

Dr. Mufid Abdul Hadi was born in 1913 in Nazareth, Palestine. He graduated as a MD from The American University of Beirut in June 1936, and continued his studies in Britain and Germany. From 1937 to 1943, Dr. Abdul Hadi lived and practiced his profession in Germany, specializing in the field of ear, nose and throat diseases. In 1943, he left to Sweden, where he got married the same year. In 1945, Dr. Abdul Hadi returned with his wife and daughter to Jerusalem, where he opened his own practice, but in 1948, he was forced to flee with his family to Amman, Jordan, and then further to Syria. The year after, as the flood of Palestinian refugees to the neighboring Arab countries continued, his family decided to leave to Sweden, which then seemed the only location where it would be possible to begin a new life.

This book, originally published by the author in 1962 in Sweden, is a very personal account of the phase in the history of the Palestinian people that preceded and centered around the Nakba. It is based on the author's desire to describe the Arabs' side of the story from his personal perspective.



Mufid Abdul Hadi

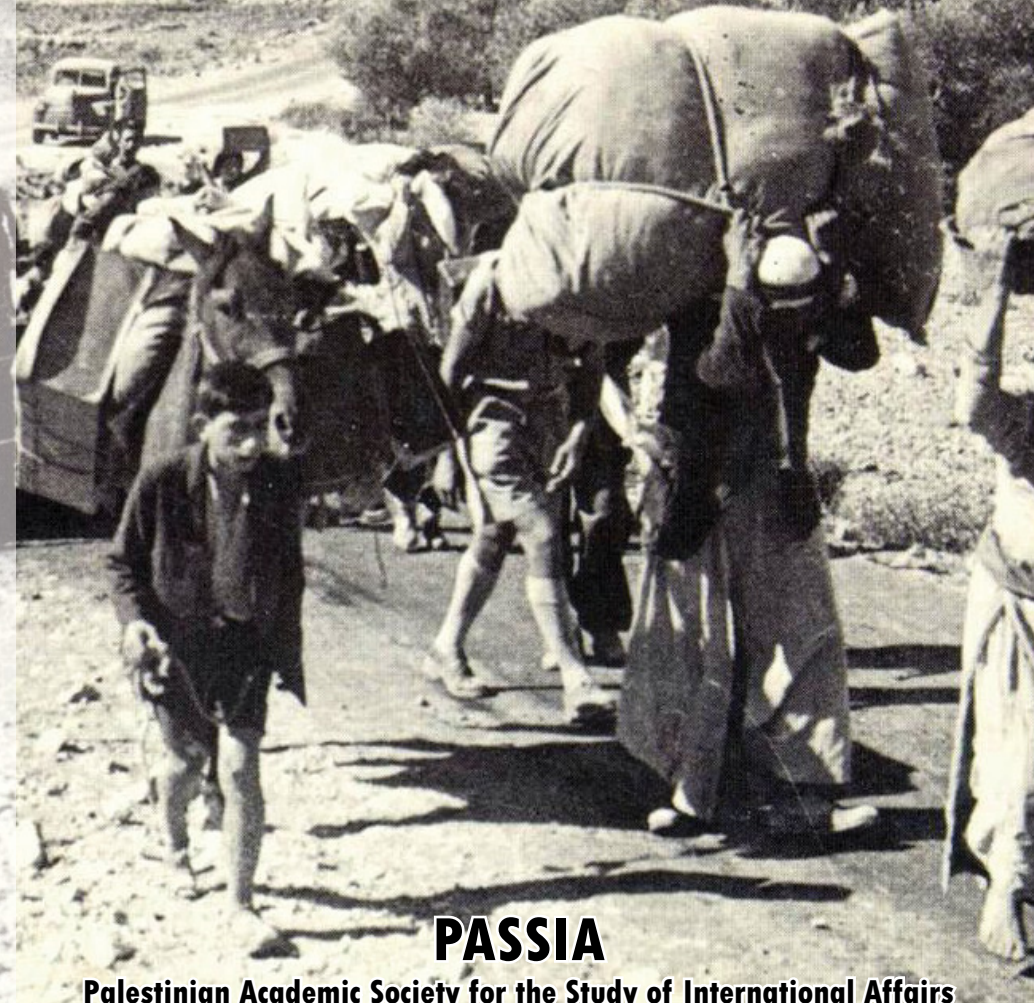
The Other Side of the Coin

PASSIA

Mufid Abdul Hadi

The Other Side of the Coin

A Native Palestinian Tells His Story



PASSIA

Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs

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PASSIA, the Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs, is an Arab, non-profit Palestinian institution, with a financially and legally independent status. It is not affiliated with any government, political party or organization. PASSIA seeks to present the Question of Palestine in its national, Arab and international contexts through academic research, dialogue and publication.

PASSIA endeavors that research undertaken under its auspices be specialized, scientific and objective and that its symposia and workshops, whether international or intra-Palestinian, be open, self-critical and conducted in a spirit of harmony and cooperation.

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Palestinaarab berättar [*The Arabs' Right to Own Palestine – A Native
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Translated from the Swedish Language by Annika Schabbauer
English Editing by Zainab Al-Kurd

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PASSIA Publication
Tel: 972-2-6264426 ♦ Fax: 972-2-6282819
E-mail: passia@passia.org
PO Box 19545 ♦ Jerusalem 9711025

This book is dedicated to my parents and all other Arab refugees who, in the same way as I, through losing Palestine have lost their native country.

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Foreword

The existence of the book presented here was first brought to our attention by Sven Eric Söder, Director of the Olof Palme International Center in Stockholm, who visited PASSIA in early 1996 to discuss possible future cooperation between the two centers. Mr. Söder was later so kind as to provide us with a copy of the book in Swedish, the language in which it was written, and it was then that the idea to translate the book into English first evolved.

PASSIA succeeded in contacting the author, Dr. Mufid Abdul Hadi, a distant relative of mine whose whereabouts had been unknown to me for several years. Upon reviewing the book, the PASSIA Academic Committee approved its translation into English and the manuscript was passed on to Ms. Annika Schabbauer, a Swedish native who, at the time, was working with the Temporary International Presence in Hebron (TIPH). In translating the book, every attempt was made to keep the translation as close to the original as possible, although the title was changed with the approval of the author, while, for practical reasons, several small hand-drawn maps were not included.

With regard to the decision to publish this book and its timing, the PASSIA Academic Committee is a firm believer in the need to preserve the rich Palestinian culture, at the heart of which is

its magnificent oral history. Such a history, it is believed, represents a powerful means of recording and preserving the unique memories and life experiences of people whose stories might otherwise be lost or ignored.

Autobiographic accounts like the one presented here serve a double purpose: not only do they shed light on events, traditions and attitudes from the past, but they also allow the reader to become familiar with the personality of the individual concerned and his specific circumstances, thus enabling him or her to form a splendid picture of the past based on, but not dictated by, the first-hand experiences of the author.

Mufid Abdul Hadi spent most of World War II in Germany, where he had gone to continue his studies and from where he was unable to leave once the war had started. He recounts both his experiences in Europe as well as his encounters with some of Palestine's more prominent personalities (e.g., the Grand Mufti, Haj Amin Al-Husseini), but whilst always paying careful attention to the events in his homeland, Palestine, as well as in the international arena.

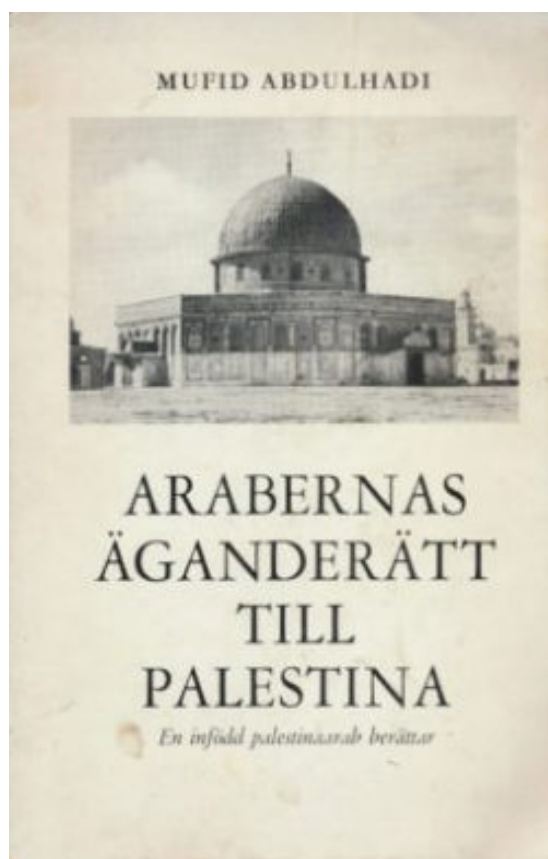
Following his return to Palestine, Dr. Abdul Hadi re-established himself in Jerusalem where he opened an ear, nose and throat practice in the Mamilla neighborhood. In covering this period of his life, the author gives a vivid and accurate account of the events preceding and surrounding the *Nakba* (the Palestinian ca-

tastrophe), which combines personal experience and factual observation and provides the reader with a valuable insight into the reasons why so many Palestinians were forced to flee their beloved homeland.

The publication of this testimony - a unique narrative of the experiences of an upper class Palestinian before and during this traumatic period in the history of the Palestinian people - coincides with the 50th anniversary of the *Nakba*. It is our most sincere wish that ***The Other Side of the Coin*** will empower the reader with the ability to form his own conclusions to certain important questions, and that by publishing Dr. Abdul Hadi's simple account of one of the most important periods in the history of Palestine, PASSIA will be making a contribution to the enrichment of the Palestinian library.

Jerusalem, March 1998

Dr. Mahdi Abdul Hadi
Head of PASSIA



Cover of the book's Swedish original

(The title translates to "The Arabs' Right to Own Palestine - A Native Palestinian Arab Tells His Story")

About This Book

This book is published by the author and not by a publisher. Nine different Swedish publishers were offered the manuscript but they all turned it down, stating different reasons. One naturally wonders about the criteria used in order to select political literature for publication in this day and age. Are there attempts to hide historical facts from the general public, or, in this particular case, was my script rejected simply because of its pro-Arab contents?

Of the nine publishers mentioned, six saw an almost identical version of the manuscript now published, under the title *'The Lost Country'*. The most common reason given for its rejection was that it was 'political literature' that was based on 'too specialized and narrow a subject'. One publisher went so far as to say that no publisher in Sweden would ever publish my book due to its contents, although he agreed, with no reservations, with everything I had written. He also stated that the book was 'harmless' and that I was definitely not anti-Semitic.

The original version of the script, titled *'Palestine - between Arabs and Jews'* was longer than this version and the chapters were arranged in a different order, although the contents were the same. That particular version was read by Erik Holm at the Utrikespolitiska Institutet (The Institute for Foreign Studies) in Stock-

holm, which sometimes provides the Swedish public with information on foreign affairs via the television. Holm wrote:

"The fears I uttered when first receiving this manuscript have been proven. Doctor Abdul-Hamid¹ has clearly sought to present the Arab stand on the issue of Palestine to the Swedish public: namely, that Palestine was taken from the Arabs by the Zionists, with the assistance of the USA and Great Britain, using force and deception. This view is naturally not totally wrong. Abdul Hadi's version must, however, be described as a sheer 'fight and propaganda' pamphlet: the writing is utterly one-sided, indeed so one-sided and bitter that it challenges the intellect of the reader. The author does not refrain from using any means whatsoever in order to prove his theory: incidents are distorted, and what are, for the Arabs, uncomfortable facts are hidden away or revised, whilst practically everything is painted black or white."

After describing the text as one-sided, Holm ended his statement in the following fashion:

"After firing this verbal attack on Abdul Hadi, and a verbal attack his work deserved, it might be unnecessary to point out that I think that the right place for Abdul Hadi's manuscript is the waste basket."

¹ The name of the author is misspelled.

The publishers that had asked Holm for a statement returned my manuscript stating that although they were grateful for having had the opportunity to see it and had read it with great interest, they were unable to publish it. Not a single historical fact in the script was said to be incorrect or manipulated.

The Institute for Foreign Studies has published a document, part of which reads as follows:

"The aims of The Institute for Foreign Studies are to heighten the level of awareness and education in Sweden pertaining to foreign issues and to encourage more writing on contemporary international politics. The work of the Institute is non-political, and its task is to educate without adopting a certain point of view."

Even if Holm's assessment of my manuscript was not a task given to him by The Institute, as claimed by its chairman, but a private matter, it is relevant to raise the question of whether his attitude is in line with The Institute's guidelines.

In a letter written to me on the official letter-headed paper of The Institute, Holm wrote that he felt he had been "really" objective in his assessment, and he refused to take back "one single word." I had never asked him to do that.

Throughout history, authors living under dictatorships have often been denied the right of freedom of speech and Jews have frequently suffered from this violation of one of their basic rights. This, however, in no way justifies any attempt to hinder the publication of a book that frankly and openly documents the injustices of the Jews against the Arabs in Palestine. In the Western World, freedom of speech is considered one of the very foundations upon which democracy rests.

Exactly the same script, 'Palestine - between Arabs and Jews', was assessed by Mrs. Alexandersson, a former employee of The Institute, according to the deputy director of a major publisher in Stockholm. She wrote as follows:

“The fact that the Palestinian issue should also be described from an Arab point of view needs no justification or explanation. The author is right when he says that it is easy to sit at a distance and have views on something, but that it would be better to go to the Middle East in order to formulate genuine views for oneself. People who have visited the area feel the same. But the sensitivity of the problem makes most publishers unwilling to publish books that are considered ‘Arab-friendly’.”

Here, it is clearly stated that to publish books that deal with the subject of this book is not acceptable. Such an attitude probably stems from the fact that the Jews are considered a harassed and oppressed people; yet, it is forgotten that the Jews are harassing

and oppressing the Arabs of Palestine. Mrs. Alexandersson continues:

“The author is not anti-Semitic. He fully understands the terrible situation of the Jewish people, but he states that this situation does not justify Jewish attempts to steal land away from him and his countrymen, who have never had anything to do with the persecution of the Jews. The Arabs have lived in Palestine for 1,300 years, and they accounted for 91 percent of the population when the question of a Jewish state surfaced. He states that the Jews have not respected international agreements, that they have stolen property that belonged to the people of the country (who were not willing to sell), that it was the Jews who instigated the methods of terrorism in the area (the Stern Gang and Irgun Zvai Leumi), and that the Arabs simply responded in a similar fashion.”

Not once did Mrs. Alexandersson state that the manuscript was one-sided or bitter.

The manuscript of *'The Lost Country'*, which was nearly identical to this book, was reviewed by R. Svanstrom (MA in Philosophy) from Stockholm and Professor H. S. Nyberg from Uppsala. They both provided me with many valuable comments of which I took heed. There were no corrections of the historical facts, but some alterations were necessary because of the way in which certain words and names are spelt in Swedish. They also proo-

fread the manuscript. Svanstrom wrote: "*No one doubts that there is a horrifying reality behind what the Doctor writes,*" and said he felt there was every justification for presenting the Arab point of view. Nyberg, meanwhile, wished the Arab cause "*a good result and ending.*"

From what I have said here, it should be obvious to the reader that I had to choose between forgetting all about my book or publishing it myself. I chose the second course of action. I did not do so because I wanted to twist historical facts or out of hatred. I did so out of love: my love for Palestine, the country in which I was born, and for the Arab refugees from Palestine.

Mufid Abdul Hadi

1962



Preface

Few contemporary problems have stirred as much fiery emotion and been subject to so many interpretations from different sides as the issue of Palestine. Because of this, it is with a certain amount of hesitation that I, as a refugee from Palestine, put my experiences into print. To describe what happened in an objective manner is hard for a neutral observer, and even harder for a person who considers himself a refugee from the losing side.

Since the end of World War II, the greater part of the tension in the Middle East has been the result of differences between the Arabs and the Jews. The battle between the two groups is filled with details that I, in this preface, cannot begin to describe. I intend, therefore, to concentrate on the elementary facts that are generally already known by the public, but perhaps not always taken into consideration.

There are always two sides to every story. Following the great suffering of the Jewish people under Hitler and Nazism, the world was prepared to listen and make amends. No one is attempting to deny a people the right to cherish a dream, the dream of 'The Promised Land', but when this dream is made to

come true at the price of another people's misery, world opinion should stop to think twice. The suffering of one people cannot justify its attempts to transfer that suffering to another. The circle must be broken, and this is what the Jewish people failed to do.

It has been said that the Arabs are anti-Semitic. The purpose is clear: namely, to put them in the same category as Hitler and the Nazis and thus, in the eyes of world opinion, to justify to a certain extent the events in the Middle East. To accuse the Arabs of anti-Semitism is ridiculous. Every educated person knows that both Jews and Arabs are Semitic and are very closely related; to even mention racism in this context is crazy. Clever propagandists used the Nazi-related terminology even after the war, when it was easier to keep talking about Arab against Jew instead of Arab against Zionist. The same clever propagandists turned a political issue into an issue of race and religion. In the light of the suffering of the Jews during World War II and the way in which the Arab-Zionist conflict was presented, it was highly unlikely that a single country in the entire world would not take the Jewish side. As an Arab I am willing to admit that the propaganda machine of the Jews is better than that of the Arabs. Tens of thousands of good Jewish authors and journalists all over the world gathered forces to make the dream about 'The Promised Land' come true. Most of them probably did not harbor evil intentions, but had simply inherited the dream from their parents. A few of them, however, whilst fully realizing the extent of the

burden of guilt that they now carried, decided to transform a religious dream into a political reality. One cannot forget 2,000 years of history.

The Jews have always been persecuted, and in most European countries their lives have been affected by special rules that were designed especially for them. Even in our time and age certain injustices persist in appearing. One should observe that anti-Semitism was not a German invention but had existed in different forms in almost all European countries. Christian intolerance of the Jewish religion has always been obvious, especially in the Catholic camp. The Moslem attitude to the Jewish faith was not as extreme, and throughout the centuries Jews and Arabs lived peacefully side by side in Palestine. The famous Mosque of the Omayyads in Damascus contains the tomb of John the Baptist; the same building also houses the remains of Salah Ed-Din Al-Ayyoubi. In fact, before the fighting started in Jerusalem, Jewish, Moslem and Christian holy places were so close together that not even the experts could say where the property of one faith ended and the property of another began.

Islam was and remains tolerant of the adherents of other faiths, but the Arabs refuse to grant the Zionists such tolerance: Zionism is pure nationalism, and the fact that it is similar to National Socialism and National Communism is so very clear that world opinion should have reacted long ago. The Jews suffered under Hitler, but once defeated, they were contaminated by his ideas.

Zionism is based on the same historical ideas that were once popular with German National Socialists. Theodore Herzl's propaganda book, *'Der Judenstaat'*, with its roots in the German patriotism of the late 19th Century, must not be forgotten. At that time the German people thought they were the vanguards and protectors of European culture. Perhaps it was this spirit that influenced Herzl when he wrote: "We shall, in Palestine, build a wall of protection against Asia. We are the defenders of culture, against the barbarians."

The question of a Jewish state involved not only finding a home for a persecuted and hated Jewish people, but also the realization of the Jewish dreams of 'national greatness'. The idea was carried for 2,000 years by the followers of Ahasverus and was put into writing by the philosopher Herzl, but it was turned into a reality by people who had suffered so much that they should have known better. Today, 14 years after the Jewish takeover in Palestine, the small Arab minority that remains in the country is forced to live under special laws and regulations that are very similar to Hitler's Nuremberg Laws.

My own destiny is closely linked to the destiny of Palestine during the 20th Century. It is because of this that I want, as a refugee, to try to give my side of what happened, and I hope that by doing this I can accurately describe the Arabs' side of the story as I know it.



Who am I?

Even during the earliest years of my youth I was made aware of the fact that I was part of a wealthy and important Palestinian family. I am the son of Amin Ahmad Abdul Hadi. The family is an old Arab family and consists of many members. Our ancestral home is in the small village of Arrabeh, close to the town of Nablus in the West Bank. Until two generations ago, polygamy was common in the family, which partly explains why our family is so large. Palestine was then, as were all the other Arab states, part of the Ottoman Empire. Life was simple. There was plenty of time and money and stress had not yet been invented.

At the time of my birth, my father was the civil governor of the town of Nazareth in northern Palestine. As far as I know, I was born on 28 August 1913, but I am not certain about the date. If anyone asks my mother, she will say that I was born in the summer of 1914, "at the time of the war," and will usually add, "I should know best." Fifteen years after I was born my date of birth was changed when I was 'made' one year older to make it possible for me to enroll at the American University in Beirut.

Like all the sons of wealthy families living at that time in the Middle East, my father had studied in Constantinople, the capital of the Ottoman Empire. Upon completing his studies, he was made a civil servant in the Ottoman Department of State. He was young and full of energy and had no plans to marry for many years. His parents, however, had decided when he was very young that he was to marry one of the girls from the large Abdul Hadi family according to family tradition. But destiny decided differently. Amongst my father's peers at school was a young man called Mohammed Niazi, the son of Hassan Fahmi, an executive in the tax department. The young man had several sisters and he convinced my father to marry the youngest, much to the Abdul Hadi family's horror. The marriage took place on 25 March 1910. Later, my siblings and I were called half-breeds to make us feel different from all the other children whose parents were both from the family. Uncle Niazi was eventually appointed the private secretary to the Khediv of Egypt, Abbas Hilmi II, and later to his brother, Crown Prince Mohammed Ali.

Despite my father's position as a Turkish civil servant, my family had a good reputation due to its opposition to the Turkish oppression. My youngest uncle, Salim Abdul Hadi, was hanged in public in Beirut in the spring of 1916, together with several of his comrades, by the tyrant Ahmad Jamal Pasha, the Turkish representative to the Levant. Another of our relatives, Fakhri Abdul Hadi and his men fought the British troops in Palestine during the British Mandate. Both men had one thing in common: they

wanted to create a free and independent state for the Arabs. My father, on the other hand, did not go for the sword but for diplomatic negotiations. After a while, he was elected a member of the Ottoman Parliament as a representative for Palestine and was given the title 'Bey'. After five years in parliament, he withdrew to farming. He was then a rich man and bought large amounts of land near Jenin. Until the time of the War of 1948, he owned the entire village of Mukeibleh.

Amongst the other powerful men of the family my cousin, Awni Abdul Hadi, a successful barrister trained in France and the leader of a political party, played a major role in the political history of Palestine. After the War of 1948, he was made the Jordanian ambassador to Cairo, and he represented Jordan in the Arab League.² My father's cousin, Ruhi Pasha Abdul Hadi, held the highest position that could be held by an Arab in the Palestine Administration during the British Mandate. After the defeat in 1948, he was appointed foreign minister to King Abdallah of Jordan.

In 1917 or 1918, when I was approximately four years old, my family moved to Haifa where my father rented a big two-story villa in the German Colony, which was then the best neighborhood in all of Haifa. At that time, Haifa was a medium-sized town with an Arab majority and a Jewish minority comprising only about six percent of Haifa's population. The town was also inhabited by a small number of Germans, Armenians, Italians, Turks and Persians.

² He is presently the director of the Arab League's department of justice.

My father's position in the Haifa hierarchy was strong. He once ran for mayor but was beaten by only a few votes by an Arab colleague, Hassan Shukri, who secured the votes of the minority groups. Following his defeat, my father became a member of the city council. The number of Jews in Haifa at that time was so small that a Jewish mayor was out of the question.

By the time World War I came to an end, the future destiny of Palestine was most uncertain. My memories of the Turkish troops leaving Haifa are very clouded. For us children, the end of the Turkish rule only meant that the official language suddenly became English. The new troops that arrived were also new friends who tried to win our hearts and minds with large bags of sweets.

One should know that the system in Palestine at that time was very feudal, and that the general situation cannot possibly be compared to the one that existed in the Western World at the same time. My father was a big landowner, and after a while he strengthened his position even further by buying all the land that surrounded our country house in Mukeibleh. He was to eventually own several thousand dunums³. The soil was the most fertile in that part of Palestine; the land was planted with thousands of olive and eucalyptus trees and we always had rich harvests of different vegetables and fruits. Besides cattle, there were several

³ The word is borrowed from the Turkish *doenoem*; 1 dunum = 1,000 square meters.

horses and some huge dovecotes and beehives. My father also owned a large house in the village.

Our home in Haifa soon became a meeting point for politicians from all over the Middle East. Through these travelers, some of whom played an important role in the memories I formed as a child, the latest political developments became part of our everyday life.

In 1920 or perhaps 1921, the Syrian, Jamil Mardam Bey arrived at our house. His post-World War I activities, directed mainly against France, had earned him a death sentence. The sentence, however, could not be put into effect since he had fled across the border. He stayed with us for a lengthy period of time while the French bombarded the British authorities with letters in an attempt to secure his extradition to France. The British implied to my father that for as long as Jamil Bey did not show himself in public, his presence would be ignored. Another of the Syrian patriots and a friend of my father who showed up at our house in Haifa was Shukri Bey Al-Kuwatli, who also had a French death sentence hanging over his head. Once Syria had been liberated from the French, he played a major role as the president of Syria for many years until his retirement in 1958, when Syria and Egypt became the United Arab Republic.⁴

⁴ At the end of September 1961 Syria left the Arab Republic following a military coup that broke out in the vicinity of Damascus.

The time finally came for my brother and I to start school. My parents decided that we should go to the American school in Ramallah, 16 kilometers north of Jerusalem. The school was directed by the Quakers and had the reassuring name, The Friends' Boys School. Not without fear did we anticipate going to school: this would be the first time that we had been separated from the family, and the fact that the school's 70 pupils were all the sons of wealthy families from Palestine and Trans-Jordan did little to make the prospect of sharing the great dormitory more attractive.

The first night was a nightmare, and we cried ourselves to sleep. The next morning, our escape plan was ready. One hour later, we found our parents at a hotel in Jerusalem. The meeting was not very pleasant, and nor was the meeting back at the school with the kind headmaster, Mr. Kelsey, an elderly American gentleman. On special orders from the headmaster, all taxi stations in Ramallah were warned not to carry pupils from the school unless they had written permission to leave the premises. Two days later we ran away for a second time, but this time on foot. Once again, we were treated with no mercy and despite our protests, we were immediately sent back to school. After the second escape, the headmaster figured us out and we were placed in separate dormitories. In addition, we were never allowed to leave the school building at the same time, which meant our chances of escaping were significantly reduced. The reality of school life had begun.

The 1920s went by peacefully. It was decided, that after finishing school in Ramallah I was to be sent to Beirut to study medicine. In 1929, my father was appointed a member of The Supreme Moslem Council, the highest Islamic council in Palestine, with its seat in Jerusalem. After many problems I was granted a French visa in order to travel to Lebanon, and shortly afterwards I began the eight-hour taxi journey from Jerusalem to Beirut.

The American University in Beirut was founded in 1866 and directed according to American standards, with the board located in New York. The campus consists of several buildings in the Ras Beirut neighborhood and boasts a magnificent view over the Mediterranean Sea. All tuition is in English. In my day, the majority of students were Arabs, but there were also some Armenians, Persians, Sudanese, Americans and a few Jews, mainly from Iraq. Most doctors, lawyers, clerks and politicians in the Middle East have spent some time at the university.

After the heavy atmosphere in Palestine, it was a liberating experience to arrive in French-administered Beirut, which actually had a bit of Parisian atmosphere. Among the French imports, artists and callgirls could be noticed in every nightclub. The brothels permitted by the French provided a wonderful field of study for us would-be doctors. Together with our professor of hygiene we paid regular visits to the brothels, where our main task was to go through the journals looking for venereal diseases. Potassium permanganate was the most effective cure for gonorrhoea. The

rounds were not very popular with anyone. It is hard to be a doctor and a human being at the same time.

In June 1936, I became a doctor of medicine and surgery. We were given our diplomas at a grand ceremony with speeches, music and singing, all according to American tradition. Nevertheless, for myself and my peers from Palestine, the cup of joy of this day of happiness was filled with the bitter taste of wormwood as none of our relatives could attend. At the time, widespread strikes were causing havoc in our country, and every man with some political influence was needed back home.



Historical Perspectives

It is hard to understand the political status of Palestine without knowing its history. By saying this, I am not implying that one has to go back in history to the time of the birth of Jesus Christ. During 400 years, from 1517 to 1917, Palestine was a part of the great Ottoman Empire and, together with Syria, Lebanon and Jordan, was named the Syrian Province. When discussing the historical developments of Palestine, one can talk about certain eras, of which the Ottoman period is the first. In 1917 Palestine was conquered by the British under General Allenby, but it was not until June 1922 that the British Mandate was formally introduced. This era of relative calmness ended in August 1929 when the Jewish Agency was formed in accordance with the mandate. Among the members were David Ben-Gurion, who later became the prime minister of the State of Israel, Golda Meir (previously Meyerson), Moshe Shertok, Dr. Chaim Weizmann, the first president of the State of Israel, Dr. Nahum Goldman and others. The Jewish Agency was in reality a predecessor to the government of the State of Israel, and was divided into different sections. After the creation of the Jewish state in 1948, these sections were immediately transformed into governmental departments.

During the summer of 1929, the antagonism between Arabs and Jews intensified, which led, among other things, to an armed encounter near the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem. The problems soon spread to Hebron in the south, Jaffa in the west and Safad in the north. The fighting resulted in many dead and wounded on both sides. The British arrested three Arabs: Ata Al-Zir and Jamjoum from Hebron, and Hijazi from Safad. When the three were accused of murder and subsequently hanged, the first Arab martyrs were created, which initiated a series of armed encounters that characterized, until 1936, the intercourse between the Arab population and the British Authority.

The era between 1936 and 1939 began with the great strike of 1936, which lasted for six months. The strike represented an attempt by the Arabs to stop the increasing Jewish immigration to Palestine, which at the time was openly supported by the English. During earlier stages Great Britain had more or less secretly supported the idea of the new Israel at the same time as British-Arab friendship was warmly accentuated in all official dealings. It was the Grand Mufti who was responsible for the strike. He had reached the conclusion that all the useless conversations at lunches and dinners with English representatives did not constitute a possible solution to the problems but simply a well-planned British policy of obstruction. Despite Arab protests, Jewish immigration was allowed to continue, which triggered off the armed Arab uprising.

The Higher Arab Committee was headed by the Grand Mufti and included most of the country's political leaders and prominent figures. Besides my cousin Awni there were several famous names like Dr. Al-Khalidi, Al-Ghousein, Emil Al-Ghour, Jamal Al-Husseini and Ahmad Hilmi Pasha. There were several local committees all over the country.

The effects of the strike were tremendous. Life came to a halt: all shops - including the food stores - were closed and the roads were empty of traffic, while trains that attempted to remain operational were sabotaged. The economic effects of the chaotic situation were catastrophic.

In 1937, the Grand Mufti was forced to flee to Lebanon but the fighting continued with the same intensity. Arms and money poured over the borders. The Palestinian uprising was supported, at least morally and partly materially, by the neighboring Arab states.

With the approach of World War II, events in the area accelerated. Since the Higher Arab Committee leaders had been forced to escape abroad in 1938, resistance had become somewhat disorganized; yet, when it became clear in 1939 that the threat of war was looming even closer, the British decided to use even more force against the Arabs and stop the uprising with tanks and airplanes.

To reach a temporary peace in Palestine, and to protect their flanks in case of massive world unrest, the British stated in November 1938 that they were going to delay the plan to divide Palestine that had been devised by Lord Peel in the summer of 1937. Roundtable conferences were out of the question since the Arabs refused to sit down at the same table as the Jews, who, the Arabs claimed, were not a part of the conflict. At the meeting that was held in London in early 1939, Great Britain was forced to negotiate with the Arabs and Jews separately.

In a White Paper published in May 1939, the British announced their decision to forcefully implement certain policies in Palestine, regardless of Arab and Jewish dissatisfaction with British solutions to the problems.

The most important item in the declaration pertained to the fact that Palestine, within ten years, would have a national independent government, while Great Britain would leave the area following negotiations with the League of Nations. Great Britain thereby provided a solution to the problem that would serve her well in the upcoming phase, when certain developments proved that the British moves had been very well planned. Only a few months later, World War II led to a temporary halt in all activities concerning the Palestine issue.

During the war, both sides gathered strength for the coming talks and negotiations. In 1943, the Jews sought the permission of

the British Government to form a Jewish brigade within the British army. Winston Churchill supported the idea, but the Commander of Egypt and the Middle East, Field Marshal Wavell disagreed, as he thought that the Arabs would consider British approval a form of provocation. Churchill neglected the comments he had received about the inappropriateness of such a development and allowed the brigade to be formed in September 1944. The roughly 30,000 Jews from Palestine who enrolled received excellent military training toward the end of the war, in addition to practical experience, gained from the fighting in Italy and elsewhere. An Arab brigade, to fight with the British, was never formed: the memories of the fighting in 1936-39 were too fresh. Nevertheless, the Grand Mufti attempted at one point to resort to private politics in order to obtain weapons from the Germans.

The years between 1945 and 1948 constituted a bloody part of Palestinian history, which was mainly characterized by open Jewish terrorism. The Jewish army, the Haganah, was not officially formed until May 1948, but in reality it was operating long before. The Jewish terrorist organization, Irgun Zvai Leumi (The National Military Organization) consisted of approximately 2,000 to 3,000 men and was commanded by Menachem Begin, who immigrated to Palestine in the early 1940s. The second group was the so-called 'Stern Gang', which was a disciplined underground terrorist organization with approximately 600 members. The membership of both these organizations grew rapidly.

Initially the Jewish terror acts were directed towards the British, especially when the British used military means to hinder illegal immigration. Later, however, the Arab population also became a target as an unchecked wave of murders swept the country. Amongst the victims were innumerable civilians including men, women and children, not to mention Lord Moyne, who was murdered in Egypt and Count Folke Bernadotte, who was killed in Jerusalem. There was also an attempt on the life of the Governor General, Sir Harold McMichael. Another bloody incident in the war of terror involved the attack on Jerusalem's King David Hotel in July 1946, in which around 100 persons were killed.

Because of Great Britain's decision to end the mandate in Palestine, the last British Governor General to Palestine, Sir Alan Cunningham, left Jerusalem on 14 May 1948 together with the British troops. The Jordanian Arab Legion that had been stationed in Palestine during World War II was also withdrawn to Jordan. Many regions were taken over by the Jews due to the backstage maneuvers that were organized during the War of 1948. For example Ramleh and Lydda - two entirely Arab cities - were evacuated, leaving some 100,000 Arabs without a home.

In early summer 1948, Jewish troops attacked Iraqi positions at Jenin, but after suffering a miserable defeat they were forced to retreat towards Haifa and Al-Lajoun. The position of Al-Lajoun soon became impossible to sustain, and the Jewish mayor, Shebat-ai Levi tried to negotiate with the Iraqi commander, Omar Ali,

in order to have the city recognized as an open city. The same situation existed in Tel Aviv, where a large percentage of the population demonstrated for an end to the war.

The first truce that was signed on 11 June 1948 was to last for only four weeks, and a second truce was announced on 19 July. The Jewish military capacity was strengthened during the four weeks of the first truce due to the arrival of large shipments of arms, mainly from Czechoslovakia. Despite their indisputable military successes, the Arabs lost Palestine on the political level.

The UN's interference in the Palestine issue in 1947 makes its General Assembly partly responsible for the unhappy course of events that directly resulted from the 29 November 1947 decision of the General Assembly to divide Palestine. The division was simply too artificial and illogical to be accepted by the Arabs of Palestine.

The State of Israel was now a fact, as was the partition that was successfully brought about by the UN. Meanwhile, the refugee problem remained unsolved due to the organized Jewish terror against the Arabs of Palestine. In a UN resolution of 11 December 1948, it was decided that Arab refugees should return to Palestine and that compensation should be paid to those who did not wish to return. At the time, the UN did not recommend that surrounding Arab states should absorb the refugees, which, as subsequent events were to prove, constituted the embryo of

future conflicts. In the Israel of today there are approximately 175,000 Arabs, but the refugee camps in the surrounding Arab states are filled with refugees. Approximately 950,000 Arabs fled their homes, although the total number of refugees is now much higher due to an exceptionally high birth rate in the camps. For 14 years these people have lived under indescribable conditions. The UN has indeed provided the refugees with food, but in the words of a Palestinian: "We have received food, for sure: too much to allow us to die, but too little to allow us to live." It has been estimated that UN aid for the maintenance of the refugees equals seven US cents per day per person.



Palestine under the Crescent

The Ottoman Empire lasted over 400 years. In European written history, it has been described as a huge colossus, kept together by the power of the sword only. Although it is true that the Turkish sultans maintained their power with the sword to a large extent when it came to the European states, this was not necessarily the case with regard to internal affairs. Uprisings occurred quite frequently in the vast region between the Austrian and Bulgarian borders and in the south of the Arab Peninsula, but they were often tribal wars. During the entire 400 years that the Ottoman Empire existed in the Middle East, hardly any national uprisings occurred in the local regions. It was during the early years of the 20th Century when the Ottoman Empire was on the brink of disintegration that local nationalism began to grow.

During the era of the Ottoman Empire, the Arabs enjoyed a certain equality with the ruling class. The different areas elected representatives to the parliament in Constantinople and many Arabs secured high positions in the central government. Despite this fact, Arabic was never recognized as an official language in the Turkish Empire. Nevertheless, the Turkish armed forces included a large number of Arab officers who attended the same military

academies in Turkey and Germany as their Turkish colleagues. During World War I, these officers fought on various battlefields, including those in Iraq and Gallipoli.

