) reliance on the exchange of letters at the beginning of the First World War between the Sharif of Mecca and a representative of the British government (the Husain-McMahon correspondence). The leaders of Palestinian nationalism regarded this correspondence as a binding contract, and interpreted it as implying that Palestine was included in the area in which the British government was prepared to recognize the independence of the Arabs.

To reinforce this set of arguments the Palestinian Arab leaders, as mentioned, advanced another set of reasons to explain why the Jews did not have a claim to Palestine:

(1) Palestine was an Arab land and as such the Jews had no right to it;

(2) the realization of Zionism in Palestine was not possible. Because of the limited territory there was not room enough for large-scale Jewish immigration, and the two peoples, because of their natures, will not be able to live together in the country;

(3) the legal basis for Jewish settlement – the Balfour Declaration and the British Mandate – was altogether invalid. The declaration did not hold, because the British government had no right to issue such a declaration, and the writ of the Mandate was void because it incorporated the Balfour Declaration;

(4) Jewish immigration to the country worsened the economic situation; it increased unemployment and created an unhealthy economic competition with the Arabs.

These arguments comprised the principled, *ideological* position of the Arabs of Palestine towards the *Yishuv*: arguments replete with reasons for rejecting Zionism, disallowing the Jewish claim to the country and emphasizing the country's Arab character and the Arab right to it. The *practical* stand taken by the Arab population towards the *Yishuv* was the product of the combination of the ideological input and the realities of daily life.

The major expression of this position was not only the refusal to regard the Jewish *Yishuv* as a partner either in the ownership of Palestine or its settlement, but also the refusal even to discuss these matters. Consequently, the only party with whom the Arabs of Palestine were prepared to discuss questions related to the future of the country and the fate of its inhabitants were the British authorities. All the ideas, proposals, complaints and protests voiced by the leaders of the Palestinian Arabs were directed to that party.

With their points of departure those cited above, in the beginning of the twenties the Arabs of Palestine formulated a series of demands, known as the "national demands", which they harped on to the Mandate authorities. Concisely stated, those demands were as follows: (1) Jewish immigration to the country must be halted altogether; (2) the sale of land to Jews in the country must be prohibited; (3) the Mandate and the Balfour Declaration must be nullified and an independent Palestinian state be established on the entire territory of Palestine.

These demands were presented with only slight modifications throughout the entire period of the Mandate. Every Arab representation – national, local or sectorial – placed those "national demands", at every opportunity, before every possible representative of the British government. Over the years the demands were aired by the Arab Palestinian Executive Committee, the Higher Arab Committee, the political parties and by all the social and economic organizations regarded by the Arab public in the country as their representatives. They were raised before the British officials in Palestine and before representatives of the government and the public in Great Britain: cabinet ministers, members of parliament, and the

communications media. It should be noted that these "national demands" constituted a framework with which most of the Arab Palestinian public identified during most of the period. The few divergences from the consensus had to do with the spirit of the matter and its formulation but not its substance. In other words, the Arab position with regard to the *Yishuv* and the Zionist movement was essentially a single, rigid and monolithic position with virtually no shadings. This phenomenon is particularly striking when set against the variegation of hues characterizing positions on the "Arab question" in the Jewish *Yishuv*.

A single, defined position on the Arab question, widely accepted in the Zionist movement and the *Yishuv* in that period, is hard to locate. Views differed even with regard to the ultimate objectives of Zionist activity in the country. These questions were the subjects of extended debate between the various factions and of vigorous discussion within the factions themselves. The struggle and contention among the Zionist leaders, as mentioned, put into sharper relief the uniformity and rigidity of the Arab position.

Nevertheless, within the framework that developed on the Arab side there were instances of what can be considered as different aspects within the overall conception. An example is the distinction drawn by the Arab political public between Jews and Zionists. This distinction held mainly on the ideological and theoretical plane. Occasionally it could be noted in utterances made within personal contexts. However, when matters came down to practical political manifestations, the distinction between Zionists and Jews was obfuscated.

A familiar Arab propaganda argument, which recurs in different versions right up to these days, is that Jews and Arabs lived side by side in Palestine for generations, peacefully, in friendship and with mutual respect. This system was disrupted with the advent of Zionism. The arrival of the Jewish Zionist immigrants from Europe and their militant activity created – according to this argument – the screen of hostility and enmity that fell between the two peoples.

A very familiar episode is related by David Ben-Gurion to highlight his first encounter with Arab nationalism. In 1915, while he was a law student in Constantinople, he was expelled from the country on grounds of having engaged in Zionist activity. Before being expelled he was held in detention in the prison in the Old City of Jerusalem,

where by chance he met a fellow student, a scion of one of the city's notable Arab families. His friend asked why he was in jail and Ben-Gurion replied that he was about to be expelled from the country because of Zionist activity. The young Arab responded: "As your friend, I am sorry about that; as an Arab nationalist I am glad".

This distinction however, remained only theoretical and vanished when matters were put to a real test. The lack of distinction between Jews and Zionists came to expression in the frequent outbursts of violence by the Arabs of Palestine against the Jewish *Yishuv*, especially in the disturbances of 1929. The non-Zionist Jewish communities such as the Old *Yishuv* in Hebron and Safed were the major victims of those disturbances, whereas the settlements of the more recently arrived Zionists, whose inhabitants were armed and could defend themselves, suffered less.

Beginning in the twenties Arab propaganda made increasing use of anti-Semitic motifs and anti-Jewish religious arguments. The Arabic version of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* was distributed in the country, and it was contended that the Jews' intention was to gain control of the holy places of Islam on the Temple Mount. The Jews were portrayed as the enemies of Islam, a depiction that was buttressed by quotations from the Koran. This propaganda line, which more than a small section of the Arab public in the country found acceptable, was directed against the Jews as such and as a religious community, without any distinction drawn between Zionists and non-Zionists.

In the reality of daily existence Palestinians practically cooperated with Jews not only as individuals but also with the recognized representative bodies of the *Yishuv*: the Zionist Organization and the Jewish Agency. The major areas of cooperation were:

(1) the sale of land to Jews;
(2) the acceptance of money from Jewish institutions for political and propaganda purposes;
(3) the "courting" of Jewish votes in elections to the municipal councils in the mixed-population cities, especially in Jerusalem;
(4) preference for suppliers of goods and services in the Jewish *Yishuv*: physicians, attorneys as well as various kinds of merchandise.

There was also Arab-Jewish cooperation when the mutual interests of the two communities called for it. This was most pronounced during the Second World War, especially after Italy entered the war. The closing of the Mediterranean harmed citrus exports and the import of goods. The economic impact of that situation brought the two parties closer together.

Joint Jewish-Arab representations convened on many occasions to discuss situations arising as a result of the war, problems of export, citrus surpluses, and the distribution of government allocations of raw materials and of foreign exchange. There were also many joint meetings of mayors from the two communities to discuss municipal problems; similarly, homeowners and businessmen met to discuss rent and taxation and the possibility of forming a united front against levies and restrictions imposed by the government.

Cooperation of that sort reflected a certain reduction in the level of hostility towards the Jewish *Yishuv*.

There were certain periods in which the level of Arab hostility towards the *Yishuv* somewhat decreased. The most conspicuous was the late twenties, when Zionist implementation was at a low point. Immigration had diminished, emigration had increased and many (in the *Yishuv* and outside) tended to view the National Home as no more than an unsuccessful experiment that might terminate itself, even without being attacked from outside. That was also the assessment of the leaders of the Palestine Arabs, who did not see reason at that time to take more forceful action against Zionism.

Another period of lessened enmity was the first years of the Second World War. In addition to the cooperation between the parties mentioned above, which by its nature overshadowed the enmity for a while, other factors also played a part. When the war broke out the Arab population of the country was leaderless. Most of the Arab politicians had been arrested by the government during the 1936-1939 revolt, been expelled from the country, fled or had been murdered. One of the consequences of the revolt and of the World War that followed was that the Arabs of the country focused their attention on prosaic mundane problems – the individual's and his family's economic and physical security. The occupation with politics – including attitudes *vis-à-vis* the Jewish *Yishuv* – became a matter of secondary importance, especially during the first half of the war.

II

Relatively moderate positions towards the *Yishuv* could be found among individuals who were benefited by Jewish sources. The Zionist and Jewish Agency Executives tried to buy the cooperation of those elements in Arab society who were opposed to the authority and leadership of the Arab Executive Committee. They sought to spur those parties to moderation, and encouraged them to form political parties that would operate within the Arab community and would cooperate with the Jewish *Yishuv*. Those elements were generally opponents of the existing leadership on personal and family (not ideological) grounds; the most prominent among which were the members of the Nashashibi family and their associates. It should be noted that the opposition groups within the Arab community tended to cooperate with the British authorities more than the others, and consequently were generally regarded – correctly or not – as more moderate. As pro-British they accepted the framework of the Mandate for Palestine (and were even interested in having it continued). Acceptance of the Mandate could also be interpreted as tacit recognition of the Balfour Declaration.

It appears, then, that even the less hostile views towards Zionism for the most part came to expression for reasons that were ideologically irrelevant. They did not stem from a recognition that in principle the Zionists were partners for deliberations about the country, but from internal rivalries or as a result of extraneous factors. The inflexibility and unwillingness to compromise that characterized the Arab position were most pronounced on the eve of the Second World War, when the British government published the White Paper of 1939. In this document the British government went – insofar as the matter can be put in quantitative terms – more than three-quarters of the way towards the Arabs. Even the order of the sections of the White Paper paralleled to that of the Arab "national demands" that had been previously mentioned:

(1) the Arabs of Palestine demanded a ban on Jewish immigration, and the White Paper proposed a drastic reduction in immigration: 75,000 immigrants would be alowed in the country over the following five years, and afterwards a renewal of immigration only with Arab consent;

(2) the Arabs of Palestine demanded a ban on land sales to Jews, and the White Paper authorized the High Commissioner to amend regulations limiting or prohibiting the sale of lands in various parts of the country. When the regulations went into effect it turned out that in 95 per cent of the territory of *Eretz Israel* Jews were either forbidden to purchase land or this right was limited and made conditional on the consent of the authorities. In only 5 per cent of the territory of the country were Jews permitted to buy land without interference, but that was mostly on the coastal plain where most of the land was in Jewish hands;

(3) the Arabs of Palestine demanded the nullification of the Mandate and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, and the White Paper spoke of a gradual end of the British presence in the country and its replacement by an independent state in which Jews and Arabs would share government responsibilities, but the state itself would be neither Jewish nor Arab.

Although the White Paper went a very long way towards meeting the Arab demands, the Palestinian leadership refused to accept it. The formal reason was that the neighboring Arab states (who tried to mediate between the British government and the Palesinian Arabs) were reluctant to advocate a cooperation with the government on the implementation of the White Paper. The real and deeper reason was, however, their unwillingness to recognize any Jewish right to Palestine. Acceptance of the White Paper meant recognition of the Mandate framework, and the writ of the Mandate included mention and affirmation of the Balfour Declaration.

As mentioned above, during the first half of the Second World War the attention of the Arab public in the country was not on political struggle. The turnabout in this attitude, the end of the indifference to political matters, began in late 1942 and early 1943. It was the result of developments over which the Arab community in the country for the most part did not have much influence.

(1) The battle at El Alamein at the end of October 1942, the Allied victories in the Western Desert and the Anglo-American invasion of North Africa – all these removed the Axis threat from the Middle East. The successful Allied war campaigns in 1943 – the victories in

Russia and the landings in Sicily and in Italy made their chance of winning the war all but certain. The end of the war became only a matter of time. This expectation necessitated a reassessment of the situation by the Arabs in Palestine, especially within those quarters who expected an Axis victory, and did not conceal those expectations.

(2) In November 1942 the resolutions of the Biltmore conference (held in May) were published and were understood as a call to establish a Jewish state in Palestine immediately. At about the same time, the first reports from Europe about the Holocaust, its extent, and the methodicalness of the German machinery of destruction employed against the Jewish people, reached Palestine. Apart from the furious reaction of the Jewish *Yishuv* and its demand that the gates of the country be thrown open to the survivors, this led to support for the Jews by public opinion in the free world. Many persons and bodies in the United States and elsewhere expressed support for the right of the Jewish people to immigrate to Palestine, to settle and establish its state there. This development lit a warning signal for the leaders of the Arab public in the country.

The fear of Jewish immigration was one of the major disturbing factors for the Arabs of the country and contributed to the crystallization of their rigid attitude against the *Yishuv*. They now envisioned the possibility of massive Jewish immigration, and that called for organizing and consulting together with the aim of preventing that possibility from materializing.

(3) In this period developments also took place on the inter-Arab plane. The loose ideology of the thirties about Arab unity looked as if something might now come of it. On the initiative of the Egyptian and Iraqi Prime Ministers, meetings were held among various Arab leaders for the establishment of a federation or supra-national framework of unity, in which the common heritage, language, culture and history of the Arab peoples would be expressed. The Arabs of Palestine were also asked to send representatives to those talks and that gave rise to the problem of who those representatives should be and how they would be elected.

(4) At that time many Palestinian leaders who had left the country during the 1936-1939 revolt – having fled, been expelled or arrested – returned and contributed to the renewal of political activity among the Arabs.

The major issues concerning the *Yishuv* occupying the Arab public in the country were immigration and land purchases. The latter became increasingly important, since of all the areas in which the Arabs of Palestine fought the Jewish *Yishuv*, the land issue was the one where the Arabs themselves could affect the developments: the decision whether to sell or not to sell lands was in their hands. In the other areas of contention – the ban on immigration and the termination of the Mandate – their power of influence was minimal.

With their fear of Jewish land purchases and immigration mounted, the Arabs of the country regarded the White Paper as the best guarantee of their rights and the best assurance that the *Yishuv* would not exceed beyond the narrow border laid out for it by the White Paper. Here a seemingly paradoxical situation was created. The Arabs of Palestine never accepted the White Paper (except for the Nashashibi faction) and did not recognize it. Nevertheless even though in principle they disagreed with the policy it represented and formally even opposed it, most of the Arab parties in the country demanded – forcefully – that the various sections of the White Paper be implemented. The reason for this paradox is that despite all their criticism of the White Paper, the Arabs of the country, saw it as the best barrier under the circumstances to the ambitions attributed to the Jews concerning the absorption of additional immigrants and the acquisition of more lands.

III

In examining the relations between the Arabs of Palestine and the Jewish *Yishuv* in the period following the Second World War, two major developments can be noted.

(1) A radicalization and hardening of positions of each side towards the other. The hardening stemmed from the trauma of the Holocaust, the war, and the feeling that the fate of the country was about to be decided. Both Arabs and Jews prepared for this possibility and therefore presented maximalist positions.

One of the expressions of the hardening on the Arab side was the argument raised by the heads of the Higher Arab Committee, according to which they were prepared to grant civil rights (but not political

ones) only to those Jews who had arrived in the country before 1919. Were this idea carried out it would have meant a mass expulsion of all the immigrants who arrived in the country after that date. This demand, which had been raised by the Higher Arab Committee in 1946 and in 1947, was aired again later by the PLO, in its national covenants of 1964 and 1968.

(2) The Jewish-Arab conflict in Palestine underwent a process of internationalization, as new international parties entered the arena. The foci of the confrontation were no longer only the Arabs, the Jews and the British. Now on the scene were also the United States, the Soviet Union and the United Nations.

In consequence, the *direct* confrontation between the Jews and the Arabs was obscured in that period (1945-1947). There were virtually no hostilities until the summer of 1947 and even relatively little verbal clashing. the Jewish military and political effort was directed mainly against the British.

On the Arab side too the dealing with the Palestine question was mostly between the local Arabs of the country and the neighboring states (and to a certain extent, by their mediation, also with Great Britain). The Arab countries even gradually supplanted the Arabs of Palestine as the standard bearers of the fight against the Jewish *Yishuv* and Zionism.

To conclude, several points and their implications should be mentioned.

(1) The Arab attilude *vis-à-vis* the *Yishuv* throughout the entire period stemmed from unwillingness and refusal to recognize any Jewish right to the country. The Arab moves intended as abstention from recognition of the Mandate emerged from the same reason, for the writ of the Mandate mentioned the Balfour Declaration and recognized the Jewish right to the country.

The Arab leaders even refused to hold formal talks with the Jews, for such talks were in and of themselves one of the components of a recognition. The Arab position held that any residency by Jews in the country and that any civil or humanitarian privilege granted to them was a matter of sufferance not of right.

(2) One of the explanations for the Arabs' monolithic and uncompromising line with regard to the *Yishuv* – especially in the twenties – contended that this position originated partly in fear,

uncertainty and a non-acquaintance with Zionism and its objectives on the part of the Arab community.

The proponents of this explanation argue that in that period there was a lack of consensus about final objectives within the Zionist movement itself. Some desired a Jewish state, others a spiritual-cultural center, a binational framework and so on. The absence of a clear definition of Zionism's objectives was fertile ground for the spread of rumors and the emergence of odious propaganda in the Arab public regarding the objectives of Zionism in Palestine.