The Turkish governmental apparatus was inadequate and health care, educational, legal and social authority only existed on paper. The administration was corrupt, and the bribing of officials was common. There was, however, a strong bond between Turks and Arabs: Islam. The Sultan of Turkey was the Khalif (spiritual leader) of all Moslems and through this unique position, he maintained both spiritual and temporal power.

The Sultan had representatives in the different Arab provinces, and the most famous of these was Sherif Hussein, the son of Sherif Ali, a direct descendant of the Prophet Mohammed. He was well-suited for the task since he and his sons were raised in Turkey. Furthermore, Hussein and his son Abdallah both had Turkish wives. The Hussein in question is the great grandfather of the present King Hussein of Jordan, and of his cousin, the assassinated King Faisal of Iraq. In some ways Sherif Hussein indirectly became the instrument for certain behavior in British foreign policy that would lead to the end of the Ottoman Empire.

During the late 19th Century, Great Britain was interested not only in building its empire in the Far East, but also in securing the routes to its vitally important colonies. Britain's need for bases in the Middle East was obvious, but everywhere that Britain tried to

push through, Turkish interests were also to be found. It was at this time that oil began to pour from the wells in the Persian Gulf, also called the Arab Gulf by the Arabs. In the minds of the British there was no question: in order to secure access to their colonies and establish bases, they had to facilitate the 'collapse' of the Turkish rule.

The chain of events suited Britain well. It was when Turkey allied with Germany during World War I, that the big break came for Britain. By the end of their rule the Turks in the Syrian Province had started to behave so violently that growing dissatisfaction had accelerated into a full-blown revolt. In the Arab Peninsula, the Wahabit tribes had revolted several times, and in around 1750 they set out to conquer as much land as possible under their skillful leader, Saud of Riyadh. Approximately 50 years later, the Wahabits were the masters of almost all the Arab Peninsula, and they refused to bow to Ottoman rule. With devastating force they entered Mesopotamia and destroyed the Shiite holy city of Karbela. When they advanced along the Syrian coast, it was simply too much for the Arabs to bear and the Egyptian Wali, Mohammed Ali, who originated from Albania, was ordered to crush them. After defeating the Wahabit troops the Egyptians marched through the Nejd and eventually took Riyadh. The chief of the Wahabits surrendered in 1818 and was brought to Constantinople, where he was shot by the Turks. That was the situation at the beginning of the 19th Century. During the years to follow the Arabs were often the victims of internal conflicts, and

they were scattered repeatedly until Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud, born in 1882, managed to unite them once more. Ibn Saud would become one of the great Arab leaders, and he played a major role in the political developments of the Middle East.

During the 19th Century, the situation in the region changed drastically. The superpowers focused mainly on Egypt, and the attempt by Napoleon to occupy Egypt resulted in a large number of British troops being sent to the region. The English sought to eradicate the French strongholds, and they occupied the Egyptian coastline up until 1802. Meanwhile, Mohammed Ali steered the Egyptians without interfering in the French-British affairs. He proclaimed himself Khediv of Egypt and submitted to the protection of the Sultan, who confirmed the authority of the Khediv over the country in the early 19th Century. Mohammed Ali was apparently well-informed about the ancient history of Egypt. He put the ancient water channels to work again, thus creating a prosperous agricultural area in the Nile Valley. He built up the Egyptian army, and his troops marched into Sudan, Syria and Turkey, reaching as far as the outskirts of Constantinople. During the 40 years that followed he was to find himself in trouble with the Sultan, Great Britain and France. In 1841, the Sultan proclaimed Mohammed Ali and his descendants after him rulers of Egypt, thereby making Mohammed Ali the ancestor of the Egyptian royal family. The last Egyptian king would be Farouk's young son, Fuad II.

In 1854, Mohammed Said, the son of Mohammed Ali, granted the Frenchman, Ferdinand de Lesseps⁵ a concession to build the Suez Canal, but only after long negotiations. Work on the canal, which was built with the assistance of Egyptian workers, started in 1859, and the canal was opened in 1871. To celebrate its inauguration, Ismail Pasha, who came into power in 1863, invited the majority of the European princes to Cairo, where Verdi's opera Aida was performed for the very first time. From a financial point of view, the canal was administered by a company in which the Egyptian Government was granted stocks in exchange for the concession. Ismail Pasha, who came into power in 1863, was not such a good businessman as Mohammed Ali: after only 15 years in power, he had amassed such huge debts and foreign loans, that in 1875 he had to sell the Egyptian share of the stocks in the Suez Canal to Great Britain for four million pounds. The deal proved most profitable for England, not least of all because it

⁵ Ferdinand de Lesseps, who served at a consular mission in Egypt, founded the Egyptian Suez Canal Company. Initially Great Britain as well as Turkey opposed the construction of the canal, but supported by Napoleon III, de Lesseps began the undertaking. The negative attitude of the British was not directed toward the canal as such but toward the fact that it was the French who had received the concession. Egypt paid for thousands of workers of whom, according to Egyptian historians, 120,000 died. The concession was designed for 99 years, and starting in 1968 the canal would be run entirely by Egypt. In addition, Egypt offered all the necessary land to the company, which entitled it to 15 percent of the revenues. On 26 July 1956, Gamal Abdul Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal Company that had always been an Egyptian company. The immediate reaction to this action, which was to cause the Suez Crisis, was that Great Britain and France refused to contribute to the building of the High Dam over the Nile. The statement of Agne Hamrin in *'Dagens Nyheter'* of 27 May 1962, i.e., ('The dam at Asswan is Nasser's hope') that "the withdrawal of Western and mainly American financing of the construction of the High Dam was a consequence of" the Suez Crisis, was not correct.

provided her with important influence in the political development of the Middle East. In 1882, the British occupied Egypt after bombarding Alexandria from the sea, and during the coming decades Britain continued to push into the south of Egypt.

At approximately the same time, the Wahabit desert leader, Ibn Saud, the descendent of Saud of Riyadh, was born in Riyadh. Ibn Saud, in addition to his contemporary, Sherif Hussein, was to play a major role in the political state of affairs in the Middle East.

From the outset, the British political view of the Middle East supported Arab interests that aimed at bringing about a breach with the Turks. Ibn Saud was one of the Arab leaders who enjoyed British support, despite the fact that he opposed Sherif Hussein and the Hashemite family, one of England's allies. The British supported both sides in the Arab World according to a political policy that had been proven throughout the centuries. The rising power of Ibn Saud at the turn of the century imposed a threat to the Hashemites, and Sherif Hussein, who at the time was still a Turkish official representative in the province of Syria, was strongly influenced by the English incentives. According to certain historians, Lord Kitchener, as early as in 1914, contacted Sherif Hussein in Egypt in order to convince him to support the cause of the British in the Middle East. As for MacMahon, the English representative in Egypt, he promised that the Arab provinces in the Ottoman Empire, following the end of the war, would be granted independence if they joined forces with Eng-

land against the Turks. The provinces in question, including the southern province of Syria, later called Palestine, were delineated by the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf. From a psychological point of view the atmosphere in Palestine as well as in Syria and Lebanon was ready for such a step: the Turkish tyrant Jamal Pasha had caused a popular desire for revolt by ordering a long string of executions, which promised to serve well in the event of a revolution.

The approach of Hussein might look somewhat politically naive from a broader perspective. The British had no plans to create an independent Arab state in the Middle East; Britain's role in European politics was far too complicated to allow for such a development. At the time, the British were not able to commit themselves to anything without the full support of their allies, the French, who also had their own interests, especially in Syria. In March 1916, England and France secretly agreed with the so-called Sykes-Picot Agreement that at the end of the war Iraq and Palestine would go to the British, while Syria and Lebanon would go to the French. The Arabs were unaware of the agreement, which was not made public until the Russian Revolution in 1917 when the Russian Communists published all the secret documents they had found in the archives of the Royal Russian Foreign Ministry, including the Sykes-Picot Agreement.

When the German Government found out about the agreement it informed Turkey, its ally during that period, and Turkey in-

formed Prince Faisal. The Prince then wrote to his father, Sherif Hussein, and told him that Turkey had suggested the founding of a Turkish-Arab state. The idea behind the proposal to establish the state was to help Hussein put an end to the ongoing revolt against Turkey. When the British heard about this, they hurried to deny that they had arrived at a secret agreement with the French. Hussein received the announcement through the British representative in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia in February 1918.

In order to understand the measures taken by the British, including the so-called Balfour Declaration of 2 November 1917, according to which the Jewish minority in Palestine was promised a national home at the expense of the Arab population, which constituted over 91 percent of the total population, one has to look further back in history and study the history of Jewish Zionism and its connection to the old Turkish rule.

The Jewish philosopher Theodore Herzl, having been deeply affected by the nationalist movements that had surfaced in Germany during the late 19th Century, organized a Jewish conference in Basel in 1897. The conference dealt with the question of a Jewish return to Palestine and the founding of a Jewish national homeland, and it resulted in the establishment of the Zionist World Federation, with Herzl as its first president. The idea of Palestine as a Jewish national homeland was enthusiastically supported by many people, but others were predicting certain difficulties in realizing the plan since Palestine at that time was Ot-

toman territory and the Moslem Turks were expected to object. Finally, it was decided that someone would approach Sultan Abdul Hamid and suggest the establishment of a Jewish national home under Turkish control. According to unconfirmed sources, there was to be an attempt to alter Abdul Hamid's negative attitude by offering an enormous amount of gold worth 50 million pounds, but the plan was never implemented due to the Sultan's fear of upsetting the powerful Islamic leadership. Abdul Hamid had undertaken direct actions against the Jews in Palestine on several occasions. For instance, his government issued the 'Red Passport Law', according to which Jews who wished to visit Palestine were required to carry a red passport. In addition to this, Jews were forbidden to own land, which led to a concentration of Jews in the cities. Nevertheless, individual Jews were able to obtain small pieces of land inside the Palestinian borders by bribing the local authorities.

It is obvious that the Turkish attitude towards the Jews resulted in both hatred and a widespread reaction on the part of the Jews themselves. The Jewish resistance within the Ottoman Empire was concentrated in the town of Saloniki, today a part of Greece, where most of the Turkish Jews lived. Many of these Jews were called *doenme* from the Turkish verb for 'pass' or 'turn' because they had turned, at least officially, to Islam. By registering as *doenme* a number of Turkish Jews managed to obtain high positions in the Turkish Administration. One of those 'reformed' was the Minister of Finance, Jawid. According to available

Arab sources another well-known *doenme* was Hussein Jahid Yalshin, but there were many others, including a number of writers, lawyers, professors and leading businessmen. The irony of fate is that one of the three men who would later be appointed by the Ottoman Parliament to convince the Sultan Abdul Hamid to abdicate was a Jew by the name of 'Kara Su Effendi', 'the dark water', another famous *doenme*. With regard to Yalshin, he was Turkey's representative in the International UN Negotiations Commission that negotiated between the Arabs and Jews in connection with the War of 1948. The other two members were American and French.

During World War I, the Jewish minorities within Turkey worked devotedly for the allies, which released a string of Turkish reactions. Several Jews were expelled from Turkey while executions were common, especially of individuals believed to be British spies. At one stage, the Jewish leaders asked the Turks, through German Emperor Wilhelm II, to reconsider the question of a Jewish homeland. In Berlin in 1916, the Emperor announced to the Turkish Prime Minister Tala'at Pasha, that the Jews wished to realize the plan that had evolved from the meeting of 1897. The question was raised in the Turkish Parliament but it was later rejected following the protests of the Palestinian MPs.

In order to illustrate the antagonism that existed amongst the Jews I will reveal an anecdote from 1904, when the English proposed the establishment of a Jewish national home in East Africa.

At the time, Dr. Herzl mildly protested the founding of a Jewish state in Uganda, but Chaim Weizmann and his supporters reacted violently, explaining that the only place where Jews could assemble was the Temple and the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem. It ought to be pointed out that even the famous expert on Uganda, Sir Henry Johnston firmly advised the Zionists against planning anything in Uganda. According to Johnston, the British residents would never agree to the immigration of large numbers of Jews to the country. He was certainly right, as was confirmed by the British Chief of Immigration, Sir William Gordon, who also opposed Jewish immigration to the motherland, England, a popular subject of conversation at the time. It was Gordon's opinion that England could hardly be held responsible for the pogroms of Jews in Russia.

Another of the Zionist proposals that was discussed was based on the idea of a Jewish national home in Al-Arish in the Gaza Strip, or alternatively the Sinai Desert. Both suggestions were rejected due to the lack of water in those regions. Today, large Arab refugee camps occupy both sites, in spite of the fact that living conditions have not been ameliorated to any noticeable extent.

The Arabs have always said that Jewish claims concerning Palestine are baseless. The Jews insist, however, that it is clear from their holy writings, as well as from those of the Christians, that their national home is inside Palestine and that they were vio-

lently expelled from the country by the Romans around the time of Christ. This argument appears hollow when you consider that the Jewish people came to Palestine as conquerors, and that continuous Jewish settlement in parts of Palestine lasted only a relatively short period of time when compared to the 1,300 years of continuous Arab rule that followed. The Arab states cannot today use historical reasons to reclaim Spain and Portugal, countries they ruled for 800 years, and the Jews cannot refer to Solomon. The Roman ancestors of the Italians once ruled London, but it is unlikely that any British citizen would be willing to give up a single square foot of British soil because of such an argument.

The British, however, have been prepared to accept this kind of reasoning when it involves other states. In 1917 the so-called Balfour Declaration that promised the Jews a national homeland in Palestine was announced, crowning efforts by the Jews to have Britain bless their plan to annex Palestine. The announcement was probably intended as a 'thank you' to Chaim Weizmann, whose extraordinary knowledge of chemistry enabled him to do the allies certain favors during World War I when he discovered cheap explosives. The declaration was delivered as a letter from the aged foreign minister, Arthur James Balfour to Lord Rothschild, and read as follows:

"I have much pleasure in conveying to you on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy

with Jewish Zionist aspirations, which has been submitted to and approved by the cabinet.

'His Majesty's government views with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or in any other country'. I should be grateful if you would bring the declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation. A.J. Balfour.'

There is a considerable amount of information on this famous document and how it came about. In his memoirs, *'Trial and Error'*, published in Great Britain in 1949, Dr. Weizmann reveals several interesting facts. Before the declaration was formulated, Foreign Minister Balfour cooperated with Dr. Weizmann and the other Zionists in order to formulate its contents in such a way that they could serve as a point of reference for many different interpretations, according to particular needs. From Weizmann's point of view, it would have been preferable for all of Palestine to be recognized as the national home of the Jews, but because of opposition, not least of all from the British Jews, especially Claude G. Montefiore, who was the president of the Anglo-Jewish Association, the document was formulated as above. Upon the initiative of Weizmann, Balfour sent the letter to Baron Rothschild and not to Weizmann himself. The position of Baron

Rothschild in the English-speaking world was at the time so strong, that the fact that the letter was sent to him was enough to render it great importance. Whilst the British Government gave the declaration its approval, Weizmann, according to his own words, waited close by.

The declaration came as something of a bombshell in the Arab World, despite the fact that the British propaganda machine tried to placate the Arabs by claiming that it represented no bad intentions on the part of the British. In spite of attempts to cover up the conflict, this split in British foreign politics still remains an unsolved riddle for the Arabs: How, they ask themselves, could a country with Albion's proud traditions allow its foreign minister in 1915 to cheat King Hussein into allying with the British during World War I by making him believe that there would be future independence, engage in a secret agreement with France about dividing the very area in 1916, and in 1917 amend a declaration about a Jewish national homeland in the country, in which there existed a seven percent Jewish minority, a 91 percent Arab majority, and a two percent minority consisting of much smaller groups? One has to ask oneself if politics and foreign governing can justify juggling with politics and the breaking of promises. The game played in the Middle East is not comparable to anything else in British colonial history. Because of its position, Britain can be held responsible for all the suffering of not only the Arabs, but also the Jews. Even the British themselves have been forced to

sacrifice more English blood than can possibly be defended because of their political escapades.

Exactly how well the British played their games of deceit in the Middle East is best understood if one looks at the British-French Declaration of 1918, which was circulated through the entire Near East. The declaration stated that the only goal of Great Britain and France was to liberate the people who had been suffering for so long under the Ottoman occupation. It also stated that these people should be given the opportunity to form national governments, based on their right to govern themselves. Things become even more interesting when one considers the fact that General Allenby, who conquered Palestine in 1917, knew about the Sykes-Picot Agreement, and hence must have been aware of the games played in the dark behind the scenes. Nevertheless, Allenby declared to the Arabs of Palestine that he had come as a liberator, not a conqueror!

The declaration of 1918 was the work of Lord Robert Cecil, who was also in such a position that he would have known all about the plans. The promised independence was turned into a League of Nations mandate in accordance with the Sykes-Picot Agreement but was not ratified by the League until June 1922. In reality, France and Great Britain had already assumed control over 'their' areas, via their military administrations. The UN approval of the mandates was merely a formality and confirmed that neither England nor France attached any significant impor-

tance to the League of Nations, inasmuch as they did not think it necessary to take it into consideration when making their decisions.

The regulation that founded the mandate system states, in its 22nd paragraph, that “certain groups that used to be connected to the Ottoman Empire have reached such a developed stage that it will allow them to attain transitional recognition as independent states, provided that they are supported by a mandate power with advice and administrative help until they can manage by themselves, and that these groups ought to choose such a mandate power for themselves. The other people, especially in Middle Africa, are in such a state that the mandate powers should be responsible for their administration, which guarantees them religious rights, etc.”

When Great Britain applied Paragraph 22, it effectively gave away in advance exactly those rights it had decided to administer. The fact that the Arabs, constituting some 91 percent of the population did not freely choose England to protect them, was totally irrelevant. The Jews of Palestine, forming some seven percent of the population were possibly happy about their new protectors and were most certainly pleased about the Balfour Declaration, but it is unlikely that there was any real consideration of what the people wanted.

The British have tried to dismiss the Balfour Declaration and have not expressed a willingness to take into account relevant events in the Middle East. The vital nature of the declaration was confirmed by a mandate document issued on 24 July 1922, which is stored at the League of Nations headquarters in Geneva. Thanks to Dr. Chaim Weizmann, the Zionist leader, one knows that the document was formulated by the American Jew, Ben Cohen together with the then secretary to British Foreign Minister, Curzon, Eric Forbes Adam.

According to the first paragraph, the mandate power, Great Britain was granted full authority to declare laws and maintain entire control over the administration. In the second paragraph, it was explained that the mandate power was to be responsible for keeping the country in an administrative, political and economic state that guaranteed the establishment of a Jewish national home according to the Balfour Declaration, thus allowing for the development of the foundations for independence. The mandate power was also held responsible for preserving the civil and religious rights of all the people of Palestine, irrespective of race and religion.

In the fourth paragraph, it was decided that the British Administration should cooperate with and recognize a 'Jewish Agency', the assumption being that this would advance future development. In another paragraph it was decided that the mandate power, without harming other groups of the population, should

support Jewish immigration to Palestine under suitable circumstances, and in cooperation with the Jewish Agency should help the immigrants to settle on land, including parts owned by the state but not designated for public purposes. In Paragraph 7, the mandatory power promised to facilitate the regulations concerning citizenship for immigrant Jews. In addition to these paragraphs there was another sentence that strengthened the position of the Jewish minority. English, Arabic and Hebrew were also accepted as the official languages of the country. On stamps and coins, for example, the word 'Palestine' was written in Arabic and English, while 'Eretz Israel' was written in Hebrew. The latter means 'the Land of Israel', and the English did not notice the Arab protests.

It is hardly necessary to underline the enormous consequences of this document. In reality, the declaration of the mandate meant that the Arab majority of the Palestinian population would become a minority and that the country would open up to massive waves of immigration resembling an invasion. No people could quietly accept such treatment from an occupying power. It is surprising that such a document could be approved by the League of Nations without any voice being risen, pointing out the potential problems. The Arabs of Palestine, who now live as refugees, are of the opinion that they were victims of a British-Israeli plot that had the regrettable approval of the League of Nations.

During Hitler's rule in Germany, the belief in 'the Jewish Conspiracy', a secret world government organized by Jews was to surface. Let us simply state that the idea is nonsense and rubbish. The Arabs have never believed in the existence of such an organization, in spite of the fact that it is true that the Jewish people at all times and in all countries have stuck together. World Zionism is a result of this togetherness, which is perfectly natural. The members of a scattered people, who in certain parts of the world have been persecuted into insanity, have decided to try to secure a national home of their own, and everybody is helping to realize the dream about 'The Promised Land'. The arguments are strong and are supported by the Zionist claim that the dream has a religious justification. What is more natural for the opposition, in this case the Arabs, than for them to think that every Jew is a Zionist?

Nowadays, it could be said that the enthusiasm surrounding Zionism has cooled down to a certain degree. Israel was not the dream come true that so many had hoped for. Many Jews had settled down in other countries, and they found it extremely difficult to imagine living in an agricultural state instead of doing the intellectual work they had been used to. From 1897 until today, one is tempted to say that a large number of people have made a direct connection between Jews and any kind of problem in the Middle East. In this book, I frequently note that a Jew of any nationality remains a Jew, regardless of whether he is a Turkish UN delegate, the secretary of a famous minister or an assistant in an

international organization. This should not be regarded as a sign of anti-Semitism, but as a possible explanation for the course of events. Had the tables been turned, I personally would have supported my fellow countrymen.

It is every person's right to be an idealist, but it is also the right of every honest political opponent to point out the presumptive 'spies', the hidden sources of information, the little men who have played a major role in the chain of events. In the fight for a national homeland for the Jews, the propaganda machine of the Zionists has worked better than any similar apparatus in history; we, the Arabs, are the first to admit it. Hundreds of thousands of cunning and clever fingers have hammered the keys of typewriters all over the world to sing the praises of the coming state of Israel, the struggling people, the new and future state. We can only say that we are sad that we were not as cunning and clever.



Palestine During the British Mandate

The British war effort to break the Turkish resistance during World War I was, by 1917, in such an advanced state that the British were more or less certain which of the Arab allies would be of possible use to them in the future. From the very beginning, Ibn Saud had been high up on the British list, but at the time of the war he was a bad choice for Great Britain, for several reasons, even though he had managed to consolidate his position and was becoming a legend among the desert tribes, due, in part, to his conquest of Riyadh at the turn of the century. On that particular occasion, after traveling many hundreds of kilometers on horseback he had taken one of the best strongholds in the Arab Peninsula in complete darkness with only a few of his men and a minimum of supplies. He received a good deal of support from his cousin, Al-Jalawi, who through resorting to wisdom, firmness and justice was able to create peace and order in the Nejd. Today, the son of Al-Jalawi, Emir Saud, is the regent of the eastern parts of Saudi Arabia. From 1915 onwards Ibn Saud frequently fought for his life in the Nejd and Hasa, only to be saved by his skill in riding, and he would often disappear into the desert without a trace when faced with too strong an opponent. For tactical reasons, the British concentrated on Sherif Hussein in

Mecca as they believed that his position as the head of the Hashemites would enable him to raise an army.

British troops, supported by Indians, marched towards Baghdad but were pushed back by the Turks. The British commander was captured at Kut Al-Amara. My father's friend and neighbor in Jerusalem, Ahmad Hilmi Pasha, who was at the time a Turkish officer, used to tell us with pride that he was at the battle of Kut Al-Amara. A second army succeeded in taking Baghdad and then proceeded north towards Mosul, while a third army led by General Allenby left Egypt and was successful in taking Jerusalem in December 1917. From there, Allenby prepared to take Syria.

In order to persuade Sherif Hussein to enter the war, the British guaranteed him that his old enemy Ibn Saud would remain neutral and would not attack Hejaz in order to take the holy cities. By maintaining control over Mecca and Medina, Hussein served as a religious counterweight against the Turkish Sultan and Khalif in Constantinople. Hejaz was regarded as one of Islam's key regions that could not possibly be allowed to fall into enemy hands. The British knew that the Germans, in coordination with the Turkish troops, planned to send a submarine fleet to the Red Sea in order to capture the two holy cities and threaten their sea routes to India. They also knew that they had to secure Hussein's support, and because of this, they confirmed the McMahon promise of 1915, stating that Hussein would become the leader of a league of Arab states, which was in line with a dream

the old man had nurtured for his entire adult life. The British understood that such an idea would appeal to Hussein, especially since the promise was supported by English money plus weapons and ammunition, and they already referred to him as the 'King of the Arabs'.

The inner circle of the Syrian nationalist movement was formed by 11 young Arabs, including Jamil Mardam Bey and Awni Abdul Hadi, who chose Paris as their headquarters. The Turks had become suspicious and jailed and hanged some of the leaders, among them, as already mentioned, my uncle Salim. When Hussein protested, he was given a warning from Jamal Pasha, the person responsible for the hangings.

Once Hussein had taken the necessary steps, he canceled the Turkish treaty and proclaimed himself leader of the Arab struggle for independence. It is said that he symbolically fired the first shot from his home in Mecca. It was the summer of 1916, and the Arabs called him 'the Great Liberator'. At first, Hussein's sons Ali, Abdallah and Faisal, assisted by Arab troops from the Hejaz and Bedouin tribes, managed to clear Mecca of Turkish troops. Success was not to last. The Turks gathered their forces and were very close to crushing the uprising when Hussein and his Arabs called in the British. At the last moment, help arrived via the ports of Jeddah and Yenbo on the Red Sea, where British warships unloaded guns, rifles, ammunition and even sacks of gold. Of greater importance was the fact that along with this

fleet came Captain T. E. Lawrence, accompanied by a small troop of British soldiers. The guns helped the citizens of Hejaz and Lawrence proved himself to be just the political advisor Hussein needed. Many Arabs, even today, believe that Lawrence was nothing more than a British 'spy' and 'agent'.

After an adventurous horseback ride across the Arab Peninsula, Hussein's son Faisal and Lawrence managed to conquer Aqaba at the northeastern tip of the Red Sea. While the Turkish strongholds within Hejaz remained cut off and besieged, the two desert warriors continued north and joined General Allenby's troops in Palestine.

In order to have some control over Ibn Saud, the British sent John B. Philby to Riyadh. Philby, who was the King's advisor, was a devout Mohammedan married to a Bedouin woman, and the couple's two young offspring looked like any English children.

The development of the Middle Eastern war sites went according to schedule. Nevertheless, even though the Turkish resistance was gradually shattered, the political developments did not take the path the co-actors had imagined. Faisal had been crowned King of Syria not long after he, together with General Allenby and Lawrence, had conquered the city from the Turks. One has to conclude that Lawrence was not aware of the Sykes-Picot Agreement. During the hostilities Lawrence had become like a foster brother to Faisal and the two men would eventually join

forces to fight a difficult battle at the Versailles Peace Conference in order to rescue, as it was called, not only the freedom of the Arabs in Syria, but also of those in Palestine, Iraq and Hejaz.

In early 1919, the Arabs and their problems constituted the main subject of discussion at Versailles. Faisal represented Arabia, excluding the parts controlled by Ibn Saud. Together with Lawrence, Faisal put together a letter that was passed to the British Government, in which he requested, on his father's behalf, the creation of the Great Arab State that Britain had promised Hussein via Sir Henry MacMahon in 1915. In the same context, Faisal also met with Chaim Weizmann with whom he made a treaty that promised the Jews autonomy in Palestine within the borders of the Great Arab State. The treaty, however, was conditional on British fulfillment of the promises given by MacMahon. Should the British fail to comply, Faisal would not be obliged to honor his promise to Weizmann.

In the beginning, the peace congress in Versailles seemed to develop in favor of the Arabs, but the events soon took another course. The French did not share Faisal's point of view, and they were not prepared to allow the British to settle the future of the entire Middle East. They explained that since France had contributed culturally to the Levant, it should remain in control of certain areas. The French threatened Faisal that they would 'bring out' the Crusaders as the defenders of the truth faith, to which Faisal made the quashing reply, "Who really won the Crusades?"

The French were completely stunned by such an answer. Faisal's view that Britain should keep its promises to the Arabs was supported by General Allenby and by the English statesman, Lloyd George, and it is very possible that events might have favored the Arabs, had not Clemenceau, the 'Tiger', put an end to the talks by giving the British an ultimatum: either honor their promises to the Arabs or their secret agreements made with France.

The results of the secret Sykes-Picot Agreement created problems for President Wilson of the USA because they contradicted his belief that every people, whether big or small, should have the right to decide its own future. Wilson suggested a public vote under international control, but the idea was disapproved of by the French and British. The final result was an investigative committee consisting of the Americans, King and Crane, who studied the problem on the spot and then wrote a report. From a political point of view, the document became a rather unpleasant part of the discussion. The report showed that the people of Syria wanted independence more than anything else and that if independence proved impossible to obtain, the Syrians would follow the League of Nations' decree number 22 and choose an American mandate. Should this be impossible to realize because of the American disinterest in politics outside North and South America, they would then opt for a British mandate. Under no circumstances did they want a French mandate.

Syrian wishes fell on deaf ears. The League of Nations' paragraph number 22, in which the allies promised to respect the Oriental people's right to rule themselves was evidently not worth the paper it was written on. No notice was taken of the Syrian report and President Wilson returned to America. Faisal had already given up and returned to Damascus, from where he was soon thrown out by the French. In Versailles, only the French were left, and they managed, against all odds, to get their way. During the San Remo Conference in 1920, the most fertile countries of the Middle East were divided according to the Sykes-Picot Agreement, which granted England the mandate of Iraq and Palestine, and France, that of Syria and Lebanon. The League of Nations was to subsequently accept the division made in San Remo.

A patchwork of old phrases and interpretations created some coherence between theory and practice. Something called a mandate was discovered, whose meaning was political authority to be carried out freely by winning states over 'politically more immature' states in order to make them, little by little, capable of ruling themselves. This interpretation in relation to Palestine seems very hollow, as history was to prove.

While the conference went on in Paris and the winning powers were occupied dividing the spoils, political developments in the Middle East continued, apparently unaffected by the conference. In Syria and Lebanon, the military administration was trans-

formed into a civil administration. Faisal was pronounced king in Damascus, and the French persisted in their attempts to secure his cooperation. Faisal did not get along with the French, and France soon felt it necessary to remove him from power. The Arab nationalists were struck down with iron fists, and they fled by the hundreds to Palestine and to other neighboring states. During this period, our home in Haifa was filled with many a powerful and influential refugee, many of whom would later play a role in the political developments in the Middle East.

King Faisal himself went to Britain, where he eventually found shelter with his old friend and comrade-in-arms, Lawrence. In the meantime, Faisal's brother, Abdallah grabbed the opportunity, and after leading a *coup d'état* proclaimed himself ruler of Iraq. The British were not unduly concerned, and they directed a public vote, according to which Abdallah was replaced by his younger brother Faisal, despite the fact that many English 'experts' on Middle Eastern politics advised against it. Faisal was Sunni [an Islamic sect], and the people of Iraq were Shiites. Nevertheless, King Faisal succeeded in burying all the old hatred between the Sunni and Shiites and even succeeded in making friends with his old enemy King Ibn Saud (Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud), despite the fact that it took many years.

After Abdallah's unsuccessful coup, he went to his father in Mecca in search of advice, and it was his father's wisdom that would make him abstain from plotting a revolt against England.

Instead of a revolt against the British, he started to organize a plan to take possession of his brother's old throne in Damascus with the assistance of his father's troops and Bedouin tribes, in order to guarantee the independence and freedom of Syria. He was supported, amongst others, by Arab nationalists from Iraq, Syria and Palestine. He took off from Mecca with his troops in 1921 and went, via Amman, east of the Jordan River, towards Syria. Minister for the Colonies, Winston Churchill went directly to Cairo with Lawrence. It was decided that Lawrence, who was famous for his smooth talking, should attempt to stop Abdallah in Trans-Jordan; his good relations with the Hashemite royal family were common knowledge. He succeeded somehow in convincing Abdallah to go to Jerusalem. There, he was welcomed to a conference by the Governor General for Palestine, Sir Herbert Samuel, who was of Jewish origin and a devoted Zionist. The mutually satisfying result of the conference was that the land east of the Jordan River and the Dead Sea was excluded from the Palestine mandate and turned over to Abdallah, while Amman, at the time the size of a large village, was designated a capital city. In addition to the aforementioned area, a piece of land that had been conquered by the British close to the Bay of Aqaba plus the port of Aqaba itself were added. The new realm was called Trans-Jordan, and together with Palestine, it was put under the control of the British Governor General. Saudi Arabia, despite never relinquishing its claims, had no choice but to accept the situation. British troops were sent to the area, and the

officers came to lead the Arab Legion that was founded by Peake Pasha in 1921.

British troops were also placed in Faisal's Iraq, mainly at Al-Habbaniyah Airbase. Sherif Hussein's youngest son, Emir Zeid, did not play a major role in the chain of events; he was later appointed to the position of Iraqi Ambassador to London. And so it was that all the participants of the drama to follow took their positions on the stage, thus allowing the play to begin.



During the Mandate

The provisional military administration in Palestine was changed to a civil administration in the summer of 1920. The first High Commissioner of Palestine was Sir Herbert Samuel, who resided at Government House in Jerusalem. Because of his Jewish heritage, he was mistrusted by the Arabs right from the beginning. As early as in the spring of 1920, serious confrontations between Jews and Arabs took place, mainly in Jerusalem and Jaffa. Minor strikes and demonstrations on the anniversaries of the Balfour Declaration became ways of expressing the Arab opposition, and in some ways, Samuel was affected by this, which caused him to become more cautious. At certain times, he lowered the number of Jewish immigrants entering Palestine to decrease the tension with the Arabs, but after each of these temporary reductions the doors were swung open again to a continuous flood of immigrants.

One of the first things Sir Herbert did was to appoint Haj Amin Al-Husseini as Mufti of Jerusalem, a position formerly held by Haj Amin's brother and comparable to that of an archbishop in a Christian country. The gesture, which was intended to placate the Arabs, would become quite significant. The appointment was a political mistake from both a Jewish and an English point of

view, and the fact that the Governor General had placed Britain's and Zionism's most dangerous enemy in such a position should be considered an ironic act of faith. The Grand Mufti was a 'Haj', the title given to every pilgrim who has visited the city where the Prophet Mohammed was born and his grave in Al-Medina. At that time such a trip was extremely dangerous, since the roads through the desert were long and complicated, and there was always the threat of attacks by hostile Bedouin tribes.

The Grand Mufti turned out to be a great leader in spite of the fact that he was still inexperienced when appointed. Although he had become an officer in the Ottoman army at a very young age, it was as the Mufti of Jerusalem that he really proved his ability to lead. When the Higher Islamic Council was founded in 1922, he was the obvious choice for chairman.

The Council consisted of five members, each representing a different part of the country. My father was the representative for Haifa and the north of Palestine. The Council was not a political institution but a religious Islamic establishment, whose purpose was to serve Islamic interests in the country. All the mosques and holy places, therefore, were under its control. In addition, the Council also controlled the Waqfs and the religious courts, which are responsible, amongst other things, for inheritance and divorce cases. The legal systems of Islamic societies are influenced by ancient Qur'anic laws that have no counterpart in Western societies. Also belonging to this 'ecclesiastical department' were the Qur'anic schools, which enjoyed great importance in Palestine

and employed hundreds of employees. At the time there was also a governmental school system, and education was divided into a religious, governmental sector and a common, private one.

The political importance, in addition to the greatness, crooked tendency and so on, of the Grand Mufti has always been debated. Even among the Palestinian Arabs it is impossible to find two persons who share the same opinion about this Arab leader. Nevertheless, most people agree that he was intelligent, energetic and very nationalistic. He is frequently described as a determined man. His goals were clearly to stop the Jewish invasion and force through a new constitution for Palestine, but although the other Arab leaders agreed with his goals, they could not come up with a united proposal on how to achieve them. Certain important leaders thought that the Grand Mufti, by not faltering in his unforgiving attitude towards Britain, did more bad than good. He never gave in, not even when it came to minor details, and many felt that he should have displayed a greater ability to compromise with the English. More extreme opponents accused him of being arrogant and of working for his personal interests only, and therefore, for the best interests of the Al-Husseini family, regardless of the consequences for the rest of the country. Of course, the reason for these accusations was old tribal envy. As for the Grand Mufti, he felt and acted like a leader.

The Mufti's greatest opponent was Ragheb Al-Nashashibi, who was mayor of Jerusalem for many years. In many ways, Al-Nashashibi was the direct opposite of the Mufti. He was always well-

dressed, proper, and very refined. Contrary to Islamic Law, he occasionally drank alcohol, which resulted in animosity from the more puritan circles. He was moderate in his politics with the English, which was not appreciated by other politicians. In spite of this he had many followers amongst the lower strata of the population due to his open and generous manner. As a negotiator, Ragheb Al-Nashashibi was inclined to be satisfied with small concessions. He became my patient during the mid-1940s, and he expressed deep disappointment that the British had failed to display a greater willingness to cooperate with him. Despite the fact that the British were known as good negotiators in Palestine, they worked according to a negotiation technique that was so tough and difficult that even the more moderate Arab leaders never succeeded in finding acceptable solutions to their problems.

Another member of the Arab Committee was Hussein Al-Khalidi,⁶ who came to succeed Ragheb Al-Nashashibi as mayor of Jerusalem. As chairman of a political party he had great influence, but he was without any doubt the Grand Mufti's man and agreed with his every decision.