The complement of this explanation of Arab rigidity is the contention that at that time Zionist positions were not adequately explained to the Arab community. Most of the information the Arabs of Palestine had on Zionism and on the Jewish *Yishuv* came from Arab sources, which of course were biased: sermons in mosques, denunciations in the press and literature of the likes of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, which were widely circulated in the country in the twenties. Obviously, this argument cannot fully explain the negative stand taken by the Arabs. Nevertheless, this is a point that should be considered.

(3) The monolithic, non-variegated character of the Arab position also stemmed to a large extent from the nature of Arab society and of the Arab national movement in the country. Even without surveying the history and social composition of the national movement we can note that it was a movement patriarchal in character, and controlled by the leading families in the community. There was a high correlation between membership in the social and financial "aristocracy" and political activity. The movement was characterized by a tendency towards extremism, an intolerance of criticism (not only on the Jewish issue), an intolerance of opposing positions and the use of violence and terror against opponents. Numerous Arabs were murdered during the Mandate period by their Arab brothers, not only on suspicion of having collaborated with the British or the Jews, but also because of an unwillingness to accept the leadership's views or authority.

In examining the components that shaped the Arab attitude towards Zionism it is of course impossible to ignore national consciousness, the consciousness of the Arabs' right to the country and the feeling of belonging to the region. This consciousness played an important role

for at least a part of the political community and influenced its position on the issue of the Jewish *Yishuv*.

At the same time, the absence of variety in the Arab attitude – which is especially striking in light of the great diversity of views in the Jewish *Yishuv* on the Arab question – is explained primarily by the lack of tolerance that typified the Arab movement.

The Arab Revolt of 1936 in the Perspective of the Jewish-Arab Conflict

Yehuda Taggar

I recently came upon an article that appeared in an Egyptian weekly on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the outbreak of the Arab revolt in Palestine, in which the author draws a comparison between the revolt and the Yom Kippur War. In both instances, he asserts, the objective was the same – to rock the *status quo* that had been formed and accepted on the Palestine issue, and to compel all those directly involved and the world at large to consider the issue anew, and to induce a resolution favorable to the Arabs. In the years prior to the revolt, as in the years prior to the Yom Kippur War, a kind of *status quo* had been formed on the Palestine problem, serving Zionist objectives. In the mid-1930s Jewish immigration reached vast dimensions and Jewish land purchases and settlement also increased. The Arabs saw Palestine slipping slowly from their hands and becoming Jewish, with Great Britain, the League of Nations and the whole world more or less accepting the process, and taking no real measures to thwart it.

The situation in the 1967-1973 period was similar. The Israeli grip on the occupied territories and settlements there grew tighter. The Israeli occupation itself became a fact, even an accepted fact. While the two superpowers, the United Nations and the world in general denounced the occupation – some more, some less – no real measures were taken to end it.

* Y. Taggar was born in Jerusalem to a family which had been there for many generations. During World War II, joined the *Palmach* and subsequently the British Army. Served as Company Commander during the War of Independence. When the war came to an end, he was sent on a national mission to Iraq – in the course of which he was apprehended and sentenced to life imprisonment with hard labour. After having spent ten years in jail, he was released. Later he received his B.A. from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and his Ph.D. from the London University. At present, he is lecturer at the Faculty of Contemporary Mideastern Studies, Tel-Aviv University.

The author goes on to say that in both instances the aim was achieved. The *status quo* that had served Zionist objectives was rocked and the world was compelled to consider the Palestine question anew, in a way more sympathetic to the Arab side. The author notes two additional aspects common to both the 1936 revolt and the 1973 war: the principle of *armed struggle* in the Palestine issue, and the principle of *general Arab involvement* in it.

Armed Struggle by the Arabs of Palestine

The political struggle of the Palestine Arabs was colored from its beginning with a violent hue, which came to the fore in the rioting of 1920 and 1921, and on a larger scale, in the events of 1929. In later years, following the Arab revolt of 1936–1939, this hue was termed "the armed struggle".

If there was an ideology behind this principle, it was a very simple one and basically echoed the ancient motto, "Muhammad's religion by the sword" (*din Muhammad bilseif*). It also reflected the traditional supremacy of the sword over the pen and other means of persuasion within Muslim and Arab society. The assumption was that the best method to induce Great Britain to change its "Zionist policy" – as the Arabs saw it – was to apply pressure by means of violence. Violence was the major occupation of the devotees of this principle. These were people who for the most part were outside the circles of the accepted nationalist movement and its leadership, that same leadership which stated time and again that the struggle of the Palestine Arabs was political in nature, and was conducted in peaceful ways and within the framework of the law.

The conception that sovereignty is attained by the use of force may have perhaps been too abstract for most adherents of the "armed struggle", but the lesson they – and all the Palestine Arabs – learned from the "disturbances" of 1929 was that violence pays. The "disturbances", they maintained, brought the Arabs some gain. If so, why not continue to use the same method in order to make future gains?

In keeping with this line, rumours spread throughout the country about the formation of armed bands that would pursue the national struggle. The establishment of these bands and their operation was widely discussed. The first to be formed was the "Safed gang", which

operated in the eastern Galilee and later came to be known as the "Green Hand Gang". The plan was that after this band and its activity proved successful, other gangs would be formed – in the Nablus area, along the Jerusalem-Jaffa and Jerusalem-Jericho roads, and in the Hebron area.

The Jews called the members of the gang "bandits". There is no doubt that most of them were escaped criminals and marginal types, residents of the area in which the gang operated who joined it to rob and despoil or settle personal accounts, or even enjoy the forced hospitality – at times – of the villagers. Whatever the motivation, the criterion which makes any activity "national" is largely its being considered so by members of the nation or by their enemies, and in this case that condition was met. The question as to whether those who carried out the activity were guided by noble and sincere motives or by personal and base motives is of secondary importance in this context.

The Arab press lauded the gang and subtly encouraged its activity. The villages in the region were generally sympathetic and assisted it; when sympathy waned, threats and intimidation successfully took its place. The objective of the gang's operations was to create a disquieting atmosphere that would encourage radical nationalists, frighten the Jews and weaken the stature and credibility of the regime. The gang operated for about five months, successfully carried out a few small operations, but was then attacked in a combined army and police action, disbanded and put out of action.

The success of the "Green Hand Gang", although limited, could have served as an indication of things to come. And indeed, later, when rioting began again, the Arabs used this method of fighting on a much wider scale. Other large gangs were not formed at that time, but individuals and small groups continued to carry out acts of armed violence, and an atmosphere of unquiet spread all over the country.

These small groups, which organized mainly in the Haifa area, were centered around Young Men's Muslim Association (YMMA) and its branches in the villages of the north. Members of this organization who were found suitable were inducted into a secret terrorist organization called the "Black Hand". The leader and driving force of this organization was a political refugee from Syria, Sheikh Izz al-Din al-Kassam, a radical Arab nationalist who was widely known as a preacher and religious leader. Their real activity began only later,

but in their meetings they planned the next revolt, discussing the murder of Jews and rehearsed the slogan "Muhammad's religion by the sword".

Another point that engaged the interest of the Arab national movement in Palestine in the beginning of the 1930s and contributed much to the consolidation of the principle of the "armed struggle" was the arming by the Jews. During the 1929 "disturbances", the Arabs achieved easy victories in places such as Hebron and Safed, where the Jews did not have arms. The conclusion drawn from that by the Jewish *Yishuv* was clear – to try and get arms. The conclusion drawn by the Arabs, on the other hand, was to thwart the Jews' efforts in this direction, using both legal ways – obtaining arms from the government – and illegal.

Following the uncovering of two instances of arms smuggling by Jews, the Arab press launched a forceful campaign demanding that the government put a stop to the Jews' attempts to arm themselves, and prevent the outbreak of a "new wave of disturbances planned by the Jews". This campaign was accompanied by a stream of protests to the government, in which the Arabs expressed their fear that "the Jews have been, and are engaged in the smuggling of arms into Palestine with the intention of arming their youths and establishing military organizations". These statements of protest also emphasized the Arabs' desire for peace and their own peacefulness.

At the same time the extremist Arab elements were continuing their preparations for terror and violence. The situation created was thus one in which Arab policy operated simultaneously on two levels. The recognized Arab leadership concentrated their efforts on the campaign against Jewish arming as well as on a campaign rallying the Arab youth to sacrifice and dedication, while the extreme elements, whom I shall call "terrorist groups", continued their illegal underground activity.

The link that no doubt existed between these two levels was very well concealed. At the same time it was clear that the official leadership, which set the tone among the Arab public in that period, did in fact favor the use of *political* means. That too was the Jews' assessment, that as long as the Arabs believe that they can win on the political front, they will refrain from using terror and violence. But those who favored the use of force continued to operate and slowly gained

strength. Following the McDonald letter to Weizmann (in which some of the Arab gains of the Passfield White Paper were muted or nullified) the "Arab Nationalist Terrorist Committee" (as it is called in British documents) was established at the end of March 1931, but it apparently did little. Much more important was the Nablus Conference that met at the end of July 1931 in protest against the arming of the Jews. The conference was distinguished by its radical and extremist character. It was controlled by the youth (*shabaab*), whose participation in the management of the Arab national movement in Palestine henceforth steadily grew. The spirit of the conference and its discussions exerted a great deal of influence on the character of subsequent Arab political conferences and meetings. This was the first time that a counter-principle was set over against the basic principle of the official Arab leadership – that of "political struggle". Here appeared the challenge of the opposed conception, that of the "armed struggle". The conference also adopted a secret resolution setting up a committee that would concern itself with the acquisition of arms for the Arabs.

Following this, in mid-September 1931, a national assembly convened in Nablus and adopted the conclusions and resolutions of the earlier conference. But while the July conference was, as mentioned, controlled by the youth (*shabaab*), most of the recognized political leaders of the Palestine Arabs participated in the September assembly. By adopting the resolutions of the previous conference, this leadership also accepted the principle of the "armed struggle". The opposing principle of the "political struggle" was still dominant in the Arab national movement of Palestine, but was no longer exclusive. Alongside it now was the principle of the "armed struggle", which until then had been proclaimed only by an extreme and marginal minority.

Instances of murder, robbery, violence and terror by Arabs against Jews continued intermittently in all parts of the country, and especially in the north, where Sheikh Izz al-Din al-Kassam's gang operated. The repeated incidence of such acts reflected the growing inclination to use arms, which was now preached openly in the press and by political parties.

On October 19, 1932, *al-Jami'ah al-'Arabiyyah* (the *Mufti's* newspaper) published the famous address by Sami Shawkat, the Director General of the Ministry of Education in Iraq, in which he called upon

the Arabs to learn the "profession of killing" (or profession of death, *sina'at al maut*), since nations that do not know this profession die without honor. The editor of the paper, Mounif el-Husseini, added: "If learning the profession of killing is incumbent on all Arabs, how much more so for the Palestine Arab who is fighting two enemies".

Also contributing to the growing strength of the radical tendency was the activity of the political parties that were founded at that time and competed for the support of the Arab public by espousing increasingly radical slogans. Mention should be made of the Palestine Communist Party (PKP), which although its weight among the Arab public was negligible (it had only few members, who were mostly Jews), it supplied the nationalists with ideas, thoughts and concepts. Its slogan of "armed revolution", for example, was publicized and gradually made popular and a part of daily usage.

An examination of Arab publications of that period (speeches, resolutions, articles, etc.) reveals a steady and clear increase in the use of militant terms, such as struggle (*kifah nidal*), holy war (*jihad*), battle (*ma'araka*), revolt (*thawra*), war (*ḥarb*), and the like. This usage, which was begun by the radical parties, gradually became widespread. The party most active in this direction was the "Independence" Party *al-Istiqlal al-'Arab*, which was joined by fervent youths, and which began semi-underground activity among "youth, scouting and sports" organizations it set up in the northern villages. Some of the activists of this party were also closely associated with Izz al-Din al-Kassam's organization.

The official leadership continued its advocacy of "political struggle", but even its standard assertion about the "use of peaceful means, and within the framework of the law" underwent a slight but significant change. The manifesto issued by the Arab Executive Committee in April 1933 said:" This nation (the Arabs) is resolute in its faith, but is opressed and dejected and lacks the means that would enable it to block the pressure and prevent the injustice being done to it, except for its unity and its steadfastness in its struggle by legal means and in peaceful ways... The Arab Executive Committee calls upon all members of the noble Arab people to implement the decision of non-cooperation with the government". It may be inferred from this statement that if the nation did have the means "that would enable it to block the pressure and prevent the injustice", it would have recourse

to them and not only to "struggle by legal means and ways of peace".

The Mandate authorities, who followed developments among the Arabs, were alert to these changes. In government circles the question was no longer "Will the Arabs riot or not?" but rather "When will the rioting begin?" And indeed, in October 1933 a short but violent, and primarily anti-British, spurt of disorders did break out. In all the reports and memoranda sent after that to the British government by the High Commissioner and the army and police chiefs in the country, it was stated categorically that further rioting would again break out. Of interest here is a memorandum by Musa al-Alami (who was then a senior Arab official in the Mandate government) about the mood current within the Arab population. He wrote: "The program of the Arab youth is based only on the use of force and violence . . . The youth prefer an open war . . . The prevailing feeling is that if all that can be expected from the present policy is a slow death, it is better to be killed in an attempt to free ourselves of our enemies than to suffer a long and protracted demise."

In retrospect, the events of 1933 were undoubtedly a preview and general rehearsal for the revolt of 1936, so that the ideological change about the use of force was no longer qualitative but merely quantitative. The principle of "armed struggle" was no longer secondary to the principle of "political struggle" but was now on par with it.

The Jews, sensing the growing danger, continued and intensified their efforts to obtain arms. A large shipment of Jewish arms smuggled in barrels of cement, which was accidentaly discovered in Jaffa port on October 16, 1935, caused a great uproar among the Arab public. A wave of protests and demonstrations swept the country for over a month. On November 25, 1935, the High Commisioner received a delegation of leaders of all Arab parties, and they presented him with a list of "national demands". The leaders emphasized that if their demands were not met within a month, they would lose their influence with the Arab public and be forced to resign. If that should happen, power and influence among the Arabs would shift to the extremists and the political situation would rapidly deteriorate.

But the event which robbed the Arab leadership of its influence – and which also cast doubts on the official leadership's willingness to make personal sacrifices for the sake of the national struggle – had already taken place earlier. Sheikh Izz al-din al-Kassam and three

members of his gang were killed on October 20, 1935, in a clash with a police force greatly outnumbering them, after displaying considerable personal courage in refusing to surrender. Sheikh al-Kassam had ceased temporarily the activity of his gang after its responsibility for the "Nahalal murder" (in late December 1932, of members of the Jacobi family) was discovered. In September 1934, he formed the Association of Holy Warriors (*'Uṣbat al-Mujahidin)* whose purpose was "to fight for the faith and the homeland and to kill the occupiers of Palestine", the British and the Jews. At about that time he joined the Haifa branch of the *Istiqlal* party and came close to several of its leaders. He used the preacher's pulpit in the "Independence Mosque" in Haifa to spread his ideas. He even turned to the *Mufti* with the request that he be appointed "roaming preacher" who would preach revolt in all parts of the country. The *Mufti* turned him down, saying: "We are dealing with the solution of our problem by political means". On another occasion he again turned to the *Mufti*, informing him that he planned to proclaim a revolt in the northern part of the country and asking that the *Mufti* do the same for the south. But the *Mufti* replied: "The time is not yet ripe for such a step, and the political efforts will suffice to obtain the rights of the Palestine Arabs".

In that same period al-Kassam established contacts with the Italians, who promised him their support. (It should be added, parenthetically, that the challenge posed to Great Britain by Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany had a good deal of resonance among the Arabs of the Middle East. This is not the place to expand on this subject, but it should be noted that the Nazi and Fascist challenge and ideology contributed to the principle of "armed struggle".)

Al-Kassam purchased arms, trained his men and waited for an opportune moment. The discovery of smuggled Jewish arms in Jaffa port induced him to take action earlier than planned. On November 2, 1935, the anniversary of the Balfour Declaration, he set out at the head of a band to the Mount Gilboa region. After a short period of activity a group of nine men from his gang, himself included, were surrounded by a select police unit numbering fifty men. To the police calls that he surrender, al-Kassam replied that he would fight to the death. He was killed while reciting verses from the Koran. The heroism of his death impressed and stirred the Arab masses. The Arab press described him as a legendary hero and saint. His funeral

was a vast national demonstration, and he and his activity became a symbol of the path to follow. Although his actual accomplishments were nil, by his activity, way of life and death, al-Kassam gave manifest expression to an idea, presented his fellow nationals with a model of dedication and sacrifice and put them to the path of "armed struggle".

The Jews understood this development clearly. Several days after al-Kassam's death, Ben-Gurion said: "For the first time the Arabs have found their Tel-Hai". (Tel-Hai in northern Galilee, where Y. Trumpeldor and his colleagues were killed by Arabs in defense of the place in 1921, became the symbol of Jewish heroism and sacrifice.) And Moshe Dayan wrote in his memoirs: "The case of al-Kassam was the first time that I began to assess the gangs as part of a national movement with national motivations".

The official leadership tried to continue the "political struggle", but the Arab public abandoned it. At that time the people of Egypt and especially of Syria also began a struggle against foreign occupation and ceased to believe that they would obtain their independence by means of "political struggle". In April 1936 the great Arab Revolt in Palestine began. The principle of the "armed struggle" had won out. The revolt itself crystalized and reinforced this principle, and to some extent even sanctified it. To this day it is the regnant principle for very many Palestinians and is one of the basic principles of the PLO National Covenant. On the wider Arab plane, the basic difference dividing the Arab world in its attitude towards Israel is still the opposition between the principle of "armed struggle", which is championed by the "rejectionist front", and the principle of "political struggle", which is supported by the more moderate Arab states, especially Egypt.

General Arab Involvement

Since the establishment of the State of Israel, there have been four wars between the Arab states and Israel, as well as numerous clashes and skirmishes. The general Arab involvement in the Jewish-Arab conflict, which continues to our day, began in the 1930s. It was largely the result of the Arab Revolt of 1936-1939 and assumed institutional form in its wake.

With the exception of the first "Southern Syria" episode (about which more below) and several fruitless unimportant delegations, articles and demonstrations during the 1920s, there had been no substantial general Arab involvement in the issue of Palestine. This stemmed from the preoccupation of the Arab countries with their own struggles and affairs, which cannot be discussed here.

A second factor, no less important, was related to the policy of the Mandatory government. One of its guiding lines was the so-called principle of separation. In keeping with this principle, the reactions of the Jewish *Yishuv* were conducted apart from, and as if totally unrelated to, the relations between the British government and world Jewry; similarly, and to maintain a balanced situation, the relations of the government with the Arab population of Palestine were conducted apart from Great Britain's relations with the Arab countries. Much has been written on this and here it will suffice to note that the principle of separation did in fact work, and in the 1920s there was virtually no general Arab involvement in the Palestine issue.

The first change in this situation came after the 1929 disturbances. The Western Wall controversy, the deliberations of the Western Wall Committee (an international committee set up by the League of Nations to examine the Western Wall issue) and its decisions, signal the beginning of genuine Muslim Arab interest in the Palestine problem, which later developed into direct involvement.

It is perhaps also important to note that after the disturbances of 1929 the political star of the *Mufti* of Jerusalem, Hajj Amin el-Husseini, began to ascend, and he was becoming the most important Arab leader in Palestine. It was the *Mufti*, who after being appointed president of the Supreme Muslim Council in 1922, began impressive repair and restoration work on the two most famous mosques of Jerusalem – al-'Aksa and the Dome of the Rock – with the aim of cultivating and enlarging the importance of Jerusalem in the Muslim world. The slogan "defence of the holy places of Islam and the Wailing Wall" became his battle cry, and in its name he brought about the 1929 riots. Following the report of the Shaw committee (1930), the Passfield White Paper was published and accorded the Arabs some advantages. But after the MacDonald letter to Weizmann (mentioned earlier) and the setback caused to the Arab position, the *Mufti* maintained that the Arabs of Palestine would be able to contend

with world Jewry's support of Zionism only with the assistance and support of the Muslim and Arab world. He thus tried to channel and give institutional form to the sympathy for the Arabs of Palestine that the Western Wall controversy had sparked through the Muslim and Arab world. The Islamic Congress, which convened in Jerusalem at the end of 1931 on his initiative and with him presiding, was the first real expression and the beginning of Arab and Muslim involvement in the affairs of Palestine, although not yet on a governmental level.

This first break in the principle of general Arab non-involvement did not widen in the 1930s. The 1936 revolt and its results, however, nullified the principle and started a process at the beginning of which the leaders of the neighboring Arab countries became partners with the local leadership in deciding their political conduct and in determining the future and fate of the Palestinians; at the end of the process they had become almost the exclusive deciders, with the Palestinians themselves "not having much to say".

This process was the result of a conscious policy on the part of the local leadership to involve the Arab governments in the Palestine issue. The factors leading up to this policy were the weakness of the official Palestine leadership, its knowledge that it did not have control of the situation and that the gangs and advocates of the "armed struggle" did not obey it and would continue to do so as they pleased. All these factors impelled it to obtain the help of the Arab countries and their rulers and to get their backing for solving these problems. The assessment of this leadership was that as a result of the rising tension in the world and the growing importance of the Middle East, Great Britain would need the support of the Arab countries; this need could be exploited for the benefit of the Arabs of Palestine; therefore, the rulers and the Arab countries should be enlisted for the Palestinian cause.

This policy did in fact bear fruit. The Arab rulers were brought in on the problem and as a result of their mediation the first part of the revolt came to an end in October 1936. General Arab involvement continued and even received formal recognition when the Arab states were invited (as an official partner) to the round-table held at Saint James Palace in London, a conference which led in the end to the 1939 White Paper. It is contended by some that it was the British who first pressed the Arab countries to get involved in the Palestine issue. Nevertheless, I would credit the first initiative to the Jerusalem

Mufti, Haj Amin el-Husseini, and to the Palestinian leadership.

I have mentioned the situation of recent years, in which the Arab countries had become the exclusive decision-makers on the Palestine issue, with the Palestinians themselves not having much of a say. As of late, the Palestinians – the PLO and several of its organizations – have been strongly protesting the general-Arab trusteeship over them and trying to free themselves of it somewhat. And indeed, it has come to be more and more accepted that the Palestinians too – but not only they – would be a party in the determination of their future.

Palestinian Distinctiveness

There is no ignoring the fact that a certain group of people has a feeling of Palestinian national distinctiveness, and wants to establish a separate independent Palestinian political entity apart from all other Arab political entities. These people, whatever their number, believe in this distinctiveness, work for it, and are even prepared to give up their life for its sake. To achieve their goal they do not shrink from using murderous terror against defenseless people, including women and children. Examining the roots of this movement for Palestinian distinctiveness, we discover that it crystalized only recently. The term *Palestine* – which is mentioned for the first time in the writing of the Greek historian Herodotus (fifth century B.C.E.) – denoted at first the coastal strip inhabited by the Philistines in the biblical period. However, after Bar Kochba's revolt was put down by the Romans in 135 C.E., the name *Palestine* was attached officially to the territory that earlier had been the Kingdom of Judaea and the name of Jerusalem was changed to Aelia Capitolina. That was in keeping with the policy of the Roman rulers – to obscure, even uproot everything suggestive of a Jewish national existence. From the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E. until the establishment of British rule after the First World War, Palestine was not a politically distinct country. Throughout this entire period – with the exception of the relatively short period of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem – Palestine was a geographical unit comprising two districts, which were administrative units, whose boundaries and divisions changed from time to time within the framework of a wider framework. These two districts were, during the days of Roman and

Byzantine rule, the provinces *Palaestina Prima* and *Palaestina Secunda*, and after the Muslim conquest were called *Jund Filastin* and *Jund al-Urdunn*. Today they more or less correspond to the territories of Israel and Jordan.

Throughout this long period, which lasted about 1850 years, Palestine was ruled intermittently from various capitals: Rome, Damascus, Baghdad, Cairo and once again Istanbul (Byzantium, Constantinople), the capital of the Ottoman Empire, which conquered Palestine in 1517 and ruled it for 400 years. Formally Palestine was ruled from Istanbul, the distant capital of the empire, but in practice it was run from Damascus, the residence of the governor of Syria, whose territory included the administrative units that comprised Palestine. Palestine was thus considered part of Syria and was called *Suriya el-Janubiyya*, or "southern Syria", and there was nothing of national nature that distinguished its inhabitants from the rest of the Arabs of "Greater Syria". During the Ottoman rule the Arabs did not for the most part have specific national features. The individual's immediate loyalty was to his family and tribe, and beyond that there was the loyalty to the religious community. For the vast majority of the Arabs, that was the Muslim community. This loyalty was also expressed in identification with the Ottoman Empire, which was a Muslim kingdom. Within the framework of Ottoman rule no real importance was attached to matters of ethnic origin; nor were language differences very important.

The local elite was fluent in Turkish, and Arabic was at the core of Islamic education throughout the Empire. In this context there was no basis for Arab separatist movements. However, towards the end of the nineteenth century a movement of Arab cultural awakening began, which in the course of time also led to the establishment of various political associations that began to manifest nationalistic leanings. Much has been written on this and we need not expand on it here. In any case, it is generally acknowledged that the number of those advocating a distinctive Arab identity was very small.

Among the Arabs of the Ottoman Empire there were on the eve of the First World War two currents; an Arab *national* current that advocated Arab independence apart from the Turks, which was supported only by a small number of people; and a second current, supported by most Arabs in the Empire, advocating Arab *local*

patriotism, but within the wider framework of Ottoman patriotism.

Among the Arabs of Palestine the prevailing current in that period was the Ottoman orientation, which was supported by the Jerusalem notables cultivated by the Ottoman regime, and enjoying considerable autonomy and influence, as well as by the notables of the north. This pro-Ottoman orientation was also forcefully expressed by the Arab newspaper of that period, *Filastin*. It should be stressed, however, that even though the national current as a whole was very weak, the rejection of Zionism and the struggle against it – which was a major element in the national current, as became evident later – occupied an important place in it, even then.

Following the Allies' victories, support gradually grew for the "Arab Revolt". After the conquest of Damascus in October 1918 and the establishment of the "Sharifian authority" – under the supreme authority of General Allenby, the commander of the Brithis expeditionary force – the idea of unifying Palestine and Syria, or as it was then presented, of joining "Southern Syria" to the framework of "Greater Syria" – became widespread. To implement this idea two clubs were established – the Literary Club *(al-Muntada' al-Adabi)* and the Arab Club *(al-Nadi al-Arabi)*, whose declared objectives were "Arab independence within the framework of Palestine's unification with Syria, war against Zionism, the prevention of Jewish immigration and the rescinding of foreign capitulations". These clubs were comprised of young educated Muslims from elite families – the members of the Nashashibi family in the Literary Club and the Husseinis in the Arab Club. Two additional clubs, less important and somewhat secretive, were set up to assist the activity of the former clubs by providing protection for its meetings, organizing demonstrations, etc. – they were the Association of Brotherhood and Purity *(al-Ikha wa-al-'Afaf)* and the Association of Self-Sacrificers *(al-Fidaiyya)*.

In January 1919 the first congress of the Arabs of Palestine convened in Jerusalem and resolved that Palestine – *Suriya el-Janubiyya* – was part of Greater Syria and that the only way to counter the Zionist threat was by unification with Syria. The traditional Jerusalem leadership, behind which stood the British authorities, did not fully embrace this decision and preferred a more Palestinian direction, but the enthusiasm and extremism of the younger elements

tipped the scales in favor of unification with Syria, which at that time was the prevailing orientation in the Arab national movement in Palestine. Evidence of this is the recommendation made by a special commission on the mandates, set up to investigate the mood and views of the inhabitants. The American members of the commission, King and Crane, who arrived in Jaffa on June 10, 1919, toured the country and met with Arab representatives, and then went on to Syria and Turkey. They recommended that "the unity of Syria be preserved, in accordance with the earnest petition of the great majority of the people of Syria". It should be noted that this formulation accepted as a fact that Palestine was a part of Syria.

On July 2, 1919 the First General Syrian Congress convened in Damascus. The Arabs of Palestine were represented at this Congress by eighteen delegates, among them Haj Amin el-Husseini (who, after the congress, was named *Mufti* of Jerusalem and became the most important leader of the Palestine Arabs). One of its decisions stated: "We ask that there should be no separation of the southern part of Syria, known as Palestine . . . We desire that the unity of the country should be guaranteed against partition under whatever circumstances." Following the Damascus Congress, representatives of the Palestine bodies met in Haifa, on November 27, 1919, and formed the Supreme Committy of the Palestinian Associations (*al-Lajnah al-'Ulya lil-Jam'iyyat al-Filastiniyyah*), which presented its demands to the authorities. These amounted to the full independence of Greater Syria and utter rejection of Zionism.

On March 7, 1920 the Second General Syrian Congress crowned Feisal King of Syria, including Palestine. This coronation sparked great enthusiasm among the Arabs of Palestine and intensified their hatred of the Jews, whom they regarded as the major obstacle to winning independence within the framework of Greater Syria. In the meantime Haj Amin el-Husseini, who returned to the country from Damascus, reported that the British were not opposed to "transferring" Palestine to King Feisal. On the day following the coronation, March 8, 1920, there was a wave of demonstrations in support of the installation of Feisal as King of Syria and Palestine. These demonstrations, which "included" the disturbances of 1920, continued and even intensified through the month of April 1920 and were the high point in the campaign for unification with Syria.

However, after the landing of the French army on July 24, 1920, which put an end to the Sharifian regime in Damascus, and King Feisal's flight, the idea of unification with Syria was no longer meaningful. The Palestinian current, that of distinctiveness within a separate Palestinian framework, began to gain strength. It should be emphasized, however, that this change in attitude among the Arabs of Palestine was as if imposed from outside. It was caused by the fact that the San Remo Conference convened at the end of April 1920, accorded the Mandate over Palestine to Great Britain and the Mandate over Syria to France. The change came about also as a result of the liquidation of the Sharifian regime in Syria; in other words: it was not the product of free choice exercised by the Palestine Arabs.

This change in attitude and priorities among the Palestine Arabs was expressed in the resolutions of the Third Palestinian Congress, which met in Haifa on December 13, 1920, under the leadership of Musa Kazem el-Husseini. The Congress based itself on the right of self-determination and called for the establishment of a national government (*wataniyyah*) in Palestine that would be responsible to parliament *majlis niyabi* elected by all Arabic-speaking inhabitants of Palestine who had lived in the country prior to the outbreak of the First World War. This was the first resolution that recognized Palestinian distinctiveness apart from Syria. The idea of unification with Syria was abandoned, and the concept "Southern Syria", which had prevailed until then, was not even mentioned in the resolutions of the Congress. However, as much as the orientation of Palestinian distinctiveness gained strength among the Arabs of Palestine, it did not become the exclusive current.

During the 1920s two major party groupings were active among the Arabs of Palestine: the party of the Husseinis (*al-Majlesiyin*) and the party of the Nashashibis (*Muaridin*). In the 1930s a third party appeared, the Independence Party (*Istiqlal*), under the leadership of Awni Abd el-Hadi, to which belonged many of the educated youth. The most politically active in that period, it continued to support the idea of pan-Arabism and called for Palestine's integration into the framework of an Arab Union, together with Syria and Iraq, under the leadership of King Feisal. (Some of the party members favored the pan-Arab idea under the leadership of King Ibn Saud, a bitter opponent of the Hashemite dynasty.) These hopes

and desires for integration in a pan-Arab framework were manifested in the enthusiastic reception the Palestine Arabs accorded King Feisal during his visit to the country in June 1933, and in the expressions of grief and pain at the ceremony when his body was being transferred from Haifa, in September of that same year. The Independence Party continued to preach this idea; a resolution in this spirit, calling for "the renewed integration of Palestine in the framework of Greater Syria", was adopted by the party congress which convened in Nablus at the beginning of 1936.

The outbreak of the Arab revolt of 1936 was, of course, accompanied by a tide of awakened national sentiment among the Arabs of Palestine, vastly enhanced in comparison with the small number of activists before. For that reason it is highly significant that the concept *Suria el-Janubiyya* (Southern Syria), which had virtually disappeared from the political lexicon since the Arab Congress in Haifa at the end of 1920, came back into wide use. In his first public announcement, the "declaration of revolt", Fawzi el-Kaukji called himself the "General Commander of the Arab Revolt" in Southern Syria (Palestine), *Suria el-Janubiyya-Falastin*.

But not only Kaukji, who was himself of Syrian origin, used that term. Commanders who were of Palestinian origin, such as Abd al-Rahim Haj Muhammad, Hassan Salamah and Arif Abd el-Razik, issued their announcements in the name of the "Office of the Arab Revolt, Southern Syria-Palestine". The general Arab character of the revolt was strengthened by the participation of Iraqi, Syrian and Druze companies, which fought alongside the Palestinian Company. Opposition circles, which in the 1930s generally centered around the Nashashibi Defense Party, also preferred integration in a wider framework to Palestinian separation. But whereas the members of the *Istiqlal* party wanted unification with Syria, or with Syria and Iraq, the Nashashibis supported a merger with Jordan.