My cousin, Awni Abdul Hadi, was the leader of one of the many Arab political parties. He had studied in Paris and was a famous lawyer. During the peace negotiations in Versailles, he was on the staff of Prince Faisal and cooperated with him in preparing a memorandum that included a map of the greater Arab empire,

⁶ In 1951 Dr. Al-Khalidi became the guardian of the holy sites in Jerusalem. During different periods, he was also the Jordanian foreign minister.

which was to be sent to the British Foreign Ministry. He was to work with Faisal again when the Prince became King of Syria.

Awni Abdul Hadi generally agreed with the Grand Mufti. He felt, however, that negotiations between Palestine and Great Britain should be conditional upon the making of certain promises by the British prior to the negotiations. The promises, he believed, should have then served as the foundation of further talks in order to prevent the unequal positions of power from resulting in only crumbs for the little Palestine from the rich political table of England.

Another political party leader was Yaqoub Al-Ghousein, a rich man from Ramleh who headed the so-called Youth Party. It is important to note that although a major part of the population was not affiliated with any political party, it was nonetheless politically aware. There was such a significant split in the Arab front that the British, who knew about all the conflicts between the different leaders, could have easily applied the principle of divide and rule. The Arab interests were undoubtedly hurt by this inner split.

The biggest problem for the British was the Grand Mufti and his followers, who were to be found all over the country. They were mainly laborers and farmers, although a few were middle class. Because of the Grand Mufti's position as a religious leader, he could enforce all his decisions without mercy in spite of any opposition. He was a leader of people, and his ability to mobilize support amongst the masses was something that the opposition

lacked. The Higher Islamic Council would later have not only religious power but also a political task, and it was certainly the Council that was responsible for sharpening the resistance against the British. Therefore, it came as no surprise that British counteracts were directed toward the Grand Mufti and to some extent towards the other Council members.

During the first few years of the 1920s, British political activity was characterized by attempts to make the mandate appear legally correct, which included the League of Nations' demand that British enforcement should be accounted for and correspond to the League's paragraph 22. On 22 June 1922, Winston Churchill's Department for the Colonies published a white paper on the constitution of Palestine, including the correspondence between Colonial Minister Churchill and the Palestinian delegation that went to London in order to apply for self-rule. In the British declaration, it stated that the promises Great Britain had made regarding self-rule for the Arabs did not include Palestine and that a national government in Palestine would stand in the way of Great Britain's promises to the Jews. Jewish immigration was to continue. The White Paper attempted to explain that the Balfour Declaration did not mean that Palestine as a whole should be turned into a Jewish national home, but that a home should be established in Palestine. It added that the founding of a Jewish national homeland in Palestine should be brought about by slowly increasing the number of Jews that were allowed to immigrate to Palestine, but without creating an economic burden for the country. According

to the British, the Arabs of Palestine should not become Jewish citizens in a Jewish state: instead, the two peoples should live happily side-by-side and should each be proud of their own contributions to the common Palestinian nation.

From the Arab point of view, the White Paper is a perfect example of political deviousness, especially when one considers that the assumed author of the document was Sir Herbert Samuel, the British Governor General of Palestine, and that Chaim Weizmann and the other Zionist leaders clearly had a say in its formulation. It contained certain principles regarding the coming mandate constitution, which the Jews were required to agree upon. According to Arab sources, Jewish leaders approved of the contents on 18 June 1922, despite the fact that the document was not officially published until 22 June 1922. The White Paper was officially published in Palestine by the Palestine Administration in September 1922.

According to the new constitution, a shadow government named the Legislative Council was to be formed. The Council would consist of ten British officials appointed by the Governor General and 12 elected representatives of the people. The Moslems were to be given eight seats and the Christians and the Jews two seats each. The Council would not have any jurisdiction over mandate issues, the issue of Jewish immigration to Palestine or the issue of a Jewish national homeland. Naturally, the Governor General as chairman would have the right to veto any issue. The Arabs said that they were not interested in joining the new council, and

they boycotted the elections. Their reasons, according to the members of the Arab congress that met in Nablus in August, 1922, were as follows:

- 1) The Arabs had demanded self-rule for the whole country according to the principles of President Wilson and the people's union and the British promise to Sherif Hussein of Mecca in 1915.
- 2) The proposal was founded on the Balfour Declaration, which, because it related to the founding of a Jewish national homeland, could not be approved by the Arabs.
- 3) The Council did not have the right to discuss the Balfour Declaration or Jewish immigration.
- 4) The division of seats in the Council was not proportional to the Arab population, which formed some 91 percent of the total population.
- 5) The fact that the chairman possessed the right to veto the Council's decisions made the Council superfluous.

In March 1923 the Arabs turned down an invitation to take part in an advisory group with the same seat proportions and the Governor General as a member for exactly the same reasons. The British Government gave in and suggested in October 1923 the establishment of an 'Arab Agency', similar to the one already allowed for the Jewish interests in the mandate declaration. Once again the Arabs rejected the British proposals, claiming that the Jewish minority that would become stronger with the immigration

of foreign Jews could not be compared to the existing majority of Arabs, which would be weakened if the political developments continued on the same path.

During the years 1924 and 1925, the League of Nations asked Great Britain why no legislative council had yet been formed in Palestine. The British replied that they felt it was impossible to form such a council when the Arabs wanted proportional representation. By abiding by such seat proportions, the British continued, they would never be able to keep their promises to the Jews regarding a national homeland.

When it became clear that the political track had been blocked by Arab resistance, the Zionists changed tactics and decided to undermine the country instead. With British support, they started to buy all available land in the area. Through their efforts at fundraising all over the world, the Jews were able to secure enormous sums of money for this purpose.

The central part of the Jewish immigration policy has always been to control the flood of Jewish immigrants to Palestine by controlling as much of the land as possible, with the minimum of foreign interference. In the beginning, the Jewish leaders did not expect the number of Jewish immigrants to Palestine to be so large or the arrival of the immigrants to be so potentially problematic. Because of the economic structure of Palestine, farming was the only real source of income, but it was always assumed that the country would eventually develop into an industrial

state. The Ottoman laws had already since World War I prevented any significant amount of land from falling into Jewish hands. During the British Mandate, however, Jewish land buyers bought every available piece of land. It was later said that the Arabs of Palestine sold their land for gold and have only themselves to blame for their loss, but to discover the truth about this matter, one must look at the issue of land ownership before and after 1948.

The Higher Islamic Council recognized the threat at an early stage, and during the first years of its existence it banned all sales of property under its administration. The Council bought land that was threatened, such as that belonging to the villages of Deir Amr, Zeta, Al-Taibeh, Attil, and Al-Tireh amongst others. Through the efforts of Ahmad Hilmi Pasha, an Arab national trust was created, and those responsible for its establishment set about buying up all endangered land. Many of the farming estates that were offered for sale were so small that the owners were unable to make a decent living. The Jewish buyers, meanwhile, realized that the most lucrative course of action would be to buy as many small pieces of land as possible and then merge them all together. In several cases such rationalization was also displayed by the Arab National Trust, which enabled individual farmers to buy additional land to add to that already in their possession.

At the time of the founding of the Jewish state in 1948, the total area of Palestine was approximately 27 million dunums. According to Arab figures, approximately seven percent of all land was

then owned by Jews. In reality, 650,000 dunums were bought by the Jews during the Ottoman era, while 300,000 dunums were given to the Jewish organization by the Palestine Government that had administered the state-owned land prior to 1948. The Palestine Administration gave the Jews, for a symbolic sum, a total of 200,000 dunums, also classified as state land. Jewish land acquisitions that were cited as cases of 'Arabs selling their land' also involved the great properties around Wadi Al-Hawarith, Al-Huleh and Marj Ibn Aamer, where the Jews bought approximately 600,000 dunums from Syrian and Lebanese - not Palestinian - citizens. In 1948, the Jews owned a total of 1,750,000 dunums, representing approximately seven percent of the total area.

It is true that some Palestinians sold land totaling approximately 250,000 dunums to the Jews, but very few of these traitors lived to enjoy the fruits of their treason. Many were killed on orders from partisan leaders while others fled the country.

The Jewish land-buying scheme was supported by huge financial resources, collected from Jews all over the world. Despite this, its success was limited. I remember from my childhood that one of the Jewish land buyers looked up my father in Haifa and offered him what was then an enormous sum, 60,000 British Pounds, or almost one million Swedish Crowns, for our estates in Jenin. Bearing in mind that this was during the early 1920s, the sum of money offered was flattering. Nevertheless, my father refused to sell a single dunum. Unfortunately, large parts of these

estates were lost in the 'border regulations between Jordan and the Jewish state' according to the Rhodos Treaty.

It cannot be denied that it was hard to be a farmer in Palestine in the 1920s, when most of the small farms consisted of only ten to 15 acres. According to an English commission headed by Sir John Hope-Simpson in 1930, a farmer needed a minimum of 25 acres in order to survive. The British commission also confirmed that increased immigration was responsible for the growing tension throughout the country. The existing administration did not care enough for the small farmers, whose primitive methods combined with high taxes forced them to sell their land. Six hundred farming families lost their land in this manner.

The Hope-Simpson Commission was one of 20 commissions sent to Palestine by the British to investigate how future uprisings could be prevented. Even though the Commission was of a purely technical nature, it recommended that the British should limit Jewish immigration to Palestine in order to decrease the chance of future confrontations taking place. The Arabs of Palestine were consistent in their demand that Britain amend laws, making the sale of land to Jews illegal. In this they were backed by religious leaders, who declared that all those who attempted to sell land to the Jews were no longer members of the faithful and should not be buried in Islamic cemeteries.

At this time, the Grand Mufti was in London to discuss the results of the different commissions with the British Prime Minis-

ter, Ramsay MacDonald. The negotiations came up with nothing, despite the fact that the two most important commissions had reported in favor of the Arabs.

Of the two reports, the one by Hope-Simpson has already been mentioned. The other report was written by a parliamentary group led by Sir Walter Shaw, which had been sent to investigate the disturbances of the summer of 1929. In his report, Shaw underlined the importance of slowing down Jewish immigration and reducing land purchases by Jews. In addition, he recommended a certain degree of self-rule. The results of the commission were not taken into consideration but published in the form of a white paper named after the colonial minister, Passfield, in 1930.

The British Mandate politics for Palestine during the first few years of the 1930s were characterized by dilettantism and patronization. In international circles, it was said that the purpose of a League of Nations mandate was to teach an underdeveloped people how to stand on its own two feet. The Arabs of Palestine learned that commissions and words are excellent ways of hiding a lack of creative political ability. By the end of 1933, patience ran out amongst certain parts of the population. Armed Arab attacks on the British Administration increased and were a source of great concern to the British Government. Whilst under great pressure, Britain suggested, through its representative in Palestine, Sir Arthur Wauchope who was called 'the friend of the farmers', that a new legislative council be formed at the end of 1935.

I met Sir Arthur at our house in Ramallah when he came around one afternoon for five o'clock tea. He himself requested and set the date for the meeting, and he was very welcome. The local authorities repaired the road leading to our house in preparation for the visit of the Governor General. Sir Arthur was very interested in Ramallah, and he wanted to know everything about the city and its inhabitants. To talk about politics was taboo. When my father followed him out, it was half an hour before he returned. The two of them had been sitting in Sir Arthur's car discussing a private matter. The result was that the British Administration took over parts of my father's land, which were subsequently distributed to poor Arab farmers with no land of their own. Another result was that the little road outside our house was repaired for free.

The Legislative Council consisted of two groups, one elected by the people and one appointed by the Administration. There were 16 appointed members, and the Council was formed in such a way that it included three Moslems, two Christians and four Jews, in addition to two foreign trade representatives and five British officials. In the elected group of 12, eight members would be Moslem, one Christian and three Jewish. Thus, the 14 seats for Christians and Moslems were immediately 'neutralized' by as many for British and Jews, supported by two 'foreigners' who had no business there at all. As in previous cases, the British rules governing the creation of councils had a number of paragraphs that made the Council entirely useless.

- 1) The Council would have no right to interfere in issues concerning the mandate and the Jewish national home.
- 2) The Council would be able to make proposals about Jewish immigration, but the Governor General was not obliged to abide by its recommendations.
- 3) The Governor General would have the right to be informed about the decisions of the Council but was not obliged to comment on them.
- 4) The Governor General would have the right to make certain amendments to the law without consulting the Council.

Right from the beginning, Sir Arthur understood that Arab approval of the Council was highly unlikely, which led him to issue an official communiqué that stated that the Council was to be formed with or without the approval of the Arabs. Should any party turn the proposal down, members would be appointed by the Administration. Although the new council was not turned down by the Arabs, they demanded certain changes. The Jews, however, refused to take part in any legislative council in which they were not guaranteed 50 percent of the seats from the very beginning. It should be noted that because of immigration, the Jews now represented 27 percent of the population, the Arabs a little over 70 percent.

When the plan for the new council was presented for debate in the British Parliament, first in the upper and then in the lower chamber, it was heavily criticized. The British Jews had mobilized

a good opposition and the British Government felt that it had to back down and allow the Palestine Administration to continue as before. Nevertheless, yet another chapter had been written in the book teaching the people of Palestine how to stand on their own two legs.

The British Department for the Colonies' perception of democracy for Palestine meant that the majority did not necessarily rule. According to the form of democracy existing at the time in Palestine, only the majority could veto a proposed plan. Now, that same right was also given to the minority, the difference being that the minority was granted many privileges that in the long run would turn the minority into a majority. In Palestine, Great Britain actively supported the minority. It is not enough to claim that this fact could be attributed to international Jewish influence. That influence was and remains strong, but certainly not strong enough to have such an impact. What advantages were the British Government promised should the Jews take over power before the end of the mandate? Or what privileges did Great Britain hope to gain in the future? The Middle East is an important cornerstone of the British Empire. One has to ask oneself the following questions: Is it appropriate for a super-power with Britain's traditions to sacrifice the interests of a local population for presumptive political advantages? To what extent can it be considered politically justifiable for a nation to adjust international law according to its own political purposes?



Uprising

In the early 1930s, following the big split amongst the Arabs, it soon became clear that the Arab forces should be united in order to increase the chances of achieving a satisfactory result to their problems. The increased Jewish immigration and the fact that the Jews had armed themselves made several of the Arab leaders realize that now was the time to stop these developments and create a united Arab front. To help achieve this, The Higher Arab Committee was founded in 1936. The Committee included the country's political leaders in addition to other influential individuals, including its chairman, the Grand Mufti. The gap between Arabs and Jews had increased even more since the visit of the English investigative commission.

In 1936, a complete strike was organized. The strike continued for six months, during which everything came to a standstill and there was no traffic in the country. Armed guerrilla units operated from bases in the mountains and attacked British troops, the railroad, Jewish colonies, police stations and the offices of the Administration. As mentioned earlier, the country was divided into four parts, each one under a guerrilla leader, but the forces were too small and too badly equipped to allow one to talk

about an organized military operation on the part of the Arabs. The British did everything within their power to stop the strike since the economic consequences were catastrophic. Every time they failed, the Arabs became more certain that they were doing the right thing and sharpened their resistance. At last the strike ended, following the intervention of the surrounding Arab states including Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Jordan, and the British backed down, albeit only temporarily. The Arab states were hoping for a peaceful ending to the problems through negotiations with Great Britain, but support from the outside was not particularly strong and the promises given to the delegates of the Arab Committee were not honored. A small number of weapons did arrive from Syria and Trans-Jordan, but they were not enough to entertain the newly established partisan groups.

Despite the lack of money and weapons, many individuals committed themselves. For instance, there was the battalion supported and led by the Syrian officer, Fawzi Al-Kawqji who, with only a few men, caused the British a great deal of damage. Al-Kawqji also managed to conquer and distribute a good amount of weapons and ammunition. The minor attacks that took place all the time irritated the British tremendously, and they responded by constantly carrying out raids in the villages and cities. The British soldiers gradually became more brutal, which created hatred that prevailed until the end of the mandate. The British cut down a lot of eucalyptus and olive trees around the village of Mukeibleh belonging to my father, under the pretext that Arab warriors were hiding behind them. In order to control the population more easily, curfews

were imposed. One evening when my colleague, Dr. Mahdi Al-Husseini was making a home visit to a patient, he was stopped and pushed by a British soldier and told: "You will need medical care yourself if you do not respect the curfew."

In 1937 the mandate dissolved the Higher Arab Committee⁷ after declaring it illegal. Arrest warrants were issued for the Grand Mufti and several other members of the Committee. Some of them were caught and sent to the Seychelles in the Indian Ocean, amongst them our friends Ahmad Hilmi Pasha, Al-Ghousein and Dr. Al-Khalidi.

Naturally, the British were mainly interested in the Grand Mufti himself, who was - quite correctly - considered the root of the revolt. His home happened to be situated in the grounds of Al-Aqsa Mosque, where the British did not dare to enter. They could have sent troops to fetch him from his house but the consequences would have been enormous because Al-Aqsa Mosque is considered one of the most holy places of Islam. Any attack on the grounds would probably have resulted in a holy war reaching from India to Gibraltar; therefore, it was enough to surround the whole area and wait to arrest the Grand Mufti as soon as he left the compound.

It was a mystery, especially for the English themselves, how the Grand Mufti eventually managed to escape from his refuge. Ac-

⁷ The Committee was re-established by the Arab League in 1946 and recognized as an organ of the Arabs of Palestine with its headquarters in Cairo.

According to his memoirs, published some time ago, the story goes as follows: Disguised as a Bedouin he lowered himself down the high walls with a rope. He had shaved his red beard that made him easy to recognize and was able to pass right in front of the soldiers. From Jerusalem he went to Jaffa, where he managed to board a boat that was heading for Beirut. His arrival in Beirut, and later in the small village of Al-Juneh close to the capital, was not unknown to the French authorities. They advised him, through the local authorities, to stay out of politics, although to no avail, but on the whole they left him alone. Perhaps the escape of Al-Kuwatli was still fresh in their minds.

Once the Committee had been dissolved, Arab resistance in Palestine became harder and harder to organize, even though the Grand Mufti tried to collect money, weapons, and volunteers both during and after his time in Beirut.

When the Grand Mufti left the country, my father took over as head of the Higher Islamic Council, but things were impossible. The Council had been stripped of its powers and put under British control. One of the members, Amin Al-Tamimi was expelled to Rhodesia where he died. In the cities the British controlled all activity through curfews, death penalties and hangings. Arabs who were found armed (knives were considered weapons) were sentenced to long spells in prison or, in some cases, even executed. The British Minister for the Colonies, Mr. C. Jones, once stated that the number of Arabs that had been executed for possessing weapons or ammunition was 148. In stark comparison to

the Arabs' light weapons, the British were in possession of military vehicles and airplanes.

In the countryside, people were made to pay large fines if they gave any support to the rebels and several villages near Jaffa, Lydda and Jenin were razed to the ground as punishment. The situation can be compared to the recent war in Algeria when it was at its very worst. In reality, the rebels controlled almost the entire country with the exception of the larger cities, which were controlled by the British.

In many cases the British tried to neutralize prominent people and Arab leaders, using 'more or less' true, or even totally false, accusations. My father was one of them. Suddenly, there was a rumor going around that accused my father of negotiating with the Jews in order to sell them Al-Aqsa Mosque, the most holy place of Islam after the mosques of Mecca and Medina in Saudi Arabia. The rumor was of course false and totally absurd and should have been recognized as such, but the atmosphere in Palestine in the summer of 1938 was inflamed with the help of posters on walls and trees. My father thought nothing of it but his two bodyguards heightened the security around him. On one occasion someone fired several rounds into our bedroom, but no one was injured. A few days later, armed men tried to see my father, but my brother told them that he was in his office in Jerusalem. After a while, it became clear that the mystical sale of Al-Aqsa Mosque had been organized by the opposite side, and the rebel leader who had been given the task of assassinating my fa-

ther delivered his sincere apologies. Somewhat ironically, Al-Aqsa Mosque was renovated just a few years later by my father in his capacity as head of the Islamic Council.

After the Germans marched into Austria in the spring of 1938, the political climate in Europe darkened and Britain became eager to stop the fighting in Palestine, at least temporarily. The possibility of a major war had increased, and the British did not wish to be attacked from the side. In the autumn of 1938, the British made it clear that Lord Peel's⁸ suggestion that Palestine be divided would not be realized. Instead, it was suggested that a conference should be held in London with the participation of the Arabs of Palestine, representatives from World Zionism and delegates from the surrounding Arab states. In early 1939, a conference was held as planned but the negotiations were extremely slow, partly because the British did not want to accept the Grand Mufti as a delegate. In the end, he would stay in his home in Beirut, and it was from there that he followed the conference with great interest. From the beginning, the Arabs demanded that the mandate over Palestine should cease at once, and that the country should be granted independence and autonomy. In return they promised to reach an agreement with Great Britain. The Arabs also stated that Jewish immigration to Palestine should come to an end. The Colonial Minister, Malcolm MacDonald had a hard time leading the negotiations at St. James's Palace. The Arabs, who did not consider the Jews a part of the

⁸ Lord Peel's 'Royal Commission' arrived in Palestine in late 1936, and after careful investigation of the reasons behind the troubles, the partition of the country between Arabs, Jews and the British was suggested for the first time.

conflict, refused to sit with them at the same table, forcing the Colonial Minister to run between two hotels. During the conference the Iraqi delegate, Nuri Sa'id flew to Beirut twice in order to confer with the Grand Mufti. The British had to swallow their pride and accept that the Grand Mufti, although not invited, was still very much involved in the conference and its decisions.

In the spring of 1939 the British Government published a white paper stating the new political line on the Palestine issue, and the British made it very clear that they would follow its contents, regardless of whether they were rejected by the Jews or Arabs. The main context of the white paper was as follows:

- 1) The British Government admitted that differences existed between the demands of the Palestinian Arabs and promises already made to the Jews.
- 2) The British stated that they had helped the Jews to find a national homeland and that now was the time for the people of Palestine to decide their own destiny.
- 3) The British Government decided that the goal of its new political approach to Palestine was the creation of an independent Palestinian government. It was foreseen that this might take up to ten years to achieve and that the mandate should therefore stop after ten years. During the five years to follow, a new constitution would be agreed upon by the British Government and the people of Palestine.
- 4) The British Government decided to allow, for the last time, one further wave of Jewish immigration to Palestine. The

number was set at 75,000 Jews over five years, allowing 15,000 Jews per year to immigrate to Palestine. After this, the people of Palestine were to decide for themselves if there should be any future Jewish immigration.

- 5) The British Government also decided that the question of land sales in Palestine should be solved by a series of new laws that would forbid, allow or limit the purchase of land by Jews.

In a statement issued in Beirut on 23 June 1939, the Higher Arab Committee stated that its attitude towards the British declaration was not wholly positive. Its members stated that they would insist upon clear rules that specified how the independent state of Palestine would be formed, and they expressed concern with regard to the proposed constitution.

The Jewish reaction to the British concessions was totally negative, and representatives of the Jewish Agency stated that the entire White Paper was clearly against all the natural rights that the Jews possessed in relation to Palestine. The discussion could have gone on forever, but September 1939 witnessed the beginning of World War I and the Palestine Question was overshadowed by more pressing problems in Europe. Then, in 1941, the Grand Mufti suddenly turned up in Berlin.

From 1940 to 1941 the Arabs continued to request that the British declaration be taken into consideration, but this did not happen. Once the five-year period mentioned in the White Paper had ended, the British decided that they would still allow 1,500 Jews per month to immigrate to Palestine.



To Britain and Germany

After I had graduated as a doctor of medicine and surgery in Beirut in the summer of 1936, I returned to our home in Ramallah outside Jerusalem. My graduation was not as joyful as expected since my family had been prevented from attending because of the strike. With my standard of education, it would have been easy for me to open a practice and make a good living, but my father and I agreed that the best thing I could do was to travel abroad and continue my studies. It was decided that I should go to Britain.

In the autumn of 1936, once the trains had started moving again, I left Jerusalem behind me with a sentimental feeling in my heart. Traveling south along the Mediterranean coast through the land of *Filasteen*, where the great combatant Salah Ed-Din Al-Ayyoubi fought the Crusaders, the first stop was Gaza. Then a small town with only a few thousand inhabitants, it was obliged in 1948 to receive some 250,000 refugees. After a tiring journey past seas of sand in the Sinai Desert with only a few green oases attracting animals and humans alike, we arrived at the Suez Canal late at night.

In Port Said everything was ready for my departure. One of my father's old friends, Mohammed Rajeb Bey, who was the deputy chairman of the shipping company 'The Khedival Mail Lines', was responsible for finding me a cabin aboard the luxury steamer, 'The Strathmore'. The trip was expected to take 11 days, and at that time a tourist class passage to London cost approximately 14 British Pounds.

In spite of the fact that life in Beirut had not been too bad, life on board was interesting and educational. The weather in October was lovely and the sea was calm. Moreover, there were five meals per day, dances in the large salon every night and strolls on the deck by moonlight. The passengers were mostly British citizens en route home from the colonies. The other major category of travelers included Indians and Anglo-Indians, and I was soon to make several acquaintances from amongst them. It was here that I was introduced, for the first time ever, to the 'colored line'. I myself was never discriminated against, but my new Indian friends often complained that the British always tried to avoid them on board, even though they belonged to the Empire. At the dances this fact was accentuated by English girls who would politely but coldly refuse a 'colored's' invitation to dance.

At Tilbury Docks I was met by friends from Palestine who drove me to my future quarters, a boarding house near Holland Park in the aristocratic West End of London. The owner was a Swiss lady but the guests were mainly English and I got on well with

everyone. During the long nights in the sitting room I soon realized that not many of the other guests, including the more educated ones, whether Arab or Jewish, cared anything at all about Palestine, the little dot on the English map. Politics in that corner of the world were not of great interest. Never before had I been so aware of how local our problems were from a British point of view. What for us were questions about life or death, were for the British nothing but news items placed somewhere in the middle of the paper. At the boarding house I was told that Lord Peel, the man who had originally recommended the division of Palestine, lived in the neighborhood. Although the Englishmen had heard the name, they could not understand how one of these eternal governmental propositions could have almost set the entire Middle East on fire and promised to result in the loss of thousands of human lives in the years to come.

It was not long before I turned to my own kind instead. My father had a number of friends, some of whom were employed in the so-called Palestine Administration. Some were British, but there were also several Arabs. During quite a few dinner parties, I had a good opportunity to discover what the British really thought of us. A while later, I was to meet one of the people I had met at dinner in Palestine. He was the manager of a bank in Jerusalem, and he lived in a large villa in the Katamon neighborhood close to my own home. I was often invited for tennis and five o'clock tea by the family who lived in luxury with a car, chauffeur, gardener and servants; the director's wife had once

interrupted her holidays in England because of what she decided was a lack of servants. Another chap, who once had a high position within the Palestine Administration, now worked in London and had been forced to give up the luxury he was accustomed to in Palestine and take the subway to work. The contrast between their lives as 'colonial Englishmen' and the normal Englishman was stunning. For them Palestine meant a place to live and earn money. What happened amongst the masses, their way of living and general opinions did not concern them as long as 'the irritating shooting' did not move in their direction. It ought to be underlined that they were very charming people, and I was more than glad to spend a few hours in their company.

During my first stay in Britain, I took the opportunity to do a bit of traveling and during my visits to several cities I made a point of dropping in on the universities where some of the sons of my father's friends were enrolled. After a while, it was time for me to commence my studies at The Postgraduate School, which offered theoretical postgraduate education. This further medical education was necessary for those of us who wished to become a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons (FRCS). Unfortunately, I was only able to take the theoretical course since my diploma had been issued by the American University in Beirut, and to obtain a diploma in surgery at this highest level, one has to be a graduate of a British university. The problem was of a delicate nature. I could stay at a lower grade, but personally I found it irresponsible to perform operations with such a short education.

After having talked the issue over with some British colleagues, I decided to take the theoretical course and then continue my surgical education in Germany.

Prior to my departure from England, I was delighted to hear that my father was to come to London as a guest of the British Government in order to represent the Arabs of Palestine at the coronation of King George VI. My happiness was short-lived. After careful consideration, my father had to decline because of the political situation and the revolt in Palestine. I, meanwhile, watched the drama from the balcony.

The German Legation in London managed to secure me a place with Professor von Eicken at the Berlin University Ear Clinic. Through a travel agent I found a decent room at Kaiserallee in Berlin. My hosts were the von Clausewitz family, who claimed to be the descendants of the famous general. The family ran a sort of boarding house, and when I arrived there were already two foreigners staying there, a Frenchman and a Chinese.

The setting of the boarding house reminded one of the English propaganda drawings of the Pinneberg family in the 1930s. At dinner, everyone sat at one big table with Mr. and Mrs. Clausewitz on either side. The father was a cultivated gentleman who took great pride in telling us about his relatives. The hostess, who was also well-educated, always came to dinner in a long, dark dress with a thin velvet choker around her neck. The com-

pulsory language of conversation was German, “for the sake of language skills,” as Mr. Clausewitz used to put it. Maybe he was right because I certainly benefited from the experience.

To improve my German even further, I enrolled at a language school in the center of Berlin. The number of nationalities almost equaled the number of students, which is common in such institutions. In my group there were three Arabs from Lebanon. They were all members of the Syrian National Party, whose leader was the Christian Arab, Anton Saadeh, whom I had seen during my stay in Beirut. He taught for a short while at the American University, and he spread the idea that the old Ottoman Empire, that is Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan, should merge into one big state. The party was an extremist group that did not hesitate to use violence. Saadeh was eventually hanged by the Lebanese authorities, and as revenge his followers murdered the then prime minister in Lebanon, Riad Al-Solh⁹ whilst he was visiting King Abdallah in Jordan.

Besides the three Lebanese on my course, the extremist group consisted of a number of Arab students. The group used to hold regular meetings to discuss internal issues, and I made repeated attempts to join their meetings to talk about ‘Greater Syria’, but for some reason I was not welcome. The party had their own flag and their emblem was a swastika with rounded edges. When

⁹ Al-Solh, who was a friend of my father, was in 1916 sentenced to life imprisonment by the Ottoman Jamal Pasha and locked up together with Salim Abdul Hadi, who was later executed.

I asked them if this was not simply another version of the Nazi flag, they responded, proudly, "No, it is the Nazis that are imitating our flag and not the other way around. Besides, the Nazis are National Socialists, while we are Syrian Nationalists."

After I had installed myself in Berlin, I reported to the university's ear, nose and throat clinic, which was called 'Charité', and introduced myself to Professor Carl von Eicken. The professor read my references and handed me over to one of his assistants, the English-speaking Dr. Kuttner. It was Dr. Kuttner who would be my foremost teacher in the art of surgery, and I followed him like a shadow, day and night, on his rounds. At the same time I paid a reasonable amount to take a course in operating on corpses, with the 'Oberarzt' [head doctor], Professor Klaus Vogel and his closest colleague, Professor Hermann Barth. The course was not compulsory, but the 20 hours of operating was useful practice.

Most doctors and trainee doctors were members of the National Socialist Party (NSDAP), while many were members of the Waffen SS. Professor von Eicken was in those days a distinguished ear doctor. In the 1930s he had removed a polyp from one of Hitler's vocal chords and it would be he who would examine Hitler's injured eardrums after the attempted assassination on 20 July 1944. In spite of this, von Eicken never joined the Nazi Party. The 50,000 Mark that the German leader was said to have paid for the operation on his vocal chords were deposited in a bank

and administered through The von Eicken Fund, which supported poor students.

One day, Professor von Eicken asked me how long I intended to stay with the Charité. "As long as you let me," I replied bluntly. The professor looked at me, trying to find the right words, and then said, "Personally, I have nothing against you, but you must understand that this is a German hospital, and many of the patients dislike foreigners." I felt hurt deep in my soul and made an instant decision to go back home. But then came the war.

As of 1 September 1939, I had lost all contact with Palestine, which meant, amongst other things, that my allowance from home had come to a sudden end. So far, I had worked as an unpaid volunteer, a so-called 'consultant' doctor. There were also German colleagues in the same position and we were called '*Die Schwänze*' [the tails]. For us Arabs in Berlin, things changed rapidly. After Britain and France declared war on Germany on 3 September, the Americans took over our interests. The situation was difficult. Although we were not British citizens, we had British passports since Palestine was still under the British Mandate. For a few days I played truant and tried to find answers to all the questions that had arisen due to my visa. Almost at once, I received a letter from von Eicken stating that he wished to see me the next morning at eight o'clock. He was shocked by my explanation of my situation, and especially by the fact that I had no funding, and after a few months he employed me to work in the

clinic for 272 Mark per month; prior to that I received free meals at the hospital restaurant. At this time there were around 40 Arab students in Berlin. Most of us regularly took loans from the American Consulate, where the friendly Mr. Wilson worked dutifully at his task.

During the very early stages of the war I found myself in trouble because of my British passport. One day, upon coming home from the clinic I found a sturdy policeman waiting for me at the door of my new landlady, Frau Bachmann at Ranke Street. I was ordered to pack my bags right away and told that I would shortly be on my way to a labor camp. I tried, but in vain, to convince the law enforcer that I was not a British citizen. At the police station the discussion became rather heated and, out of mercy, I was allowed to phone the Foreign Ministry, where I was fortunate enough to get hold of the employee who had arranged my German visa. After a lot of arguing it was confirmed that I was an Arab from the British Mandate of Palestine, but certainly not a British citizen. During the following year I was forbidden to leave Berlin and had to report to the police every Tuesday, although these restrictions would eventually be lifted.

After the fall of Poland, it really became noticeable that there was a war going on. In the beginning the allies were satisfied with dropping leaflets over Germany, and nothing else happened. One day a manager from the Reichsärztekammer, the German association for MDs, phoned me and invited me to join a group of for-

eign doctors on a trip to Posen and Bromberg. As we know, it was the so-called 'Blood Sunday' on 3 September 1939 that caused the Germans to start a real war in Poland. During the trip we saw the true face of war. We were dragged from farm to farm where eyewitnesses had witnessed the murder of their own families by 'Eisenbahner' (railway men), but had themselves escaped. A German lawyer swore, with tears in his eyes, that he had seen thousands of civilians living near the border slain by the Poles.

The war continued, and my contacts with my homeland became less and less frequent. In the beginning the Red Cross could forward small signs of life in the form of postcards, but these would also stop. During the first years of the war we hardly noticed anything: our days were miserable, but there was no real lack of food, even though one had to go to several shops to fill a packet with cigarettes as no shop would sell more than six to any customer.

In 1941, the Grand Mufti came to Berlin. He came straight from Persia when the English invaded the country, and with him came the Iraqi Prime Minister, President Rashid Ali Al-Kailani¹⁰. After the war they were both heavily criticized for 'cooperating' with the Germans. This matter could be discussed in greater depth, but as it was, in 1941 they did not have much choice. Al-Kailani was facing a death sentence in Baghdad and all of the Middle East was then under British control. Some of his members of parliament were caught and executed. Had he tried to escape to the

¹⁰ Often pronounced Al-Gailani.

Far East or the USA, sooner or later he would have probably been handed over by the British to the authorities in Baghdad. Although the Grand Mufti had not been sentenced to death, he too had a price on his head, and the English had promised a generous reward to anyone who caught him alive. Al-Kailani was a new acquaintance when I met him in Berlin, but I had known the Grand Mufti since we were both boys. When I last saw him in Jerusalem he was still a relatively young man with red hair and beard. He was always calm and spoke in a low voice. When we saw each other again in Berlin he had become thinner and somewhat older.

During the Grand Mufti's time in Germany I occasionally visited him at his villa in Krumme Lanke on the outskirts of Berlin. The Mufti lived a good life and he often invited me for meals at his home. He was *persona grata* with the German authorities, which planned to use him at a later stage. During these meals, I tried to find out as much as possible about his cooperation with the Germans but he did not reveal very much. Nevertheless, he spoke much more when the subject of Arab problems arose. During his stay in Germany he often traveled to Rome or Yugoslavia to visit the Moslem population there. The Grand Mufti was surrounded by a number of colleagues who included a friend of mine, Dr. Musa Al-Husseini, who had a great passion for old Arab literature and good food. After the war he was accused by the Jordanian authorities of cooperation in the murder of King Abdallah in 1951 and hanged.

I find it very hard to believe that either Al-Kailani or the Grand Mufti were Nazis deep in their hearts and souls. The Nazi ideology contained far too many things that went against the Arab way. Both of them, however, should be characterized as real politicians. The Grand Mufti was the number one enemy of the British in the Middle East, and it was therefore quite natural that he should attempt to cooperate with the Germans in order to reach his goals. He was concerned only with purely Arab interests, and the Germans had no illusions. The Grand Mufti's cooperation with the Germans was conditional, not only on his demand that the Germans recognize Palestine as an independent state should they win the war, but also on the assumption that this recognition should extend to the small sheikdoms along the Persian Gulf. The Germans did not agree to the second demand; perhaps an idea about the great oil resources lay in the way.

The Grand Mufti always had new plans. One of these concerned North Africa, where he thought that Germans and Arabs should be 'brothers in arms'. To put this plan into action, he requested both weapons and instructors. He, on his side, would mobilize the Arabs along the coast and the fighting Berber tribes on a grand scale, which could have put an end to the colonial empire in North Africa. For several reasons the Germans did not find the idea tempting. To start with, they had no wish to annoy the Vichy Government with a planned, massive coup in North Africa, and they preferred to postpone the plan. There is no doubt that the Grand Mufti took Germany's rejection of his plans for North

Africa badly. Maybe he felt that his political usefulness for the future was over. His attempt to do the same thing in Germany as Sherif Hussein of Hejaz had done during World War I was doomed to failure. The eventual goal for both men was the Arabs' liberation from foreign sovereignty.