Towards April 1937 rumors began to spread about the partition proposal of the Royal Commission headed by Lord Peel. On April 28, 1937, Emir Abdallah, the ruler of Transjordan, set sail from Haifa to England to participate in the coronation of King George VI. It is known that during his stay in London he was to hold talks about partition and about the possibility of annexing the Arab part of Palestine to Transjordan, under his crown. When he passed through the

country, rallies of support and mass identification were held in his honor, including large receptions in Jerusalem, Nablus and Haifa. The same took place on his way back to Amman. This camp of support was organized by the Nashashibis, but the Husseinis had no part in it. They conspicuously boycotted the receptions held in his honor. The picture was clear – opposition elements among the Arabs of Palestine identified with Emir Abdallah's intention to annex the Arab part of Palestine to his kingdom.

But when the partition plan was made public in July 1937, the Defense Party was forced to withdraw its support of it in response to public pressure, especially from among its own supporters in Acre and the Galilee, who were to be included in the proposed Jewish state. It is known, however, that the leaders of the party, Ragheb Nashashibi and Yacoub Faraj, expressed to the High Commissioner their support of partition and the annexation of the Arab part of Palestine to Transjordan.

The largest and most important Arab party in the country at that time was that of the Husseinis, headed by the *Mufti* of Jerusalem, Haj Amim el-Husseini, the supreme leader of the Palestine Arabs. The Husseinis more than any other group were the exponents of Palestinian distinctiveness, perhaps because they reckoned that in an independent Palestine the power would be in their own hands, whereas in a union with Syria or Iraq they would have to share power with others, and in the case of unification with Transjordan they would be excluded from power altogether. But even the *Mufti* himself and his Husseini supporters had their own doubts and reservations about Palestinian distinctiveness. Although the *Mufti* was the principle symbol of this distinctiveness, he also brought about its gradual effacement. In his political meetings with foreigners, in closed and open sessions, the *Mufti* repeated time and again the following sentence: "Since this land belongs not only to the Arabs of Palestine but to the entire Arab and Muslim world, it is incumbent on the Arab kings and rulers to guide us with counsel and decide with us . . ."

When we examine the activities of the *Mufti* from the time he assumed leadership, after the 1929 riots, until his flight from the country in October 1937, we discover that this oft repeated sentence reflected his political attitude and was not just an empty phrase. The practical meaning of this was the participation of the Arab kings and

princes in determining the future of Palestine and their taking exclusive power of decision out of the hands of the Palestinian leadership. In other words, making the problem a *pan-Arab* rather than a distinctively Palestinian problem.

The *Mufti* adopted this line because of his own pan-Islamic and pan-Arab consciousness and because of his assessment that the Arabs of Palestine themselves were too weak to stand up alone to the Zionist challenge. He also hoped that Great Britain would need the support of the Arab countries for the impending war and would therefore change its pro-Zionist policy in Palestine, so as to appease them. Thus, the *Mufti* was the first to initiate general Arab involvement in the Palestine conflict, and for a time this initiative was successful. Pan-Islamic activity in the 1930s (the Islamic Congress in Jerusalem in 1931) and pan-Arabic activity (the 1937 Congress in Baludan, Syria) was on the whole the direct or indirect fruit of the *Mufti's* initiative, and he exploited these events to further the Palestinian cause.

During the Second World War various ideas about possible unifications permeated the Middle East. Nuri al-Said, the influential Iraqi statesman, proposed the Fertile Crescent plan for the unification – at the first stage – of Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Transjordan, and afterwards with Iraq as well. Emir Abdallah, on the other hand, proposed the Greater Syria plan which envisaged a kingdom headed by him that would embrace Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Transjordan. The Palestine Arabs, whose political frameworks were in a shambles as a result of the developments in the wake of the 1936-1939 revolt, were unable to take a stand, but a survey of the local press indicates that many of the Arabs in Palestine supported such proposals.

From what has been stated so far, it appears that during the Mandate period elements encouraging Palestinian distinctiveness were operative, but at the same time there were also elements pulling in the opposite direction. The two opposing tendencies were current among the Arabs of Palestine, but neither was powerful enough to overcome the other.

As I have noted, the Arab kings and rulers began to participate in the making of Arab policy for Palestine in the middle of 1936, but the conduct of affairs remained, in effect, in the hands of the *Mufti*. When the *Mufti* fled the country, the management of affairs was moved outside the boundaries of Palestine, and towards 1948 the real leadership

was transferred from Palestinian hands to the Arab governments within the framework of the Arab League.

The dependence of the Palestinians on the Arab kings, which continued to increase after 1937, undoubtedly weakened the resoluteness and will of the Palestine Arabs, and eclipsed Palestinian distinctiveness. The 1948 war was much more an expression of a pan-Arab than of a Palestinian effort. The outcome of the war was a takeover by the neighboring Arab states of the parts of Palestine retained by Arabs. Jordan took over the West Bank, Egypt the Gaza Strip and Syria the El-Hama enclave. This takeover provided these governments with added incentive to efface and erase Palestinian distinctiveness, lest one day they would have to return these parts. However, although it seemed that the current of Palestinian distinctiveness had expired, the Palestinians remained apart and isolated from the Arabs of the neighboring countries. There were three major reasons for that:

1. the total rejection of the Palestinians by the Arab governments, which put restrictions on them and hampered their absorption into their societies, with the exception of Jordan, which allowed Palestinians to integrate;
2. the decision of the Arab governments to keep the refugees in camps, in order to exploit them in the struggle against Israel, for propaganda, and, when the day would come, militarily as well;
3. the retention by the refugees of strong feelings of attachment to the places of their birth – Haifa, Jaffa, etc. – without necessarily linking this up with Palestinian national consciousness.

After the 1948 war the Palestine problem had become primarily a refugee problem. The Arab struggle against Israel was the continuation of the pan-Arab effort, in which the current of Palestinian distinctiveness played virtually no role. But in the early 1960s this orientation was taken up again and gained new strength. Among the reasons for this were Syria's secession from the United Arab Republic, the tarnishing of pan-Arabism's halo under the leadership of Gamal Abdul Nasser, and the example of the war of national liberation fought by the FLN in Algeria.

In 1964 the PLO was formed. It should be noted that although its establishment stemmed from competition among various Arab countries and not from genuine Palestinian distinctiveness, the dynamics of its very existence strengthens and consolidates this tendency. Also

an impetus in this direction was the decisive Israeli victory in the Six Day War and the Palestinians' disappointment with the Arab countries in that war. As I noted above, the Palestinians are embittered and protest against the general Arab guardianship over them, and are trying to take control of their own fate. It is more and more accepted now that not only the Arab countries but also the Palestinians must participate in the talks about their future. Palestinian distinctiveness is recognized and accepted.

There are several other aspects related to our subject that are important, but because of limitations of space will here be dealt with only briefly.

The Religious Dimension

The religious dimension, as is known, played a major role in the 1929 riots. That was not so in the revolt of 1936-1939. I do not mean to imply that various religious motifs did not arise now and then in one context or another. (Indeed, I do not believe that the Arab-Jewish conflict can be altogether free of this dimension.) I merely wish to note that in the 1936 revolt the religious dimension played only a marginal role.

The Revolt and British Policy

At the beginning of this essay I mentioned an article in an Egyptian weekly which asserted that the objective of the 1936 revolt, as of the October 1973 war, was to shake up the *status quo* and to force the parties concerned to reconsider and reach a decision. That objective was attained in both cases. The revolt, its aftereffects and the developments that came in its wake forced both the British and also the Jews – each separately – to reconsider their course and to come to a decision. I will not survey here British policy in Palestine in the period between the two world wars, but it can be characterized as a slow and gradual retreat from the spirit of the promises given to the Jews in the Balfour Declaration which was incorporated in the language of the British Mandate over Palestine.

The political line of the Arabs in that period, which demanded "all or nothing", did not make things at all easy for the British. They were not in a hurry to make a sharp turnabout, and even *could* not do so, if

only for reasons of prestige: Great Britain could not be seen to be retreating under pressure from native inhabitants of a Mandate country. However, in the period of the 1936-1939 Revolt, and under the impact of the international situation and the approaching war, Great Britain began to strengthen its positions in the Middle East, maintaining that it must appease the rebellious Palestine Arabs, in order to win sympathy and support in the Arab world as a whole. A *gradual* abandonment of the Balfour Declaration policy would do no longer; a decision had to be reached, and was.

Representatives from Palestine and the neighboring Arab countries were invited to a round-table conference in 1939 at the Palace of Saint James in London. The conference was a failure, but in its wake the MacDonald White Paper of 1939 was born. In effect this meant an end to the process in which Great Britain helped to establish a Jewish "national home" and the beginning of a process of establishing an independent Palestinian state, to be controlled by the Arab majority. On the broader Arab plane the British opted in the direction of general support for Arab unity and helped to establish the Arab League.

Decision by Jewish Policy

The Jews, too, were compelled by the revolt and related developments to reconsider their course and arrive at decisions on two difficult issues. One was Arab terrorism, which necessitated an immediate short-term response; the other was the plan to partition Palestine, which was more basic as an issue and related to the very future of Zionism and of the Jewish *Yishuv*. On the first issue the majority of the *Yishuv* decided on a policy of restraint (*havlagah*) and acted accordingly. The Jewish response to Arab terror took the form not of counter-terror but of defense, settlement and immigration. Jewish arms were designated for defense, at first passive and in the course of time also active.

On the issue of partition, the Jewish *Yishuv* and the Zionist movement encountered head-on the full force of a question, which persists, in fact, to this day: is it preferable to get a state and independence in the western part of *Eretz Israel*, or to continue the struggle – without any assurance of what the end result will be – and strive for independence within the boundaries of all of *Eretz Israel*. After incisive and

painful deliberation, which cut across the usual party divisions, the majority chose to accept the principle of partition, in other words, that immediate independence even only in the western part of *Eretz Israel*, was preferable.

The Revolt's Consequences for the War of Independence

I have already dealt in part with this aspect, in relation to the "armed struggle" and the influence of the revolt on general Arab involvement in the conflict which led to the Arab countries being drawn into the war against the nascent State of Israel. Now I would like to make brief mention of this aspect as it was manifested on the intra-Palestinian plane.

In its final stages the revolt deteriorated into a sort of civil war, with the Husseini gangs fighting and killing the Nashashibi "peace" gangs, and vice versa. Apposite in this context is a scene described in a book by Ahmed Shukeiry, the former Chairman of the PLO. He relates of a time he was in a room in Beirut together with the *Mufti*, Haj Amin el-Husseini, and a certain Lebanese statesman. An emissary from Palestine entered the room and reported that Shukeiry's brother, who was a physician with the "peace" gang, was killed by the *Mufti's* gang. An oppressive silence fell over the room, and then the Lebanese statesman said more or less the following:

"The British, the Jews and the Arabs have one thing in common. The British kill Arabs, the Jews kill Arabs and the Arabs kill Arabs. How sad and unfortunate that the Arabs kill Arabs much more than the British and Jews together."

This truth reflects the internal division and self-destructiveness of the Arab public in Palestine after the revolt, a destructiveness from which it has not managed to recover. At the time of the War of Independence in 1948, the Arab public lacked leadership and ceased being a political and military factor on its own accord. The war was waged primarily by others – especially in the final stages – and they did not do it too well.

Arab Positions on Zionism

Yehoshafat Harkabi

When I was invited to deliver the lecture on which this essay is based I suggested to the organizers that they request the invitees to read beforehand the second section in chapter one on "Palestinian Arab Ideology" in Yehoshua Porat's book *The Emergence of the Palestinian Arab National Movement, 1918 to 1929* and chapter 4 "Zionism" in my book, *Arab Attitudes to Israel* (pp. 171-215). I did so in order not to repeat what has already appeared in print.

Porat describes the argumentation of the Arabs in the twenties, whereas my book is meant to reflect the situation at the time of its writing, in 1965. A reading of the two will give the reader a sense of the persistence and continuity of the Arab argumentation on this question.

Still, it is worthwhile to note the differences and the developments. In the twenties the Arab arguments were pragmatic (the country is too small to hold two peoples) and legal in nature (the country belongs to the Arabs and no one but them should be made a party to it). The legal arguments looked for support to the McMahon letters and harped on the alleged invalidity of the Balfour Declaration and the Covenant of the League of Nations, which allocated a land to strangers without consulting its inhabitants, and on the other hand emphasized the exclusive right of the Arabs. From here arguments developed denouncing Jewish immigration and the damage it caused, leading up to arguments denouncing the Jews.

In the fifties and sixties the denunciation of Zionists was broadened and deepened. Zionism was presented as part of a reactionary imperialist plot, with Zionism playing the role of executor of imperialism's

* Y. Harkabi is Hexter Professor of International Relations and Middle Eastern Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

orders. In this period the relationship between Judaism and Zionism was emphasized, with Zionism depicted as the active part or "violent executive apparatus" of Judaism. Later the Arabs tried to dissociate themselves from this linkage and the tendency that emerged was to distinguish between Zionism and Judaism, at least on the level of propaganda intended for foreigners. As I explained in my book, the link between Judaism and Zionism stemmed from the fact that when the Arabs came to examine the nature of the Jews' Zionist tie to *Eretz Israel*, they saw that it derived from Judaism. Judaism is Zionist, in terms of its special association with *Eretz Israel*. It is a religion with a territorial dimension. Judaism and Zionism are intertwined. Thus, the need developed among them to denounce Judaism by means of Zionism and vice versa. To that end anti-Semitic ideas were employed. A highly ramified anti-Semitic literature was published in that period in the Arab countries, whose importance relates to the fact that it was issued by the governments and official state publications. We cannot assess precisely to what extent those ideas made inroads among the Arab public, but what is certain from the fact that the publications appeared on the initiative of the authorities is that the ruling circles wanted those notions to be spread. The ideas of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* were widely publicized, indeed even the name of this defamatory book is linked up with Zionism, for these are as if the protocols of the elders of "Zion".

Zionism and its successes were an irritation for the Arabs that provoked interest, which is why there have been so many publications about it. Many of the writings of the founders of Zionism were translated into Arabic and published in Arabic. The interest in Zionism has been intense and is marked by a fervor to know, for denunciation's sake, but in the course of it an acquaintance has been gained with quite a broad spectrum of Zionist writings and authors. For example, a pamphlet in Arabic entitled "Violence and Peace – An Examination of Zionist Strategy" (PLO Center of Research, Beirut, March 1976) begins with a thorough review of the ideas of Berdichevski and Tchernikhovski.

The Institute for Palestine Studies in Beirut has published a series of books in English, which are critical of Zionism, as the works of, for example, G. H. Jansen, J. M. N. Jeffries, Richard P. Stevens, Alan R. Taylor, Elmer Berger and others.

This Institute, in collaboration with the Center for Strategic Studies affiliated to *al-Ahram* in Cairo, has begun a vast project of translating the protocols of the Zionist congresses and the proceedings of the *Knesset* into Arabic and of publishing them in large volumes. The project was begun by the Cairo outfit, which published a translation of the protocol of the First Zionist Congress in Basle. That was followed by the joint publication of the protocols of the Twenty-Seventh Congress (1968), in two volumes of some 1100 pages, and that of the Twenty-Eighth Congress (1972). The publication of these protocols is an indication of how detailed is the Arabs' interest in Zionism.

An asymmetry is being created which should concern us. The Arab student and intellectual, if asked, will for the most part be able to mention the names of a number of Zionist thinkers, whereas the average Israeli intellectual will not be able to name even one of the founders of Arab nationalism. The Arabs have tended to regard the struggle between them and Israel as not only a political struggle, but also, and no less, as an ideological struggle. Thus the fight against Israel does not only take the form of a political fight, but also spills over to a war against the ideas that led to the establishment of the State of Israel and which symbolize it. That also has practical value, for they use Zionism in their studies to denounce it, especially to foreign publics.

The Arabs came to realize that their call to liquidate Israel as a state (politicide) was counterproductive for them in the international arena. That is not the case when hurling charges against Zionism. Thus, we have witnessed in the last fifteen years or so a growing tendency to focus the accusation on the denunciation of Zionism, as a substitute and cover for Israel. The principal charge laid against Zionism is that it is racist. That is an old idea on which heavy stress has been placed. The emphasis on racism on the one hand is a way to enlist the support of the Third World and on the other, recalls the crime of the West and awakens guilt complexes in Western circles.

This emphasis comes to the fore in Article 22 of the Palestinian National Covenant (1968 version): "Zionism is a political movement organically associated to international imperialism and antagonistic to all action for liberation and to progressive movements in the world. It is racist and fanatical in its nature, aggressive, expansionist and colonial in its aims and Facist in its methods."

This formulation is an inventory of sorts, a catalogue of all that is abhorrent about Zionism. It is as if to denounce one feature is hardly enough, and the formulation is swept up into a rhythmic litany of condemnation. Zionism is not a spiritual movement – for that would be a measure of praise – no, it is a materialistic political movement. Its connection to imperialism is not transitory, mechanistic, conjunctural, like the relation of several Arab regimes with the West, but is organic, permanent, inherent. (In the earlier stage Zionism was linked to imperialism by the idea of a conspiracy, i.e., Zionism serves imperialism in its schemes against Arab nationalism, a service which is a manifestation of an historical stage and therefore is temporary in nature.) Zionism is not only hostile to the Arabs as such, but is a link in an expanded front – a global evil, it is inimical to all progress in the world. (See detailed explanation of this paragraph in my booklet *The Palestinian Covenant and its Meaning*, London 1973.)