In spring 1941, during his regency in Baghdad, Al-Kailani declared war on Britain. He did not want to simply throw the British out of Iraq; he also wanted Iraq to become a republic. At first he was very successful with his troops taking control of Baghdad and large parts of the country, but the British regained control with help from Glubb Pasha's Arab Legion from Jordan. It might seem odd that the Arab prince, Abdallah allowed Arabs to fight Arabs in Iraq, but the problem must be seen from a family perspective as well. The Iraqi royal family were also Hashemites. At that time in Iraq, Abdul Ilah, Abdallah's nephew, was the prince. Even if Abdallah had considered the idea of voting for the Germans for political reasons, he would not have sullied the family honor by letting his relatives down.

To the Germans, Al-Kailani's revolt in Iraq was very important, at least from a propaganda point of view. Whilst the revolt was going on it remained front-page news, although the lack of interest displayed in higher circles did not encourage the Germans to donate weapons, ammunition or airplanes to Kailani's army. After a month, the British were back in control and the exiled prince,

in addition to his friend Nuri Sa'id, the head of the government, could return home from his refuge in Amman.

It has been said that there were political disagreements between the Grand Mufti and Al-Kailani during their stay in Germany. Personally I have not found anything that supports such an idea. On the contrary, the Grand Mufti wrote in his memoirs that the cooperation between them was intimate, especially concerning their unified negotiations with the German Government.

After Germany's collapse, the Grand Mufti fled to Egypt via France, where he has lived ever since. Being somewhat of an expert at avoiding his enemies, he managed to avoid all the traps the British put in his way. Al-Kailani also managed to get out of Germany in one piece and found a refuge in Saudi Arabia, where he remained until it was time for him to re-surface once more during Kassem's bloody revolt in Baghdad in the summer of 1958. Eventually he would be disfavored by Kassem and sentenced to death yet again, but the sentence was never realized.



War and Peace

For me, the sad, everyday life of war continued. After a while, the number of doctors at the clinic decreased since our German colleagues were sent to the front. Of the 15 assistant doctors, only six or seven remained. There were three foreigners at the clinic: myself, the Bulgarian, Kitoff, and the Spaniard, Del Fresno. Our working load became heavier and heavier. I was responsible for two whole wards, including operations, rounds and polyclinic work. On top of this we took turns in being on call and held a number of temporary posts in town.

After the peace and quiet of 1941 and 1942, allied planes started to bomb Berlin. By 1 March we had experienced one attack involving a thousand planes. For psychological reasons the attack had been scheduled to coincide with German Airforce Day. Plane after plane flew over the city, emptying its devastating load. The German Airforce fired until the sky was glowing, but it hardly helped; it was as if all the gates of hell had been opened. In the beginning we could still recognize the single explosions from where we were hiding in our cellars, but the bombardment became like a continuous earthquake. Eventually the light went out in the shelter. When the danger was over and we came up from

the shelters we were met by a sight hard to describe. Large parts of the city were burning and where houses had once stood, only iron skeletons remained. It was inconceivable that the streets would ever be useful again.

The worst problem was the lack of sleep. Every now and then I went to the suburb of Röntgental outside Berlin where I rented a room from a farmer. The trip took an hour and a half but was worth the trouble. There, one could get a full night's sleep. In Röntgental there were no air raid warnings because the bombers were not interested in the unimportant village. At dusk I could see the explosions in Berlin and after a while the fires turned the sky crimson. Sometimes, the spotlights would hit an attacking plane and follow its journey to the ground, engulfed in smoke and flames. The whole situation was, as somebody expressed it, "*grausam schön* " [painfully beautiful].

The continuous air raids, the lack of sleep, the workload, the blackout and the lack of luxury goods had its toll on people's nerves. One was living under stress, anguish and fear. The irritation in trams and at restaurants was noticeable. Life became monotonous. There was no more light music but only classical and military music. One day, in the summer of 1942, the Association of German Doctors notified me that I had been granted a diploma in the field of ear, nose and throat diseases. This was encouraging news in my gray life.

For months I tried to obtain a permit to leave Germany but all my applications were turned down. Even though the doctors at the clinic received extra food coupons since we were considered laborers, I lost about 20 kilograms. After eight months of warfare against the authorities, I spoke to Al-Kailani who promised to see what he could do, and three days later everything was arranged. Since my fiancée Britta Geston, who I had met in Berlin in 1938, was Swedish and her homeland was the only neutral country from where I could possibly travel anywhere else, I decided to go there first.

One early morning in August 1943, we got on a train to Copenhagen. All the money I had on me was ten Reichsmark, which was the amount I was entitled to take out of the country. The contrasts between Berlin and Copenhagen were enormous. That year, the Danish shops still had goods to sell and it was possible to get a wonderful ham and egg breakfast, while at the bakery it was possible to eat one's fill of pastries; in Berlin, the shops were often '*Ausverkauft*' [sold out]. The next day we arrived in Malmö, and this was a totally new world: no blackout, dance music, newspapers from both sides ... and, with no airplanes to force me out of bed, no lack of sleep. Sweden was an oasis of peace.

In Sweden I took the opportunity to take a proper rest. We stayed at my father-in-law's farm outside the town of Västerås. Upon arriving in the country, I married my fiancée almost immediately, and our future seemed very bright. Nevertheless, within

a few months I became extremely homesick and we started to try to discover if it would be possible for us to go to Palestine. The only possibility seemed to be to get on a Swedish ship bound for South America, get off in Lisbon and then try to get to Palestine from there. It did not promise to be an easy journey, and we did not like the idea of finding ourselves stuck in Lisbon.

While we were still considering our options, our first child, a girl we named Fawzia was born. Shortly afterwards we discovered that the Swedish Red Cross diplomatic ship, the 'Drottningholm', was to sail to the Middle East in order to exchange diplomats and some detainees. We were neither diplomats nor detainees, which meant that we would not be allowed on the ship. After some hard work on the part of the Egyptian minister, Ahmad Kadri Bey, the authorities concerned gave in and we were allowed to travel on 'The Drottningholm'.

In March 1945 we went to Gothenburg and boarded 'The Drottningholm'. As mentioned earlier, my trip on 'The Strathmore' cost approximately 160 Swedish Crowns, whilst this trip cost nearly 4,000. Our first goal was Norway where the ship made a short break before continuing to Liverpool. Between the two harbors we were approached by a German submarine that sent some officers on board to show us the way through the dense German minefields. The meeting with the submarine had its good points. Like most of the passengers, I was hanging over the gunwale when the officers came on board, and one of them

immediately rushed towards me and shook my hand with the words: "*Guten Tag, Herr Doktor*" [Good day, doctor]. That was the first time I heard a German officer greet me with a good day instead of '*Heil Hitler*'. When he noticed that I did not recognize him right away, he jogged my memory. He had belonged to the staff of the Grand Mufti and had been the liaison officer between the Mufti and the German authorities. Now he was the captain of a submarine and could not conceal that he no longer believed in German victory. He tried to keep his head high, but behind the mask one could see a man representing a state on its way to defeat.

The next stop on our way to the British Isles was the Fairy Islands. The whole harbor was filled with small boats that darted like arrows back and forth inside the wave breakers. Everybody seemed so happy that one wondered whether they realized that there was a war going on. Somehow they reminded me of the old lady in a small English village who, if asked about the war and Hitler, would say: "Hitler? Never heard of him."

The trip along the English coast was interesting. From time to time we saw airplanes attacking submarines with bombs. Unfortunately the distance was too far to be able to see the effects of the attacks. After the touching ceremonies when the English returned to Liverpool, the ship made a big turn out into the Atlantic Ocean, avoiding the mines along the French coast. Lisbon was a show of southern gaiety where it was still possible to laugh and the air was

warm and nice. At Gibraltar we met an American war fleet, balloons and airforce, but things still remained calm and peaceful.

After about three weeks, on a sunny day in April 1945, we landed at Port Said. It felt wonderful to be in the Orient again. The shops were open late at night, life did not die like in other cities and it was possible to get a shave at ten o'clock at night. We went directly to the railway station and got on the first train to Cairo, where my brother, Abdul Munim, greeted us with open arms. During the war years he had advanced and was now deputy chief for The Palestine Agency in Egypt. The Palestine Agency had managed all commercial and economic issues between Egypt and Palestine during the war and functioned like an embassy, even though Palestine was not a free country.

A few weeks later I was once more on a train passing through the Sinai, en route to Lydda. Every joint in the rails brought me closer to all I had been longing for all those long years: home, home, home. When I was on the train, I did not realize that I was leaving one war to soon be in the middle of another. My 'calm' country, just a few months later, would be turned into a chaotic combination of murder, terror and exploding grenades, and machine-gun fire and armed assault would become common occurrences.

After only a week in Jerusalem I was summoned for questioning by the head of the CID, the British Intelligence Service in Pales-

tine. I was actually surprised that the order did not come earlier: most people coming home from Germany had been questioned immediately upon their arrival. My father's connections and the fact that I had not been politically active in Germany made the CID treat my case rather lightly.

The first phrase, "You behaved well in Germany," made me cheer up. The questioning continued with Turkish coffee and the only annoying aspect of the whole encounter was the presence of a notorious employee behind a desk who wrote down every word spoken. The director of the CID pointed towards a bookshelf filled with folders, each marked with a name. At the first glimpse I could see that many of my Arab friends and acquaintances from Berlin were there. There was no reason to deny that I knew them all. Then an intensive cross examination started about what so-and-so had said then-and-then and what I myself had said there-and- there. As proof of how well-informed he was, the interrogator told me that he knew that we Arabs, on a certain spring day in 1941, had met at a café on Kurfürstendamm. There we had discussed the possibility of taking a quick military training course somewhere in the vicinity of Cologne in order to go to Iraq and take part in Kailani's short-lived war against Great Britain in May 1941. We all had different opinions about what stand to take, but history solved the problem for us when the coup in Iraq was crushed before we had even made up our minds. For security reasons I, of course, gave as little information as possible about my friends; whatever they did during the war it

would have been wrong of me to report on my fellow countrymen. Despite the fact that I was not interested in the war, I had no reason to help the English intelligence in Palestine. My country was after all under occupation, even though the League of Nations preferred to call the situation a mandate. It is hard to forget that many thousands of my compatriots in Palestine were victims of British gunfire and even more were wounded in battle. A world war does not change such a thing, even if the occupation force struggles for something called justice and freedom - albeit for the sake of its own interests.

The effectiveness of the CID was astonishing. In my file I found photocopies of several letters that I had sent from Sweden to my friends in Berlin. How the CID could get hold of such correspondence is a well-kept secret between the English and their agents in Germany. I was surprised though that they did not ask me how I managed, with a British passport, to stay clear of the labor camps in Germany in 1939, and how I was able to get a residence permit and a permit to leave Germany during the height of the war whilst still holding a British passport.

I cannot end my story about my time in Germany without mentioning the connection between the persecution of the Jews there and the loss of my homeland. Between 1933, when the Nazis came to power and their fall in 1945, they caused, perhaps without knowing it, the misery of my people. By their persecution of the Jews, they forced many thousands to flee from Ger-

many and Europe and, even as far back as in 1922 and 1936, to come in large numbers to Palestine.

The Arabs indeed regret the methods used by the Nazis to exterminate the Jews, but we are at the same time horrified by the 'Nazi methods' that the Jews have used against the Arabs in Palestine. There has been no Auschwitz or Belsen in my country, but the Jews have committed genocide against women, children and men. Hitler almost exterminated an entire people in Europe, but the Jews have tried to do the same to us. By resorting to terror, they have forced an entire nation to live as refugees, whilst taking their homes, money and possessions. Even if these Arabs are alive, they are more like the living dead, and perhaps even worse off than the dead. They are living under miserable physical and emotional conditions. Thousands have already been sacrificed to starvation and cold.

The Jews in Germany did not have the same rights as Germans and it is the same with the 175,000 Arabs who live in the Jewish state, although they are Israeli citizens. The Israelis play the role of the master, calling themselves 'God's chosen people'.

In 1917, the Jews accounted for approximately ten percent of the population of Palestine while 40 years later, the Arabs represented only ten percent of the population. The Arabs are not allowed to move inside the Jewish state without the permission of the Jewish authorities, and their villages are under military

surveillance. Both Christians and Moslems are held to be Fifth Columnists, and the state has the right to take away from them the little they have left. The Israeli Arabs are second-class citizens. In spite of all this, the Jewish State is in many people's eyes 'the most democratic state in the Middle East'.



The Arab League and Arab Unity

In order to properly understand the political blocs in the Middle East one must skip backwards in time. Earlier, I described how Zionism had grown from being a more or less idealistic concept to a political power. In doing this, it was aided by the English, whose actions were dictated by the need of the British Empire to secure its sea routes. The interests of the third actor, which is now called the Arab League, are not so easy to define.

The weakness of Arab nationalism has always been that it is so divided, due to the fact that we are talking about a number of peoples several-million strong, spread over a large area, whose actual link is their religion, history and language. The history of the modern Arab states is a story of the struggles of separate groups against oppression. It started with the Turks and the Arab Revolt during World War I.

During the years that followed, it was a totally different ball game. This time the struggle was against certain Western countries that tried to take over after the Turks. Behind the revolt against the Turks were nationalistic dreams, and Hussein and Faisal did what they could to consolidate their power with

the assistance of Britain. The fact that this was disliked by people such as Ibn Saud, the leader of the Wahabites is easy to understand. His stand can clearly be traced to the acts he undertook against the Hashemites. The old King Hussein was driven away from the area around Mecca and Medina. When the sons, at a later stage, mounted the throne in Trans-Jordan and Iraq, there was at the very best armed neutrality. From an atmosphere of distrust, one cannot suddenly count on a wave of trust and cooperation. Geographically we are talking about two different worlds that have little or nothing in common.

In old times Iraq and Palestine-Jordan were seen as one naturally defined area, then called the 'Fertile Crescent'. It has always been a big step from this fertile crescent to the deserts lacking water on the Arab Peninsula. As recently as 30 to 40 years ago, groups of armed Bedouins still took their 'tribute' from the groups of pilgrims and trade caravans. Shortly after the end of World War I, the dream about a greater Syria was rejuvenated when King Faisal managed to control all the land from Aleppo to the Red Sea, except for the two occupied zones, Lebanon and Palestine.

Since the French and their British 'brothers' would share the remains after the Turkish capitulation the Arab sovereignty quickly came to an end. From the very start there were major problems. The Christians of Lebanon would not consider being part of a state where the Moslems might be a majority, and the situation was exploited by the French, who succeeded in imposing their

mandate. Concerning Palestine, the local Arab population hoped for self-rule, whilst the Jewish minority, supported by international Zionism, argued as passionately for Palestine's separation from the Fertile Crescent. This division was to become even more obvious. When Faisal moved to Iraq, his brother Abdallah took over the dream of creating a Greater Syria. His nomination was opposed by not only the French but also by the Syrian Nationalists, who considered him so deeply in debt to Great Britain that he would never be able to act independently.

The politics of Great Britain during the 1920s and 1930s were designed to help the Jews first and then the Arabs. The maxim 'to divide and rule', which has been practiced by Great Britain in various parts of the world, was turned into a fine art in Palestine by the British without any regard for the wishes of the majority of the people.

The political developments in Europe entered a critical stage in 1938, when Britain was ready to change course in Palestine in order to protect its flank in the event of an international conflict. Suddenly, the British were ready to agree to Arab demands that had earlier been refused. They even took the risk of suggesting a limitation on the number of Jewish immigrants allowed into Palestine, but unfortunately, the final draft of the legislation was written in such a way that both the Jews and the Arabs turned it down.

The fact that the Zionists would be on the British side during World War II was obvious right from the start. The Nazi policy against the Jews, the Nuremberg Laws, not to mention the coming systematic extermination, both contributed to the decision of Jews to support the English throughout the war.

Generally, the Arabs chose the same side, with the exception of Rashid Ali Al-Kailani's *coup d'etat* in Iraq in 1941. There was a fear that possible victories by the allies could turn the Middle East into a battlefield. Whilst Rommel was achieving success in North Africa, the Arabs of Egypt joined forces with the British, and together they managed to stop the German-Italian war machine. In their own interest, the English, having recognized the tendency toward Arab unity during World War II, took every opportunity to demonstrate their friendship with the Arabs. It should be pointed out that the British Government was seriously worried that its allies, through the cooperative France under Vichy, had sent war materials via Syria in order to strengthen Rashid Ali.

I mentioned earlier that the Grand Mufti and Rashid Ali did not receive the support they needed from the Germans in order to carry out their plans. When the pro-British general, Nuri Said was once more head of state in Iraq, he devoted a lot of his time to thinking about how to form Palestine-Jordan, Lebanon and Syria into states. According to Said, the new Syria should unite with Iraq in an Arab union, and this unity would be the key to

solving all the problems of the Middle East. The British gave the plan their blessing, perhaps because it contained a passage that gave the Jews in Palestine a certain amount of autonomy. Such a solution would enable the British to keep clear of all the intricate promises and obligations to which they had committed both themselves and the Jews. Any major complications in Syria were not expected by the British Foreign Department since Syria-Lebanon had been taken by the British and the Free French forces under General Latroux, following the revolt in Iraq. On 28 September 1941, the republic of Syria declared independence and by 26 November the same year, Lebanon followed suit. Of course this was strongly disliked by General De Gaulle and the Free French who predicted an end to the French Empire in the Middle East but did not dare to enter an open conflict. Nevertheless, they postponed the final liberation as long as possible, and only left Syria and Lebanon after some bloody revolts in Syria in 1946.

The Iraqi head of state's plans for a Greater Syria involved a number of political problems, which were not fully appreciated in the neighboring countries. King Abdallah would never accept a republican Syria, and he encouraged the Syrian Nationalists to join with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Prime Minister Nahas Pasha of Egypt used the idea as the basis for a new anti-British campaign. When the threat of a German invasion of Egypt after the battle at Al-Alamein was definitely over, the cries for independence were heard amongst the Arabs of Egypt, and when

the outcome of the war became more and more clear, the efforts toward national independence increased. When the British supported the formation of a huge state in the north of the Middle East, the Egyptians said that this would threaten their role as the leading Arab nation of the Middle East in the future. Nahas Pasha opened negotiations with all the Arab states with the intention of gathering opposition towards Nuri's plans, not because they represented Arab unity, but because they represented the birth of a competing state. He was supported by Ibn Saud, who watched the 'Hashemite' attempt at hegemony with the same suspicion.

After a couple of conferences that dealt mainly with Nuri's plans, the future Arab League began to take shape at the end of 1944. At a conference held in March 1945, the Arab League became an official organization, and it was decided that all of the seven member states should each have one vote in a council led by a secretary-general, while a number of special committees for specific issues would be created to complement the council's activities. It was stated in the founding document, that all countries should respect the form of rule in the neighboring states and not interfere in their internal matters.

The Arabs of Palestine were represented during the negotiations, despite the fact that Palestine was not an independent state, and it was decided that a representative from Palestine should be present during all council negotiations. It was stressed that the

Arab League saw Palestine as an important and equal member and that without Palestine, the Arab World was not complete. The protocol stated that the persecution of Jews around the world was not to be taken as a pretext for an even greater injustice against the Arabs of Palestine, who had been living in the Palestinian homeland for 1,300 years.

It is certainly true that Arab unity had a weak start, inasmuch as it was formulated by the Arab League. Nevertheless, it should be said that the rivalry of the past is not to be traced to various peoples but is rooted in dynastic relationships. From a slow start the Arab League, on a cultural level, has reached significant results of cooperation, preparing the ground for a spiritual closeness amongst its members, whilst on a political level the League has served as a link between the seven member states and public opinion. In an international context it was natural for the League to unite as an Arab bloc, especially in the UN.

In the struggle against imperialist oppression the Arab League has repeatedly expressed its solidarity with African and Asian states, and with regard to the Palestine Question, the Arab states are united in their demand for Palestine's independence. Even if the unity in certain issues was disturbed by local power struggles between 1945 and 1948, the Arabs were determined not to allow Palestine to fall under Jewish dominance. After the UN decided upon the partition of the country, the political

temperature raised in the Middle East. The sky darkened and Jews as well as Arabs prepared for the coming power struggle.



The Zionists Charge Their Batteries

During World War II, the Arab forces regrouped in order to strengthen their unity as mentioned earlier, mainly because the Zionist appetite for Palestine had increased due to the war. At first, the Zionists were satisfied with the level of Jewish immigration, which increased both the number of Jews in Palestine and their influence on the Administration, but after a while the Zionist leaders wanted to increase the immigration to such an extent that the Jews would become a majority in Palestine, and, by doing this, to prepare for the formation of a Jewish state.

These ideas turned up in the so-called Baltimore Program, developed almost entirely by American Zionists at a congress at the Baltimore Hotel in New York in 1942. After the mass persecution of Jews in Europe, the new demands from the Zionists did not come as a surprise to the men in power in America or the general public, who were psychologically prepared to allow one injustice to be redeemed by another. The Baltimore Program was supported by the American press and President Roosevelt, and both Roosevelt and Governor Dewey promised, during their campaigns in 1944, to support the program. Of equal importance to the Zionists was the fact that Attlee's Labor Party came to

power in Britain following the end of the war in 1945. Earlier, the British Prime Minister had stated that he felt that increased Jewish immigration to Palestine was justified. According to the program, the Arabs that would be forced away from their land would be settled in new places of residence 'elsewhere'. At least as important was the support that was to be found in President Truman's pro-Zionist stand: the president had repeatedly expressed his solidarity with the Jews and their demands to open the borders for free immigration, or in any case the transportation of Jewish refugees from the camps in Europe.

Amidst a flurry of diplomatic activity, Zionist leaders made the military arrangements for the founding of a Jewish state. They concluded early on that they would need an experienced group of officers and junior officers to fight any opposition. They took into account the fact that the British Administration might oppose increased Jewish immigration to Palestine in spite of diplomatic success and that the military leadership might have to turn to large-scale illegal immigration. Experience gleaned from the Arab general strike in 1936 and the guerrilla war that followed had taught the Jews that they should not expect any mercy from the English occupiers but should be prepared to meet violence with violence. The Zionists were wrong. The events have shown that Britain did not use the same degree of violence against the Jews as it did against the Arabs during the Arab Revolt.

When the Zionist leaders started to prepare the groundwork for the Jewish state, they found difficulties where they were least expected. The heterogeneous Jewish people, brought together in Palestine from all corners of the world, lacked the outer prerequisites that are characteristic of a national state, including a common language. Through tireless efforts over many years, Jewish scholars managed to awaken the Hebrew language from its 2,000-year-long sleep and adapt it for modern use. It is true that Hebrew has been taught at Rabbinical schools all over the world for centuries, but the purpose was to enable rabbis to read the old Torah scrolls in their original form: thus, it was in Palestine that the new Hebrew evolved, mixed with numerous words borrowed from the major world languages.

One of the first wishes of a new nation state is to establish an army. The Jewish army was created during World War II after a proposal was submitted to the allied supreme command, formed as a brigade within the allied army. Due to the political circumstances, Field Marshall Wavell, who was in charge of the British forces in Egypt and the Middle East, responded very negatively to the idea. To sanction such a proposal during an ongoing war would help to create irritation in the Arab World and seriously harm the allies' position. After the battle of Al-Alamein, the political leadership in England, with Churchill in the front, decided to take the risk of founding a Jewish army, especially since the Egyptian Prime Minister, Nahas Pasha had already demonstrated his anti-British attitude. Officially, friendliness with the Arabs was

maintained, in a typically British way, but true to the principle of divide and rule it was seen as rather smart to have a Jewish counterpart to the planned Arab union.

During 1943, 30,000 men were recruited from among the Jews of Palestine, but the creation of the brigade was not made official until September 1944. The British supplied arms and instructors and managed, in a short period of time, to put together a force capable of taking part in real fighting, which saw its first action in Italy. After the war, these troops returned to Palestine, although the entire company was not demobilized and certain units remained under the British army for a long time. These forces became the backbone of the Jewish Haganah army at the outbreak of war in Palestine in May 1948, and were, so to speak, on the site before the war broke out. By then the Haganah had been expanded into a compulsory popular army, even though its illegal character meant its members could only be trained in secret. It is estimated that the Haganah army consisted of approximately 70,000 men, even prior to mobilization.

Beside this half-official army, there were two terrorist groups that operated in Palestine at this time, one being the Irgun Zvai Leumi and the other the Stern Gang. The first is described as a 5,000-man-strong organization of extreme Zionists with the goal of forming a Jewish state combining both Palestine and Trans-Jordan. In common with the Stern Gang, it was based on hard discipline and total mercilessness. Terror was the only recog-

nized way of struggle, and the number of bloody acts committed by Irgun and Stern is countless.

The smaller Stern Gang consisted of about 2,000 men. Of the total number, 600 were considered to make up the core of the group, although the exact number of members in Irgun and Stern was never known. During its existence, the Stern Gang waged a 'war' where terror attacks and murders were the most important ingredients. Politically, the Stern Gang was Communist and it received both arms and funding from the East.

Officially, the Jews have always said that the violent crimes committed by Irgun and Stern were mere bagatelles, and that Jews with good judgment have always tried to detach themselves from the arguments of both groups. This, however, is not entirely true, since the Jewish leaders saw terror as a necessary means to scare off the settled Arab population. Before and after the battles in 1948, the two gangs committed several violent acts and murdered the inhabitants of whole villages, thus delivering the radio commentators of the time effective propaganda, according to which it was made clear that they would threaten the remaining Arab Arabs with the same fate if they did not move voluntarily. After such treatment it is easy to understand why less than 200,000 Arabs dared to stay in Jewish-occupied Palestine.

It is clear that the Jewish war preparations should have alerted the Arabs more than they did, but one must bear in mind that

many of the Arab leaders of Palestine were in exile during World War II, sentenced to death by the British. One is justified, however, in asking why the remaining Arabs in Palestine were so passive. The very few who joined the Germans or fought in Iraq in the Al-Kailani revolt of 1941 are not worth mentioning since they numbered less than a few hundred. The explanation is, that at the beginning, the Jewish terror campaign was aimed at the British and therefore the Arab population could not care less.

It is true that the Arabs did not request permission from the English to form an Arab brigade within the British army. The main reason why this was so was that the memories of the earlier revolts were still fresh in their minds. From 1936 to 1939 the Arab uprising against the occupying power, which might have behaved more civilized than other colonial powers but followed the same overall pattern of behavior, was in full force. The hanging of patriots¹¹, prices on the heads of those in exile, the blowing up of entire villages, and fees and punishments for those villages that had helped the 'revolutionaries', created an atmosphere of hatred where no cooperation was possible, not even in one's own interest. The British used blatant terror tactics against the Arabs in Palestine.

¹¹ The British hanged, amongst others, the partisan leader Farhan Al-Saadi who was an old man. When the Frenchman, Gaston murdered a whole family camping in France, he too was sentenced to death but never executed, since he was over 70 years old. The French marshal, Pétain was also sentenced to death, but pardoned because of his age. One might wonder: Would the British hang one of their own, of the same age as Farhan Al-Saadi, irrespective of his crime?

Learning from history one has to ask if the Arabs were not mistaken in rejecting the conditions. During World War II, the Arabs of Palestine could not foresee the way in which the UN would totally betray them. The British had been given, by an international forum, the confidence to administer and develop an area so that the inhabitants would later be able to run it themselves. The occupiers understood this task, yet they put their own interests first, made agreements with the Zionist organization and opened the country for unrestricted immigration. When the 91 percent majority was weakened enough and the position of England in the region had become unbearable, the British simply pulled out of the complicated situation and handed over responsibility to the UN. But even the UN put into action a plan to divide Palestine that gave the most valuable parts of the country to the Jewish minority. As a result, more than one million Palestinian Arabs live in exile, in spite of the passing of 14 years since the end of the Palestine War.

The country was divided into four parts, each one under a guerrilla leader, but the forces were too small and too badly equipped to allow one to refer to an organized military operation on the part of the Arabs. The British tried to stop the strike in every way they could think of since the economic consequences were catastrophic. Whenever they failed, the Arabs became more certain that they were doing the right thing and sharpened their resistance. At last, the strike ended after the intervention of the Arab leaders. The UN plan had made it clear

that one of the conditions for establishing a national home for the Jews was that the Arabs would not suffer any religious or civil harm. If England had stayed committed to its earlier plans and created an independent Palestine with room for both Jews and Arabs to live and solve their problems alone, according to the current popular distribution, there would have been, after some internal disputes, a chance of reaching an agreement. Instead Great Britain preferred to stick its tail between its legs and leave the work unfinished, to be completed by people who knew even less about it.

A few commissions of international character passed through Palestine between 1946 and 1947 and one of them, led by the Swede, Emil Sandtröm, handed over two reports to the UN. At the talks in Geneva seven of the delegates recommended that the country be separated between the Arabs and the Jews, whilst three (India, Persia and Yugoslavia) suggested the foundation of a state with Arab and Jewish cantons, following the Swiss model.

When the UN took over after the British, the Palestine issue ceased to be a local problem and was given international status. The Jews, with their superior knowledge of international politics, had an enormous advantage over the Arabs when it came to influencing the development of this game. The Zionists have always wanted to play down their movement's contacts with the world of international politics as well as their ability to influence individual governments. It should be enough to state that three mil-

lion Jews live in New York alone and it would be almost impossible for an American president to be elected without the Jewish vote.

Through its international character the Zionist movement also has access to a number of trained political agitators, who are well acquainted with local customs and, through their familiarity with the local language, find it easier to let their voice be heard. A Palestinian Arab who barely speaks English cannot convince an American senator, but it is not unthinkable that a Mr. Cohen from Brooklyn can do the trick.

When the General Assembly handed over the report from the Palestine Commission to the specialized study committee in 1947, it did not come as a surprise that this committee, with 21 votes against 20, rejected the question of whether the UN had the competence to divide Palestine against the will of the Arab majority in the area. Unfortunately the General Assembly did not respect the outcome, and it brought up the question again.

An Arab request to bring the legal part of the Balfour Declaration before the International Court in the Hague was turned down with 25 votes against 18 and 11 abstentions. After the intense Jewish activity on the international level, the Zionists managed to prevent the obvious and indisputable right of ownership of Palestine for 1,300 successive years being questioned in court. The chance that the dream about a Jewish nation-state, following

such a long Jewish absence, would win the approval of the legal experts was, after all, rather slim.¹² Another resolution suggesting that Jewish refugees would be hosted somewhere else than in Palestine was voted down by 18 to 15 votes.

When the division of Palestine was decided upon by a special UN committee with 25 votes for, 13 against and 17 abstentions, the wise men in the UN must have looked at the problem with the same eyes as a mother with only one biscuit and two children, which led them to their solution: simply break it in two. The Palestine problem was not really that simple. In the biscuit of Palestine, the sugar happened to be only on one side whilst the other half had a bitter taste of sand and gravel. The committee should have remembered the Biblical story of how Solomon dealt with the problem of the two women who each claimed to be the mother of the same baby. Solomon suggested dividing the baby between them and the false mother cheered, while the real mother wept. And so it was that the Zionists in New York and Jerusalem cheered about the partition of Palestine. The wise men of the UN, as well as the seven members in the special commission that first suggested the division, should have thought in the same way as Solomon, because the division of a baby or a land

¹² In relation to a similar dispute that was brought up at the International Court in the Hague, the American magazine 'News Week' of 18 January 1960 read as follows: "Minquiers and Ecrehos (Great Britain versus France). Two small groups of islands off the French coast, which have been disputed since 1066, were demanded by France. The court decided that 'direct evidence of ownership' (by Great Britain) weighs heavier than indirect assumptions based on things in the Middle Ages."

means death or at least mutilation. The Jewish part of Palestine consisted of the most fertile areas of the land and was rich in water, while in the parts that remained, there was no possibility to create an independent state. The UN created the problem and must now face the burden of supporting the enormous refugee camps around the borders of Palestine. After having been delayed twice, the vote on the division of Palestine was held in the General Council on 29 November 1947. For an approval of the plan, two thirds of the votes were demanded. The resolution was taken with 33 votes against 13 and ten abstentions. The delay from November 26 to 29 gave the Jews time to collect the necessary 'yes' votes. In addition, the Soviet Union, for the first time, voted on the same side as the USA for the division of Palestine.

A closer look at how Palestine was to be divided reveals that a terrible injustice was suffered by the Arabs of Palestine. The most fertile parts of the country, along the Mediterranean coast and around the Sea of Galilee in the north were given to the Jewish minority. In addition to this, the Jews were given Arab land around Akka, Nazareth in the north and Gaza in the south west. The Negev, where no Jew has ever lived but where there was a considerable Arab population, happened to fall within the new Jewish state. As a matter of fact, the Jews owned only one percent of the whole Negev area, which constituted 40 percent of Palestine. The planned border went right alongside a row of Arab cities like Beer Sheba, Ghaza, Ramleh, Lydda, Qalqilia, Tul-

karm, Nazareth and so on. Whilst the houses and the streets happened to fall on the Arab side, the fields around the orange groves, the olive groves and the rest of the usable land fell on the Jewish side. In the city of Tulkarm, the border went across the railway tracks so that the transportation net became useless. The demarcation line through Palestine was drawn at the desk and caused the most horrible conditions as it failed to accurately represent the distribution or percentage of the two populations. In spite of the fact that the Jewish population had not yet reached 30 percent, the Jews received 60 percent of the land, according to the UN Partition Plan. Whole Arab cities like Yaffa were allotted to the Jews - in this particular case, because of the city's closeness to Tel Aviv. The fact that the loss of income from orange exports would have terrible consequences for the Arabs of Palestine was simply not taken into consideration.



The New Type of Human Being

Upon my return to Jerusalem I opened an ear clinic in Mamilla Road, but I performed all operations at a hospital that belonged to an old colleague, Dr. Wallach, an Orthodox Jew who had lived all his life in Palestine. Even my Arab colleague, the ear specialist, Dr. Husam Al-Dajani operated there, and Wallach's patients included both Arabs and Jews. I soon had many opportunities to form a comprehensive picture of what had happened in the country since my departure. Let me say from the very beginning that nine years is a long time in a human being's life. During this time my attitude towards Palestine and the rest of the world had been significantly altered by my time spent studying in England, the war years in Germany, and my marriage in Sweden, not to mention a certain maturity. It is said that distance brings perspective, which was certainly true in my particular case.

At the time of my departure from Palestine, the Arabs had been in the midst of an enormous battle with the English. To be sure, there was a Jewish problem but it was not so accentuated. Even though the first wave of Jewish immigration came in 1933, at the time of my departure in 1936 it had not really had any effect on the society. Neither I nor the majority of the Arabs of Palestine

understood how the coming waves of immigration would affect the destiny of our people. During the 1,300 years the Arabs have been living in Palestine, the country has experienced both periods of cultural awakening and periods of decay, which, to a certain extent, have depended on religious factors as well as the governors of the country. Under the great Salah Ed-Din, Palestine was at its cultural peak, as confirmed by architectural remnants. Famous mosques were founded, and learned Arabs spread their knowledge of medicine to the West, while literature and poetry flourished. Palestine was a green oasis and irrigation channels provided life-giving water throughout the country. During the 400 years of Turkish occupation, much of the advancement made in the Arab Middle Ages was lost. When Palestine was conquered by the English in 1917, the curve of development had reached rock bottom, but the Arab renaissance had already started to become noticeable, although new developments in the region ensured that it never had the chance to flourish in the proper manner. Nevertheless, the illiterate Palestinian masses, within a few decades and against all odds, would eventually revive their cultural heritage.

One of the most commonly used Zionist arguments that the Jews have used in their attempts to legitimize the conquest of Palestine has always been: 'Look at the Arabs: for 1,300 years they have neglected the land', which is not totally true, since the advancements made in the Middle Ages are deliberately forgotten in this context. It is clear that a people cannot develop in any

field whilst suppressed by a foreign ruler that constantly puts its own interests above everything else. The time and energy of the people is mainly spent on achieving independence, which was the case with the Arabs of Palestine when they came under Ottoman rule. The Zionists have always pointed at their own flourishing hills as evidence of their people's will to live, and they have never failed to point to the poor huts of the Arab shepherds. But the argumentation is somewhat lacking. It is true that the Jewish hills are a sign of the strength of the Jewish people, but one has to ask how the Jews were able to implement so many drastic changes: the fact that millions and millions of US dollars and, at a later stage, West German money built Israel is only mentioned in whispers.

Very few people think about the fact that the people who were thrown out of Germany in 1939 were the European cultural elite, the product of many centuries of central European civilization, which reached its peak in the 1930s. These people had a first-class education. Of course, not all of them were able to practice their original professions upon their arrival in Palestine, but the majority had such high intellectual backgrounds that they were able, without any difficulty, to easily switch trades and specialize in entirely new fields. As long as the Jewish component in Palestine consisted of local farmers, the starting point for the two groups of populations was more or less equal. The local Jews, who often lived under worse conditions than the Arabs of Palestine, were supported by foreign capital, but this in itself meant very little for as long as they suffered from the same lack of specialists as their Arab neighbors.

The third actor in the drama treated the Arabs, throughout the 1920s and 1930s and in fact right up to 1948, as inferior. The English spirit of colonialism, already common in other parts of the world, was practiced in Palestine. During the British Mandate, the Arabs were unable to reach positions of responsibility in the British Administration. With regard to wages, we had to accept half of what less educated Englishmen received. Moreover, in the police force, for instance, it was unthinkable that an Arab would be allowed entrance to the English canteen. This racial discrimination created antagonism toward the occupation forces, which would last for the entire mandate period.