Throughout the conflict the need to brandish the Arab objective of liquidating the State of Israel was a weak point in their position. It is undoubtedly more convenient to present the Arab objective not as the destruction of an existing state but as only a "change" in its nature: "de-Zionization" or the "uprooting of the Zionist entity". However, on closer inspection the meaning of expressions turns out to be identical with the liquidation of Israel, for Israel without Zionism would cease to be Israel. There are Arabs who maintain that the bankruptcy of Zionism is what will eventually lead to the demise of Israel. Thus, the denunciation of Zionism gains programmatic value beyond its being an ideological principle. Israel without Zionism means elimination of the state's Jewish character and its transformation into Palestine. Furthermore, the denunciation of Zionism enables the process of moving from de-legitimation of Zionism to de-legitimation of Israel. To undermine the Zionist idea is to undermine Israel's *raison d'être*. The efforts the Arabs have evinced to get a resolution condemning Zionism adopted by international forums is directed to that end. The apogee of this was the United Nations General Assembly resolution of November 10, 1975, which condemned Zionism as a form of racism.

The Arabs view the United Nations resolution as an Arab victory and as an important event in the history of the conflict. Commenting on the resolution, Dr. Clovis Maqsud wrote:

> This resolution, most certainly for the first time since the Partition Resolution, challenges the legality of the latter resolution intellectually, ideologically, and politically and clears the way for the historical demise of the rapacious Zionist entity . . . The resolution sends shock waves through the issue of Israel's right to exist, without having any practical effect on the right of the Jews to be present in Palestine. This adds legality and international consent to what the [Palestinian] revolution regards as a humane and proper substitute for Israel, that is, the democratic secular state.[1]

Israel was constituted by international decision and sanction and now its existence will be nullified by the force of a similar decision.

In recent years a tendency noticeable in some circles is that of viewing Israel in a more balanced way, less demonically and more discerningly. This tendency is not yet apparent with regard to Zionism, which as in the past is still viewed with the emphasis on its odium.

Moderate Arab circles contend that they are ready to recognize the legitimacy of Israel's existence *de facto*, but cannot recognize the legitimacy of its establishment *de jure*. This position is understandable, but it contains a difficulty which should be considered. Existence cannot truly be legitimate if it came into the world in an illegitimate way. That is the tangle in which this position is enmeshed. Recognition of the existence of Israel as a truly legitimate entity entails a certain acknowledgement that the state was not born in sin, in other words, recognition that there is justice to Zionism. Furthermore, the rejection of Zionism, presented by Arab leaders as "Jewish nationalism", is based on depriving the Jews of their national status. The Jews are described as a religious community and not a nation or peoplehood and therefore do not merit a state. Thus, the logic of the rejection of Zionism leads to taking a stand with regard to the Jews, one that accords them inferior status as a collective. The road from this position to anti-Semitism is likely to be quite short.

The proximity between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism is found among educated Arabs, including those in Judaea and Samaria. A manifestation of that is their repeated attribution of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* to Zionism and not to the Jews. A claim of this sort was repeated by the former mayor of Hebron, Fahed Kawasme (in *Saut*

[1] Clovis Maqsud, "The resolution Condemning Zionism as Racism, its Significance on the Practical Level", *Shu'un Filastiniyya*, no. 52, December 1975, p.7.

Filastin, January 1977, and to the Israeli press and television). In this way they affirm that the *Protocols* are true – but shift their alleged origin from the Jews to the Zionists. This shift contains an absurd element, for as is known, the *Protocols* deal with a world *Jewish* plot. Furthermore, if asked what is the source of the Zionists' ambition to rule the world, as described in the *Protocols*, they answer that that abhorrent aspiration stems from the pretension of being the "chosen people". Again, the "chosen people" notion is Jewish and not Zionist, and the claim that Zionism wants to use *Eretz Israel* as a springboard to world rule is demonology not only against Zionism but also against the Jews. Thus, by latching onto the *Protocols* in order to condemn Zionism through it, some Arabs unwittingly complete the cirlce and are caught in the net of anti-Semitism.

The denunciation of Zionism is also prominent in Arab radical leftist approaches. Such circles try not to adopt the motifs of anti-Semitic cultural denunciation typical of conceptions that link Judaism and Zionism, and denounce it socially and as a political system. For them Zionism's notoriety is not that of an independent category, but is part of other political manifestations, such as Rhodesia and South Africa, with Zionism as a transposition of the conceptions of whites in those countries to the circumstances of the Middle East. Israel and Zionism are, therefore, aberrational and anachronistic phenomena which should vanish from the world. The radicals regard the Jews as representing a religion, and therefore they must find the solution to their problems in assimilation not in a separate national entity. Zionism, as Jewish nationalism that seeks to preserve the separate existence of the Jews, is "the Judaism of the age of imperialism", following Lenin's formulation that imperialism is the advanced stage of capitalism. From such an approach stems the tendency – typical of Marxism – to be preoccupied with discovering the "contradictions" of Zionism, leading to its collapse from within. The delegitimization of Israel leads to the idea of its liquidation, while the delegitimization of Zionism as Jewish nationalism, as the Arabs define it, goes further and leads to the idea that the Jews must disappear as a separate group by assimilation.

Among these circles one also finds the explanation that the beginning of Zionism is embedded in capitalism's attempt to solve its problems by exporting them to backward countries, as implied in the

familiar explanation of imperialism. That also explains the interest the Europeans – and above all the British – had in Zionism.

For the radicals, Zionism belongs to the kind of reactionary nationalism that must be opposed. It is an ugly nationalism of a non-people. That too is how they explain why it is necessary to reject the Jews' right to collective self-determination. The collective existence of the Jews is not such as to warrant it.

Kamal Mirve:

> The position on the Israeli entity resembles Marx's position, when he rejected the Czech people's right to self-determination in 1848. Lenin, writing on this, said that there were historical and political reasons in 1848 to distinguish between reactionary peoples and democratic revolutionary peoples . . . Lenin added that the Czechs were in fact a reactionary people, an advanced base of the empire . . . On the same basis it can be said that Israel is an advanced base of imperialism, and there is no alternative but to direct fire against it.[2]

To illustrate the radical conceptions I will cite a passage from a pamphlet issued by *Fataḥ*, which although not considered a leftist movement, radical ideas are current in some of it's parts and were expressed in a pamphlet issued officially by *Fataḥ*, entitled *A Powerful but not Legendary Enemy*. It was published in a series of *Fataḥ* pamphlets called "Revolutionary Studies and Experiments" issued by the Department of Information and Guidance (no date or place of publication indicated).

Here is a passage from the chapter called "The Colonialist Struggle and its Influence on the Growth and Development of the Zionist Movement":

> A preliminary examination of Zionist thought in that stage [the scramble for Africa] reveals that it was part of the reactionary thought and action of the colonialist countries in that stage, and that its implementation at a later stage was not unlike the way the old colonialism in all its forms was implemented.
>
> Herzl presented his colonialist plan for solving the Jewish problem – as opposed to the revolutionary plan proposed by Karl Marx for the

[2] Kamal Mirve, "On Strategy and Tactics in the Resistance Movement", in: *The Palestinian Resistance – The Situation and Expectations* (Beirut: Dar al-Tali'a, 1971), p. 237.

solution of the same problem, the main features of which were as follows:

– Organizing a society in such a way as to eliminate the basic conditions necessary for commerce by means of middlemen, peddlers and speculators; thus eliminating the possibility of engaging in that work will also place the Jewish trait outside the realm of the possible, and then the Jew's religious consciousness will melt away like fog in the atmosphere of society filled with genuine vitality.

– The imaginary nationality of the Jew is in general form the nationality of the merchant and financier.

– After society will succeed in putting an end to the practical essence of Judaism, which is that of the itinerant merchant, and to the circumstances and conditions it creates, the Jewish trait will no longer be within the realm of the possible, for that consciousness will no longer have a suitable bearer. That is because the inherent element of Judaism, that is, the practical needs, will assume a [general] human character, because of the elimination of the conflict between the individual's concrete existence and his general existence.

– Judaism reaches its peak when bourgeoise society reaches its perfection.

– The liberation of the Jew socially will liberate society of Judaism.

From his position on the Jewish problem Marx reached the conclusion that the liberation of the Jew requires a revolution against the bourgeoise society within which Judaism blossoms as a social phenomenon, in that it is a society based on commerce and middlemen. Only the revolution can eliminate these conditions, while inherent in their elimination is the solution to the Jewish problem.

Herzl, by contrast, tried to profit from the bitter colonialist struggle and from the aspiration to take over the legacy of the crumbling Ottoman empire, and acted to establish contact with the various axes of the struggle, with his thoughts nurtured on Jewish reactionary tendencies and their roots embedded in the thought and action of the colonialist powers. These tendencies are divided into three main groups:

1. The religious tendency, which awaits redemption by miracle, which will take place when the Messiah comes.

2. The tendency of flight, by means of immigration, which was manifested in the waves of limited migration from Eastern Europe to Western Europe, or from Europe as a whole to the United States, South America and Palestine.

3. Settlement by means of the financial help provided by wealthy Jews such as Baron de Rothschild and Baron Maurice de Hirsch, who

had founded the Jewish Settlement Society in 1891 . . . (pp. 36-39)

The organic relationship between the Zionist movement and colonialism is revealed in Herzl's direct appeals to the Turkish Sultan and at the same time to several European countries. These appeals are described in his diary, in which he recorded his activity and ideas between May 1895 and May 1904. In the period after the publication of his book *The State of the Jews* Herzl contacted the German Kaiser and members of his government, two British cabinet ministers, responsible officials in the Austrian empire and in Russia, the King of Italy and the pope. He also tried to meet directly with the King of England and the Russian tsar. In all of these contacts he tried to present the honorable side of the Zionist program of action, which was to bring great benefit to each country, such that it would appear to all of the countries that the program was intended for it and that it would be the sole beneficiary of it. To this end Herzl did not eschew any means – bribery, lies, violence, opportunism and war against the socialist movements in Europe. That is clear proof that the Zionist movement, in terms of its historical roots, is a colonialist movement which was born in the lap of colonialism and relied on its support. (p. 43)

The British and Zionist Respectives 1939-1945

Nathaniel Katzburg

The subject of this essay is the last decade of the British Mandate over Palestine. In terms of British policy this was the period of the 1939 White Paper, which was supposed to bring the mandatory regime to an end, within ten years, and to establish an independent Palestine state, in its stead. However, during the first years of the Second World War there were indications which pointed to a reconsideration of this policy. Efforts were made to formulate a new policy for Palestine,[1] which failed, and in the end Great Britain relinquished the Mandate. It can be said, then, that the last ten years of the Mandate were a time of political uncertainty concerning the future of Palestine. In contrast to the confusion of British policy, a Zionist position unequivocally favoring a Jewish state in Palestine, to arise after the war, began to take shape at that time. That was a decisive shift in the Zionist position, for, prior to 1939, when a pro-British orientation prevailed in Zionist policy, the Zionist objective was to maintain the Mandate in letter and spirit for the sake of developing the National Home.

The major cause of this shift in Zionist policy was the White Paper, which swept away the basis of British-Jewish cooperation in Palestine. Also operating in this same direction were the developments that occurred during the war period, the hostility of the Palestine Administration towards the *Yishuv*, the harsh inflexibility with which the immigration policy of the White Paper was

* N. Katzburg is Professor of Modern Jewish History, Bar Ilan University.

[1] See G. Cohen, "Winston Churchill and the Formation of the Cabinet Committee on the Palestine Question (April-July 1943)", in *Hatsionut*, 4 (1976) (in Hebrew); G. Cohen, *The British Cabinet and the Palestine Question* (Tel-Aviv, 1977) (in Hebrew); Nathaniel Katzburg, *Mediniut B'mavoch – Mediniut Britania B'eretz Yisrael 1940-1945* (British Policy in Palestine 1940-1945) (Jerusalem, 1977).

implemented, and not least – the Holocaust in Europe, with all its implications for the Jewish future.

That is the general background against which the Arab aspect of the Palestine problem must be seen. The decisive change in the Arab line-up in Palestine took place in the period of the 1936-1939 disturbances and consisted of the involvement of the Arab countries in the Palestine conflict. More specifically, one can single out the appeal, in October 1936 by the rulers of the Arab countries, calling upon the Arabs of Palestine to stop their general strike. Although outside the range of our topic, it merits some attention here, in light of its far-reaching significance for developments after 1939.

As often happens, the true significance of an event may not be appreciated by its contemporaries at the time of its occurrence. The full significance of the event for future developments is realized only after some time has elapsed. That applies to this matter as well. But to the Zionist leadership's credit it must be said that it foresaw what might follow and opposed the intervention of the Arab countries in 1936. Moshe Sharett, the head of the political department of the Jewish Agency, entered the following in his diary on September 29, 1936:

> It is clear to both sides – Great Britain and the Arab kings – that the intervention creates a precedent that does not vanish once the riots come to an end, and is liable to give rise to certain developments in the future . . . The intervention this time[2] will be by kings of independent Arab countries not at all associated with the Mandate regime. This intervention will contradict the Mandate and will establish a new political fact.[3]

The intervention by the Arab rulers did establish a new political fact, which had a great impact on political developments in Palestine. It can be said that thereafter the Arab countries became, as it were, the guardians of the Arabs of Palestine.

[2] That is, as opposed, for example, to the mediation attempt by Nuri Said, the then Foreign Minister of British dominated Iraq, in the summer of 1936; see M. Sharett, *Yoman Medini 1936* (Political Diary 1936) (Tel-Aviv, 1968), pp.393-394, 399.

[3] M. Sharett, *ibid.*, pp. 323,324.

II

Our point of departure is the London Conference held in February-March, 1939. The Conference was called by the government after it had backed off from the partition plan proposed by the Royal (Peel) Commission.[4]

In a statement issued in November 1938, in which the government announced its abandonment of the partition plan, it was said that the surest foundation for peace and progress in Palestine would be an understanding between Jews and Arabs.

> His Majesty's Government are prepared in the first instance to make a determined effort to promote such an understanding. With this end in view, they propose immediately to invite representatives of the Palestinian Arabs and of neighbouring States on the one hand and of the Jewish Agency on the other, to confer with them as soon as possible in London regarding future policy, including the question of immigration into Palestine. As regards the representation of the Palestinian Arabs, His Majesty's Government must reserve the right to refuse to receive those leaders whom they regard as responsible for the campaign of assassination and violence.[5]

As is seen here, the government believed it possible to advance towards peace in Palestine on the basis of an understanding between the two communities. But this belief was in total contradiction to the findings of the Royal Commission, which had earlier, after having thoroughly investigated the Palestine issue, asserted in Chapter 20 of its Report not only that there was no chance of an understanding being reached by the two communities but, moreover, that the gap between them was widening; that is why the commission proposed to partition Palestine in the first place. The government agreed with this diagnosis and at the time accepted the principle of partition as a basis for a settlement. Did the government, having retreated from the idea of partition, believe that an understanding between Arabs and Jews was now possible? In fact, it did not, and did not expect that an agreement

[4] See N.A. Rose, *The Gentile Zionists: A Study in Anglo-Zionist Diplomacy. 1929-1939* (London, 1973), Chapter 7; N. Katzburg, *Mehaluka Lasefer Halavan* (From Partition to the White Paper) (Jerusalem, 1974), Chapter 1.

[5] Palestine. Statement by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom. November 1938. Cmd. 5893.

would be reached between the parties at the talks in London; that is why the government worked out a policy of its own to resolve the problem.

It was evident to the government that both sides would have hesitations about the talks and doubts about its chances of success; therefore the government's announcement included two elements, each designed to attract one of the parties. To satisfy the Arabs, the assurance was given that the question of immigration would be open for discussion, and on the other hand, to assuage the Jews, the assurance was given that those responsible for acts of terror, meaning the *Mufti* and his henchmen, would not be permitted to participate in the Conference. However, only one of these elements was honored in fact – the discussion on immigration, which was one of the key topics at the Conference; on the other hand, participation by the *Mufti*'s people was not blocked.

From the point of view of its overall policy, and in order to attain the objectives it set for itself in the London Conference, the government regarded it more vital to win the support of the Arab countries and not necessarily that of the Arabs of Palestine;[6] in other words, it was the Arab states which were decisive here.

In addition to the Jewish Agency, five Arab countries were invited to the London Conference: Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Iraq and Transjordan. Syria and Lebanon were not invited because they were still under a mandatory regime. Transjordan, too, was under such a regime, but was invited because it was evident that any change in the Palestine Mandate would most likely be of consequence for it as well. There was also another consideration, which in the case of Transjordan's invitation may have been decisive: its ruler, Emir Abdallah, was without doubt likely to reinforce the moderates among the Arabs. And that was one of the government's hopes – to create a situation at the Conference in which the moderate Arabs would dominate.