The foreign Jewish specialists who had been exiled from Germany became a decisive factor in the struggle between the local Arab and Jewish groups. With the aid of foreign capital and the toughened Jewish farmers, the Zionist kibbutzim were soon to prosper. The skilled immigrants who arrived in the first waves of immigration used all attainable capital in order to start new kibbutzim, which were established on land bought from poor Arabs. The larger areas of land acquired were gained in return for enormous sums of money paid to foreign landowners from Syria and Lebanon who happened to own land in Palestine. The new Jewish settlements showed World Zionism the way to facilitate mass immigration. At the same time a new creed was invented, namely, the belief that every Jewish city-dweller harbored a natural longing to return to nature and become a farmer; thus, the new Jewish type of human being was born.

In the course of the centuries, countless religious movements have seen the light and then disappeared amongst the Europeans, not forgetting Judaism. From the very beginning, the Jewish revival did not concern all the Jews, and in England and America, not to mention Sweden, for example, it was looked upon with skepticism. The Jews of these countries had for centuries fought to achieve social equality, and they were afraid that the rise of Zionism would threaten their rare successes. With Hitler, international anti-Semitism grew so much that even the Jew who strove for assimilation had to choose sides. In Jewish orthodox circles, the idea of 'Eretz Israel' was a logical consequence of religious belief: for thousands of years the religious Jews had wept as they remembered the destroyed temple at the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem and prayed for its reconstruction.

For the younger Jews the problem was not as simple. Many of the intellectual ones had lost their fathers' faith somewhere on the way, either partially or entirely. The intellectual who had been in contact with Communism could hardly avoid being influenced by the Marxist teachings. Nevertheless, both Nazism and Communism taught the Jews that their Jewish heritage weighed heavier than their actual deeds. It came as no surprise when the Zionist revival developed into a new ideology of which Nazism and Communism were important elements.

From the Nazi idea of the 'super human', the myth about the new Jewish type of human being was created: the strong, sporty,

healthy and clean individual with his roots firmly planted in the soil. The German '*Blut und Boden*' (blood and soil) theory was transmitted to the Jewish state and refined. Hitler tried to make National Socialism into a religion by using the existing myths about the Nordic race and by proclaiming "*Die Heiligen Quellen der Deutschen Kraft*" ["The holy sources of the German strength"]. The Zionists had something even better to show off: they already had a myth that had prevailed since the time of Abraham.

With some Nazi additions, the Jewish myth became such an efficient ideological glue, that it attracted the Jewish youth. How many tall and strong blonde Jews have been spared the humiliation of not being allowed to play with other children, or to compete on the same conditions, simply because of their Jewish heritage? Many of them struggled to compete anyway, but they were always scorned by the society in which they lived. They wanted so much to be part of the competition but were not accepted, and it was because of this that the desire for revenge was born and then strengthened when the Nazis used physical violence against them. The upbringing of the young people in the Jewish state reminds one of '*Die Hitlerjugend*' [Hitler Youth] and '*Der Arbeitsdienst*' [Labor Service].

During the revolution, but also in the 1920s and 1930s up until the big purge under Stalin, a significant part of the Communist elite consisted of Jews. Later, even Communism was to carry out a cleansing process, according to which the unwanted were

pushed out if not eradicated. Many Jews in lower positions thus became ideologically homeless and they brought their problems with them to Palestine. Israel is the first country since pre-historic times where the Communist idea of communal living has been practiced. Kibbutzim were established as communes where private ownership was abolished. The children were brought up in a special house whilst the adults were directed to the work for which the authorities deemed them most fit. If an individual needed a toothbrush or pocket money for a trip to town, it was signed for in the camp storehouse.

On the Arab side and all around the world, the question has been raised of how the Jews of Palestine, who were much fewer in number than the Palestinians, were already prepared for war in May of 1948. The Jewish population was then 650,000 compared to the 1.2 million Arabs. The secret lies mainly in the kibbutz organization. The kibbutzim were built on hilltops, often where two or more valleys cut through each other, and they were planned from the very beginning according to strategic principles. Each kibbutz provided for and protected itself: members cultivated the land with one hand and held a gun with the other. The Jewish state was ready for war long before any Arab had thought of anything else than peaceful coexistence, as had been the case for 2,000 years.

Before the end of World War II, certain groups of Zionists denied that a Jewish state was planned, and world opinion was pacified and misled into believing that Zionism simply meant the

search for a home for the Jewish refugees. As a matter of fact, there was a deliberate effort to portray the Jewish invasion as peaceful immigration. The Arabs have been accused of resisting the continuous infiltration by demanding an end to immigration and calling for laws to prevent Jews from buying land, thus displaying a lack of humanity towards Hitler's victims, and their feelings were compared to anti-Semitism. The accusation, however, is not waterproof. The Jews of Palestine knew very well that we, the Arabs of Palestine, had stated repeatedly that Palestine for humanitarian reasons was willing to receive a certain number of Jews but in proportion to the resources and size of the country, under the condition that other countries, for example Canada, Australia and the USA, did likewise and under the same conditions.

The Christian World has a guilty conscience when it comes to the Jewish people, since it was originally the Christians of Europe who persecuted the Jews and had no desire to keep them in their midst. The immigration curves of the USA were well known: so-and-so many foreigners, including Jews, were welcomed during a certain period, assuming they brought with them such-and-such an amount of money. The lack of humanity can certainly be discussed.

There was another idea that the Zionists managed to spread all over the world. It is mentioned spontaneously in every discussion about the Palestine Question: the idea of a homeless and persecuted people returning home, as it says in the Bible. This idea disregards the fact that the Israelites came to the land of Canaan as conquerors. As previously mentioned, their land under

David and Solomon involved only a part of Palestine for a relatively short period, whilst the Arabs have been settled in the country for centuries. Like Christianity and Islam, Judaism also spread far beyond the borders of the Orient where these religions were founded. As a consequence, the European Jews of our days are not kinsmen of the Israelites, but a European people like other European peoples. There are persons amongst the Negroes of America who have converted to Judaism, and they clearly have no relationship to the Biblical Israel. Many of the British and German Jews have blonde hair and blue eyes, as pointed out by the National Socialists in Berlin during the war: they, too, clearly lack any connection to the Biblical Israel. In Ethiopia the Jews have black eyes and curly hair, whilst an Egyptian Jew looks like any Egyptian, meaning that these Jews are at home in all of these regions and are clearly not homeless. As mentioned before, it was the Christian intolerance, particularly that of the Catholic Church, that made them homeless. Israel's British and American Jews certainly cannot be considered a persecuted people as Hitler did not manage to occupy either England or the USA. There is, however, a bond that pulls the Jews to Jerusalem and to Palestine: the Jewish religion. But Jerusalem and Palestine are as holy for Christianity and Islam; Jerusalem is so holy for the Moslems that it was to Jerusalem, not Mecca, that they first turned in prayer.

Zionism is a political movement, as already mentioned, and it has conquered Palestine using political means. That is why the Arab World looks upon the conflict in Palestine with political eyes.

Let us for a moment turn away from the Arab-Jewish problem and make a European parallel. In Switzerland there are three groups - the Germans, the French and the Italians - who have lived in peaceful coexistence for many years. Let us pretend that after the terrible destruction of World War II, the members of one of these three groups, upon the demand of their brothers on their side of the border, had started to promote the unilateral immigration of their countrymen. In the short period of ten years, the natural proportions between the three groups would have become so tilted that one of the three languages would have become the major language, while farming, as well as the economy, would have been controlled by the group in question, at least when it came to percentages.

Does anyone imagine that the two other groups would have simply sat by and quietly let it happen? Would it not be natural for the two other groups to beg their lingual partner countries for support and money to stop the process? Certainly the exploited groups would not suspect the third group of any aggressive intentions until the moment it became clear that it intended not only to help refugees, but to launch a real, armed invasion with the intention of ensuring that the one group should dominate at the expense of the two, supported by military, economic and political weapons.

Switzerland has indeed been invaded economically, not only by the three groups but by the entire world. The question concerns tax refugees, but the reaction of the Swiss has been exactly the

same as ours. Measures have been taken to protect against illegal or immoral capital and all Swiss newspapers talk about the risk posed by the infiltration of foreign capital at the expense of the Swiss people. It should be observed that the discussion started when the percentage of infiltration reached between two and three percent. In Palestine, the infiltration percentage was raised from six percent in 1917 to 33 percent in 1948.

Jewish propaganda around the world has for ages accentuated the theme of 'the little persecuted nation' against 'the big merciless Arab World', and it may be bought by people who have never set foot in the Middle East. The same Jewish propaganda omits to mention that behind this little nation is the entire Jewish World, in addition to a great number of co-actors who felt morally obliged to support this nationalistic madness. That they did so must be attributed to idealism rather than common sense. It is true that the Arabs of Palestine were supported by their neighbors, but the Arab World is heterogeneous and the support of seven Arab nations that were directly or indirectly involved can in no way be compared to the support gleaned by Zionism. For every military success there was a diplomatic failure of much greater importance, and Zionist propaganda did everything it could to destroy the prestige of the Arab countries, thus causing more damage than bullets and grenades.

After the end of the war the big groups of refugees from Palestine became an economic burden in the neighboring countries, thereby endangering their own social security. That same prob-

lem still prevails 14 years after the refugees were evicted from their homes. The refugees as a group were not poor, but the problem lies in the fact that their economic resources, worth millions of Swedish Crowns are still administered by the Jewish state, which uses this money to finance continuous mass immigration. Any suggestions by this state concerning compensation involve only minor sums and are conditional on the Arabs giving up all legal claims to their property and their right to live in Palestine. For the Palestinian refugees there is no other choice than half starvation and unemployment in the UN camps. In an environment where the number of calories is so small that it only protects against famine, no new initiatives are prospering. The forced unemployment has succeeded, in ten years, in effectively making a whole people lazy. Attempts to educate the refugee children have been made by various aid organizations, but these have failed to provide the necessary vocational training. The money gained from embroidering tablecloths does not feed many mouths in the Middle East.

In the struggle against the new Jewish type of human being, the Arabs of Palestine had no chance. There is no reason to deny this fact. Due to several centuries of occupation and the generally low level of education, the Arabs of Palestine were on a totally different level to the people of Europe. It might be worth mentioning that the level of education was no different from that existing in other countries between the Mediterranean and India; it would be unreasonable to expect a single group of Middle

Eastern people to have reached a level of education comparable to that existing amongst the intellectual elite of Europe!

In the USA, Jewish emigrants of the likes of Einstein and Oppenheimer, to mention but a few, pushed the USA forward in the worldwide competition with such speed that the local intelligentsia could hardly hope to compete. Meanwhile, the majority of the less famous specialists who remained after the superpowers had made their pick came to Palestine, and it was from within this circle that the soon-to-be world famous names evolved. The Arabs, therefore, should not have developed an inferiority complex due to having picked the shortest straw in this competition. Moreover, they have the right to demand of the world that it does not take sides because the 'other side' has a higher standard of living. What this kind of bias means in reality is that the Arabs, as the 'inferior' party, are not considered worthy of living under normal conditions and being treated as human beings.

The Jewish immigrants brought not only their Western culture but also their knowledge of terror and genocide. We, the Arabs of Palestine are sorry that our limited understanding of violence and underground activity was not as advanced as that of the Zionists. Our snipers learned to ambush and shoot individuals, but they did not learn how to massacre the residents of whole villages, including pregnant women and children. Where did the Zionists learn to bet on the sex of the unborn child before slashing the mother's belly open to look, as they did in Deir Yas-

sin and other places¹³? Even though these acts of terror were ascribed to the terrorist gangs Irgun and Stern, the Jewish people as a whole will always be held responsible. These bloody acts constituted deliberate terror that aimed at scaring away the local population and freeing more land for new Jewish immigrants.

In the summer of 1948, the Israeli Government announced that it was prepared to take responsibility for the acts of Irgun and the Stern Gang. In spite of this, the UN negotiator Folke Bernadotte was murdered in September of the same year by terrorists. The murderers are still free, including the Irgun leader Begin, referred to by many Arabs as the genocide specialist, who is now an honored member of the Jewish Parliament and the head of a political party. In his memoirs, he made no attempt to deny that a massacre took place in Deir Yassin and was content with remarking that it was merely one step in the emptying process.

¹³ - In the Arab village of Deir Yassin close to Jerusalem, on 9 April 1948, some 250 village women and children - born and unborn - were murdered whilst the men were out working. The bodies were thrown into the village wells.

- In the border village of Quibya, on the night of 15 October 1953, the Israelis killed close to 70 Arabs and injured about 15. The village was flattened to the ground. On this occasion, Israel was condemned by the Security Council for aggression against Jordan.

- On 28 February 1955, Israelis killed approximately 40 Arabs in Gaza. Again, the Security Council charged Israel with aggression.

- On 11 December 1955, the Jews murdered approximately 55 Arabs, amongst them a number of women at Al-Boteeha, close to Genezareth on the northern shore of the lake.



My Time in Jerusalem

The end of 1945 and the beginning of 1946 did not allow me to form any new perspectives on the state of affairs in the country. My practice was doing well and I was busy letting my wife in on the little everyday secrets of Arab life. The step from the well-organized life in Sweden to a life as a Moslem woman in Palestine must have been a very big leap for her, and I wanted to do whatever I could to make things easier. Incidentally, the British classified her, on her identity card, as a 'Moslem woman' with my family name, and the card bore no photograph. It was that easy to lose your 'white' identity.

Long before the events in the country became more serious, the British had divided Jerusalem into different zones, separated from each other by barbed wire fences. The checkpoints were manned by British soldiers, to whom the local population had to show their yellow identity cards. My wife and I lived in Zone A and so did my parents. The fear of terrorist attacks had grown and the security at the checkpoints was quite strict. Inside the different areas there were the occasional checks and rigid body searches. The contrast with peaceful Sweden was startling, and we often had a hard time not making fun of the young British soldiers that

stopped us now and then. I remember the time when my wife was stopped on her way to the dentist, Dr. Ibrahim George, a Christian Arab: she was stopped by an inspector, who insisted on walking her all the way to the dentist because her identity card did not bear a photograph. The ending of the story became quite comic when Dr. George promptly advised the British soldier to be very careful with this 'dangerous terrorist from Sweden'.

Shortly after our arrival in Jerusalem, I started to teach my wife about the history and geography of Jerusalem and its holy sites. Jerusalem is built on four hills. The Mosque of Omar and the famous Al-Aqsa Mosque are located on one hill, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher on another. The other two hills are the Bezetha Hill in the north and Mount Zion, which stretches from David's Tomb to Jaffa Gate, one of the gates of the Old City of Jerusalem. The Zionist dream to rebuild Solomon's Temple as a reminder of the state David founded in Palestine faces a major problem, inasmuch as the fallen temple is said to have existed on the site of Al-Aqsa Mosque.

The Old City, that is historical Jerusalem, is located within a wall, built by the Ottoman sultan, Salim. It has a number of gates, which in the old days were closed at sunset. The streets in the city center are narrow and filled with many alleys. In some places they are vaulted, while in other places, balconies steal what little light remains. The majority of the streets in the Old City are so narrow that a car cannot drive through them, or else they have stairs so that even bicycling is impossible. The street life of Jeru-

salem with its bazaars filled with goods and the shopkeepers sitting outside is not so different from life in other Oriental cities.

During religious celebrations, the street life becomes even more cheerful with the addition of pilgrims of every race, nationality and creed. The different groups, such as Moslems, Jews and Armenians, live in their own well-defined quarters. At the outbreak of the Palestine War, the 1,500 Jews living inside the walls of Jerusalem were evacuated to the New City of Jerusalem, situated outside the walls.

The most sacred Islamic area in Jerusalem is located in the Old City. It is called Al-Haram Al-Sharif and covers approximately 145,000 square meters. It is here that the Mosque of Omar and Al-Aqsa Mosque are located. From a religious perspective they can be compared to the two cities of the Prophet, Mecca and Medina.

Al-Aqsa Mosque was built by Khalif Abdul Malik bin Marwan and was completed in the Hijrah year 72, which is equivalent to the year 694 AD. There have been tough battles around the mosque. The Christian Crusaders tried to conquer it many times, and it was not until the arrival on the scene of the great Arab warlord, Salah Ed-Din, that an Arab victory was secured. The mosque has undergone frequent restoration work, and it is filled with ornaments in marble and golden mosaic. The biggest reparation in modern times was undertaken by the Higher Islamic Council with my father as its driving force. He was at the time temporary head of the Council during the Grand Mufti's absence. Under his

guidance, a large part of the mosque was rebuilt and huge amounts of marble were imported from Italy, even as the war continued in Europe. Unfortunately the reparations could not be completed during the war and many campaigns were directed toward my father because of the delay, although once the reparation works were completed the opposition faded away. It should be noted that the Egyptian Government supported the efforts with skilled laborers and money.

The octagonal Omar Mosque is one of wonders of the Islamic World. The dome was repaired by Salah Ed-Din, amongst others. On the little cliff under the dome of the mosque is the spot where the Prophet Abraham was ready to sacrifice his son Isaac.

The most sacred place for Christians in Jerusalem is the Church of the Holy Sepulcher where Christ's tomb is said to be. The Church was built by Helena in the year 335 AD but was destroyed in 614 AD by the Persians, only to be rebuilt at a later date when several smaller chapels were added inside. The Arabs look after the keys to the main door but the different churches each take care of their section, and confrontations between the different Christian denominations are not uncommon. The building is in acute need of repair, and it has been necessary to support the walls from the outside since the various churches have failed to reach an agreement concerning who should pay the bills. The different sections of the church are separated by imaginary lines, and every monk is careful to sweep only on his side of the line. It was during the Medieval era that the keys were

handed over to the Moslems following the intervention of Salah Ed-Din, and to this date a Moslem sits at the gate with the church keys in his pocket. In such religious questions Islam is significantly more tolerant than other religions. When Khalif Omar conquered Jerusalem he said his prayers near the church, not inside it, because he did not want to offend the Christians.

The Arabs have shown the same tolerance towards the Jews. Solomon's Temple was located where Al-Aqsa Mosque is today, and it is here that the Wailing Wall is found. The ancient wall is Moslem property but the Jews have access to it at certain times during the day, in order to say their prayers. They read from the testament, hit their heads against the wall and cry over the Jewish past, while order is kept by Arab policemen.¹⁴

On Christmas Eve in 1945 my wife and I visited the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. The name of the town comes from

¹⁴ The fact that the Wailing Wall is Moslem property was determined by an international commission that visited Palestine in the summer of 1930. No British members took part. One year earlier, in 1929, the Jews placed wooden benches, amongst other things, in front of the wall. This gave the impression of there being a kind of open air synagogue, which the Arabs perceived as an attack against their religious rights. The incident resulted in heavy clashes with many victims on both sides, and the troubles quickly spread to other parts of the country. The commission stated that the Wailing Wall was Moslem property where the Jews were not allowed to place anything, but that the Jews should eventually be given access to the place in order to pray. The fact that Solomon's Temple had once been there had not, according to the commission members, affected their decision. According to the Arab perception, this decision has great historical significance, the Zionist claims regarding Palestine on the grounds of Jewish religious memorials having been nullified by an international commission.

the Arabic words 'Beit Lahm', meaning 'House of Meat'. This small town, approximately nine kilometers south of Jerusalem, is visited yearly by thousands of Christians from the four corners of the earth. Despite the short distance, it takes an hour to drive there during Christmas, due to all the pilgrims and cars crowding the road.

According to Christian tradition it was here that Jesus was born. The first church, however, came much later. It was built by Helena in 326 AD but was destroyed 200 years later. The majority of the paintings and mosaics in the church date from the 13th Century. The church is extremely large, but its door is much smaller than one would expect considering the size of the building. Approximately 1,000 years ago the great front door was walled up, and only a tiny opening was left so that a person could pass through only with great difficulty. The door was sealed in order to prevent visitors from bringing donkeys and horses inside the church, as was common practice in those days. The birthplace itself is located in a small niche inside the church. Unfortunately my wife has not visited my place of birth, Nazareth, because of the troubles.

After World War II, powerful elements tried to expel the Grand Mufti from the Higher Islamic Council. Despite having a price on his head, he managed to escape from the British by constantly changing his place of residence. This did not change the fact that he was the leader of the Council, of which my father, although not a religious leader, was the temporary head for many years. It was at around this time that I met the British member of the judicial

court, Mr. Shaw, supposedly a relative of the great George Bernard. He held one of the highest positions in the Palestine Administration and was also one of my father's closest friends. The British hinted that they would welcome a shift of power in the Council and that the new leader did not have to be a religious leader. My father, as well as his colleagues in the Council, rejected the proposal and preferred to keep the seat of the Grand Mufti vacant during his absence, having recognized the fact that public opinion would not allow for such a change without great upheavals. Strangely enough, the Grand Mufti - although an important religious leader - was considered a leader of the lower classes. His support stretched far up into the middle class, and even amongst the upper class there were those who believed he was the only one who could really do something for the Arabs of Palestine.

Mr. Shaw was a very powerful man in Palestine, especially in Jewish eyes. As a judge, it was his duty to study every illegal case of immigration and grant entrance permits. At the time, the number of ships bringing illegal immigrants had increased. The Zionist movement thought the immigration quota was too small and made a decision to bring immigrants into the country in secret. The ships arrived during the night on the shore between Haifa and Tel Aviv, where most of the population was Jewish. By boarding lifeboats, the new Jewish immigrants were able to disembark on the open coast, and they were instantly taken care of by the welcoming committees that were responsible for bringing illegal immigrants into the country.

Even in the early days, however, the British were aware of what was happening, and they took certain measures. Innumerable immigrant ships were discovered out at sea and returned to their port of origin or to Cyprus, where a large refugee camp had been established; there, whilst so close to Palestine, the refugees were forced to wait month after month until it was their time to fill the official quota, the first camp having been established by the British in the summer of 1946. Many of the groups of refugees who managed to disembark along the coastline ran right into the open arms of British patrols. In the beginning, they allowed themselves to be caught without resisting, but as Stern and Irgun started to organize their own waves of private immigration, real battles took place between the Zionist troops and the English patrols. In order to put an end to the fighting, the British tried to reduce the official quota every time there was an attempt to bring in immigrants in an illegal fashion, much to the dismay of the large number of Jews waiting in the camps in Cyprus. In all these cases, it was Mr. Shaw who was the judge, and it was he who had to decide how the Palestine Administration would deal with each attempted illegal entry. His task was certainly difficult, but he never complained.

King Abdallah was in the spotlight during the period after the war, when I met the monarch several times. Our relationship began when I sent him greeting cards for religious celebrations, according to Arab tradition: most of the Arabs of Palestine saw King Abdallah as the true ruler of the country, and it was therefore natural to direct the traditional telegrams and letters to him and make personal visits if possible. King Abdallah usually had

one of his officials thank the person paying his respects, but on rare occasions he would send a telegram in his own name. In my case, his telegram was signed 'Abdallah', and he had also put the title 'bek' after my name.

'Bek' or 'bey', as the Europeans pronounce it, is an Ottoman title, as is the title of 'pasha', which the Sultan of Turkey and later the Middle Eastern kings used to honor certain individuals. These titles were then inherited by the family's oldest son. I cannot deny that I felt flattered, even though I knew that King Abdallah could be generous with titles. I decided soon afterwards that I should visit Amman given a suitable occasion, when I would try to get an audience to see the King.

As fate would have it, I was to meet the King on several occasions. One of these occasions was a visit by my father and I to the King's winter residence in Al-Shouneh, a small village in the Jordan Valley approximately half an hour's drive from the border. The King usually went there during the winter since the climate was ideal, whilst Amman, which is situated at an altitude of 850 meters, is usually cold and windy at that time of year.

The Jordan Valley and the Dead Sea are situated 300 meters under sea level, which means they enjoy a most peculiar climate. When it is raining heavily or even snowing in Jerusalem and Amman, one can literally descend into pure tropics after just a few kilometers. In this region there is no wind, the sky is blue and the temperature is high. All of my family would visit Jericho,

which, in common with the rest of the Jordan Valley, is famous for its banana plantations, and I once took the opportunity to drive my wife down to the river so that she would have the chance to wash her hands in the holy water where Jesus was once baptized by John the Baptist. The water of the River Jordan is quite sweet, which can be explained by the fact that its sources are the mountains in Syria, Lebanon and Jordan, but once it reaches the Dead Sea the high salt content sees to it that all forms of life are unable to survive. The salt content in the Dead Sea is ten times higher than that in the world's oceans, which makes any attempt to swim there quite exciting as the water is so heavy that the body cannot sink, and there is a very famous photograph of a man who is practically sitting in the water of the Dead Sea with a newspaper in one hand and a parasol in the other. Nevertheless, to swim in the Dead Sea is not to be recommended since the smallest wound burns like fire, and if one decides to take the risk it is absolutely necessary that the swim be followed by a sweet water shower.

My father and I had arrived at the royal palace accompanied by our chauffeur Ibrahim just before twelve o'clock. On our way we had crossed the border at the River Jordan, where one was obliged to cross the Allenby Bridge, named after the British general who conquered Palestine at the end of World War I.

The palace consisted of a small stone building of a clean and simple architectural nature. Located right on the main road, it was guarded by the famous Arab Legion. The then Prime Minister,

Samir Al-Rifai welcomed us inside the open courtyard together with his brother, who was also a high-ranking diplomat. Whilst we were standing and chatting the King arrived, and he immediately threw himself into the conversation in Turkish, which he had mastered to perfection. After welcoming us warmly, he asked us to join him in the dining room and share his meal. The King's table was known for its riches and the delicious courses were carried in one after the other.

King Abdallah was a very impressive figure in a light colored robe with a dark coat and turban. He had now proceeded from Turkish to a peculiar form of classical Arabic. Written Arabic has remained basically intact since the 8th Century, whilst the spoken language varies from province to province in the Arab World. Almost at once the conversation turned to the subject of politics. The statement of the British Foreign Minister, Bevin, concerning the Palestine Question was brought up by the Prime Minister, and it soon became clear that the King was extremely familiar with the subject under discussion. During lunch the King emphasized that he was willing to help the Arabs of Palestine several times, although he underlined the fact that the possibilities were very limited. Due to subsequent developments, I have often thought about this conversation. At the time it took place, all the leaders of the neighboring states were promising to help the Arabs of Palestine whenever necessary, yet when the time actually came for them to act, all of them adopted a totally private strategy and political line, which reduced the effect of foreign aid to insignificance.

It is my belief that King Abdallah alone could not have saved Palestine. Many of my countrymen have accused the King of having failed them in their time of crisis, and they argue that his government accepted the UN Partition Plan, which was a bitter pill to swallow. The government was also accused of having kept the Arab Legion back and of ordering the evacuation of several purely Arab villages during the cease-fire negotiations. Others, especially the Jordanians, believe it is wrong to make King Abdallah the scapegoat with regard to the loss of Palestine. Moreover, they note that most of the involved parties committed mistakes that cannot be defended. The first mistake was that there was no synchronizing whatsoever of the various armies' actions, and that the Arabs were left to fight in the ancient Bedouin way, namely, as small entities with no linkage. No matter how brave these individual troops were, they all, in the long run, were destined to fall under their more organized opponents.

When the first cease-fire came into being, the Arab troops, in spite of their divided strategy, had managed to crack open some holes in the Zionist-controlled territories, and from a military point of view it was madness to accept a four-week cease-fire. During this time the Jews succeeded in reorganizing their platoons and completing the rapid training of new recruits. In spite of the export ban on weapons to the Middle East, the Jews managed to bring large quantities of war materials from the Eastern states, which helped to change the military positions.

My cousin Awni enjoyed good relations with the Hashemite royal family and knew King Abdallah well. During the peace negotiations that followed World War I, he had helped Abdallah's younger brother Faisal with the negotiations with the allies in Versailles. Awni once visited King Abdallah in Amman in order to discuss a certain matter with Ahmad Hilmi Pasha, a member of the Higher Arab Council, who later formed the so-called All Palestine¹⁵ Government, which did not last long. After the political discussions, Awni happened to mention that one of his errands in Amman was to buy a new car. At the time the cars in Palestine were terribly expensive and also hard to obtain, since England preferred not to import American cars because of its pressed economic situation. After a moment of silence the King ordered one of his servants to bring his big Chrysler out of the garage, and then turned to my cousin and said, "Congratulations, Awni bey." He added, whilst clearly referring to Hilmi Pasha, "The Pasha should not be envious."

I would meet Abdallah and his son, Emir Naif several times. The King would frequently drive over to Jerusalem on Fridays to pray in Al-Aqsa Mosque where his father Hussein is buried. My father used to welcome him in his capacity as the oldest member of the

¹⁵ After the Palestine War, Ahmad Hilmi Pasha was ordered by the Arab League to form the so-called All Palestine Government, which was recognized by all the Arab states excluding Jordan. The task of the government was to help the Palestinian refugees both materially and morally as well as to look out for their political interests in Palestine. However, the support from the Arab states would shortly come to an end and Hilmi Pasha's colleagues resigned one after the other until he was the only one to continue with this activity.

Higher Islamic Council, and huge crowds would gather in the mosque to celebrate the King's arrival. With the Grand Mufti out of the county, the adoration of the lower classes had changed focus to the King's advantage.

In his residence in Amman, the Raghadan Palace, Abdallah was surrounded by tall 'Sherka' bodyguards dressed in red, who, in spite of speaking Arabic, were blond and blue eyed and had fair skin. The Sherka tribes came to Jordan after World War I and were placed in the cities in order to protect the city dwellers from attacks by nomads. Such security measures were absolutely necessary since anyone was allowed to visit the King without giving notice in advance. The King often received his visitors early in the morning, often as early as six o'clock, and it was not uncommon to see him leaning against his saddle on the ground outside the palace, making himself available to any of his people who wished to meet him.

At least two attempts were made on Abdallah's life prior to his assassination on a Friday in July 1951. At the time, he was on his way to prayers at Al-Aqsa Mosque. Following one of the earlier attempts, Abdallah called the would-be assassins in order to find out for himself why they had tried to murder him. He attempted to make the men understand that he was just an old man with no intention of hurting the Arab cause.



The Wave of Murders

As time went by, life became more and more complicated for the people in Palestine. In the beginning the terror, sabotage and shootings existed only in newspapers, but after a while the cruel reality came closer. From 1945 to 1948 Jewish terrorism was mainly aimed at the British, and Arab-Jewish relations were quite calm. The Jews assassinated British individuals with bullets or grenades, often under the cover of darkness. They kidnapped British officers, tortured them, and then murdered them by hanging them in trees and blowing the dead bodies to pieces. These terrorists respected neither the living nor the dead.

After a while the political atmosphere developed into serious conflicts. The first sign of trouble was that Jews or Arabs who lived in small numbers in areas where people of the other religion formed the majority were forced to move. Soon, a lone Arab could not walk in a Jewish area after dark and expect to survive. The same applied to Jews who dared to take an evening stroll in one of the Arab neighborhoods. I was soon forced to give up my practice on Princess Mary Avenue, where I had moved from Mamilla Road, and to move to my residence in Katamon. Before I took this step many of my colleagues, in addition

to several friends of the family, had already lost their lives. The first victim was a Jewish colleague who worked at the hospital in Beit Safafa, a small village outside Jerusalem. The hospital was connected to the state hospital where I worked and was used mainly by Arab patients. My colleague was murdered while he and an Arab doctor were on their way from one building to another inside the hospital complex. The murder was a typical act of terror. It was said that the doctor was killed by Jews because he had treated Arabs, but according to another version, the murderer was an Arab. I never learned the truth about the person or the motive behind the murder. Nevertheless, I received a thorough explanation of what had happened from Dr. Mohammed Al-Aasi from Lifta, who was one of my friends from the war years in Germany. It was he who had been walking next to the Jewish doctor at the time of the attack. Al-Aasi never saw the murderer, and he was deeply shocked.

The murder in Beit Safafa represented the beginning of a series of attacks on doctors. Within 24 hours a group of Jewish terrorists shot the Arab doctor, Dr. Shadid, the director of the mental hospital in Bethlehem. Shortly afterwards, a Jewish doctor was shot and injured in the Katamon quarters where I myself lived. At the time, four to five Arab doctors, including myself, were convinced that one or more of us would soon become the target for a Jewish bullet. Due to my concern for my family, I decided that we should move immediately to my parents' house in the Greek Colony, which was a completely Arab neighborhood. At around the same time, one of my Jewish colleagues, an ear spe-

cialist by the name of Frenckel, was shot and seriously wounded. Frenckel was a popular man with many friends in the doctors corps, even amongst the Arabs. Despite our wish to pay him a visit, common sense dictated that we should refrain from doing so since the atmosphere had become so tense that a visit could have been interpreted - from both sides - as treachery.

My wife, accustomed to a more peaceful environment, was filled with horror because of what was going on. The last straw was when the famous Swede, Miss Andersson, was murdered on the Mount of Olives by Jewish terrorists. We had visited her at her home called 'Svenskbo' many times, and I remember her saying that she was on good terms with both the Arabs and the Jews and that she was sure she was unlikely to come to any harm. Anyway, she became the victim of a bullet. My wife's nerves were strained, and we decided that it was time to give some serious thought to the possibility of leaving.

It was impossible to live in a country like Palestine during that period without asking oneself if it was necessary to take some form of personal action. Personally I have always loathed violence and I have never believed that the world can be changed with bullets and grenades. Murder, including its legal form, execution, makes me feel sick. Killing itself is against the fundamental principles of the meaning of my life: my medical profession.

The first time I came in direct contact with murder was as a young medical student, during a vacation from the University of

Beirut in the summer of 1935. I was practicing at the state hospital in Jerusalem, located in the same compound as the central prison where dangerous criminals were sometimes executed. That particular summer the two thieves, A. Jilde and Armit, who, during one of their escapes had committed a murder, were to be executed. I wanted to watch how it was done since I had just studied the subject of death by legalized forms of violence in Beirut.

Well in advance of the actual hanging, I asked the fat, jovial prison director, the Englishman Steel, for permission to attend. No one opposed my request and my study companion, Hamdi Al-Taji from Ramleh was also allowed to take part. One of the two men was scheduled to be executed at eight in the morning, and I was there well on time. According to custom, the prison doctor, Dr. Livny was present to ensure that everything went as planned and to inspect the body. In addition, there was the normal group of police and authority figures.

A little while before eight o'clock, whilst standing in the yard, I heard the person sentenced to death singing in his cell, apparently carefree and happy as if on his way to a party. A few minutes later, the prisoner came out dressed in his normal clothes with his hands tied behind his back and a black hood covering his head. He was led by two policemen so that he should not stumble, since the hood prevented him from seeing. His legs were tied together above his knees, and a religious man was at his side to help him with his prayers. Once the prayers had ended, Mr. Steel made a sign with his hand, and the executioner put the rope

around the prisoner's throat. A few seconds later, we were confronted by the sight of the lifeless body, hanging in front of us. It was a cruel act, and I felt disgusted deep in my soul as I rushed away from the scene. I did not want to be a part of the second execution, and I did not feel like discussing what had happened with the correspondents waiting at the gates. My studies to become a doctor were exact: first the brothels of Beirut, and then this.

There are many reasons why I remember my first visit to the central prison. In 1946, when I was employed at the state hospital, it was also my task to take care of the prisoners. Many of the prisoners were Jewish terrorists, and they were guarded by English and Jewish policemen. At the time, there were many Jews in the police organization. It was with very mixed emotions that I, as an Arab, moved amongst these terrorists and their guards. In the prison all languages were spoken, including German and English, with which I had become familiar during my time as a student. As for myself I was usually addressed in Arabic whilst being scrutinized from head to toe, and I was always happy to leave.

One day I heard that one of the Arab employees in the prison had been battered to death by the Jewish prisoners before the guards had managed to interfere. After that episode I explained to the director of the hospital that I would refuse to treat the patients on the prison grounds, even with a completely British escort, although I was prepared to receive prisoners in my clinic in town, assuming they were brought there under armed escort.

Several visits took place, and all followed the same routine. A panzer wagon stopped outside the clinic on Princess Mary Avenue. The prisoner was taken out of the car followed by a British policeman with his pistol at the ready and escorted into the reception. During the whole examination the policeman sat prepared to fire his pistol. If the patient was asked to give a urine specimen, the policemen would accompany him to the toilet door. The whole procedure made me feel bad and strengthened my belief that the big explosion in Palestine was near.

One night I was at the hospital when the ambulance came in with two young English soldiers. One was already dead and the other seemed close to death. The dead soldier was placed on the ground with his face turned toward the cold stone floor, and when the doctor on call, a young Jewish colleague came to listen to the heart, he turned the body with his foot. I controlled my anger only with the greatest of difficulty. The respect for human life had sunk to such a level that one no longer wanted to make one's hands dirty by turning a body but preferred to use the foot.