The problem of the representation of the Palestine Arabs was a difficult one. Ever since the disbanding of the Higher Arab

[6] A memorandum by Colonial Secretary Malcom MacDonald on the government's policy in relation to the approaching talks, states (in paragraph 48): "It is more important to regain the full sympathy of those neighbouring Governments (Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iraq) than that we should secure the friendship of the Palestinian Arabs". C.P. 4(39); CAB 24/282 (Public Record Office, London; henceforth PRO).

Committee in October 1937, the Arabs did not have a representative organization. When the government announced the London talks, Arab activists from Palestine met with the *Mufti* in his place of exile in Lebanon, and six representatives to the talks, all members of the *Mufti*'s faction, were selected. The government took a dim view of this, for it was interested in having people from the rival party, the moderate party of Ragheb Nashashibi, participate. To that end pressure was applied until consent was won for their participation in the Conference, initially as a separate delegation and afterwards as part of the Palestine delegation. It may be said that the government's acquiescence in the participation by the *Mufti*'s men marked the start of the erosion in its position during and after the Conference.

The government hoped that the representatives of the Arab countries would exert a moderating influence on the Arabs of Palestine. In fact, the very opposite occurred: the representatives of the Arab countries adopted the radical demands of the Palestinians, and at the conclusion of the talks the government was forced to advance much further than it had expected towards the demands of the Arabs. That is particularly the case with regard to the Arab demand that Palestine be granted independence. As has been noted, the government did not believe that an agreement would be achieved at the talks, and therefore worked out a program of its own. This policy ruled out the establishment of a Jewish or Arab state:

> . . . neither the Jewish claim for the creation at some future date of a Jewish state covering the whole of Palestine, nor the Arab claim that the country should become an Arab state can be admitted . . . there are various practical reasons why it is impossible to contemplate the establishment of an Arab State as the solution of the problem. The Palestinian Arabs themselves have scarcely the capacity to assume responsibility for the government of a country where such difficult problems would arise, and their willingness to accord in practice to a large Jewish minority whom they dislike so intensely proper minority rights must be doubted.[7]

Here it must be stated that the opinion British officials in London – and even more so in Palestine – had of the Arabs of Palestine, and especially of their leaders, was not very favorable. Moshe Sharett, in a diary entry on October 16, 1936, recorded the

[7] *Ibid.*, paras. 22 and 28.

following passage, said to him by Sir Arthur Wauchope:

> He (the High Commissioner) does not have a good opinion of the members of the Higher Arab Committee. They don't have courage, neither physical or moral, nor a sense of statesmanship or responsibility. He doesn't think that the *Mufti* is a genuine leader. He plays more a passive than an active role. He always let himself be pushed from below into some position and never demonstrated courage in leading his followers.[8]

Neither did the *Mufti*'s leading opponent and political rival, Ragheb Nashashibi, win compliments from the heads of the Palestine administration. The Chief Secretary of the Palestine government described him, in 1937, as unstable and lacking in moral fiber and backbone.[9] Dr. Judah L. Magnes, the leader of those who favored attempts to achieve Jewish-Arab cooperation, also did not have the most sympathetic things to say about the Arabs of Palestine, and especially their leaders; he regarded them as true Levantines.[10] It can be said that the Arabs of Palestine did not produce a leader of stature with whom it was possible to negotiate and who could be regarded indisputably as their representative.

At the beginning of the Second World War the High Commissioner, Sir Harold MacMichael, tried to cultivate a Palestine Arab leadership. During 1940 he met regularly with Arab notables, headed by Suleiman Touqan, the mayor of Nablus, and conferred with them monthly on the current business of the administration. The High

[8] M. Sharett, *ibid.*, p. 334.

[9] W.D. Battershill, Chief Secretary and at the time Acting High Commissioner, wrote to Sir John Shuckburgh in the Colonial Office on November 21, 1937: ". . . Ragheb Bey is unstable as mercury, and what is more, he lacks what Kipling called 'essential guts'. I am most disappointed in him. . . He is such a fool that he expects the Government to pull his nuts out of the fire by allowing him to publish proclamations and manifestos blackguarding the Government, so that he can regain his prestige with the Arabs. He has no moral character or backbone. It is a great pity, especially as he is such a charming rascal and exceedingly good company and popular socially with many Englishmen." [C.P. 286(37), CAB 24/273.]

[10] In 1944 Magnes wrote in a memorandum: "As . . . to the so-called Arabs, they are no more true Arabs than I am a South Sea Islander . . .these people around here are true Levantines . . . There is not much to do with the people here." Cited by S.L. Hattis, *The Bi-National Idea in Palestine During Mandatory Times* (Haifa, 1970), p. 278.

Commissioner may have believed that come a day some of these notables would be brought into the governing apparatus, in keeping with the processes spelled out in the White Paper leading towards the establishment of a Palestine state. But these meetings stopped after a few months; apparently, MacMichael ceased believing in the possibility of Palestinians participating in the government. That in fact had already been his view in as early as 1939. While the White Paper was being drafted, London asked him his view of participation by Palestinians, and he dismissed it as altogether out of the question. At that time the High Commissioner opposed the participation of Palestinians (that is, Arabs, for the Jews were not prepared to collaborate); so too did the advisers of the Colonial Secretary, Malcolmm MacDonald. MacDonald, pressed by the Foreign Secretary, insisted on such participation. In 1940 the High Commissioner came under renewed pressure, this time from MacDonald's successor, Lord Lloyd, who pressed for an attempt to prepare Arab Palestinian leaders for possible participation in the apparatus of government. The attempt did not go well, and in the end MacMichael came to the conclusion that partition was the solution.

The period of the Second World War was an ebb tide in the political life of the Arabs of Palestine. This has been attributed to the White Paper, which satisfied many of their basic demands.[11] Although formally the Arabs rejected the White Paper, they accepted it after the fact, although many had doubts about the sincerity of the government's declared intentions. But these misgivings vanished in view of the rigorous implementation of the immigration policy, the introduction of the Land Transfers Regulation in February 1940 and the deterioration in the government's relations with the *Yishuv*, all of which were proof for the Arabs that the government was in fact determined to carry out the policy of the White Paper. Also contributing to the ebb in Arab political activity was the *Mufti*'s fall from favor. In the beginning of 1943 several leaders of the *Istiqlal* (Independence) Party tried to reinvigorate the political life of the Arabs of Palestine. Several activists, foremost among them the veteran Palestinian politician Awni Abd el-Hadi, attempted to form a new leadership, but the Husseinis were not about to relinquish their leadership, and in 1944 they reestablished the Arab Palestine Party, the *Mufti*'s old party,

[11] See C. Sykes, *Crossroads to Israel* (London, 1965), Chapter 12.

headed by his cousin Toufiq Salah el-Husseini. The political program of the new-old party was eminently simple – the dismantling of the Jewish National Home; that was in opposition to the *Istiqlal* position, which was seemingly more moderate, declaring that the White Paper should be retained as a basis.

III

As we have seen, the strength of the Palestine Arabs as an independent political factor had diminished beginning in the late thirties. It was this fact that guided the Arab considerations in British policy on the Palestine question in the period of the Second World War. During the war two major schools of policy emerged. One held that the policy of the White Paper should be pursued in order to ensure the continuation of British rule in Palestine and to preserve Great Britain's status in the Middle East after the war. In the view of this school, the White Paper was a necessary political concession to Arab nationalism in Palestine. The holders of this view included many individuals in the Foreign Office, Colonial Office and the Palestine administration, the heads of the army in the Middle East and, of course, British diplomats in the capitals of the region. The other school consisted of the long-standing opponents of the White Paper, foremost among them Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and several members of the cabinet who had opposed the White Paper from the outset, in 1939. Once the military situation in the Middle East had turned to the better, there was a growing awareness in the cabinet in London of the need for a long-range policy for Palestine as an alternative to the White Paper. Accordingly, in July 1943 a ministerial committee was formed to study the Palestine problem and to propose a plan to resolve it. The committee was set up largely on the initiative of the Prime Minister, who also determined its composition and gave it clear and explicit instructions – to examine first of all the partition plan of 1937.[12] In the report it presented several months later, this committee proposed a plan for the partition of Palestine.

[12] See G. Cohen, referred to in note 1 above; also, G. Cohen, *Churchill V'she'elat Eretz Yisrael 1939-1942* (Churchill and the Palestine Question 1939-1942) (Jerusalem 1976).

The committee was well aware of the Palestinian Arab aspect of the problem, and proposed to solve it by uniting the Arab parts of Palestine with Transjordan, and at a later stage to include the enlarged Transjordan in a federation that would also encompass Syria and Lebanon. It should be noted that in 1937, too, the Royal Commission proposed that the Arab part of Palestine be united with Transjordan. It was clear to that commission that the Arab part of Palestine, Judea and Samaria, could not exist as a state on its own, and moreover, that Transjordan was tied up with Palestine in every sense.

The ministerial committee took a much broader view of the Arab aspect of the Palestine question than did the Royal Commission. The 1943 ministerial committee wanted to link the solution of the Palestine question with the idea of a federation of the eastern Mediterranean Arab countries. This idea had been in the air since the 1930s, and in 1943 it seemed to the planners of British policy that the time was ripe to advance towards its realization. At that time there was much talk in the Arab world about unity, and a British initiative to promote Arab unity was likely to reinforce Great Britain's standing in the region after the war. When the partition plan was put forward in 1943, it was clear that it would not be accepted by the Arabs, just as partition had not been accepted in its first appearance in 1937. Therefore, together with the establishment of a Jewish state in a part of Palestine, it was also proposed that an Arab federation be formed that would include the Arab part of Palestine, Transjordan, Syria and Lebanon. The originator of the idea was Lord Moyne, Minister of State in Cairo. He maintained – and his view was accepted by the ministerial committee – that it would be easier for the Arabs to accept a Jewish state after it was established, if its establishment would bring Arab unity closer. The proponents of the Arab federation plan viewed it as a restoration of sorts, namely the reunification of the lands that had formed one unit under Ottoman rule. The ministerial committee's proposal was submitted to the Cabinet in January 1944 and approved in principle, with the intention that it be implemented at a certain time in the future, after the defeat of Germany. However, in 1944 there were new developments. It became evident that the establishment of an Arab federation would involve greater difficulties than had originally been anticipated, and that Great Britain would

no longer be free to act as it wished in this matter. One of the major obstacles to the formation of such a federation was the consideration that the Syrians would not accdept Emir Abdallah, the ruler of Transjordan, to head the federation. On the other hand, the British had a deep commitment to this ally of old. Nor would Saudi Arabia look favorably on the establishment of such a federaion. Furthermore, it was feared that a federation headed by Syria, or in which Syria was the major party, would indirectly lead to an expansion of French influence, which was still quite considerable in Syria. The British, therefore, came to the conclusion that the establishment of "Greater Syria" would be carried out in two stages, the first being the establishment of what they called "Southern Syria", comprising the Arab part of Palestine and Transjordan. In that stage the partition of Palestine would be effected and the Jewish state would be formed. In the view of the ministerial committee, the leaders of the Arabs of Palestine might accept this arrangement, because the weight of the Palestine Arabs would be much greater in the enlarged state – Arab Palestine together with Transjordan – than in a federation also embracing Syria.[13]

Still, the ministerial committee believed that the idea of Greater Syria should not, as such, be abandoned, and that Great Britain must declare the establishment of such a state an inseparable part of its overall Middle East policy. In the view of the ministerial committee, that declaration should stress that the resolution of the Jewish question by partition removed the major obstacle to Arab unity. The declaration should be issued at the time of the implementation of the partition.[14]

IV

We still have to consider the place of the Arab question in Zionist policy. At the London Conference in 1939 an attempt was made to hold direct talks between Jews and Arabs in a meeting with the participation of representatives of the Arab countries, the government and the Jews – Ch. Weizmann, D. Ben-Gurion, M. Sharett and Lord

[13] See paragraph 20 in the revised report by the Ministerial Committee on Palestine (October 16, 1944) –PRO, P. (M) (44) 14 – CAB 95/14.

[14] *Ibid.*

Breasted, a Jewish dignitary in England.[15] Representatives of the Arabs of Palestine were not present at this meeting. In the course of the conversation Ben-Gurion said he would be willing to have the Jewish state in Palestine included within "a larger body encompassing the neighboring countries".[16] In that same conversation, Weizmann expressed a readiness for negotiations with the Arabs of Palestine on a "give and take" basis; he was even ready to accept a certain slow-down in the tempo of immigration – much to Ben-Gurion's and Sharett's consternation. Needless to say, nothing came of this meeting; once again it became evident that there was no basis for a settlement with the Arabs that would assure the continued development of the National Home. The White Paper further diminished the chances of a settlement in the future.

Zionist policy in the period of the war set as its goal the establishment of a Jewish state after the war, as formulated in the Biltmore program of 1942. The question is, how was the Arab question seen in this framework?

There is as yet no clear answer to the question. Nevertheless, it seems that the assessment among the Zionist leadership was that Arab pressure would be weaker after the war and their bargaining power would decrease. It is reasonable to surmise that the Zionist leaders drew encouragement on this matter from various (private) utterances by Churchill denouncing the Arabs for their failure to participate in the war effort, and that consequently Great Britain did not owe the Arabs a thing. It would seem that the view prevailing among the Zionist leadership was that if Great Britain and the Allies adopted a forceful position in favor of the establishment of a Jewish state – the Arabs would reconcile themselves to this fact, just as they had come to accept the existence of the Jewish *Yishuv* in the country, although initially they had opposed it.[17]

But beyond this supposition it was clear – at least to Ben-Gurion and his supporters – that the matter of the Jewish state might be decided by war, and they prepared for that possibility.

[15] See D. Ben-Gurion, *Pegishot im Manhigim Aravim* (Meetings with Arab Leaders) (Tel-Aviv, 1967), pp. 261-265.

[16] D. Ben-Gurion, *ibid.*, p. 262.

[17] Memorandum by the Jewish Agency to the Government (October 30, 1944) – PRO, P. (M) (44) 15 – CAB 95/15.

The policy of the Biltmore program was, as is known, a matter of dispute and its major opponents were those who favored a bi-national state. Although our subject is Zionist policy accepted as such by the authorized institutions of the Zionist movement, this matter deserves some comment.

Paradoxically perhaps, the idea of a bi-national state never received such broad support as it did in the 1940s. Dr. Magnes maintained that there was much tacit support for it.[18] It is difficult to gauge how much support the idea of the bi-national state actually had, but it is clear that a variety of bodies were rallied around it, among them *Hashomer Hatzair*, Left *Po'alei Zion*, *Aliyah Hadasha* founded by Zionists from Germany, as well as some *Mapai* members and General Zionists, and of course people from the former *Brit Shalom*. This group's crystallization had already begun in 1939, under the name The League for Jewish-Arab Rapprochement; from 1943 it was called *Ihud*. The Jewish Agency leadership looked askance on the activity of *Ihud*, fearing that this group or others like it would be brought in as "moderate" to help decide the future of Palestine, by offsetting the "extremist" Jewish Agency; this fear was not unfounded.

The plan for a bi-national state was examined by the ministerial committee in 1943, and was rejected[19] on the grounds that it did not resolve what they took to be the key problem – the matter of immigration; there seemed to be no chance for a solution of this problem within the framework of a bi-national state.

[18] Cited by S.L. Hattis, *ibid.*, p. 290.

[19] Committee report (see note 13), paragraph 6.

Glossary

Agudat Israel. World Organization of Orthodox Jews, non-Zionists, founded 1912.

Aḥdut ha-Avodah. Zionist-Socialist party in Palestine since 1919, merged 1930 with the *Hapo'el ha-Za'ir* Labor party, forming together the Labor Party of *Eretz-Israel, Mapai.*

Aliyah Ḥadashah. Founded 1942 by Central-European Zionists immigrants in Palestine, opposed to Biltmore Program (q.v.).

Arab Higher Committee. Formed during 1936 riots (q.v.), headed by Jerusalem *Mufti*, who collaborated later with Nazi Germany. The defunct Committee was revived in 1946 (see London Conferences).

Arab Riots. *1920* – Emir Faisal's ouster by the French from Damascus was accompanied by waves of riots. In the wake of these events Arab marauders attacked Tel Ḥai in Upper Galilee, killing eight women and men, including heroic Joseph Trumpeldor.

Weeks later a Muslim mob demonstrated in favor of demoted Faisal, eventually breaking in on Jerusalem Jews. Bloody riots lasted for two days and brought about the arrest of Vladimir Jabotinsky for organizing the Jewish defense.

1921 – Labor Day processions provoked Arabs to attack and kill Jews in Jaffa, including celebrated Hebrew writer Joseph Ḥaim Brenner. Riots spread all over Palestine and troops had to be brought in to quell them. The High Commissioner subsequently suspended Jewish immigration in an attempt to pacify the Arabs.

1929 – Protests against restrictions upon Jews prevailing at the Wailing Wall unleashed Arab furor. Heavy losses were inflicted upon isolated Hebron and Safed Jewish communities. The authorities decided thereupon to reexamine the policy in Palestine altogether (see Passfield White Paper).

1936 – The newly established Arab Higher Committee declared a general strike in protest against immigration and purchase of lands by Jews, also aiming at a recognition of Arab claims over Palestine. This was accompanied by riots and sabotage acts against Jews and Britain. The strike was halted six months later due to the intercession of neighboring countries. Disturbances resumed 1937 as part of an Arab Rebellion, which lasted until 1939.

Balfour Declaration. In a letter to Lord Rothschild, British Foreign Secretary Arthur James Balfour issued on November 2nd, 1917, a statement promising Jews a National Home in Palestine, provided it did not prejudice civil and religious rights of non-Jews. This became the cornerstone of Zionist claims and aspirations after the First World War. The previously unknown term National Home entered diplomatic

usage and was incorporated in the text of the British Mandate of Palestine.

Biltmore Program, *1942.* A Zionist conference in New York adopted May 11, 1942, a program that envisaged a Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine after the war was over. This marked the beginning of a new Zionist strategy that culminated in the partition of Palestine and the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948.

Brit Shalom. A group of Zionists, mainly intellectuals, seeking a compromise with Arab nationalists in Palestine.

Commissions for Palestine. *1919, King-Crane* – In view of the contradictory plans developed by Britain and France respectively, US President Wilson had his own commission come to the Near East. Dr. Henry King together with Charles Crane recommended that both Syria and Palestine be brought under the same government (American or British), with Emir Faisal as constitutional monarch.

This commission rejected the Zionist claims altogether.

1930, Shaw – After the 1929 riots (q.v.) a British commission, led by Sir Walter Shaw, arrived in Palestine and heard accusations that Zionism had evicted Arab farmers. The commission found most Arab claims unsubstantiated, yet urged the government to issue a clear statement of policy (see Simpson Report).

1936, Peel – A Royal Commission, headed by Lord Peel, was appointed after the riots broke out to study the Palestine situation. It proposed that the purchase of lands by Jews be restricted and that immigration be drastically reduced, advocating the future partition of Palestine.

1938, Woodhead – Sir John Woodhead was entrusted with the task of devising a detailed plan for partition. His commission failed to arrive at a definitive proposal. The government thereupon rejected the idea of partition, but decided to consult the parties concerned (see London Conferences).

1946, Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry – Pressure was brought to bear upon the Allies by the 'displaced persons' in Europe seeking entry into Palestine. A joint body was set up to study the refugee problem together with the Palestine situation. The committee recommended that 100,000 Jewish survivors be allowed into Palestine and that restrictions on the purchase of lands be lifted. It rejected the solutions of partition or independence and preferred a United Nations trusteeship for Palestine.

1947, UNSCOP – A special session of the UN General Assembly in May 1947 resolved to form a United Nations Special Committee on Palestine. It comprised eleven members, evenly balanced, under a Swedish chairman, with Ralph Bunche representing the UN Secretariat. UNSCOP recommended August 30, 1947, that Palestine be partitioned, yet Jerusalem be placed under international rule. India, Ireland and Yugoslavia proposed, in a minority resolution, that Palestine become a federal state.

"Conflicting Promises". When, a month after the Balfour Declaration (q.v.) was announced, the new Soviet regime made public the secret treaty between France and Britain (see Sykes-Picot Agreement), Arab leaders interpreted both documents as an outright breach of promise made to the Arabs. They cited the MacMahon letters (q.v.), as well as the commitment made by Lawrence of Arabia, to prove it.

General Federation of Labor. *(Histadrut).* Founded 1920 as an amal

gamate of trade unions, as well as agricultural cooperatives, industrial plants, institutions of health, welfare and education. The *Histadrut* tried to encourage the establishing of a parallel Arab organization. It opened up its ranks to include Arab members in 1952.

General Zionists (A). Non sectarian, progressive, supported Weizmann's claim to leadership in World Zionist Organization.

General Zionists (B). More right-wing, advocating free enterprise, also connected to the so-called Civil Block in Palestine.

Ha-Po'el ha-Mizrachi. Pioneering religious labor movement in Palestine, founded 1922.

Ha-Shomer ha-Za'ir. Zionist youth movement in Europe, later Zionist radical party in Palestine; since 1948 part of *Mapam* – United Workers' Party.

Histadrut. See General Federation of Labor.

London Conferences. *1939, Round Table Conference* – After the failure of the Woodhead Commission (q.v.) the British government called upon both Zionists and Arabs to voice their opinions before it reached a policy decision. Talks were held in London separately, as the Palestine Arabs refused to negotiate with the Zionists, though other Arab representatives did meet with them informally. Britain proposed independence under the Crown, after a transitional period, during which the Jews would become one third of the Palestine population. Both parties rejected the proposals.

1947 Conference – Foreign Minister Bevin convened Arabs and Zionists to discuss the Morrison-Grady Plan (q.v.) in a last minute attempt to reach some agreement. The revived Arab Higher Committee (q.v.) attended the conference, beside the Arab League countries. Talks were held with each party separately and both rejected the plan. Soon afterwards Britain announced its intention to refer the Palestine issue to the United Nations.

MacDonald Letter. Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald interpreted the Passfield White Paper (q.v.) in a letter to Dr. Ch. Weizmann, President of the Zionist Organization, at the beginning of 1931. MacDonald reaffirmed the British commitment to the Jewish National Home (see Balfour Declaration), inducing Weizmann and others to take back resignation.

MacMahon Letters. In an attempt to foment Arab rebellion against the Turks, the British High Commissioner in Egypt, Sir Henry MacMahon, proposed future independence to Sharif Hussein of Mecca, 1915–16. The letters were vague as to the degree of independence and the extent of territory. Though Palestine was not specifically mentioned, it later became a bone of contention (see "Conflicting Promises").

Mandate Ratification. Soon after the Churchill White Paper (q.v.) was issued, the League of Nations ratified the British Mandate of Palestine, referring, inter alia, to the 1917 Balfour Declaration (q.v.). The Mandate was to take effect September 29, 1923, almost six years after British soldiers set foot in Palestine.

Mizrachi. Founded 1902, the religious faction of the World Zionist Organization, still existent.

Morrison-Grady Plan. *(1946).* Britain rejected the recommendations made by the Anglo-American Committee (q.v.) whereas the White House persisted in the demand to let 100,000 refugees enter Palestine. The growing tension between Washington and Lon

don gave rise to a conciliatory scheme devised by British cabinet minister Herbert Morrison, with the US Ambassador Henry Grady, in July 1946. They proposed the division of Palestine into four semi-autonomous areas under British control, while 100,000 certificates be granted to Jewish refugees. The plan did not meet with any approval whatsoever.

New Zionist Organization. Was founded in 1935 by Revisionist-Zionist Vladimir Jabotinsky, who had seceded from the World Zionist Organization twelve years earlier. This movement inspired some of the armed action against the British (see Revolt Movement).

Palestine. This term had been in use for generations, though not in a strict geographical sense. Under Ottoman rule Palestine was not considered an administrative entity – Jerusalem and the south were a separate unit, answerable to Constantinople, whereas northern Palestine was governed out of Beirut and Damascus. The British introduced this as a geographical and administrative entity, but soon deviated from it by creating Transjordan.

Partition of Palestine *(1947)*. The UN General Assembly adopted on November 29, 1947, the majority recommendations of UNSCOP (q.v.), with 33 member-states in favor and 13 against. This was a decisive step towards the termination of the British Mandate of Palestine on May 15, 1948. The Arabs refused to accept the resolution trying to overrun the newly established State of Israel instead.

PKP. The Palestine Communist Party, mostly illegal, Jewish and Arab membership, anti-Zionist, supported Arab Rebellion (see Arab Riots, 1936).

Po'alei Agudat Israel. Labor wing of the non-Zionist *Agudat Israel* (q.v.), nevertheless founded pioneering settlements in Palestine.

Po'alei Zion, Left. Zionist-Marxist group, in Palestine since 1919; participated in *Mapam,* United Workers' Party, 1948 (see *ha-Shomer ha-Za'ir)*.

Revolt Movement. Labor came into power in Britain in July 1945, yet did not amend pre-war White Paper, despite promises. Zionists conducted illegal immigration into Palestine and staged mass demonstrations. This also led semi-official *Haganah* to join hands with 'dissenting' armed groups against British military installations.

San Remo Conference (April 1920). Settled outstanding issues of the Peace Conference, such as the French Mandate over Syria and Lebanon and the British Mandate over Palestine and Iraq.

Sheikh Izz 'al-Din 'al-Qassam. Muslim preacher from Syria, took to the mountains in northern Palestine to wage a "holy war" against the Zionists and the British; Killed in clash with police 1935; became Arab national martyr.

Simpson Report. Following the Shaw Commission (q.v.), Sir John Hope Simpson was appointed in 1930 to study the economic conditions of Palestine. While noticing the high standard of Jewish agriculture, he rebuked Zionist colonists for desisting from employing Arab labor and claimed that a shortage of lands would bar further Jewish colonization. He also confirmed the suspension of additional Jewish immigration.

Supreme Muslim Council. Was formed 1921 by the authorities to attend to religious matters, it became a political organization in the hands of the Jerusalem *Mufti,* Ḥaj Amin al-Husseini (see Arab Higher Committee).

Sykes-Picot Agreement. The secret

treaty named after British Mark Sykes and French Georges Picot, ratified by their respective governments on May 16, 1916. It allocated to each party certain Ottoman territories in view of a future Allied victory. France received Syria and Lebanon; Britain acquired Iraq and parts of Palestine. Jerusalem and vicinity were intended to become international.

Va'ad Leumi for *Knesset Yisrael.* The national Council representing the *Yishuv* (q.v.), founded 1920; later acquired statutory recognition, dissolved 1948 with the establishment of the State of Israel.

Weizmann – Faisal Agreement. The Head of the Zionist Commission (q.v.), Dr. Weizmann signed January 3, 1919, an agreement with Faisal, the prospective king of Syria, for mutual assistance at the forthcoming Peace Conference. The agreement recognized the Balfour Declaration (q.v.) and favored Jewish immigration and colonization. Zionism pledged its support for the then envisaged Arab state and promised assistance to the economic development of the Palestine Arabs.

White Papers. *1922, Churchill* – Colonial Secretary Winston Churchill issued a policy statement aiming at a compromise between Jews and Arabs in Palestine. He reaffirmed the Balfour Declaration (q.v.), while at the same time saying that Palestine would not become "as Jewish as England is English". Immigration was made dependent upon the economic absorption capacity of the country. This followed the separation of Transjordan from Palestine (q.v.) made a year before, when Churchill took office.

1930, Passfield – published together with the Simpson Report (q.v.) on October 20, 1930, by Colonial Secretary Lord Passfield (well-known laborite Sidney Webb). The document curtailed British obligations towards the Jewish National Home in Palestine (see Balfour Declaration), purporting to treat Jews and Arabs alike. It also recommended a Legislative Councill that would reflect the Arab numerical preponderance.

1939, MacDonald – Colonial Secretary Malcolm MacDonald issued a policy statement in line with the preceding Round Table Conference in London, 1939 (q.v.). Both Zionists and Arabs rejected the White Paper, which attempted to bestow a measure of independence upon Palestine after the Jews reached one third of the population. It was rebuked in Parliament and at the League of Nations. Three months later war broke out and thus it remained intact.

World Zionist Organization. Was founded 1897 by Theodore Herzl at the lst Zionist Congress convened at Basle; it aimed "to create for the Jewish people a home in Palestine secured by public law".

Yishuv. – The term denotes the organized Jewish community of Palestine *(Eretz Israel)* before the establishment of the State of Israel.

Zionist Commission. Was sent to Palestine in 1919 with British approval to lay the foundations for the Jewish National Home (see Balfour Declaration). Its functions were handed over to the Palestine Zionist Executive formed 1921, which constituted the Jewish Agency as specified in the Palestine Mandate. The Jewish Agency was enlarged in 1929 to include non-Zionists.

Index

Abd al-Hadi, Awni, 61, 178, 203
Abd el-Razik, Arif, 179
Abdallah, Emir of Transjordan, 15, 31, 63, 179, 180, 181, 200, 206
Abdel Nasser, Gamal, 124, 125, 141, 182
Abdul Hammid, Sultan, 3
Acre, 81, 180
Aelia Capitolina, 174
Africa, 193
Agudat Israel, 51, 54, 209, 212
Ahad Ha'am, 8
Ahdut Ha'avodah, 14, 18, 55, 106, 115, 118, 143, 144, 209
Ahimeir, Abba, 77, 86, 89
al-Ahram (newspaper), 189
al-ᶜAksa (Mosque), 172
Alami, Musa, 61, 169
Algeria, 182
Aliya Hadasha, 208, 209
Allenby, General, 176
America, 108
American University in Beirut, 56, 70
Amman, 81, 180
Anglo-American Committee (1946), 210, 212
Arab Club – *see al-Nadi al-Arabi*
Arab Executive Committee, 52, 151, 155, 168
Arab Executive Council 20
Arab Higher Committee, 209
Arab League, 31, 182, 184, 211
"Arab Nationalist Terrorist Committee", 167
Arab Palestine Party, 203
Arabia, 87
Aranne, Zalman, 139
Arlozoroff, Haim, 17, 19, 38, 39, 41, 45, 46, 48, 56, 57-60, 62, 63, 119, 120, 121
Association of Brotherhood and Purity – *see al-Ikha wa-al-ᶜAfaf*
"The Association of the Graduates of the Herzlia High School", 142, 145
Association of Holy Warriors – *see ᶜUṣbat al-Mujahidin*
Association of Self-Sacrifice – *see al-Fidaiyya*
Atlantic Ocean, 9
Avigur, Shaul, 134
Baghdad, 77, 80, 175
Balfour, Arthur James, 209
Balfour Declaration, 11, 13, 35, 36, 39, 41, 42, 49, 67, 70, 88, 110, 111, 150, 151, 155, 156, 159, 170, 183, 184, 187, 209, 210, 211, 213
Baludan, 181
Bandung, 137
Bar Kochba, 174
Barzilai, Israel, 139
Basle, 189, 213
Basle Program, 36
Beilinson, Moshe, 40
Beirut, 56, 62, 70, 185, 188, 212
Ben-Gurion, David, 14, 17, 20, 26, 28, 29, 32, 37, 38, 39, 41, 45, 46, 55, 60-62, 63, 69, 72, 89, 95-147, 152-153, 171, 206, 207
Ben-Zvi, Yitzhak, 36, 37, 110, 122
Benjamin, Rabbi, 24
Bentov, Mordechai, 29, 139
Berdichevski, (M.Y.), 188
Berlin, 8
Betar, 75
Bevin, (Ernst), 211
Biltmore Program

(1942), 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 116, 117, 157, 207, 208, 210
"Black Hand", 165
Breasted, Lord, 206, 207
Brenner, Joseph Haim, 209
Brit Poalei Eretz-Yisrael, 15
Brit Shalom, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 25, 27, 46, 52, 95, 120, 208, 210
Britain, 10, 11, 15, 20, 25, 26, 28, 32, 34, 140, 209, 210, 211, 213; – *see also* England; Great Britain
British Army, 11
Buber, Martin, 12, 43
Bulgaria, 79
Bunche, Ralph, 210
Burg, Yoseph (Dr.), 139

Cabinet Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defense, 132
Cairo, 77, 134, 175, 189, 202
Calcutta, 77
Carmel (Arabic newspaper), 69
Center for Strategic Studies, Cairo, 189
Central Europe, 12, 82
Churchill, Winston, 26, 203, 207, 213
Churchill White Paper (1922), 211, 213
Cohen, Aaron, 41
Cologne, 8
Colonial Office, 68
Comintern, 92
Constantinople, 7, 8, 9, 152, 212; *see also* Istanbul
Crane, Charles, 210
Czechoslovakia, 79

Damascus, 175, 176, 177, 178, 209, 212
Davar (Hebrew newspaper), 107, 119, 120
Dayan, Moshe, 101, 102, 103, 132, 138, 171
de Haan, Jacob Israel, 51
Defense Ministry, 134, 136
Defense Party, 179, 180
Dome of the Rock, 172

Eastern Europe, 11, 16, 17, 34, 89, 194
Eder, M.D., 36
Egypt, 23, 32, 78, 80, 102, 124, 125, 133, 134, 135, 138, 147, 171, 182, 200, 211
Ein Harod, 14
El Alamein, 156
England, 65, 106, 179, 207; *see also* Britain; Great Britain
Epstein (Elath), Eliahu, 53, 56, 62, 69, 70
Epstein, Yitzhak, 40
Europe, 9, 15, 16, 19, 27, 32, 33, 77, 78, 91, 152, 157, 194, 195, 198, 210, 211