On 29 March 1946, the so-called Anglo-American Commission directed by the American judge, Hutchesson came to Palestine. My father served as the group's guide and showed them the holy sites in the Old City whilst trying, albeit in vain, to make them understand the tragedies happening at the time.¹⁶ The minds of the

¹⁶ The same year my father headed an Arab delegation to Rome. He demanded that Pope Pius XII intervene and explained to him the seriousness of the situation in the Holy land. The Holy Father expressed his support, and the delega-

Americans were already made up, and these 'neutral' people were always ready to offer lots of good advice about how the problem should be solved but were far from prepared to take responsibility for all their suggestions. President Harry S. Truman of the USA had insisted on allowing an additional 100,000 Jews into the country, which would significantly increase the pain. Unfortunately, the Commission supported this proposal, even though it had been right on the site and witnessed what was happening. It admitted that a new wave of immigration might have unexpected consequences but maintained, with blue-eyed faith, that the Palestine Administration would certainly be capable of handling the situation. One preferred not to talk about the fact that this would be impossible without arms. Of course the Arabs protested immediately once the Commission's recommendations were made public. The consequences involved new clashes between Jews and Arabs, which represented an introduction to a new step on Palestine's way to chaos. Now there were shootings on every street corner. Earlier, at least Arabs and Jews had been able to move freely inside the cities, but now Arabs risked their lives if they set foot in the Jewish neighborhoods of Jerusalem, whilst Jews faced a similar problem if they ventured into Arab areas. The security checks between the various areas that had been established by the British were quite efficient, and countless terrorists were arrested on the spot with weapons hidden in their clothes and escorted straight to one of several prisons, all of which were severely overcrowded.

tion returned home with commemorative medals. Ever since 1929, the Arabs of Palestine have sent delegations to every corner of the earth to explain the majority's view of the issue; even the Canary Islands received a visit from Palestine.

My practice was located a few meters away from my father's office at the Higher Islamic Council. One day, I parked my car in the parking lot outside the building, but in the evening, when I was about to go home, I saw that the entire area was surrounded by British soldiers with panzer wagons. The British soldiers wanted me to leave the area since they said that Jewish terrorists had placed a bomb right on the sidewalk of this busy commercial area. The box with the bomb had been placed behind my car, in front of the British grocers, 'Spinney's'. I asked for permission to drive my car away but it was some time before the British officer agreed to my request. It was later discovered that the bomb was a dummy and had been placed there to get the British soldiers away from another area where the terrorists needed to work undisturbed.

The Christmas Eve of 1947 is a day I will never forget. I had parked my car in front of the garage a few blocks away from my home when all of a sudden all hell broke loose. Bullets tore up the tarmac and hit the side of the wall. My first thought was that this was it, my time had come, and I made a tiger's leap back into the garage where I pressed myself against the back of the door. The shooting died down and I realized that the fire was not aimed at me directly and that the whole incident was but one attempt to frighten the local inhabitants. Since it was impossible to find out where the snipers were hidden without running the risk of being shot, I took the shortcut through the back door of the garage to the house of a colleague, Dr. Hasib Bulus, who was

just about to have Christmas dinner with some guests. Not until an hour or so later did things cool down sufficiently to allow me to walk the few blocks home.

During 1946 Jewish terrorists organized a large number of attacks and acts of sabotage that cost many human lives. One of the most serious occurred in July when, one busy lunch time, they attacked the King David Hotel in Jerusalem. About 100 people died, while an entire wing of the hotel was demolished. Despite the strict security Jewish terrorists had been able to sneak in through a backdoor carrying large milk containers filled with explosives. The front of the building and one of the wings had been guarded by British military personnel, since the hotel was also the headquarters of the Palestine Administration's secretariat.

The attack was devastating, and hardly one hour of the day went by without the radio reporting that new names had been added to the long list of dead and injured found amongst the ruins, which included not only Arab and British victims, but also many Jews. Among the wounded was a cousin of my father, Ruhi Abdul Hadi, who held a high position in the secretariat, but luckily his wounds were light. My former patient, Mr. Thompson, was pulled out from the debris after three days. His Greek wife, who my wife and I attempted to comfort, tried to hold on the belief that her husband was only wounded and was safe in hospital. She was right, but only for a few days. Before Thompson died I visited him at a British hospital. He recognized me and said "Doctor, my nose is fine now."

The secretary-general of the Palestine Administration was lucky enough to have been standing next to a wall when the bombs detonated, which is why he survived. That same night, he spoke on the radio but his voice had lost its normal British calmness. He stated that terrorism disgusted him and that he was equally disgusted by Begin, the leader of Irgun, the group that was partly responsible for the massacre. According to the Arabs this was Begin's thanks to the English who had accepted him in Palestine when he came as a Jewish refugee from Poland, thus saving his life.

There are still people, even outside the borders of the Jewish state, who say that Begin was an incredible person. One of the large newspapers in Scandinavia, the Swedish '*Dagens Nyheter*', described Begin as a brilliant speaker in connection with the Israeli elections in November 1959. '*Dagens Nyheter*' also wrote, "The Herut Party, with its leader, Begin, won hero status during the fight against the British and the Arabs before the founding of Israel, and represents extreme nationalism." These words were spread by the newspaper on 29 October 1959 and 2 November 1959 (the anniversary of the Balfour Declaration - a touch of irony for the Arabs of Palestine). Not one single word was mentioned about terrorism and mass murder! If this man happens to be the same man who terrorized the Arabs and forced them out of Palestine, which he is, then one is putting an argument in the Arabs' mouths. They could say: "Look, there is an ex-terrorist leader sitting in the chair of a party leader in modern Israel!"

Next on the hotel list was the 'Semiramis', the grand Arab hotel in the Katamon area, about 200 meters from my home. On the morning of 6 January 1948, we were thrown out of our beds by a couple of violent explosions. Jewish terrorists had managed to get into the hotel disguised as Arabs; hiding in their bags were bombs set with timers, and they left the bags in the hotel before leaving. The hotel was nearly full and several of the sleeping guests were killed, among them an entire family: the parents, brothers and sisters of an Arab dentist, Dr. Sfeer, whom I knew. He was lucky enough, or perhaps unlucky enough, to survive, and he left right away for Lebanon.

The windows of the surrounding buildings, including ours, were blown out of their frames and my Swedish next-door neighbors, the family of Olof G. Matsson, thought that they were the intended victims of the attack, so powerful was the explosion. Thirty people died in the attack, amongst them a Spanish diplomat.

Around the world, and especially in the USA, Zionist propaganda attempted to justify these acts of terrorism by saying that 'Eretz Israel' belonged to the Jews and the British had only themselves to blame if they stayed on. The Swedish Count Folke Bernadotte said that the Jewish terrorists had received financial help from certain Jewish circles in America.

For most people it was clear that the time had come for Palestine to face its destiny. More and more people I knew lost their

lives in one way or another. Our driver Ibrahim died from a Jewish grenade and the police officer that used to stand on the corner of Mamilla Road and Princess Mary Avenue was killed by a bomb that was thrown in front of him. It felt strange to drive by his old post and see another constable directing the traffic. I had once performed surgery on his little girl for almost nothing because he was very kind, but extremely poor. He used to nod when I drove by and he always let me go first when he was directing traffic.

Every time I went to the local grocers, I remembered how close the war really was. The owner's name was Jabari and he was a faithful Moslem who said his prayers five times a day, often behind the counter while the customers waited. During the night, he would join the Arab partisans and lead the fighting on the outskirts of town. One night, the shooting had been more severe than usual and we could hear grenades going off until the early morning. The next day I went by his store and as usual he was behind the counter. I could not help laughing when he asked: "Well doctor, how was it last night?" "Horrrifying," I replied, and he smiled and pulled out a big gun from the pocket of his trousers.

Once in a while Jewish terrorists committed massacres on the streets. On one such occasion my father's bodyguard, Ahmad Al-Ma'it, who was now keeping an eye on the locals of the Islamic Council, happened to be nearby. He read the situation at once and fired half a dozen rounds at the fleeing car, which eventually

stopped. The terrorists fled in all directions but were soon shot dead by Arabs running to the scene. Before the terrorists died, they had killed several Arabs at Bab Al-Khalil, one of the Old City gates [Jaffa Gate].

Later, the Arabs of Palestine also learned how to use terrorism, because a weapon of this kind has two sides. One day in March 1948, the Arab, Anton blew up the headquarters of The Jewish Agency in Jerusalem. He had fitted his car with an American flag, left it filled with explosives outside the Agency and hurried away. Several Zionist leaders died in the explosion, while the building was severely damaged. In February the same year almost an entire Jewish commercial area, Ben Yehuda in Jerusalem was blown up, and with it the office of the anglophile Jewish newspaper, *'The Palestine Post'*. In addition, large parts of the Jewish neighborhood of Montefiori were destroyed. In April 1948, Jewish cars en route to the Jewish Hadassah Hospital and the Hebrew University on Mount Scopus were attacked and approximately 100 Jews died, including many who were connected to the university. These counterattacks of the Arabs made the Jews stop and think for a while and caused them to consider future attacks more carefully before actually carrying them out.

As for myself I was never armed, and I had no license to carry weapons. With time, however, I myself started to be influenced by the madness. It was impossible to stay passive in front of all this killing. Whenever yet another of my friends was killed, I

clenched my teeth in anger and shouted kill, kill, even though I really did not mean it. More and more it became clear to me that it could not continue this way. Many of my acquaintances had already chosen the security of neighboring Arab countries, and I was rather clear over the fact that what had to be done, had to be done soon. War was knocking on our front door. The only remaining question was when would the fighting begin? An answer materialized sooner than expected. On 14 May 1948, Ben-Gurion declared the birth of the State of Israel in Tel Aviv, and hence, the bell tolled for Palestine.



The Palestine War and the UN's Actions

The fact that the Arab states lost the war for Palestine that began after the State of Israel was proclaimed in 1948 is well known. Somebody once said, "Half a million Jews in Palestine won over the seven zeroes, that is, Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Yemen," but there were a number of things going on behind the curtains that contributed to the Jewish victory. For us, the Arabs of Palestine, the war had started three decades earlier in the spring of 1920. It was then that the first armed resistance against the Jews and the mandate forces started. We had not lost the first stage of the war and had succeeded in keeping 48 percent of the Palestinian land, compared to the seven percent of the Jews.

The second stage started because of the UN Partition Plan, which was ratified on 29 November 1947. Between 29 November 1947 and 15 May 1948, the Arabs of Palestine clashed with the Jews in order to stop the country from being divided. Even then, the Arabs did not lose the battle. They had won the struggle for the Old City of Jerusalem, Sheikh-Jarrah, Bab Al-Wad, Beit Sureek, Sureef, Nevi Yaqoub, Kufr Ziyyon, etc. They also

fought at Abu Kabir, Al-Manshieh, Al-Ajjami (close to Jaffa), Tel Al-Rish, Salameh, Al-Abbasiyeh, Ramleh and Lydda, and the Jews had evacuated three blocks in Tel Aviv because of Arab attacks. The Arabs blew up several Jewish strongholds that were used for shooting against their men and communication lines, such as the Jewish alcohol factory at the entrance to Jaffa, the colony of Beit Yam, the road between Jerusalem and Jaffa, and the big carpentry workshop on Herzl Street in Tel Aviv. In the north, the Arabs had blown up the big mill at the Haifa railway station, a Jewish military plant at Yajour, another plant at Al-Burj and other places in the cities of Safad and Tiberias.

The approximately 115,000 Jews of Jerusalem (around 20 percent of all the Jews in Palestine) had already found themselves in a difficult situation, in which they were left without water and electricity. The diplomatic corps in Jerusalem had sent some of their members to Damascus to discuss the situation with the representatives of the Arab League and the Higher Arab Committee.

In March 1948, new battles took place in the south between Jerusalem and Hebron in a place called Al-Dheisheh, whereby hundreds of Jews were killed and band wagons, military cars, weapons and ammunition were confiscated. The Arabs had cut off the road between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv at Bab Al-Wad and Al-Qastel, where Abdul Kadir Al-Husseini, a close relative of the Grand Mufti and a fellow student of my brother Abdul Munim, met his death. The position of the Jews became so complicated that in March 1948, the US delegate at the UN announced that

America was no longer going to support the Partition Plan. He suggested, however, the alternative of a kind of UN-sponsored guardianship for Palestine.

When the unprepared Arab states came to help us out on 15 May 1948, the Arabs of Palestine were already aware of the catastrophe ahead. There were so many intrigues and political games, which resulted in the Arabs losing not only the war, but also their homes. At this point there is a need for a short description of the war tactics employed.

The evacuation of the British troops had already begun, with the troops being withdrawn to the port city of Haifa, from where ships were to take them home. The evacuation of Palestine was the signal to race for the British military camps. During the mandate the British had started to build a system of police stations according to the directives of the police expert Taggart. The stations consisted of a central tower surrounded by low buildings, and they were usually placed quite high to allow them to master the surrounding valleys and plains. In addition to these fortresses, which were built mainly in the north of Palestine, Taggart built a military road along the northern border of Palestine. The purpose of this road was to prevent weapons and ammunition from Syria and Lebanon from falling into Arab hands. During World War II the English also built the so-called 'Eden Line', which, situated in the north of Palestine, was intended to stop a possible move by Rommel into the north.

The Jewish colonies - kibbutzim - were nothing more than military compounds that were spread over almost all of Palestine. Each kibbutz was well armed and during the British Mandate, the Jews had received military training from the British officer, Win-gate. During the early stages of the war, the kibbutzim main-tained contact with each other and succeeded in arranging a de-fense line of sorts. In some areas the Arabs were able to destroy the kibbutzim, while in others, especially along the coast between Tel Aviv and Haifa, they were beaten.

The military action of the Arab forces was not the big synchro-nized operation that we Arabs had dreamt about. The fragmenta-tion was too great at the diplomatic level. Instead, there were a number of separate attacks without any coordination. From the beginning, there was a plan that the Egyptians would advance in two columns from the south, one along the coast towards Tel Aviv and the other further inland towards Jerusalem. The Arab Legion from Jordan would at the same time support the Egyptian inland force with an attack from the west and would itself be protected on its northern flank by the Iraqi forces, who would advance towards the coast and Haifa. Syrian and Lebanese forces, meanwhile, would attack from the north. Other Syrian troops would invade the Eastern shore of Genezareth and parts of the Galilee. Iraqi, Jordanian and Egyptian troops would eventually meet in Tel Aviv, the heart of Zionism.

In reality, the Arab forces in the north consisted mainly of volun-teers led by Adib Al-Shishakli. The northern front stayed rather

still, whilst the Syrians, on the other hand, managed to invade the eastern shore of Genezareth except for a few small bridgeheads and were well on their way to the western side of the lake. The Syrians occupied the cities of Safed and Samech after several battles in which 120 officers were either killed or wounded. As for the Lebanese, they occupied the border post of Al-Nakoura, the nearby village of Al-Zieb, and the Jewish colony of Naharia, and threatened Akka.

The Iraqi army occupied the Rutenberg electric power plant south of Tiberias that served the Jewish factories, which they took over from the Arab Legion. On 26 May, Nablus, Kawkab Al-Hawa and Jeshar were occupied, as were the cities of Jenin, Tulkarm and Qalqilia two days later, which meant the army was only 28 kilometers from the Mediterranean.

The Egyptian advance along the coast went more or less according to plan. Gaza was taken on 15 May, Beer Sheba on 20 May, Hebron on 21 May, Bethlehem and Al-Majdal on 22 May, Deir Suneid on 24 May, Iraq-Sweidan on 25 May, Ashdod on 29 May, and Nitzalim on 7 June; the advance had reached a point 20 kilometers south of Tel Aviv.

The Jordanian troops, meanwhile, occupied Jericho and Al-Bireh on 16 May, the Old City of Jerusalem on 28 May, Ramallah, and Ramleh and Lydda on 30 May, but they were stopped about 12 kilometers away from Tel Aviv. Eventually, the Egyptians and the Jordanians were able to make contact south of Jerusalem.

Concerning Saudi Arabia and the Kingdom of Yemen, their forces had stayed home, except for a Saudi force that fought with the Egyptians. None of the above mentioned forces were more than 30 kilometers away from Tel Aviv. That these forces actually reached the outskirts of Tel Aviv is confirmed by the eyewitness Agne Hamrin, the Rome correspondent for 'Dagens Nyheter', who at the time was in the Jewish state. He wrote on page 47 of his book 'Storm over Palestine' (1948), which is one long song of praise of Israel, as follows:

"The war was in a paradoxical way as far from us as if we had sat in front of our radios in Buenos Aires or Stockholm - yet, the closest Arab bridgehead was only a few tens of kilometers from the outskirts of Tel Aviv."

And more on page 68:

"But now the concert in Tel Aviv is over...A few kilometers away on the road to Jerusalem the artillery is thundering, machine guns are blaring, and the cry of the jackal mixes with the dying soldier's groaning."

Now we know what happened to the Arabs during the first two weeks of fighting. But what happened then?

The first mistake of the Arab states was that they at all participated in the fighting, which contradicted the Arab League decision that was made during a meeting in the city of Aliya, Lebanon in October, 1947. According to the decision, no troops from the neigh-

boring countries should march into Palestine; instead, they should keep guard along the borders and advise the Arabs of Palestine from there. It was also decided to provide the Arabs of Palestine with weapons, help them to consolidate their positions like the Jews, and then let the two parties settle things amongst themselves. There was no objection to the idea of volunteers from the Arab states, but not regular troops, joining the fighting in Palestine.

Great Britain was annoyed by the stand of the Arab states and referred to the arming of Palestine's Arabs as 'an unfriendly act'. In doing this it was motivated by the fact that Palestine was still a British domain. The Egyptian head of government, M.F. Al-Nokrashi had said, "I want everybody to know, that even if Egypt is prepared to participate in this military action - to stay at the borders - it is not willing to go further." Egypt's participation in the war was to become the subject of a court investigation during Nasser's regime, when it became clear that Al-Nokrashi, in order to calm down the opposition, had said that the English had promised him weapons and ammunition - promises that were never kept.

Concerning Jordan, the head of government, Tawfik Abul Huda Pasha had agreed during a meeting in London with Foreign Minister Ernest Bevin not to try to go further than occupying the Arab parts of Palestine that according to the UN Partition Plan belonged to the Arabs - all according to Glubb Pasha. The translator at the meeting was Glubb Pasha himself. Glubb's knowledge of the Arabic language was so good that he even managed to un-

derstand the dialects of the various Bedouin tribes, and people used to call Glubb's legion "the British legion that speaks Arabic."

Another way in which the Jews were helped in the war was as follows: When their forces attacked the Iraqi stronghold in Jenin in the middle of Palestine, they were nearly crushed, and the survivors were forced to escape to Haifa.¹⁷ When the Iraqis started to follow them, they received orders from Baghdad to refrain from attacking the Jewish enemy. It is common knowledge that many of the new canons were never fired. The Iraqi words '*maku awamer*', meaning 'there are no orders', are still remembered in the Arab World.

Once the cease-fire called for by the Security Council following Great Britain's proposal had gone into effect on 11 June, Great Britain withdrew its officers that were serving in the Jordanian army. Meanwhile, the American colonel, D. Marcus continued and led the Jewish attack against Al-Latroun. The Security Council had decided on 29 May that no war materials or personnel should be sent to the fighting zones of Palestine, but that was one thing; it was another to recall officers who were already in the country but only if they were helping a particular side! Al-Latroun was particularly important for the Jews because it provided Jerusalem with a major source of water.

¹⁷ According to reliable sources, Haifa's Jewish mayor, S. Levi, tried through negotiations with the Iraqi commander to declare the city an open city. Levi was represented in the negotiations by the two Arab members of Haifa's town council, Haj Tahir Karaman and Shihadeh Shalah.

There was something else. The Arab Legion had been in different parts of Palestine since the end of World War II, but shortly before 15 May, the British suddenly ordered their soldiers to evacuate the country and return to Jordan. The Jewish Haganah army and Palmach forces were allowed to remain in the county, both before and after 15 May, and they received no orders to evacuate.

When the British troops - then under the command of the last governor general of Palestine, Sir Alan Cunningham - left Jerusalem on 14 May, the Jews immediately occupied large parts of the New City. This proves that the plan was formulated in advance, since on 14 May no troops from any Arab state were in Palestine. The way in which the English evacuated not only Jerusalem but Palestine as a whole speaks its own language and makes the British objectives concerning the Arabs very clear.

Further evidence pointing to the British intentions can be found in the following words of the negotiator, Count Folke Bernadotte:

"A visit that moved me was that of the sister and the two nuns from the Russian Convent in the Garden of Gethsemane the same afternoon. One of the convent representatives was the Russian princess, Tatiana. I received from them a vivid description of what it had been like when the British troops left Jerusalem. Right outside the Herb Garden in Gethsemane the band-wagons had stopped a moment. The English commander had shouted to the Jewish troops who were close by, telling them that now it was their turn to carry on, which resulted in Jewish platoons entering the Garden of Gethsemane. There are other such

examples of the nonchalance displayed by the English when they evacuated Palestine. The way in which the evacuation was carried out created the worry and tension that put coal on the fire of the atmosphere, which was to develop into open acts of war.”

The port city of Haifa with its oil pipes from Iraq was also evacuated in a mysterious way. The Palestine Administration announced that Great Britain had important interests in Haifa and that the British were going to stay until August 1948, three months after the mandate ended on 15 May. It emphasized that during this period, the Arabs of Haifa were forbidden to enter certain neighborhoods and to bear weapons, and yet the Jews of Haifa were able to enjoy absolute freedom of movement. Once the British had completed their military preparations, they suddenly and with no warning whatsoever left the city, without waiting for the month of August. The Jews were then able to take over the English military grounds at once, which made the task of capturing Haifa an easy one.

Another problem for the Arabs of Palestine was that the UN itself was far from neutral. On 15 May, as mentioned earlier, Arab troops marched into Palestine, and the very next day the UN protested to King Abdallah through the Belgian Consul in Jerusalem, complaining about the ‘single-sided aggression’; there was no mention of the aggression of the Haganah army or the occupation of the New City of Jerusalem on 14 May, despite the fact that Jerusalem, in addition to its surrounding areas, was international ground, according to the UN decision.

The Arabs were threatened with direct military actions from certain superpowers should they decide to continue the war. The first threat came from the French Foreign Minister, Georges Bidault. When, in Paris at the end of May 1948, Count Bernadotte asked him how France would react should Jerusalem be turned into an Arab center, Bidault replied: "Such a measure must be considered excluded," before adding that, "this would cause a new crusade against the Arabs." Moreover, Bidault threatened to recognize the Jewish state if the Arabs did not accept a cease-fire, and went so far as to say that military measures would be taken against them if French ships on the coast of Palestine were so much as touched. The Arabs, at that time, had no reason whatsoever to touch Bidault's ships for as long as France remained neutral.

Another threat is evident from the conversation between the negotiator and the Egyptian head of government: "If the war started anew and the Arabs were successful, this would lead to one or several of the superpowers that have recognized Israel providing the Jews with active military support, which would surely guarantee Jewish success." That these threats were made seriously was later confirmed when President Nasser refused Great Britain's and France's cease-fire ultimatum in connection to the aggression of the Jewish state against Egypt in the autumn of 1956.

While the fighting continued with maintained force and fury, the diplomatic game behind the scenes raged with even greater intensity. Count Folke Bernadotte, who was appointed a negotiator in the war by the UN on 14 May, managed to push through a

cease-fire that was signed on 11 June, according to a council decision of 29 May. This was the greatest mistake of the Arab states. By agreeing to the truce, Palestine was lost. The one who would have preferred that the war continued without interruption was the Secretary-General of the Arab League, Azzam Pasha, but he lacked military authority and his will was not backed by an army.

The Jews in Jerusalem were surrounded by Arab forces and found themselves in a difficult situation because of the lack of water and food. According to the eyewitness Hamrin he could get two teacups of water for two cigarettes, which cost him two Swedish Crowns, and he later told a story about a Jewish woman who showed him a few slices of bread and a cup of white beans, which was all she had to count on as her daily ration. He continued to add that the Jews of Jerusalem were forced to suffer for weeks on end because of the Arab occupation. According to the Commander of the Arab Legion in Jerusalem, the UN diplomat, De Azcarate, wrote to King Abdallah and asked him to provide the inhabitants of Jerusalem water for humanitarian reasons. After some time, the negotiator succeeded in talking King Abdallah into relieving the pressure of the siege. Referring to a meeting between the negotiator and the King, Count Bernadotte once said, "His Majesty must understand that I, as a representative of a humanitarian organization such as the Red Cross, cannot agree with your opinion that the starving Jews and Arabs in Jerusalem should receive no humanitarian aid." Here it should be noted that the Arabs in Jerusalem were not starving since they received

what they needed in the way of food and water from their own troops. Further on the negotiator says: "These words had a noticeable effect on the King. He answered that he would agree that Jerusalem should receive help..." The Arabs had in addition opened the way between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.

During the four-week truce, the Jews received large quantities of arms and ammunition, mainly from Czechoslovakia. Even tanks and planes and other war materials poured into their hands. During the same period, men of military service age were also smuggled in, as confirmed by the negotiator. The Jews took the opportunity to repair roads and bridges and to consolidate their positions. The Arabs did likewise, but unlike the Jews, they received no weapons or ammunition.

The fighting was raging again on 9 July, and after only a few days, it became very clear that the Jews had used the four weeks well. Glubb Pasha's Arab Legion withdrew its most advanced units from Ramleh and Lydda to protect them from being cut off. According to A. Al-Tall, who was the military governor of Jerusalem, it was not at all necessary to pull back these troops, but the whole thing went according to a set plan.¹⁸ On 15 July another cease-fire was

¹⁸ Glubb Pasha's opponents criticized him for being responsible for the following actions, which they reason played a decisive role in bringing about the unfortunate ending of the war from the Arab point of view: 1) disarming the Arabs of Palestine and forbidding them to operate; 2) forbidding the Syrian and Iraqi troops from assisting the Egyptians at Al-Faluja; 3) opening the road at Bab Al-Wad between Tel Aviv and the Jewish part of Jerusalem; 4) not caring about occupying the Jewish parts of Jerusalem when he had the chance; 5) directing the Syrian troops to Samach where the Jews had the upper hand; 6) directing

agreed upon by the Security Council, and it came into effect three days later. After this second truce both the Arabs and Jews stood back and watched the new developments while the UN observers investigated border violations in different places.

The situation grew more serious in October when the Egyptian troops tried to stop armed convoys from reaching isolated Jewish posts in the Negev. Following several failed UN attempts at negotiations, Jewish troops attacked and destroyed the Egyptian lines in several places and forced the Egyptians to withdraw toward Gaza. Under the pretext that Egyptian forces would attack again, the Jewish troops advanced toward Al-Arish but were soon pushed back. They also violated the truce line in the north and invaded significant parts of the Galilee. In early 1949, an effective truce between the Egyptians and the Jews came into force. The other Arab states, excluding Iraq, also joined in the truce.

The last deal was made in July 1949, when it was decided that the Jews would receive the major part of the Negev in the south, down to the Bay of Aqaba, while Egypt would keep the coastal area south of Gaza, the so-called Gaza Strip. Jordan, meanwhile, would keep the areas it had taken west of the River Jordan, the so-called West Bank. In Jerusalem, the demarcation line went between the Old and the New City, while the Hebrew University and Hadassah Hospital, isolated in Jordanian territory, were

the Iraqi troops to the 'Eden Line'; and 7) preventing the Arab troops from occupying Hadassah Hospital and the Hebrew University on Mount Scopus.

to be kept by the Jews.¹⁹ According to the agreement the Jews would have the right to support the closed garrison with convoys but only at certain times. During the negotiations, Jordan demanded that the Jews should give up the university, but to no avail. Mount Scopus is of strategic importance because from here it is easy to control the road between Jerusalem and Amman and the road between Jerusalem and Ramallah. In addition, it provides an excellent view of the Old City of Jerusalem.

In connection to the war in Palestine, the Grand Mufti was often criticized for being outside the country during the critical months and for being content to watch the drama from a distance. In the name of justice it must be said that according to the pamphlet the Grand Mufti published in his own defense, he made several attempts to come to Palestine from Gaza and from Syria, but was stopped every time by the local authorities who were following the direct orders of certain Western powers. To travel from the east was excluded since his Arab committee was

¹⁹ Concerning the Jewish approach toward the Hebrew University and Mt. Scopus, Count Bernadotte in his book *'Till Jerusalem'*, published in 1950, writes as follows: "After lunch a representative from the American Consulate in Jerusalem paid a visit and he gave an interesting description of the circumstances in the Holy City." He continues: "Our informant complimented the Arab legions on their order and discipline, but was not prepared to say the same about the Jewish forces. Using sharp words, he criticized the Jewish attitude towards the Hebrew University and Mount Scopus. The American and British authorities demanded that the Arabs should not fire at either. Thanks, to a large extent, to the influence of Sir Alexander Kirkbrides, King Abdallah had also accepted this suggestion. The Jews, in spite of this, had taken the university and it was from there that they threatened, as a response to the earlier shooting from the Arab side, to turn their fire against the Arab hospital."

banned by the authorities in Jordan, and to come by sea was impossible, because he would have had to come to Tel Aviv.

In addition to the reasons above, there were other factors that played a role in the Arab defeat. In this context, one ought to remember certain facts: Egypt, for instance, was busy with internal problems, including the eternal dispute with Great Britain over the Suez Canal. The British had not equipped the Egyptian army according to the 1936 agreement between the two parties. Furthermore, Palestine is situated 400 kilometers from Cairo, and troops and war materials had to pass through the desert, while the Jews in Palestine had very short communication lines and first-class paved roads at their disposal, built by the mandate power for its own use. In addition, a large part of the Egyptian army had stayed home for internal duties. One should not forget that Egypt at this time was an occupied country with 80,000 British troops stationed at the Suez Canal.

As for the Egyptian regime itself, it was corrupt. The authorities had bought weapons from several countries, including Italy, and it was later disclosed that they were all damaged. Grenades often exploded, killing or wounding the soldiers about to use them. This fact was revealed following Nasser's revolution, and it resulted in those responsible being brought to court and convicted.

As for Iraq, Baghdad was 1,000 kilometers away from Palestine, and once again, there was a huge area of desert that had to be

tackled before one could cross over into Palestine. Iraq was known to be 'England-friendly' and to be taking its orders from the British. Moreover, Iraq was occupied by Great Britain and British troops were stationed, amongst other places, at Al-Habbaniyah Airbase. There was no doubt whatsoever: Great Britain would never allow the Arab countries to crush the Jewish state.

Syria and Lebanon, meanwhile, had hardly been born as independent states after 20 years of violations under the French mandate. Moreover, France still considered itself the shepherd of the Christian communities that lived in the two countries.

Concerning Jordan, it was practically considered a British colony and was expected, therefore, to obey British orders. Because King Abdallah was the Arabs' highest military commander, their highest general in the field was the Englishman, Glubb. According to many Arabs, the fact that the English were enemies, yet at the same time allied with the Arabs, was the central reason why the war was lost.

It is totally believable that Saudi Arabia could have put an end to the Partition Plan itself, had it been prepared to give up its oil agreements with the US. Iraq could have done the same thing with regard to England and Syria, while Jordan could have destroyed the oil pipes passing through its territories, as it did in 1956 during the Sinai War.

The inner struggles amongst the Arabs played a not insignificant role in the Arab defeat. Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia were on one side while Abdallah and his relatives in Iraq were on the other. It is unlikely that the three governments would have allowed Abdallah to rule over Palestine because it would have strengthened his position in the Arab World. In addition, Abdallah worked for 'Greater Syria', much to the annoyance of the other leaders.

Cairo and Baghdad also fought over the leadership of the Arab World. Iraq more than once protested against the choice of Azzam Pasha for the position of Secretary-General of the Arab League due to his Egyptian nationality, in spite of the fact that there is nothing in the League's constitution that disqualifies Egyptians from holding the post.

The partition of Palestine that the UN suggested was far too artificial and illogical to be fair. The UN had instructed Count Bernadotte to not only stop the war, but also to make new suggestions regarding the future of Palestine. Bernadotte did not like the UN plan and wished to form a single state. He said, "The artificial borders that Israel obtained and the strong resistance of the Arab World regarding the division of Palestine and the creation of a separate Jewish state will lead to war. The creation of a single state in Palestine with far reaching rights for the Jews²⁰

²⁰ The Secretary-General of the Arab League, Azzam Pasha, even suggested a kind of 'Vatican' state for the Jews inside the borders of a united Palestine,

would, as a matter of fact, have been preferred. This has also been suggested by a few members of the commission that last investigated this issue."

The reason why the negotiator had not suggested the idea of a united state was that many nations, according to his opinion, had already recognized the Jewish areas in Palestine as constituting an independent state. Nevertheless, these nations gave the negotiator the authorization to come up with an alternative proposal to the UN Partition Plan, which is why the Arabs of Palestine could not understand why the negotiator had taken into consideration their recognition of the Jewish state.

Great Britain's representative to the Security Council, Sir Alexander Cadogan confirmed that Bernadotte had the right to decide upon a new plan for the future of Palestine with the following words:

"I believe that everyone who has followed the negotiations in the General Assembly as well as in the Security Council realizes that when the negotiator was appointed, it was an attempt to avoid the impossible (the plan to divide Palestine), because it has proven impossible to put this resolution into action."

Count Bernadotte's suggestion was far more just and realistic than the UN plan. In brief, the suggestion was as follows:

with its own ministers and attachés. He felt that such a plan would allow for the religious aspirations of the Jews to be satisfied.

- 1) to include all or part of the Negev area in the Arab territory;
- 2) to include all or part of the western Galilee in the Jewish territory;
- 3) to include the city of Jerusalem, with local autonomy for the Jews and special protection of the Holy Sites, in the Arab territory;
- 4) to consider Jaffa's status;
- 5) to establish a free port in Haifa, which should include the refineries and various transport terminals; and
- 6) to build a free airport in Lydda.

As shown, the negotiator wanted the port of Haifa to be used by both Jews and Arabs, including those from the neighboring Arab states; his proposal was clearly in stark contrast to the UN plan to leave Haifa for the Jews. Could one really believe that Iraqi oil would continue coming to Haifa as it had done during the mandate period? History has revealed that this would not be the case. Concerning Jaffa, the negotiator suggested that its status be re-considered due to the fact that the city was 100 percent Arab to the same extent that the neighboring city of Tel Aviv was 100 percent Jewish. The only motivation, according to the UN, for proposing that Jaffa - including its orange groves, the only thing of real importance in the city - should go to the Jews, was its immediate proximity to Tel Aviv. Why then, did they not give Tel Aviv to the Arabs? The one thought is as absurd as the other. In

this context it should be said that the Jaffa orange groves were owned by the Arabs.

The fate of the hundreds of thousands of Arab refugees was a matter of great concern for Count Bernadotte. Even in 1948 he had realized that the only lasting solution would be to send them back to Palestine and to compensate those who did not wish to return. He also thought that the UN should be held directly responsible for their dilemma and that it was duty bound to take care of them and ensure that they returned back home as soon as possible. Therefore, the Security Council, on 11 December, ratified a resolution stating that the refugees should be allowed to return to their old homes, while those who did not wish to return should receive compensation. The refugees, thought the negotiator, were a serious threat to peace in the Middle East, as they still are.

Count Bernadotte's proposal, which suggested, amongst other things, that Jerusalem and the Negev should be given to the Arabs, was too much for the Jewish terrorists and they murdered him in cold blood in the Katamon area of Jerusalem on 17 September 1948. The murder of the negotiator, which must have been carefully organized, was a direct violation of the cease-fire and a serious insult to the UN itself. It becomes clear from the report of the negotiator's colleague, Age Lundström's, that the Jews were dressed in the uniform of the Jewish army, which could mean that they belonged to the regular forces. The murderer must have known exactly where Bernadotte sat and in which car he traveled,

because he went straight up to the negotiator's car and fired several shots with an automatic pistol, thereby killing both the negotiator and the French UN observer, Colonel Sérot.²¹ According to Lundström, Bernadotte was hit by six bullets, one of which hit him in the heart, whilst Sérot was hit by no less than 17 bullets. It was the same terrorist group, the Stern Gang, that committed this murder and so many other terrible deeds during the mandate period. The strange part is that the murderers have not been arrested by the authorities in the Jewish state and not a single measure has been taken against them by the UN.

As for the Arabs, they were unhappy about the death of the negotiator, but they were also relieved that the murderer was not an Arab. Bernadotte's plan died along with the man himself.

In short, one could say that the Arabs certainly carry part of the blame for the loss of Palestine, but it is not fair to stop there. The greater part of the responsibility rests on the shoulders of certain superpowers, primarily Great Britain and then the US, which through their unrestrained support for the Jewish minority in Palestine turned justice upside down and forced the Arabs of Palestine to go through a war lasting some 30 years.

²¹ The plan was to kill General Lundström together with the negotiator and not Colonel Sérot, whose murder was referred to by the assassins as a 'fatal mistake'. Meanwhile, they accused General Lundström of being a 'British agent' and an 'anti-Semite'.



Farewell to Palestine

The bell had sounded, and it was time to leave. The last bombings had been the final straw: my wife's nerves were shattered, and mine were not much better. The sharpened awareness about the need to discover traps in time was going to drive me crazy. The foundation necessary for peace to work, which is security, was not to be found in the world we lived in. Jerusalem looked like Berlin during the war, but it was still not the same thing. The daily air-raids and bombings had been part of our daily routine, but there was an important difference: when the danger was over, one never risked being shot in the back from the nearest gate or having someone connect a devilish contraption to the ignition of one's car. In Jerusalem there was no end to the storm and for an entire year we lived under constant bomb attacks, which slowly but surely destroyed our resistance. The continuous wave of murders accentuated the feeling of insecurity. There was no respect for life itself anymore, and even the unborn child in his mother's womb was unable to count on being shown any respect by the opponent. In this circus of madness normal values had stopped to exist, and hatred and revenge colored our days.

Untroubled by all of this, our little daughter was playing as usual. We had not yet told her that our departure was imminent. I could not bring myself to discuss the toys she would have to leave behind, the friends she might never see again, and the uncertainty of our new life as refugees without land.