Faraj, Yacoub, 280
Fatah, 193
Federation of Palestinian Workers, 112
Feisal, King of Syria, 10, 67, 70, 78, 111, 149, 177, 178, 209, 210, 213
Fertile Crescent, 114, 181
al-Fidaiyya, 176
Filastin (newspaper), 176
FLN, 182
Foreign Ministry (Israel), 131, 134, 135, 136, 138, 139; *see also* Ministry of Foreign Affairs
France, 15, 31, 139, 140, 146, 178, 210, 213
Frumkin, Gad, 22, 46

Galilee, 48, 165, 171, 180, 209
Gaza, 34, 134
Gaza Strip, 135, 138, 182
General Federation of Labor – *see Histadrut*
General Syrian Congress, 177
General Zionists, 17, 40, 95-96, 208, 211
Geneva, 56
George IV, King, 179
Germany, 9, 23, 115, 170, 205, 208, 209
Gliboa, Mount, 170
Glickson, Moshe, 40
Golomb, Eliahu, 106, 142, 143
Gordon, A. D., 142
Grady, Henry, 212
Great Britain, 9, 74, 77, 86, 88, 92, 93, 112, 152, 159, 163, 164, 170, 172, 173, 178, 181, 184, 197, 198, 204, 205, 206, 207;

see also Britain; England
"Green Hand Gang", 165; *see also* "Safed Gang"
Greenberg, Uri Zvi, 76, 77, 85-86, 87

Ha'aretz (Hebrew newspaper), 78
Hadera, 54
Haganah, 106, 143, 212
Haifa, 47, 50, 54, 56, 89, 165, 170, 178, 179, 180, 182
Halperin, Uziel, 87
El-Hama, 182
Ha-Po'el ha-Mizrachi, 211
Hapoel Hatzair, 5, 108, 115, 119, 142-143, 209
Hashemite dynasty , 15, 93, 178
Hashiloah (Hebrew newspaper), 40
Hashomer, 142
Hashomer Hatzair, 19, 24, 28, 95, 116, 208, 211
Hebron, 81, 153, 165, 166, 191, 209
Hebron Hills, 130
Helsingfors program, 82, 83, 90
Herodotus, 174
Ḥerut, 93
Herzel, Theodore, 69, 193, 194, 195, 213
Herzlia high school, 142
Herzog, Yaacov, 103
Ḥibbat-Zion, 82
Higher Arab Committee, 151, 158-159, 200-201, 202
Hirsch, Baron Maurice de, 194
Histadrut, 15, 19, 36, 56, 60, 62, 106, 107, 113, 210
Hope-Simpson Commission, 54
House of Lords, 24
Hoz, Dov, 142, 143
Husain, Sharif of Mecca, 150, 211
al-Husseini, Hajj Amin, the *Mufti*, 20, 67, 172, 174, 177, 180, 185, 212; *see also Mufti*
al-Husseini, Mousnif, 168
el-Husseini, Musa Kazem, 178
el-Husseini, Toufiq Salah, 204
Husseinis, the, 15, 21, 31, 48, 55, 176, 178, 180, 185, 204
Hyamson, Albert, M., 24, 25

Ibn Saud, 31, 105, 178
Iḥud, 29, 208
Iḥud – the World Union of *Po'alei Zion*, 112
al-Ikha wa-al-ᶜAfaf, 176
"Independence Mosque", 170
"Independence Party" – *see al-Istiqlal*
India, 47, 65, 77, 210
Institute for Palestine Studies in Beirut, 188
Islamic Congress (1931), 173, 181
Iraq, 26, 80, 149, 167, 178, 179, 181, 200, 210, 213
Ireland, 210
Irgun Zvai Leumi (IZL), 32, 74, 75, 87, 88
Israel, 33, 34, 38, 53, 68, 95, 97, 98, 99, 101, 102, 104, 105, 117, 122, 124, 125, 126, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 135, 136, 138, 139, 140, 141, 145, 146, 147, 171, 175, 182, 185, 189, 190, 192, 193, 213
Israel Defense Forces (IDF), 130, 132, 133, 136
Istanbul, 110, 175; *see also* Constantinople
Istiqlal (party), 20, 168, 170, 178, 179, 203, 204
Italy, 154, 170, 195
Ittiḥad al-ᶜAmal, 56

Jabotinsky, Ze'ev, 9, 11, 12, 13, 74, 75-76, 77-79, 81 82, 83-84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 209, 212
Jacobi family, the, 170
Jacobson, Victor, 8, 9, 10, 56, 67
Jaffa, 54, 81, 165, 169, 170, 177, 182, 209
al-Jami'ah al-'Arabiyya, 167
Jellinek, 82
Jericho, 165
Jerusalem, 21, 35, 47, 50, 58, 81, 101, 125, 130, 131, 152, 153, 165, 172, 173, 174, 180, 209, 210, 212, 213

Jewish Agency, 24, 27, 29, 37, 55, 61, 70, 104, 105, 107, 119, 121, 153, 198, 199, 200, 208, 213
Jewish Agency Executive, 32, 37, 38, 56, 61, 62, 106, 115, 129, 155
Jewish Brigade, 27
Jewish Legion, 11, 12, 80
Jordan, 11, 73, 132, 175, 179, 182; *see also* Transjordan
Jordan river, 12, 81, 89, 96, 131, 132
Judah the *Hasid*, Rabbi, 67
Judea, 101, 191, 205

Kalvariski, Haim Margalit, 12, 15, 23, 24, 42, 45, 46, 47-49, 50, 51, 53, 54, 67, 69,
Kaplansky, Shlomo, 14, 29, 112, 122
Al-Kassam, Izz al-Din, 165, 167, 168, 169-171, 212
Katznelson, Berl, 14, 18, 21, 23, 40, 106, 107, 120, 121, 143
Al-Kaukji, Fauzi, 179
Kawasmeh, Fahed, 191
Kèdma Mizraha, 22-23
Khalidis, the, 50
Khan-Yumis, 138
Kibiya, 132
King, Henry, 210
King and Crane (Commission) 177, 210
Kisch, Frederick (Colonel), 15, 36, 38, 39, 41, 42, 46, 47, 49, 50, 54, 56-57, 63
Kissinger, Henry, 147
Klatzkin, Yaakov, 41
Knesset, 69, 125, 189
Knesset Israel, 36

Labor movement, 11, 43, 50, 55, 60, 69, 74, 85, 95, 104, 106, 107, 108, 111, 113, 114, 116, 117, 122, 128, 142, 143, 144
Lavon, Pinhas, 132, 134, 147
League for Jewish-Arab Raprochment, 25, 28, 29, 31, 32, 208
League of Nations, 56, 67, 79, 111, 150, 172, 187, 211
League of Nations Mandates Commission, 64, 163
Lebanon, 3, 9, 31, 56, 62, 133, 149, 181, 200, 205, 212, 213
Left *Poalei-Zion*, 11, 208, 212
Lehi, 32, 75, 88
Lenin, (V.I), 192, 193
Levant, 76
Libya, 77
Lichtheim, Richard, 8, 9
Literary Club – *see al-Muntada al-Adabi*
Lloyd, Lord, 202
London, 15, 35, 36, 38, 44, 47, 52, 54, 65, 66, 137, 173, 179, 184, 200, 201, 203, 204, 211, 212, 213
London Conference (1939), 199, 200, 206, 211; *see also* St. James Conference
London Executive, 36
London School of Economics, 106
Luz, Kadish, 139

MacDonald, Malcolm, 203, 213
MacDonald, Ramsay, 211
McDonald, letter of, 54, 167, 172, 211
McMahon (Sir Henry), 150, 187, 210, 211
MacMichael, Sir Harold, 201, 202
Magnes, Judah L., 22, 25, 26, 69, 201, 208
al-Majlesiyin – *see* Husseinis, the
Mapai, 17, 18, 59, 61, 62, 97, 101, 104, 107, 115, 116, 119, 120, 122, 133, 135, 137, 138, 139, 145, 208, 209; Central Committee of, 138, 140, 145; Political Committee of, 145
Mapam, 139, 211, 212
Margalit-Kalvarisky, Haim – *see* Kalvarisky, Haim Margalit
Marshall, George, 129
Marshall, James, 70
Marshall, Louis, 70
Marx (K.), 76, 77, 193, 194
Mazzini, 21, 82
Mecca, 80, 211
Mediterranean, 154, 205
Medzini, Moshe, 46, 48, 49
Middle-East, 1, 65-66,

77, 81, 88, 92, 99, 108, 117, 124, 127, 146, 147, 156, 170, 173, 181, 184, 192, 204, 206
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel, 62
Mizrachi, 17, 211
Morrison, Herbert, 212
Morrison-Grady Plan, 211
Moscow, 137
Moyne, Lord, 205
Mufti (of Jerusalem), the, 21, 52, 61, 65, 167, 170, 181, 200, 201, 202, 203, 209; *see also* al-Husseini, Hajj Amin
Muhammad, Abd al-Rahim Haj, 179
al-Muntada al-Adabi, 176

Nablus, 165, 180, 201
Nablus Conference, 167
al-Nadi al Arabi, 176
Nahalal, 170
Nashashibi, Ragheb, 180, 201, 202
Nashashibis, the, 15, 20, 50, 55, 61, 155, 158, 176, 179, 180
Nasser (G.A.), – *see* Abdel Nasser, Gamal
National Religious Party, 139, 144
Nazis, 30, 155
Negev, 130, 135
New Zionist Organisation, 81, 212
Newcomb, S.F., 24, 25
Nili, 88
Nordau, Max, 8-9, 11
North Africa, 78, 156
Novomeysky, Moshe, 22

Olshan-Dori Inquiry Committee, 134
Ottoman Empire, 3, 7, 8-9, 10, 67, 68, 108, 110, 150

Palestine Communist Party (PKP), 168, 212
Palestine Labor Alliance – *see Brit Poalei-Eretz Yisrael*
Palestine Zionist Executive, 35, 45, 47, 213
Palestine Arab Congress, 51, 52, 178
Palestine National Covenant, 188
Paris, 130
Passfield, Lord, 213
Passfield White Paper, 43, 54, 167, 172, 209, 211, 213
Patish, Moshav, 135
Peel, Lord, 23, 210
Peel Commission (1937), 18, 23, 27, 28, 33, 91, 115, 122, 179, 198, 205, 210
Persian Gulf, 9
Picot Georges, 213
PKP – *see* Palestine Communist Party
PLO, 159, 171, 174, 182, 185, 188
Po'alei Agudat Israel, 212
Po'alei-Zion, 5, 6, 107, 108, 109, 143
Poland, 79
Progressive Party, 139

Railroad, Mail and Telegraph Workers Union, Haifa, 56
Ramat-Gan, 137
Raszvet (Jewish Russian Organ), 78
Ratosh, Yonatan – *see* Halperin, Uriel
Renner-Springer, 82
Revisionist Party, 13, 16, 17, 43, 52, 58, 63, 96
Rhodesia, 192
Rosen, Pinhas, 139
Rosh Pinna, 69
Rothschild, Baron de, 194, 209
Ruppin, Arthur, 3, 6, 8, 20, 45, 67, 121
Russia, 6, 37, 157, 195
Rutenberg, Pinhas, 22, 37

Sacher, Harry, 36
Safed, 153, 166, 209
"Safed Gang", 164; *see also* "Green Hand Gang"
Said, Nuri, 26, 181
St. James Conference (1939), 66, 173, 184
Salamah, Hasan, 179
as-Salt, 81
Samaria, 101, 191, 205
Samuel, Herbert, 24, 112, 113
San Remo Conference (1920), 177, 212
Sapir, Asher, 15
Sapir, Pinhas, 139
Sasson, Eliahu, 53, 62
Saudi Arabia, 105, 200, 206
Saut Filastin (newspaper), 191
Schectman, J. B., 78

Sdeh-Boker, 132, 133, 134
Serbia, 79
Shai, 121
Shapira, Moshe, 139, 144
Sharett (Shertok), Moshe, 38, 56, 60, 62, 95-147, 198, 201, 206, 207
Shaw, Sir Walter, 210
Shaw Commission (1930), 54, 172, 212
Shawkat, Sami, 167
Shukeiri, Ahmed, 185
Sicily, 157
Simpson, John Hope, 212
Simpson Report (1930), 212, 213
Sinai Campaign (1956), 97, 124, 125
Sinai peninsula, 126
Smilansky, Moshe, 22, 69
Socialist International, 111
Sokolow, Nahum, 9, 38
South Africa, 6, 192
South America, 194
"Southern Syria", 172, 175, 176, 178, 179, 206
Soviet Union, 26, 159
Sprinzak, Joseph, 63
Stern Group – *see Lehi*
Straits of Tiran, 101, 138
Suez Canal Zone, 126
Supreme Court of Palestine, 46
Supreme Muslim Council, 20, 172, 212
Sykes, Mark, 213
Sykes-Picot Agreement (1916), 212
Syria, 9, 31, 56, 62, 77, 78, 79, 80, 132, 133, 149, 165, 171, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 200, 205, 206, 210, 212, 213
Syrian National Bloc, 31

Tchernikhowski (Sh.), 188
Tel-Aviv, 50, 89, 131, 142
Tel-Ḥai, 171, 209
Temple Mount, 153
Temporary Executive Committee of the Jews of *Eretz Israel*, 93
Thon, Yaacov, 36, 37
Tiberias, 54
Tiran, 126
Touqan, Suleiman, 202
Transjordan, 15, 25, 31, 32, 33, 54, 57, 62, 81, 93, 179, 180, 181, 200, 205, 206, 213; *see also* Jordan
Trumpeldor, Y., 84, 171, 209
Turkey, 109, 177
Turkish army, 117
Turkish Imperial Parliament, 110

UN Armistice Commissions, 135-136
UN General Assembly, 130, 189, 210, 212
UN Special Commisison on Palestine (UNSCOP), 33
Union of Zionist Revisionists – *see* UZR
United Arab Republic, 182
United Bureau for Handling the Arab Problem, 53, 54
United Nations, 128, 130, 132, 135, 136, 140, 159, 163, 189, 210
United States, 26, 32, 64, 105, 106, 110, 128, 131, 132, 135, 139, 140, 146, 157, 159, 184
United Workers Party – *see Mapam*
Unity of Labor – *see Ittiḥad al-Amal*
ʿuṣbat al-Mujahidin, 170
Ussishkin, Menahem, 8, 45, 48
UZR (Union of Zionist Revisionists), 74, 75

Va'ad Le'umi, 36, 37, 50, 53, 54, 119, 120, 213
Vitkin, Joseph, 69

Warsaw, 59
Washington, 128, 137, 138, 212
Wauchope, Sir Arthur, 202
Webb, Sidney – *see* Passfield, Lord
Weizmann, Chiam, 10, 11, 13, 23, 28, 31, 35, 36, 37-38, 39, 41, 42, 44, 47, 49, 54, 58, 60, 63, 65, 69, 70, 85, 93, 105, 106, 111, 141, 167, 172, 206, 207, 211, 213

West Bank, 34, 130, 182
Western Desert, 47, 156
Western Europe, 194
Western Wall, 45, 51, 52, 172, 173
Western Wall Committee, 172
White House, 212
White Paper of 1922, 12, 13, 211
White Paper of 1939, 25, 26, 27, 66, 155-156, 158, 173, 184, 197, 203, 204, 207, 212
Wilson (W.), U.S. President, 210
Wilson's Fourteen Points, 150
Woodhead, Sir John, 210
Woodhead Commissionm, 210, 211
World Zionist Organisation, 105, 211, 213
Yadin, Yigael, 130
Yellin, Daivd, 36, 37
Yemen, 199
Yishuv, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 16, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 42, 44, 46, 48, 50, 51, 54, 55, 64, 65, 67, 74, 81, 84, 87, 88, 93, 98, 99, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 116, 117, 119, 121, 122, 129, 142, 143, 144, 149, 151, 152, 154, 155, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 166, 172, 184, 197, 203, 207, 213
Yishuv Elected Assembly, 57
Young Men's Muslim Association (YMMA), 165
Young Turks, 7, 110
Yugoslavia, 210
Zaslani (Shiloah), Reuven, 53, 62
Zichron Ya'akov, 69
Zionist Action Committee, 62
Zionist Commission (1918-1921), 35-36, 39, 47, 213
Zionist Congresses, 42, 189; First, 111, 189, 213; Seventh, 8; Twelfth, 12, 43; Thirteenth, 13; Sixteenth, 37; Seventeenth, 38, 43; Eighteenth, 38; Twenty-Second, 32; Twenty-Seventh, 188; Twenth-Eighth, 188
Zionist Executive, 8, 30, 36, 37, 48, 50, 51, 53, 54, 56, 61, 69
Zionist Organisation, 35, 38, 60, 153, 211
Zurich, 37