It was no longer possible to withdraw any money from the banks, with one exception. All banks, except the Arab Bank, which was wholly in Arab hands, had stopped all withdrawals to prevent money from going to the 'wrong' side. As in most countries, the banking system was controlled by Jewish money. The money belonging to the Arab refugees was needed to build the new Jewish state and to this day, our accounts are still 'administered' by Israel, meaning we have been unable to withdraw the money that we need in order to survive.

To say good-bye to a few personal friends was not possible as we were in such a hurry to leave. We put some clothes and my most important books in the trunk of the car, and when I closed the front door to our home, it was with the same ease as if we were going to see a film, yet I had a feeling that we might never come back to see our possessions and our homely environment. In common with the cars of most Arab doctors, mine bore a red crescent, the Arab equivalent of the European red cross. I did not know whether this would protect me or be considered a signal for action by Jewish terrorists, but I did not take it down.

We chose the road towards Jericho. Next to me sat Ahmad, our bodyguard, who was coming with us for the first part of the journey. In his lap was a gun, our only means of defense in the event of an attack. Of course it would be rendered practically useless when forced to compete with machine guns, but it still empowered us with a certain sense of security. After traveling only a short distance we met a Jewish panzer platoon bringing salt from the Dead Sea. We were going down a hill and I stepped on the gas pedal, hoping that by traveling at high speed, I would be able to prevent us from being hit, should anyone decide to open fire. Obviously the Jews were preoccupied with keeping the heavy vehicles on the road whilst keeping watch for Arab troops. Nobody cared about our little car.

After about half an hour we arrived at the Nazzal Hotel in Jericho, where we said good-bye to Ahmad. I made sure my family was as comfortable as possible in the overcrowded hotel, which was already full of refugees from the four corners of Palestine. As for myself, I continued on the journey to Amman, anxious to solve the problem of arranging something for our future. I felt bitter: I had lost my home, job and homeland, Today, 14 years later, I feel just as bitter, knowing that a Jewish family from Germany, Poland or Rumania is living in our home, not because I do not want them to be secure, but because I cannot help but wonder if it was really necessary to base their security on our catastrophe. In order to help a Jewish family the Western powers and the UN had chased away an Arab one, which forms the core of the whole Palestinian

tragedy. A change of population was guaranteed with the help of violence and terror and money from abroad.

A day or so later I returned from Amman, which was full of refugees. Our future did not look very bright, and I had failed to find a solution to our predicament. Every hotel room was full of refugees who had been wise enough to escape earlier. I was quite depressed when I returned to Jericho, and my mood hardly improved when I discovered that my little girl was ill with a high temperature, which meant that we would have to stay put for several days until she was well enough to travel.

It was then that a chance meeting altered our situation to a considerable extent. By coincidence I ran into Abdallah's second son, Prince Naif in Jericho. He and his Turkish wife, Mahremah had been patients of mine in Jerusalem and we had soon become friends. When he asked me what I was doing in Jericho, I told him the entire story, including the fact that I had just returned from Amman where I had been unable to arrange a hotel room. He must have suspected that I did not have the money to pay for one of the luxury rooms that were still available but which I, for economic reasons, could not consider, and he told me: "You can stay in my palace in Amman. There are enough rooms and my family and I are going to stay in Jericho for a while." What can one say but thank you very much to such a royal proposal?

Prince Naif kept his word. The next day he drove me directly to his palace on one of Amman's many hills. When we arrived the

guard greeted his master very warmly. In a demonstrative way Prince Naif handed me the keys in front of the guard and said, "Doctor Mufid is now the master of the house."

We now had a roof over our heads and for three months everything was rosy. I was not allowed to pay any rent or bills. It is extraordinary how quickly people adapt to new situations. A slight pause in the daily nightmare and we immediately started to hope for something new.

Every now and then the Prince came from Jericho to visit and ask us how we were doing in our new 'home'. He also inquired about my wife's health: following a dinner at the house of an old school friend that had included fish from the Red Sea, my wife had developed a serious rash and shortly thereafter acute sciatica, which caused me some problems. Prince Naif differed greatly from the other royals that I had met. He really meant what he said when he put the house at our disposal and slept himself in a small modest room, close to the kitchen. Occasionally he would come in the evening, chat for a few hours and then be gone by morning. More often than not, he would make the journey between Jericho and Amman on horseback.

Naif was not very interested in politics in contrast to his older brother, Crown Prince Talal. The young prince loved cars and horses. Nevertheless, he would later be obliged to take over and rule the country.

When King Abdallah was murdered in 1951, Crown Prince Talal was in Switzerland undergoing medical treatment, the word being that he was mentally unstable. Naif immediately took over the tasks of government, but the rumors that he was planning to succeed his father all along are unfounded. Naif could never have imagined that he would come to the throne instead of his brother the Crown Prince. When Talal came back from Switzerland, Naif stepped back and moved to Lebanon while Talal was proclaimed king.

It might be worth mentioning that Naif, whose mother was Turkish, was his father's favorite son. The older Crown Prince was from another of Abdallah's wives, and father and son did not always get along, especially when it came to politics, since the two men were very different. Talal was considered an 'extremist', and he sharply condemned his father who had been easily led and supported by the English. It was said that these problems were the cause of Talal's mental illness, as well as the coolness between father and son.

Personally I had never met Talal who, in contrast to his brother, lived in a normal villa in downtown Amman with his son, the present King Hussein of Jordan. I was, however, once called to the house to treat some of the other inhabitants.

During my first three months in Amman I got to know the city quite well. Its history goes back to a long time before Christ, when, under the name of Ammon, it was controlled by the Am-

monites. Under the Jewish king, Saul the Israelites made war in Canaan against the Ammonites, whilst the Bible-famous David tried to keep a good relationship with the enemy. History tells us that David supposedly sent a delegation to the Ammonites in order to win their friendship but was soon sent away because the suspicious inhabitants had accused the delegation of espionage. As punishment, the delegates were caught and their beards were shaven, but only on one side of the face. After that episode the war continued with the same intensity.

Under the Greek rule Amman was transformed into a cultural center and called Philadelphia. Until this day there is a Greek amphitheater opposite the fashionable Philadelphia Hotel in the outskirts of the city. During the days of war in May 1948, the ancient theater became the home for many Arab refugees from Palestine.

During this time I was desperately looking for something to do in Amman. I searched my memory for people I had once known or met in order to seek their assistance in finding work. To open a practice in Amman on my own, without any contacts, was out of the question. I also lacked the funds needed in order to rent a place and buy equipment.

My first 'victim' was the Prime Minister, Tawfiq Abul Huda Pasha, not to be confused with his predecessor who had the same last name but was called Khaled. The Prime Minister came from

Akka, a little coastal town north of Haifa. I pushed him hard, and we met in his chambers and in private. In spite of the fact that he was always friendliness itself, I had a problem accepting him as the first prime minister of Jordan. There is no doubt that he was a good office holder and kept well informed about the country's internal affairs, but when it came to more complicated problems, he displayed less success in handling the situation. The problems in Palestine were certainly too big for him to solve, as he was to prove during his dealings concerning the Rhodos Treaty, when the Jews, because of his mistake, managed to work out a border regulation to their own advantage. According to this agreement the Jordanian Government, as a sign of goodwill, handed over 25 villages with a total of 525,000 dunums of land then planted with olive and orange trees in the regions of Nablus, Jenin and Tulkarm. Amongst the property lost was my father's land in the village of Mukeibleh. The Jews also acquired more land close to the Dead Sea in the south and the highway between Tulkarm and Qalqilia. They were not, however, satisfied with this, and shortly thereafter invaded Jordanian territory on the other side of the river and occupied the regions in the vicinity of the so-called Rutenberg electrical project. It should be noted that the mandate power had given the Jews the right to maintain Palestine with electricity through the plant.

My parents had remained for as long as possible in the Greek Colony, a completely Arab neighborhood far away from areas inhabited by Jews. One day when my father was in his office in

Mamilla Road, which was still in Arab hands, the telephone operator received a call from a Jew announcing that it was not a good idea for him to return home since his house had been occupied by Jewish forces. The strange voice expressed happiness at the fact that there was both a telephone and fridge. This conduct is typical of the cynical methods used when it came to driving the Arabs out of Palestine.

My parents left Jerusalem with Cairo as their first destination, but then continued to Damascus. My father managed to rescue only a few oil paintings and books; the rest was taken care of by the Jews.

After my visit to Prime Minister Abul Huda I concentrated all my energy in pursuing the Minister of Defense, Fawzi Al-Mulki Pasha, whom I had known since my years in Beirut when we were both at the American University. He was, like the Prime Minister, full of ideas and hope. During the conversation I brought up the Rhodos Treaty but he waved it away with a smile and explained: "We will get everything we lost back, all the way up to Haifa, and also your property." I was not so sure that what he said was true but could not express my opinion as I needed his help to survive.

I then visited Abdul Qader Al-Jundi Pasha, the Second-in-Command of the Arab Legion, led by Glubb Pasha, and attempted to join the Legion as a military doctor. I already knew Al-Jundi vaguely, since his son had been one of my patients in Jerusalem. He gave me an introductory letter to the Legion's health depart-

ment, but I then came to a bridge that I could not cross: my application was handled by a young British official who simply shrugged and said that the Legion had no use for ear doctors. "We have no use for soldiers with running ears," he said. "If the soldiers become ill with aching ears, it is cheaper to sack them. There are plenty of people who want to serve with us." Using the same argument the Legion also said "no" to my friend Khalil Al-Budeiri, who was an ophthalmologist from Jerusalem.

Following my rejection by the Legion, I returned home to think about the situation. To get a civilian job with the Jordanian Government would be impossible as its funding was far too limited. I knew, however, that I had to do something as the number of refugees in Amman was increasing all the time, which meant there was an enormous strain on the administration. It seemed that one camp after the other was springing up from the burned ground, and people were living in tiny mud huts with ten to 15 individuals in each room. Meanwhile, in the corridors of Amman's hotels, every square centimeter was occupied and there were heaps of clothes all over the place; the conditions under which people were living were appalling. Starvation and misery prevailed among the refugees and I realized that something had to be done if my family was not to drown in the enormous, uncontrolled flood of refugees.



To Syria

Damascus on the Barada River is supposedly one of the oldest cities in the world. Situated approximately 700 meters above sea level, the city is surrounded by a mountain range. Even in the old days the city was a commercial center and a connection point for the caravans that traveled between Asia and Europe. From there, the Arabs who conquered the city in the year 635 AD had extended their rule all the way down to India. When, many years later, Baghdad on the Tigris became the new center for the Arabs, Damascus continued to be a capital. It was from Damascus that the great Salah Ed-Din traveled to Cairo to unite the Arabs, which enabled them to beat off the Crusaders. During a visit to Damascus, I had visited the simple grave of Salah Ed-Din at the magnificent Omayya Mosque, and I found the experience of standing there for a few minutes and watching the long row of visitors extremely moving.

The Ottomans conquered Syria in the early 15th Century but did not care about developing the rich soil. Due to primitive irrigation and farming methods, the Syrian people sunk into poverty and misery, even in spite of the abundant water resources to which they had access.

The French mandate over Syria (and Lebanon) is considered a complete failure. The same primitive conditions prevailed as before. The administration was corrupt, and bribery was an everyday occurrence. Especially since the union with Egypt in February 1958, feverish attempts have been made to solve these problems at the same time as industrialization proceeds in leaps and bounds. The ancient, inherited feudalism is losing its grip.

In the Damascus neighborhood of Al-Harika (The Fire) I was once invited for lunch by my Syrian colleague, Dr. Anwar Shoura. After finishing our delicious meal, Dr. Shoura showed me the ruins around his house. "But why are these parts of your city not rebuilt?" I asked. "They should remind us of the French bombings of 1925 and 1926," replied my colleague and former patient from Mamilla Road.

It is just under 250 kilometers from Amman to Damascus. Approximately half-way between the two cities is the Al-Ramtha border. The security was tight, and every single passport, in addition to any luggage, was screened very carefully. For me everything went very smoothly because my car was more or less empty.

I arrived in Damascus tired and dusty, and I drove straight to the Omayya Hotel. Before leaving Amman, I had written to a friend of the family, Rida Mardam Bey, who was a brother-in-law of the Syrian Prime Minister, Jamil, with the same family name, and told

him I was coming. I had hardly made it through the doors of the hotel before his valet approached me to take me to his master.

Rida Bey greeted me with open arms and opened the conversation with a shower of questions about the situation in Jerusalem. His son-in-law, Dr. Said Dabbagh, who held a high position at the Jerusalem Central Laboratory, had not been heard of for some time, although his wife and children had already been brought to safety in Damascus. Unfortunately, I had no information. A few days later the 'rich' Dr. Dabbagh turned up in Damascus, but he was now a broken man, his property and villa in Katamon having been taken care of by the Jews. He was unable to cope with life in Damascus and was to leave for Riyadh alone.

At a luncheon that took place a while later I met the Prime Minister, Jamil Bey, who had once hidden in our house in Haifa. Naturally the Palestine problem came up in the discussion, as it always did when Arabs got together. Jamil Bey was greatly disappointed with the state of affairs in Palestine and cursed the fragmentation and the 'international conspiracy' that had allowed Palestine to slip into Zionist hands. As the Syrian Prime Minister he was better informed concerning the price that Syria would have to pay for the Arab defeat and the flood of refugees that was to come.

Once lunch was over, Jamil Bey turned to me and asked if I needed any form of assistance. Gratefully, I accepted the offer

and asked him if he could arrange a visa that would allow my family and I to stay in Syria. He stood up, went straight to the phone and called the head of police, Husni Al-Zaim, and then ordered him to take care of the necessary formalities. It was the same Al-Zaim who was to overthrow the government and take over power in one of the three *coups d'état* that were to hit Syria at the time.

Jamil Bey turned to me once more and asked if there was anything else he could do. I gathered all my courage, thought about my dream, and asked him if he could help me in finding a job so that I could put bread on my family's table. After a while, I got a job as an ear doctor at a military hospital on the outskirts of Damascus. It was a fairly big hospital, and most of the patients were officers and soldiers who came directly from the battles in Palestine. The salary was only 400 Syrian Pounds, of which 15 were drawn immediately for the Palestine Fund. The remainder equaled 600 Swedish Crowns, which was a fantastic sum considering the circumstances but hardly enough to provide for a family. To maintain a car on such an income was unthinkable, so I had to store mine in a garage. I was to receive several offers for it, but most were so low that I did not even consider them.

During my time in Syria, I was often reminded of the fact that old friends seldom forget each other. Syria's head of state, Shukri Bey Al-Kuwatli who had been in hiding in Haifa and was a friend of my father's had not forgotten his time in Palestine. My father

had by this time also gone to Damascus and we were both invited to a big dinner in the presidential palace, which was also attended by the Grand Mufti and the higher ranking army officers. The party took place during Ramadan, the month of fasting, and the food was eaten in the garden. After sunset, the daytime fast was compensated for with such emphasis that there was no opportunity to sample all the different dishes.

In accordance with the rules, I, as a military doctor, had been ordered to move to Aleppo, but this did not fit in at all with my private plans. We had just found a small apartment in Damascus and my wife had started to settle in and find new friends, thanks to some of my old colleagues from Berlin who had married Germans and settled in Syria. Besides, we did not want to move again. Jamil Bey got on the phone for me once more and told the head of the hospital to leave me alone. I felt good about receiving help to get out of a difficult situation.

In March 1949, the Chief of Police, Husni Al-Zaim pulled off his *coup d'état*. It happened faster than usual, and in a single night he managed to take control and become a dictator. In the morning, I was stopped by the military guards whilst driving to work and asked to return to my house. I tried to find out what had happened but the only response was that during the night the army had taken over and now there was a curfew. President Al-Kuwatli and the rest of the old regime had literally been dragged out of their beds and taken away. It took me three whole days to

get the whole picture, and even then with some difficulty. Both Al-Kuwatli and Khaled Al-Azm were being held prisoner at the hospital where I worked. Jamil Bey, who had already resigned, managed to escape since he was in Egypt at the time. To get in touch with Al-Kawatli was unthinkable; the authorities had evacuated the whole ward, but by peeking, we could occasionally take a look at the prisoners as they sat in their locked and guarded rooms.

It did not take long for me to meet the new head of government, who every now and then would come to have his teeth looked at by the young military dentist, Dr. Al-Zahra. Al-Zaim resembled Mussolini: he was small, plump and dark-skinned in appearance and his behavior was typical of a dictator. After the coup he never went outside without a military escort. Some time later Al-Zaim suffered from a pain in his ears, which meant that I had the opportunity to take a closer look at him. I was taken to Al-Zaim by the military surgeon, Dr. Shahla. Without even greeting me, Al-Zaim asked if I would look at his ears. He hardly took the time to sit down, and once the treatment was over, he simply nodded, indicating that I should leave. The whole visit smelled of military dictatorship.

The masses had invested a lot of hope in the new regime, and they greeted the new ruler with enthusiasm. Soon afterwards, however, there was bitter criticism of the rulers, and particularly of Al-Zaim. The people complained that he misused his power

and only worked for his own interests. Al-Zaim, meanwhile, tried to approach King Farouk and Egypt in search of support, but was unsuccessful.

It was only a matter of months before a new coup shocked the people of Syria. The new leader was an officer, Sami Al-Hinnawi, who by resorting to a daring maneuver had managed to take control of the country. With regard to his method of ruling, he might be described as somewhat more radical than his predecessor. Al-Hinnawi executed not only Al-Zaim but also one of his ministers, Muhsin Al-Barazi. Strict men do not rule for long periods, as we know, and Al-Hinnawi was soon forced to hand over control to Adib Al-Shishakli²² and Fawzi Sello and to escape to Beirut. He should have moved further away, because shortly after his arrival he was murdered on an open street by a young relative of Minister Al-Barazi. It was an act of revenge, carried out according to Arab tradition. The trial resembled a farce as the murderer refused to confess and instead, promised to deliver a 'bomb': the only bomb ever delivered was a full confession by the accused.

The coup of Al-Zaim, the murder of King Abdallah, Nasser's revolution and Kassem's revolt in Iraq were mainly the result of the Arab 'collapse' in Palestine. The unrest in the Arab World had

²² Al-Shishakli had taken part in the 1936-39 revolt and the Palestine War of 1948.

reached boiling point, and there were frequent explosions here and there.

The flood of refugees to Syria was increasing all the time. When my old landlord from Jerusalem turned up, it was clear that he had been less fortunate than I. When I first saw him, he was standing in one of the long lines in front of the refugee administration buildings to obtain his food and clothing coupons. At the time, more than 100,000 refugees were living in the camps around Damascus and throughout the rest of Syria, forced into idleness by the massive unemployment.

As for us, life went on according to our poor but acceptable circumstances. For a while it seemed that we might have the opportunity to leave Syria. The Iraqi authorities had sent a commission to Syria to try and employ medical personnel from amongst the refugees. I soon found out that one of the members of the commission, Jaber Omar, was an old acquaintance of mine from my time in Berlin. He had not wasted any time and managed to climb to the rank of minister.

I was called before the commission and asked for my credentials. It felt good to see Omar, as he was worth at least as much as all my papers together. After three weeks, I was called back and told that I was being offered a position at the university's ear, nose and throat clinic at the Royal Hospital in Baghdad. I was full of expectation, but when we went to the next room to sign my

contract, my optimism sunk several degrees as it turned out that the salary I was being offered by the Iraqis was exactly the same as the salary I was already receiving. There was nothing I could say about it, but by asking around I learned that everything was more expensive in Iraq compared to Syria and that it would be impossible to rent a house for less than 300 Iraqi Dinars, around 4,300 Swedish Crowns, a year. After some serious thinking, I realized that there was no reason to move to a new country. Eventually, the prices rose even in Syria.

The situation looked darker and darker. In Jordan there was nothing to do, Iraq was out of question and in Egypt the authorities had placed all the refugees in camps. There were already some 250,000 refugees in the Gaza Strip. In light of my lack of alternatives the thought of Sweden surfaced as one of the few countries where we could think about starting anew with some chance of survival. Since my wife was Swedish, I saw to it that our common language of conversation, German, was changed to Swedish.

In Beirut in the summer of 1949 we boarded an Egyptian ship called 'Al-Malik Fuad' after the former King Farouk's father, but only after selling my Buick with eight cylinders to pay for our passage. In some ways it was painful for me to see the new owner, an overjoyed young officer, drive off in my car, realizing that he had made a very good deal.

We took a last glance at Palestine just before the vessel finally left for Marseilles via Alexandria, where we would stay for one week. I felt sad to be forced to distance myself from Palestine, even though I was now on my way to my wife's native country.

Through my brother from 'The Palestine Agency' in Cairo, who drove up to Alexandria to meet us, I met the young Idris, son of the old Kabyle leader, Abdul Karim (Emir Abdul Karim as he is called), from Morocco. In 1947, after almost 20 years of exile on the island of Reunion the old warrior chief was granted permission to return to France. The memory still lived of how Abdul Karim, for five whole years, from 1920 to 1925, had fought both France and Spain and how he was only conquered when the two superpowers joined forces. With characteristic style, he played a trick on the French when he 'jumped' from the boat that was taking him to the French motherland, and once in Port Said, both he and his brother, Emir Mohammed, were granted asylum. His escape made the French press furious and the French authorities protested to the Egyptian Government, which took the whole thing lightly. The protest action is in itself enlightening; despite the fact that Abdul Karim was an old man, his name could make all of French North Africa tremble with fear. As the predecessor to the freedom movement that now fights France so intensely, Abdul Karim is a national hero in the eyes of the Arab people.

During a visit to Cairo in 1957, I visited Abdul Karim at his villa, which was guarded by police. Whilst the old freedom fighter sat

on the side of his bed, I listened to his low voice as he said that "freedom in Algeria must be taken with violence, because it will not be given voluntarily." With regard to the situation in the Middle East, he told me that the colonial powers had placed Israel, an artificial and strange state, in the heart of the Arab World in order to guarantee their rule over the Arabs.

When 'Al-Malik Fuad' lifted its anchor and began its westward bound journey, it met another ship going in the opposite direction. Its gunwale was occupied by hundreds of singing and rejoicing people, who were greeting 'The Promised Land' for the first time. The happy people greeted our ship by waving the Jewish state's flag, which, as far as I was concerned, had the same effect as waving a red cloth in the eyes of an injured bull. In this bullfight, we, the Arabs of Palestine, were the bull.

These people had not been born in Palestine, nor had they ever set foot there in their entire lives. They had not won citizenship of the country but traveled there with various passports and identity cards. They were on their way to Palestine not as tourists, but to take over the country. I said to my wife: "Maybe one of them will live in our house in Jerusalem." The only thing that kept these people together was that they shared a common creed. It was neither my fault nor that of my fellow countrymen that they had been persecuted in Europe. We were not to blame for their unfortunate situation, but they and their collaborators were certainly to blame for ours. If their plight can be used to

justify the creation of a separate Jewish state in Palestine - designed to save these unfortunate people, but whilst driving a million Arabs from their homes - then I think this issue should be discussed further by certain circles in Europe and the US.



The Arab Refugees and Their Losses

In this chapter I want to try to analyze what the Arabs of Palestine really lost with regard to real estate and property. Of course the material losses are far less important than the emotional ones, but it is a fact that many refugees in the countries that surround Palestine and around the world still own land and property in the Jewish state in Palestine. The international aid organizations have made an effort that should be recognized, but it is not enough.

Even today, the camps that surround the borders of Palestine are filled with refugees who live their lives behind barbed wire. The fact that they have not been able to provide for themselves is due to the problems of the host countries, which have denied them access to the labor force. In addition, many of them are unskilled laborers and ill-equipped to compete in the Middle East. There have been attempts to provide the younger ones, at least, with some vocational training, but since there are no machines or instructors the vocational training has consisted of teaching the girls sewing and embroidery and the boys how to sew their own clothes. To be fair, it should not be forgotten that they are also taught to read and write, including, in some cases, in English.

Unfortunately this is not enough in the new world that has developed, not only in Palestine but also in other countries all over the globe. Those of us who were lucky to have a good education or major funds have finally been able to make ourselves a relatively good life, but most Palestinians remain in the camps.

The Jewish state has tried to escape any responsibility with the argument that the Arabs left their country 'voluntarily'. I have with my own ears heard the argument here in Stockholm when someone argued that the Arabs were encouraged to leave by the Grand Mufti and his Arab committee. The reason for such an argument is, of course, to block the way for the refugees to return to their old homes, but I have attempted, through this book, to correct the myth surrounding the 'voluntary nature' of their exodus. Many Jewish writers have confirmed, without hesitation, what we already know, namely, that the majority of the Arabs of Palestine were driven away whilst fearing for their lives. The leader of Irgun, Menachem Begin, wrote about his organization in a book published in New York in 1951, in which he says that the massacre in Deir Yassin left a lasting impression on the Arabs and that 635,000 fled the country. Begin continued as follows:

"The political and economic importance of this situation can hardly be overestimated. The village of Kalonia, which beat off every attack from the Haganah was evacuated in one night and fell without even putting up a fight, as did Beit Ikksa."

It is clear from statistical sources that 95,000, or only ten percent of the refugees left Palestine as a result of direct acts of war, whilst the remaining 90 percent were driven out either before or after such acts. This fact significantly strengthens what has already been said about Jewish terror.

Another Jew writes the following in his book, *'Israel's Arabs'*, published in 1949: "Of course the Israeli troops were tough against the non-fighting Arabs. There were, for example, many villages that were blown up or evacuated, even in regions where the fighting was minor or non-existent. Concerning terror, Israel regrets Deir Yassin, where Irgun massacred more than 200 men, women and children.²³ That incident was one of the reasons that caused the Arabs to flee Palestine."

The UN reports also give clear evidence of violations against civilians. Count Folke Bernadotte wrote in a report to the UN in 1948, that the Palestine Arabs fled because of fear of terror acts, both imagined and real, and there were several reports from trustworthy sources concerning large-scale plundering and the demolition of villages in the absence of any military necessity.

In a report written by the International Negotiation Commission and delivered to the UN in 1951, the Commission's members, who came from Turkey, France and the USA, wrote as follows:

²³ In Jerusalem and in other places in Palestine, Jewish troops warned the Arab civilians that they would witness another 'Deir Yassin' if they stayed in their homes.

"The refugees' representative assured us that their decision to leave their homes had not been influenced by the Arab sates or by the Higher Arab Committee's propaganda." As a matter of fact the Committee had ordered its men in Haifa and other places to see to it that no Arab families were transported to Lebanon, and that women, children and old people should be evacuated to the inner parts of Palestine. The Committee further requested the Arab governments to reject any visa applications from the Arabs of Palestine and to return any Arabs who had already left. Such a request was sent to the head of the Egyptian Government in March, 1948.

Further evidence relating to the above is found in the book, 'A Soldier with the Arabs', published in 1957 and written by the British chief of the Arab Legion, Glubb Pasha. Glubb wrote as follows:

"Meanwhile the stream of refugees continued. The Israelis were now driving all the Arabs away, a procedure that was from time to time supported by the common, expected massacres...On 31 October the UN observers reported that the Israelis had killed 30 women and children in Dawaima, west of Hebron. It would be an exaggeration to say that huge numbers had been massacred, but enough had been murdered or severely injured to guarantee that all the civilians would leave and make room for the new Jewish settlements....The Israeli troops had driven away almost all the Arab population not only from areas that the UN had given to Israel, but also from the areas that were occupied and should have been left for the Arabs, according to the Partition Plan. The Upper Galilee was the only exception. These refu-

gees had flooded into all the surrounding Arab countries, and more than half had fled to Jordan. It now became clear that the Israeli Government was following a policy according to which all the Arabs from the areas it was occupying were exiled.”

What happened to the refugees? Of those who lived in the south of Palestine, approximately 250,000 fled to the Gaza Strip. Those who lived in the area of Haifa and Galilee, totaling approximately 200,000 people, settled in Lebanon and Syria. About 5,000 followed the Iraqi army to Baghdad and Mosul. The majority ended up in Jordan, and some 500,000 refugees fled there in a great flood that nearly drowned the local population.

I have with my own eyes seen them coming in the hundreds, dragging their few belongings with them, packed in bags. The luckiest of them could travel by car or bus, but most of them came walking, while some reached the coast of Lebanon by boat. I will never forget the horrible scenes in Jericho and Amman. Even though my pockets were as empty as theirs, although I was somewhat better dressed, I was literally taken by storm by hordes of hungry people begging for food. I met women with one or more crying children in their arms, who with greedy lips tried to find some milk in their mothers' empty breasts. Every nook and every street was filled with hungry refugees. Count Bernadotte described such scenes as follows:

“Before we left Jerusalem I visited Ramallah, where thousands of refugees from Lydda and Ramleh were gathered. I have seen

many refugee camps in my life but none were as miserable as this one. The car was literally attacked by agitated masses who with Eastern passion shouted that they wanted food and to return to their homes. There were plenty of frightening faces in this ocean of suffering people. I distinctly remember some old shabby and tired men with knots in their beards, who put their meager faces into the car and reached out with pieces of what must surely be for normal human beings inedible bread in their hands, which was their only food. Maybe there was no acute danger that this camp would be the breeding ground for epidemic diseases, which would spread over Palestine, but what will happen at the beginning of October when the rainy period begins and the weather turns cold? That is a question one would rather not think about."

The Biblical town of Jericho more than 300 meters under sea level is very hot during the summer months, when the temperature reaches between 40 and 50 degrees in the shade. In the refugee camps scattered around the small town, I saw whole families crammed together in tents of only a few square meters, sewn from rags and pieces of old clothes. In the few wooden barracks the heat was unbearable, and it was hard to understand why people did not die of suffocation.

Wherever one turned, there were begging faces and staring eyes. All these refugees had one single wish: to return home. Every conversation smelled of bitterness and disappointment, not to say open hatred. One hated the English, Americans, Jews and the UN, all to the same degree. The Arab governments of the neighboring countries were criticized as harshly. The refugees felt

cheated and maltreated by everyone who had taken part in deciding their destiny without consulting those concerned.²⁴

²⁴ Up until now I have described the Arab refugees who I met in Palestine, Jordan and Syria. I did not visit Gaza or the so-called Gaza Strip, where, as I have already mentioned, 250,000 refugees had taken their refuge. To make the picture of these unhappy people more complete, I will quote an eyewitness, Dr. K. Totah, who made a trip to the Middle East, including Gaza. In his book *'Dynamite in the Middle East'*, published in New York in 1955, Totah wrote as follows:

"The population of the city is estimated to be 60,000, and although those included are not officially refugees, they are de facto nothing else. Their existence is pathetic, because Gaza looks like a city under siege. It is cut off from the rest of the world, except from Egypt, which may be visited if permission is given. This is not always so easy."

Concerning the economic situation in Gaza, Totah said,

"In order to correctly understand the economic hardships of Gaza, one has to remember that it has been almost totally cut off. The Israeli border in the north is less than three miles away, in the east, hardly a mile. In the southern parts there are some miles of farmed land, but then the desert and nothing but sand.

"Gaza's fields of corn and straw, reaching all the way east to Beer Sheba (today Jewish territory), is lost to Israel. The orange groves in nearby villages, for instance, Deir Suneid and Hirbia, are no longer there. Olive groves, fruit and vegetable gardens and all that humans and animals feed from are lost.

"Gaza was a market for the surrounding villages and nomadic tribes, but this source of income has been cut off. Plenty of straw, corn, peas, watermelons, grapes and oranges used to be sold on the streets of Gaza, but today the city is totally cut off from all of this healthy activity. Great amounts of corn used to be exported by ship, but this has also stopped."

Totah really strikes it right with these words:

"The population of Gaza looked like they were in a concentration camp or even in a grave. The atmosphere was most depressing but people bravely struggled on. It is really a siege, and life continues on a day-to-day basis. When I think about the part of the Lord's Prayer that says 'give us our daily bread', I think about Gaza."

The human tragedies and the individual horrors could hardly fail to leave anyone unaffected. There are some cold facts from various sources, painting an effectual picture of a whole people's misery. On 43 occasions between 9 April and 29 October 1956, Arab villages were attacked by Jewish terrorists. During these attacks, approximately 859 people died while 302 were wounded, including a large number of women and children. It should be noted that these figures do not include the Arabs killed or wounded in the streets or in the bombings of the King David and Semiramis hotels. In October 1956, another 2,300 Arabs met their deaths at Jewish hands during the war in the Sinai. For psychological reasons, no pictures of the victims will be published.

The UN Security Council has frequently referred to Jewish attacks against Arab regions as aggression in its reports, of which there were six during the period 1951-1956. In addition, the mixed cease-fire commission ruled that the Jews had attacked Arab areas in approximately 1,200 cases.

The terror that prevailed before the outbreak of war in 15 May 1948, is reflected in the number of people who fled the country. From February until the third week of April 1948, 60,000 people left their homes. Of the total number, 20,000 came from Hawash close to Haifa, Ailut close to Nazareth and Nasser Ed-Din close to Tiberias, while 15,000 came from the villages of Saris, Kalonia and Beit Nakuba amongst others. The areas around Deir Yassin, Soba, Al-Kastral and Um Al-Louz contributed 10,000 to the

overall figure, and the same number came from Beisan and nearby villages. The city of Tiberias, meanwhile, contributed the remaining 5,000.

Another large wave of refugees left Palestine during the period April 23 to May 15, when 300,000 people fled from Haifa, Jaffa, the New City in Jerusalem and Safad, amongst other places. There were several waves to come, which usually coincided with the various acts of war and later, with the cease-fire agreements that were to follow.

From May 15 to June 11 in 1948, that is during the actual fighting, 80,000 Arabs fled Palestine. During the first cease-fire between 11 June to 9 July, the number sank to 15,000. Between 9-18 July, Ramleh and Lydda were evacuated and the number rose to 150,000. Between 18 July and October 1948, the number of evacuees was somewhere in the region of 60,000. After the consultations in October, 1948 and until the final Rhodos Treaty, signed in the winter of 1949, the number of refugees increased by another 175,000. Since then, an additional 100,000 refugees have fled the Jewish terror in Palestine. The total number of refugees, therefore, is approximately 940,000. Although the figure could be slightly inaccurate, it matches the estimated figure provided by several sources from different sides. In short, the Jewish terrorists were able within a few months to achieve what the Zionists were unable to achieve in 30 years, namely, to get rid of the Arabs of Palestine.

According to available statistics concerning the whereabouts of a total of 905,996 refugees, one is told that 335,762 ended up in refugee camps in the Gaza Strip, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. There are a total number of 56 camps, and the number of residents is rising rapidly due to the current birthrate. Of the refugee camps, those in Jordan were obliged to absorb the largest number of refugees, numbering some 153,250. Outside the camps 570,234 people settled in Gaza, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon and, once again, the largest group - 346,356 people - settled in Jordan, which means that the country's total refugee population amounted to 499,606 people. It should be noted that the original population of Jordan was somewhere in the region of 500,000, or perhaps a little higher. The 34,000 refugees who have not been accounted for, such as myself, either moved to other countries outside the Middle East or were part of the relatively small contingencies that made it to Iraq.

At the time of the establishment of the Jewish state, the above-mentioned refugees, together with the 175,000 Arabs that stayed in Palestine, owned 48 percent of all the land, while the Jews owned slightly less than seven percent. The remaining land - some 45 percent - was controlled by either the Palestine Administration or the various religious organizations.

Arab losses in Palestine include the following:

- 1) Out of the 370 Jewish colonies that were built between 1948 and 1953, 350 were constructed on land that belongs to Arab refugees.
- 2) Slightly over 33 percent of the Jews in Israel live in buildings that belong to Arab refugees.
- 3) Nearly 25 percent of the new Jewish immigrants (250,000) live in buildings or cities that belong to the Arab refugees.
- 4) Some 1,252,000 boxes of citrus fruit (approximately half of the citrus produce) were exported by the Jewish state between 1951 and 1952. This fruit was grown on farms that belong to Arabs (about 25,000 dunums of land). The income from citrus export made up about ten percent of all foreign currency revenues from which the Jews were to benefit.
- 5) At the end of July, 1950 approximately 17,000 new Jewish immigrants lived in houses that belong to Arabs, around 40,000 rented apartments that belong to Arabs and approximately 7,000 rented shops that belong to Arabs.
- 6) The Jews took the following cities from the Arabs: Jaffa, Ramleh, Lydda, Akka, Nazareth, Al-Majdal, Sheba, Shafa Amr and some parts of the New City of Jerusalem. The cities of Haifa, Safad, Tiberias, Beisan and Samach, all of which had a large number of Arab inhabitants, were also kept by the Jews. In addition, the Jews took over more than 700 Arab villages.

The total value of all the above has been assessed by neutral experts to be approximately two billion British Pounds, divided, according to the experts, as follows:

- 100 million pounds: citrus groves, including buildings and machines
- 1,100 million pounds: villas, buildings and other property in Arab cities and villages, including cattle and remaining animals, factories, machines, etc.
- 1 million pounds: banana plantations
- 275 million pounds: other fruit fields, olive groves, etc.
- 30 million pounds: fertile land
- 220 million pounds: less fertile land
- 200 million pounds: furniture, money, jewelry, food, household wares, means of transportation such as cars, boats, etc.
- 6 million pounds: funds in banks
- 1 million pounds: funds in insurance companies

It may be that the Zionists base their main argument for establishing the Jewish state on ideological concepts, but behind the phraseology are cold and calculating economic brains that devised systematic and mathematical plans to use all available means to ensure that the new state of Israel was able to swallow the waves of immigrants. First, the Jews needed to convince the

world that Palestine actually belonged to the Jews: in order to do this there was a need not only for mass immigration, but also for means to support the immigrants. The Jewish plans left no room for anything but the smallest number of Arabs, but they left plenty of room for Arab property.

The Jewish state needed land, something that could hardly be found, even for money, during the British Mandate. The following table shows how the land was distributed during the mandate period.

Ownership	Dunums	Percent
Arab land	12,574,774	47.79
Jewish land	1,491,699	5.67
The Administration's land	12,114,500	46.00
Other	142,050	0.54
Total	26,323,023	100.00

In the Negev area in the south of Palestine, the Jews owned 0.5 percent or some 65,000 dunums of an area totaling 12,577,000 dunums. Nowadays, almost all of the Negev is in Jewish hands, with the exception of the Gaza Strip (around 35,000 dunums).

During the weeks leading up to 15 May 1948, there was a slight increase in the amount of land possessed by Jews due to the fact that the English had left them land in Haifa, Akka, Safad, Jaffa and so on.

When the UN presented its partition plan on 29 November, 1947 there was a strong reaction on the part of the Arabs. According to the international proposal, all the land in the hands of the Palestine Administration would go to the Jewish immigrants, which meant that the Arabs would be left with only 42.88 percent of the land. The absurd nature of the proposal becomes clear when one takes into account the fact that at the time, the Arab population made up 70 percent of the total population. The Partition Plan was carried out thanks to the war, and it resulted in a remarkable situation according to which the so-called Arab regions, namely the Western bank of the River Jordan, covering some 5,755,000 dunums or 21.3 percent of the total amount of land, were all that was left for the Arabs of Palestine from their original land. On top of everything else, the land in question was transferred to Jordan since it was obviously too small to form the base of an independent state. In addition there is the so-called Gaza Strip consisting of 1.3 percent or 350,000 dunums of the total amount of land. The Strip, however, has been reserved for the refugee camps. The Jewish 'half' would eventually consist - thanks to the superpowers - of 20,922,023 dunums or 77.4 percent of the original territory.

The situation in Jerusalem resembles that in other parts of Palestine. The city of Jerusalem can be divided as follows:

New City	19,331 dunums
Old City (inside the walls)	800 dunums
Total	20,131 dunums

In the Old City, which is in Arab hands, the Jews owned only five dunums, while the rest was owned by the Arabs (Christians and Moslems).

Concerning the New City, during the mandate the Arabs owned 40 percent of the city's 19,331 dunums while the Jews owned 26.12 percent of the New City. The rest of the land was owned by Christians, the Administration and the transportation authorities. According to the new ownership arrangement, the Arabs now have only 11.48 percent of the city, while the Jews have 84.13 percent and 4.39 percent is considered a neutral zone.

According to cautious calculations, the Jewish state owes the Arab refugees approximately 47 million British Pounds in annual revenues. Of this sum, 14.75 million pounds represents the value of fruit exports, including citrus and olives. Rent for fertile land accounts for approximately ten million pounds, whilst the rent for houses and apartments accounts for another 22.75 million pounds. The export figures were not taken at random but based on the British Administration's export statistics, according to which eight million boxes of citrus fruits were estimated to have a value of 12 million British Pounds. More than 14 years have passed since the Jewish state in Palestine first stole this income, which means that it has so far succeeded in stealing at least 650 million British Pounds that belong to the Arab refugees, in addition to interest.

Many people outside the Middle East have expressed surprise at the fact that the refugees have sometimes spread offensive prop-

aganda against the Jewish state. Taking into account the figures mentioned above and the miserable existence of the refugees, one should hardly be astonished by their bitter tone. Most, if not all of the refugees view the partition of Palestine as an injustice that should make the angels weep, since they were effectively deprived of everything but the clothes that they stood in. The fact that the international organizations and the superpowers played a role in this crime without even attempting to justify the breaking of internationally accepted legal rules hardly makes the situation easier. One can try as hard as one likes to muddy the water, but it remains a fact that property worth two billion pounds has been stolen from the Arabs who, to make matters worse, were forced to leave their homeland or at the very least, their place of birth. This has happened before; to be more specific, it happened to the Jewish people in Germany, and it took many years for them to regain their property. Today, West Germany pays compensation for those losses on a yearly basis. When, one has to ask oneself, will the Jewish people be prepared to pay off their own debts?



General Arab Views

It is obvious that the stability of the Middle East, so important for world peace, is closely connected to finding a solution for the Palestine Question and that the birth of the issue in the spring of 1948 is undoubtedly responsible for the current political instability in the region. Fourteen years have elapsed without a solution being found, and it is clear that the longer the problem continues, the more difficult it will be to get rid of this cloud over the Middle East.

It is, perhaps, a matter of perspective. The Jewish state and those who support its political objectives believe that the Palestine issue has already been solved, and they would like to see the Arabs accept the new *status quo* and for peace to prevail as soon as possible. They want to forget what has happened and, as far as the refugees are concerned, they would like to see them stay where they are.

The Arabs, on the other hand, including the refugees, say that this *status quo* can never be accepted and that there must be a solution that grants the Arabs all their rights in their homeland. It is because of their stand that the Arabs are still at war with the

Jewish state and oppose all talk of peace. It is also because of their stand that the Jews, with the help of the French and British, attempted in the autumn of 1956 to bring about peace with Egypt by resorting to military tactics, albeit with no success. The head of the British Government at the time, Sir Anthony Eden, announced that the purpose of this 'police action' was, amongst other things, to create peace between Jews and Arabs in the Middle East once and for all.

Israel's David Ben-Gurion from time to time extended his hand to President Nasser and announced to the world that he was willing to meet the President wherever and whenever he wanted, simply in order to sit down and talk to him. The Arabs, including Nasser, think and say that they have no reason whatsoever to accept Ben-Gurion's extended hand. It should not be forgotten that the 'hand of peace' was extended only a few days before it attacked Egypt in 1956, and that while one hand held the dove of peace, the other was preparing to shoot.

One must also consider the Jewish attitude toward those refugees who are living close to the borders of Palestine and the cruel and unreasonable measures taken against them. Look at the Arabs living in the so-called Gaza Strip and on the West Bank: each and every day they see their fields, olive trees and orange groves right in front of their eyes and are obliged to watch as the Jews gather the fruits. Temptation is strong. From time to time an Arab refugee will dare to cross the border to the property

that is rightfully his, but what happens then? The Jewish response comes quickly and sharply, and the Arab is beaten or shot and killed. The Arabs throughout the Arab World understand that this is not the way in which their brothers in Palestine should be treated. And as if even all this is not enough, Jewish platoons have crossed the border and blown up entire villages as revenge. In the beginning, the Arabs did not cross the border to kill, but Jewish revenge soon led to Arab revenge, which resulted in increased tension.

In order to illustrate what is going on, I will cite the words of the Arab Legion's Glubb Pasha, written in his book, '*A Soldier with the Arabs*', which reads as follows:

"At dawn, Wednesday, 31 May, two trucks from the Qatra Prison close to Rehovot in the Israeli territory took off, each loaded with about 50 Arab prisoners. At nine o'clock in the evening they arrived at the demarcation line at Wadi Araba, south of the Dead Sea. During the journey, which took around 16 hours, the prisoners received neither food nor water; in addition, they were not allowed to get out of the trucks for any reason. They were blindfolded all day long. At nine o'clock they were ordered to get off the trucks. They were forced to march straight ahead in groups of three or four and were told that they were walking toward Jordan. Machine-guns were fired in order to make them run. They wandered around in the waterless desert for 36 to 48 hours until they were helped by the

platoons of the Arab Legion or by local Bedouins. Close to 20 died or became lost and have not been heard of since."

Glubb's story continues:

"The survivors said that they had been in different prisons in Israel for periods ranging from six weeks to four months. All described incidents of serious physical assault and several still had marks on their bodies, the result of beatings. The fingernails of one man had been removed according to a kind of torture that was used by the Nazis in Germany. Many had missing teeth and described how they had been lost during beatings with rifle butts by Israeli soldiers or policemen. A British officer from the Arab Legion, a medic from UNRWA, a UN observer and a photographer were sent to investigate the situation. The marks left by assaults, fingers with no nails, and mouths without teeth, in addition to a range of other injuries were all photographed."

The story of every man was written down. Here are some examples:

- 1) "I live close to Hebron. Thirty days ago I was working in the countryside close to the border with some neighbors. Whilst we were working the Jews came and captured us.
- 2) I am a refugee from Gaza. Because I was poor I crossed the line over to my old village. I had hidden some money there, and I was hoping to dig it up and use it to

live on. I was arrested by the Jews and taken to the camp in Qatra.

3) I am a refugee from Gaza. There is no work and I am poor. I tried to walk to Hebron and from there to Jerusalem in order to find a job. I was arrested by the Jews, imprisoned in Qatra and tortured.”

“Almost all the stories were the same - stories of people who had tried to cross from Gaza to Hebron or else had merely attempted to retrieve something that they had been forced to leave behind in their original home. A few, however, said that they were not refugees but lived in Israel and had been arrested in their homes. These are cold facts. They cannot be looked upon as a bagatelle or be referred to as Communist or anti-Jewish agitation.”

As one reads this story about torture and terror, one imagines himself to be reading about the methods used by the Nazis against the Jews during Hitler’s reign in Germany. To make matters worse, the story is about a people that has never harmed the Jewish people. On the contrary, it was the Arabs in Spain who rescued the Jews from persecution and restored to them their rights. It is worth mentioning that Gibraltar is called ‘Jabal Tarik’ by the Arabs, meaning ‘the mountain of Tarik’, after the commander Tarik bin Ziad who reached the Spanish coast with his troops.

Regarding the future of the Arab refugees, the Zionists say that they should remain outside the borders of Palestine. To make

this possible they are prepared to pay a high price in dollars. They have already come up, amongst other things, with the Johnston Plan, named after the American, Eric Johnston which mentions building dams and power plants at different places in Palestine and along the Jordan Valley. The aim is to create work and allow for a higher standard of living. The project would bring water to about 120,000 acres of land where some of the refugees would be allowed to settle.²⁵ It should of course be noted that this plan, which would benefit from the tributary rivers of the River Jordan coming from Jordan, Syria and Lebanon, would also benefit the Jews in Palestine. The project would cost approximately 130 million dollars, and some 30 percent of the water would be used to supply electricity. The Arabs turned the offer down since they believed that it was a trap, designed to stop the refugees from returning to their homes. The Johnston Plan would have also increased Jewish immigration, which increases the instability in the Arab World.

The Jewish state says that it is ready and willing to help the refugees materially in order to keep them at a distance. It is quite clear, however, that this state, which is itself dependent on funds from outside, mainly from the USA and West Germany, is not capable of raising any sum worth mentioning for the settlement of the refugees. In any event, the US dollar or the West German Reichsmark would reach the Arabs via the head of the Israeli

²⁵ The Johnston Plan itself would not be enough to settle the refugee problem. It is calculated that the project would help, at the very most, only some 150,000 refugees - out of one million - to have a home.

Government. Of greater importance is the fact that the refugees, myself included, are not willing to sell Palestine for money. We did not do this during the mandate period, we are not prepared to do it now, and we have no intention of doing it in the future.

I cannot refrain from referring to an article in a big northern European newspaper, which depicts itself as representing democracy. The article, which was published on 11 December 1959, defends the Zionists' wish to keep the refugees out of Palestine. I find it somewhat strange that the article was published on the anniversary of a very important UN resolution, dated 11 December 1948, which recommended that "the refugees who wish to return to their homes and live in peace with their neighbors should be allowed to do so as soon as possible, and those who choose not to return shall be compensated for their property and for damage to or loss of property." The resolution was brought up before the Security Council several times. In addition, the UN confirmed the fact that the matters of return and compensation were priority issues that should be treated as such. The issues, quite clearly, were extremely important with regard to peace and stability in the Middle East. The UN recommended that the negotiation commission (consisting of representatives from Turkey, France and the USA) should increase its efforts to protect the rights of the refugees. In another resolution, the UN regretted that the said resolution had not been executed and demanded, yet again, that UN decisions pertaining to Palestine be respected. Not a single word about the resolutions was included in the article in the newspaper.

The 'aggressive Arab states', as they are often called, demand that the UN resolutions concerning Palestine be respected by all parties. The Zionists, on the other hand, demand that the UN withdraw these resolutions and put pressure not on the Jewish state (which until now has ignored the authority of the UN), but on the Arab states (which support the authority of the UN). The Jews in Palestine have not allowed any refugees to return; on the contrary, they have tried, by adopting discriminatory measures, to get rid of the small Arab minority that remains.

The Zionists and their collaborators state that it is Nasser, Kassem, Saud and Hussein who reject all talk about peace and that a small group of army officers in the Arab World are longing for a second round of fighting with the Jews in order to regain their honor, which was lost in 1948. I dare to say, without any reservations, that this propaganda, which has been spread and circulated far beyond the borders of Palestine, has been accepted by many in spite of the fact that it does not reflect the reality of the current situation. It is the Arab people as a whole and the refugees in particular who refuse to take the Zionists' hand because as far as they are concerned, the issue is the destiny and rights of one million unhappy human beings.

More than one Arab leader was assassinated because of the Palestine War and the refugees' misery: King Abdallah was killed by a Palestinian Arab, while the head of the Egyptian Government, Nokrashi Pasha hanged himself. For exactly the same reasons, new

regimes have taken control of Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Lebanon. The new lords in the Arab World are often referred to as 'dictators', but it remains a fact that the Arab states today are stronger, both inside and outside. Nobody is willing to take orders from London, Paris, Washington or Moscow. The Arab leaders view helping their Arab brothers to return home as a sacred duty.

One current Zionist myth points to the 'spread' of Communism in the Arab World. The Zionists are happy to spread such propaganda, in addition to that about the 'dictators' in the Arab World, in order to frighten and win the support of democratic Western countries and force the Arabs into accepting the idea of peace. Both National Socialism and Communism include too many concepts that are repulsive to the Arabs and Islam. As a matter of fact, all Communists in Nasser's Egypt and in Syria are locked up! The same thing applies to Saudi Arabia and Jordan. In all these countries, Communist parties are outlawed.

And so the Zionists claim that it is the Arab leaders who prevent the refugees from staying in the neighboring countries. Once again, this is not at all correct. Official reports from the UN agencies in Beirut and other places say that the refugees want to go back home, and American correspondents who have visited the refugees confirm that this is true. It is easy to sit far away from actual events and come up with proposals. Why not find out the truth by taking a plane to the Middle East and talking to the refugees themselves?

Many people maintain the belief that the refugees, if allowed to return, will take over the property of the Jews in Palestine. It is indeed true, that hundreds of thousands of the refugees lived in one hundred percent Arab cities where not a single Jew could be found, such as Jaffa, Ramleh, Lydda, Beer Sheba, Akka, Nazareth and others. In addition, one must also consider the 700 Arab villages that belong to the refugees, not to mention the Negev. The refugees demand that their homes, cities, villages and all their property be returned. This means that the country should have the same status as it did before the UN partition.

I will refrain from making accusations and be content with stating that I am not anti-Semitic, nor have I ever been. On the contrary, between 1945 and 1948 when things were at their worst I cooperated with Jewish colleagues, operated at a Jewish hospital and never once refused to treat Jewish terrorists who needed my help. The Arabs, as a whole, are not anti-Semitic. Not long ago swastikas and anti-Semitic propaganda were painted on walls in many countries of the world, with the exception of the Arab states, in spite of the serious conflict over Palestine.

It is not possible to compare the refugees of Palestine with refugees from other countries such as East Germany, Hungary or Finland. In these countries, most of the natives are still there. In Palestine, the land was divided in spite of the wishes of the majority, and the division was carried out using force and terrorism. It was in this manner that 85 percent of the Arabs living there

lost their homes. Since 1948, approximately two million new Jewish immigrants have arrived in Palestine. Today, they live in Arab homes, use Arab furniture and cars, and work on Arab land, and they have access to millions of dollars stolen from the Arabs. At exactly the same time as the Jews refuse to allow the refugees in, they claim to seek peace with the very same people.

It is as impossible for the refugees and for the Arab states to make peace with the Jewish state as it is for the Jewish people to make peace with the Nazis. If I did not believe that all other Arabs felt the same, I would not dare make such a statement. The person who doubts that this is the overall Arab opinion and believes my words to be an exaggeration ought to go to the Middle East as soon as possible. One could start with King Saud or President Nasser and go right down the scale to the illiterate peasant.

I have personally discussed this issue with officials and ordinary people in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and - of course - Palestine. Although I never visited Iraq, I have met many Iraqis abroad. So far I have found a compact, united front regarding the refugees who settled outside the borders of Palestine. Everyone agrees that the Arabs of Palestine have suffered a great injustice and that this should be corrected as soon as possible. The refugees are discussed all over the Middle East. Whenever Arabs meet in cafés, cinemas, restaurants, trams and trains, the topic of conversation will soon turn to Palestine. The

problem of the refugees has become a nightmare for the entire Arab World, which was taken by surprise by such a catastrophe. Tragedies have happened under dictatorial regimes, but the tragedy of the Arabs in Palestine is the result of clean-cut democracy. The problem is a source of great concern for the Arab leaders and governments. The Arabs already agree with the UN's principles when it comes to human rights, but they will not allow the Jews to keep what they have stolen. A peaceful solution should not be difficult to find; in fact, it can be found in the UN archives. Unfortunately, the UN resolutions of 1948 and 1949 concerning the status of Jerusalem, Palestine's borders and the return of the refugees to their homes, have yet to be respected.

The next problem that troubles the Arabs is the planned expansion of the Jewish population of Palestine at their expense. At the moment there are about two million Jews. If one is to believe the Jewish Government, and there is no reason not to, there are plans to increase the population by three to five million within the next few years. It is for this purpose in particular that the Jewish state wishes to change the direction of the River Jordan and irrigate the Negev region, thus making way for the newcomers.

Sooner or later there will be a new problem to solve. Palestine is too small to house the new immigrants, and a further expansion of the Jewish state may occur. The first areas to be occupied will probably be the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Irgun's leader, Menachem Begin, is only one amongst many who would like to annex Jordan (a part of Biblical Palestine).

There is fresh evidence that the Arabs have reason to worry. When the Jewish state attacked Egypt in 1956, its forces occupied the city of Gaza, amongst others. The Jewish radio then invited the Jews to visit the new 'Jewish' city of Gaza, as it was called, which was described as being incredibly beautiful. There is hardly any doubt that had Nasser failed to handle the situation so well by resorting to resistance and relying on moral support from all over the world, the Jews would be in Gaza even today. Remember that Israel proclaimed at the time that the Gaza Strip was Israeli territory.

In this context I would like to quote Agne Hamrin once again: "Still these maximalists have, as part of their program, the creation of a state for the Jews, extending over all of historical Palestine's territory, thus also - as they see it - the British protectorate of Trans-Jordan." It should be noted that at the time of Hamrin's statement, Trans-Jordan was not a protectorate but a kingdom with Abdallah as regent, which has led the Jewish expansion plans to be taken even more seriously by the Arab World.

The Arabs have compiled a lot of evidence that confirms that there will be attempts to expand the Jewish state, but I will stick to a few examples. Zionist leaders like Weizmann, Sokolof, Rutenberg, Zangwill and Jabotinsky have said that they want "Palestine to be Jewish as England is English." Israel Zangwill, for instance, once said, "Palestine is a country without a people and

must be given to a people without a country. It must be the future task of the Jews to put so much pressure on the Arab inhabitants of Palestine that they will leave the country... We (that is the Jews) will force the Arabs out of Palestine and Trans-Jordan, throw them into the desert and build Israel on both banks of the River Jordan."

According to available sources, the Grand Rabbi in Palestine has expressed his belief that the capital of the Jewish state should not be Tel Aviv but Jerusalem, since it is the place where Solomon's Temple was built. He notes that Zionism is both a religious and a political idea and that the Jews should sacrifice their lives to save their holy temple (Islam's Al-Aqsa Mosque). It should be noted that he is referring to the Old City, which is completely Arab. Other leaders have said that Palestine is useless without Jerusalem while Jerusalem is useless without the temple.

When it comes to the Sinai, the Jews consider the desert a holy area: the place where they were given the Ten Commandments and wandered for 40 years. It has been said that when some of the Jewish troops reached the Sinai's borders in December 1948, all the vehicles stopped and the soldiers got out and kissed the ground. The Sinai, which for centuries has been Egyptian territory, is of strategic importance. It separates Africa from Asia and the Mediterranean Sea from the Red Sea. The area of the Sinai is approximately 82,000 square kilometers, which makes it about three times as large as all of Palestine.

In the Jewish parliament, the Knesset, it is written, 'From the Nile to the Euphrates'. What could that mean?

Confirmation of the Jewish motives in Palestine as implied above is to be found in the opinion of former Jewish Foreign Minister, Shertok. Count Bernadotte, in recalling a meeting with Shertok, said, "This was, Shertok claimed, the best way to prevent future Jewish expansion. If the area from the beginning was made too small, violent pressure would develop amongst the inhabitants, which would lead to serious complications. I interpreted this to mean that the Jews would use the argument that the numbers at a certain time had grown so big - and would become even bigger - that the Jewish area was not enough. It was a kind of reasoning that corresponded with the Arabs' understanding of the future plans of the Jews."

The Arabs, as already mentioned, do not even want to speak about making peace with the Jewish state. Can peace be forced upon them? It is possible, but political pressure alone will never be enough. The Arabs will consider such pressure a hostile act, regardless of its source. Another possibility is to crush the Arab states with military force and make them accept peace. One such attempt was made, albeit on a small scale, when the Jews attacked the village of Quibiah, which was leveled to the ground. Many people were wounded or killed. The matter was discussed in the Security Council where Great Britain and America supported a resolution recommending direct negotiations between

Jordan and the authorities in Palestine. It seems that their intention was to bring the two states together in order to achieve peace, including with the other Arab states. The attempt was a failure.

Another attempt, which has already been mentioned and which was carried out on a larger scale, involves the attack on Egypt that was carried out by the Jewish state with the help of Great Britain and France in 1956. Nasser did not give in and was prepared to fight 'to the bitter end'. This attempt also failed. It is doubtful that any superpower would come to help the Jews in the event of a renewed Jewish offensive.

It is possible that the Jews in Palestine could attempt to crush the Arab states on their own, although the Arabs do not believe that they would succeed, and in any case, it would still not be the end of the Arabs. Moreover, were the Jews to fail to win, the implications would be so great that the Jewish state would be destroyed. All the Arabs ask for is a just fight in which no side gets more support than the other, but where the sides meet as equals and fight on equal terms.

Is any kind of negotiation possible in the Middle East? Speaking on behalf of the Arabs, I think it is fair to say that they do not trust France or Great Britain regarding this issue. Their previous experience with these powers has made it impossible to accept them as negotiators.

In his memoirs, Anthony Eden confesses that the purpose of the action against Egypt was to solve the Suez conflict and, at the same time, get rid of Nasser before he manages to strengthen his position in the Middle East and Africa. He calls Egypt's nationalization of the canal company 'theft', but to keep control over the company for British purposes is seen as appropriate. Remember that Great Britain, together with other countries including France, saw fit to put the major part of the income from the canal in its own pocket while the owners, the Egyptians, had to stand by and watch.

One result of Eden's intervention is that Egypt has sharpened its measures against all Israeli traffic through the Suez Canal. From an Arab point of view, one considers export goods from the Jewish state as property belonging to the Palestinian refugees, and therefore ships with such goods are stopped and confiscated by the authorities for the sake of the refugees. Concerning imported goods, including military materials, Egypt does not consider itself obliged to allow them to pass through Egyptian territory, as the Arab World is at war with the Jewish state.²⁶ Another result of the Suez War was that Nasser's position in the Arab World, as well as abroad, was strengthened, whilst the Anglo-French influence came to an end.

²⁶ As an example, it can be mentioned that Great Britain, which does not even own the Suez Canal, closed this international waterway to all enemy traffic during World War II.

As an answer to those who would say that the Suez Canal should be open to all nations' traffic, Nasser says that the Jews in Palestine should first respect the UN resolutions concerning the country in which they live before demanding passage through the canal. This issue is but a small part of the overall Palestine problem and is unlikely to be solved until the greater problem is solved once and for all.

Then there is the question of the Arab oil. According to Eden, Great Britain did not want Nasser to control all the Arab oil, since it did not want to find itself at Nasser's mercy. One should not forget that the owners of the oil themselves, mainly Iraq and Saudi Arabia, have frequently refused to give oil to any state they consider an enemy: the oil supply to Haifa, for example, has remained cut off since 1948. They certainly do not need any advice from Nasser when it comes to this.

Eden regrets the fact that 'one' did not use the opportunity to make peace between Jews and Arabs in the Middle East, but then goes on to say that Great Britain could have kept Port Said and crushed the Egyptian military power in light of the fact that, with the Jewish forces in the Sinai, Nasser's position at the time was weak. In other words, 'one' wants the Arabs to fall to their knees!

Unfortunately, the Arabs do not trust the USA either when it comes to the Palestine Question. They are of the opinion that the American Government should be held partly responsible for

the misery of the Palestinian refugees. The American Government ratified both the Balfour Declaration and Great Britain's mandate over Palestine, thus lending Zionism its clear support, which led to 75 percent of the money used for land purchases by the Jews in Palestine being supplied by Americans, including Jews and non-Jews. The Zionists undoubtedly had strong support in the USA for their aspirations in the Holy Land.

As already mentioned, the American support for the Jews of Palestine became more noticeable under the Truman administration. It was Truman who insisted that 100,000 Jews should immediately immigrate to Palestine. It was also Truman's government that strongly supported the UN Partition Plan.²⁷ The Arabs consider the American foreign aid for the so-called underdeveloped countries in the Middle East unfair. In American eyes, one and a half million Jews in Palestine weighed as much as, if not more than, 40 or 50 million Arabs. The same unfairness existed with regard to the export of weapons to the region. Up until 1955, Palestine's 1,750,000 Jews had received close to 400 million dollars, compared to the mere 300 million dollars given to the approximately 40 million inhabitants of the Arab states during the same period.

The Arab World considers itself capable of solving the Palestine issue without foreign intervention, although it would prefer to do so according to the UN resolutions. At the moment, there is a

²⁷ Truman supported Israel with his *de facto* recognition only minutes after the state was proclaimed in Tel Aviv after receiving a written appeal from Dr. Weizmann.

water-tight economic blockade against the Jewish state. No goods from any Arab state may be exchanged with this state, and any Arab who ignores the blockade is severely punished. The Arabs insist that their pride will not allow them to stand back and watch as the rights of one million of their brothers are violated.

It is no secret that Arab politics during the Cold War have been based on the loss of Palestine. The Arabs were on the side of the allies throughout both world wars, but look what happened! World War I resulted in them finding themselves under French and British mandates, according to which their countries were divided into small states and cantons. As for World War II, it bore witness to the 'giving away' of a large part of the Arab land with an Arab majority to an alien people.

The Arabs have neither the will nor the desire to fight again. They understand that in the event of war, their cities will be destroyed, their men will be killed and their fortunes will be lost. There have been attempts to tempt them in the form of military alliances and the so-called Eisenhower doctrine, but they no longer want to listen. Why? In the year 1950 Great Britain, France and the USA accepted responsibility for ensuring that the Jewish-Arab borders in Palestine remain intact in the event of an attack from whatever side in order to maintain the *status quo*. But six years later, when the whole world ruled that the Jewish state had carried out aggressive actions, two of the three countries not only failed to come to the rescue of the attacked, but went so far as to take sides with the aggressor!

If the Western powers want to win back the trust of the Arabs, they should begin with Palestine. It would appear that it was not hard for them to inflict great injustices upon the people of Palestine. One can safely assume, therefore, that it would not be hard for them to set the record straight. Many people reason that every war will result, sooner or later, in peace, which perhaps leads one to ask why the Arabs do not want to make peace following the war in Palestine. From an Arab point of view, one does not consider this a war in its common sense, but rather a number of clear, merciless violations against a small and innocent people; indeed, this 'war' involved the extermination of an entire people, the plundering on a grand scale of their homes and farms and the annihilation of their language, culture and religion. This is no exaggeration. The fact is that in huge parts of occupied Palestine there is nothing to indicate that these regions were inhabited until just a few years ago by Arabs or that Arabic and Islam were these people's language and religion.

I find it remarkable, that the same democratic circles that plead for the Arab cause in Algeria, including those that exist amongst the French, do not want to acknowledge that the Arabs in Palestine have numerous rights that remain ignored.

A similar case of aggression was Il Duce's attack against Ethiopia, although it was not as devastating. The world condemned Mussolini's actions, yet it is not prepared to condemn the Zionist acts in Palestine.

The Arabs believe that there is a possibility that the experiment in Palestine will be tried in other parts of the Arab World if they do not take the problem seriously. Were this to happen, it would result in yet a further increase in the number of Arab refugees.

On the other hand, the Arabs are not opposed to the idea of developing peaceful relations between the Arabs and Jews in the Middle East, as has been the case for centuries. Nevertheless, this is one thing, whereas the Zionist attempts to rule the Arab World by resorting to violence, as in the case of Palestine, is another. The Jewish state cannot exist forever amidst a sea of Arab hatred and enmity. It is the Jews in Palestine who should be courting the goodwill of the Arabs, and not the other way around. It is clear, however, that according to the Arab point of view, there is no place in the Middle East for a competition between Arab Nationalism and Zionism, and it stands to reason that one will eventually prevail.

These are the views of the general Arab public on the issue on Palestine, according to my understanding. Were these views to become clear around the world, there is the possibility that justice could return to the Holy Land.

It is hard, if not impossible, to stop progress occurring in the Arab World. One is aware of the current possibilities and one wishes to live in peace with all other people, but progress must, by necessity, be accompanied by peace and justice. The Arabs are

busy with the internal problems of poverty, illiteracy and disease, and they are doing their best to solve them. Perhaps what happened in Palestine was meant to waken the Arab people from what could be referred to as a long and deep sleep.

The Arabs have frequently been criticized for the existence of feudalism in the Arab World. One should not forget that this system was inherited hundreds of years ago when the Arabs were controlled by foreign powers. At the moment, the Arabs are trying to eradicate feudalism as quickly as possible. For some years now, the authorities in Egypt have confiscated large areas of land from private owners, divided them into smaller pieces, and given them to the people. The same thing has applied with regard to Syria since its unification with Egypt in 1958. Concerning Jordan, feudalism hardly exists. The country consists mainly of desert, and in recent years it has been overwhelmed by half a million refugees from Palestine. Lebanon, on the other hand, lives on income from tourists. As for Iraq, Kassem's regime has started to share the land with the farmers. It should be noted that there are people who consider the Iraqi regime a Communist regime, which hardly fits in with the idea of feudalism. Finally we come to Saudi Arabia. It is true that the upper class lives well, but does anyone consider the less fortunate? On visiting the country in 1957 and in 1962 I occasionally heard a sound that reminded me of the sirens I heard during my years in Germany. I learned that the alarm signaled the end of one shift and the beginning of another and that factories operated around the clock. The

country is being built in a hurry, and cities such as Riyadh and Jeddah are now comparable to any large European city, and I do not mean only with regard to the number of Cadillacs, etc. A system such as feudalism that has lasted for centuries cannot be turned over like a coin.

The Arabs benefit from all the conditions necessary to become part of the modern industrialized world. They have oil, raw materials, a strategic geographical position and cheap labor. What they need now is unity. They hope that the lesson learned from Palestine will prove useful in this respect.

The Arabs are not, as many tend to believe, an aggressive people. On the contrary. The equivalent of 'hello' in Arabic, the words '*As-Salam aleykum*', which so many Europeans and Americans learn when they visit Arab countries, literally translates to 'Peace be with you'.



Epilogue

This is a document that is based on evidence concerning those responsible for the violations against a small people. These violations have no modern counterpart. The document is about Palestine's 1.2 million Arabs who once constituted around 90 percent of the country's population, and how, with terror and violence, they have been driven away from their homes and farms that they and their forefathers have owned for an uninterrupted period of 1,300 years. The homeland of the Arabs of Palestine was taken over by Jews from all parts of the world, in spite of the fact that those from whom they stole the land were in no way responsible for their persecution in Europe.

World Zionism, in coordination with Great Britain and other powers, has caused a 'switch' of peoples, against the Arab majority's wishes. For every Jewish family 'saved', an Arab one has been sacrificed, which means that today, approximately 85 percent of the original Arab population are refugees. The UN bears partial responsibility for the Arabs' tragedy and for acts that oppose all democratic, legal, moral and humanitarian principles.

The author, who is an Arab born in Palestine, has sought in this, his autobiography, to describe the misfortune of an entire people. The Israeli point of view regarding the Palestine conflict is already known. It is the author's sincere wish that this book will show the other side of the coin.

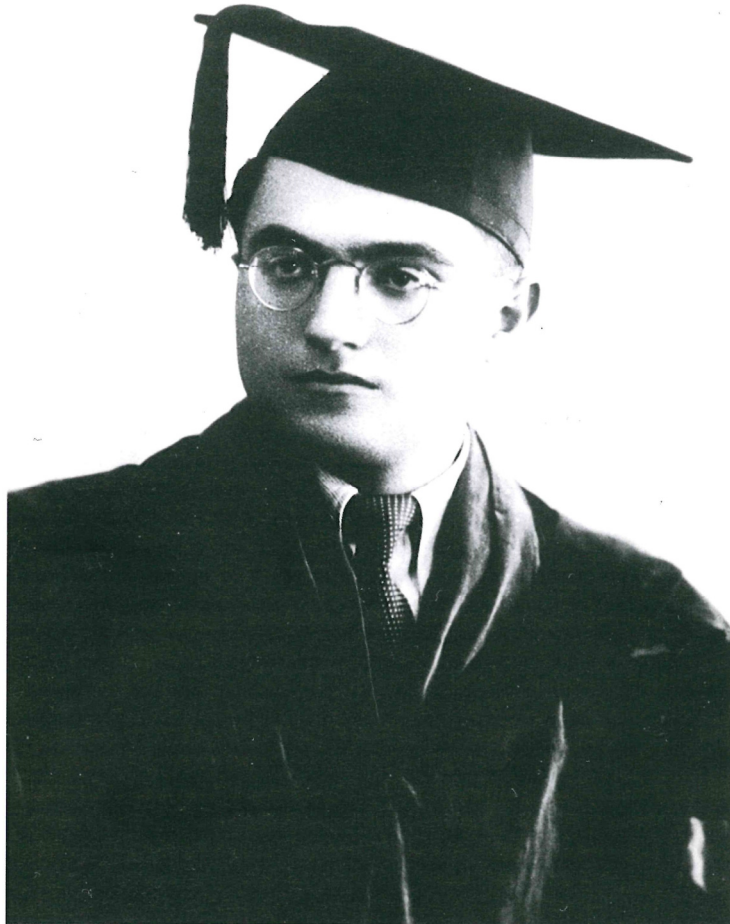
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Mufid Abdul Hadi, graduating from the American University in Beirut

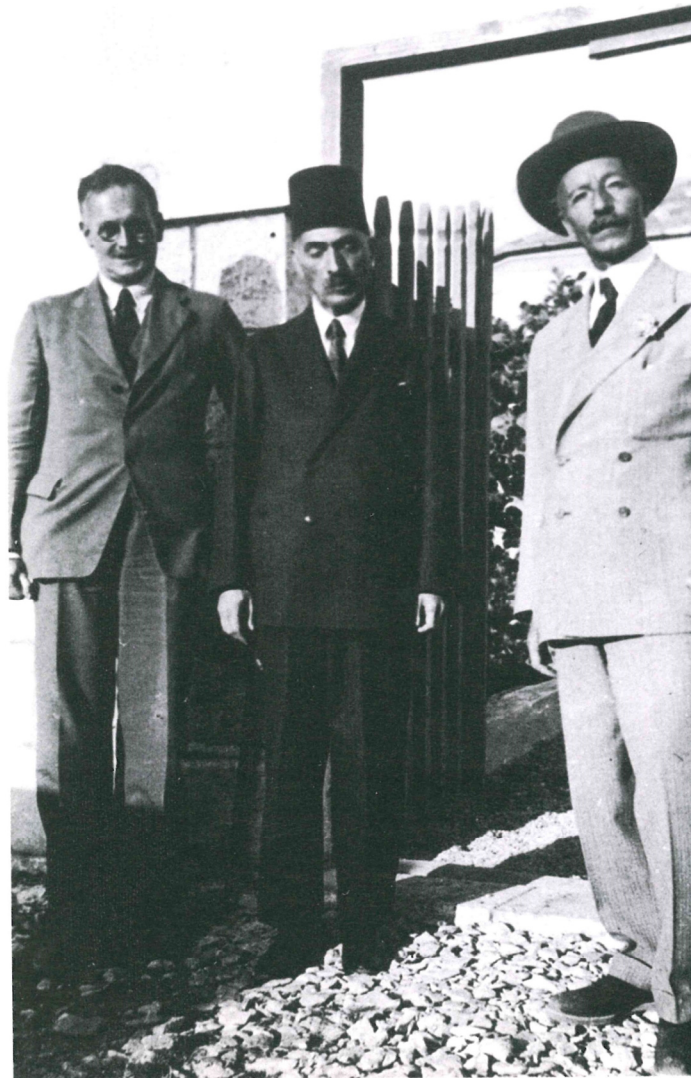
PHOTO: Munim A. Abdul Hadi, Beirut, June 1936



Haj Amin Al-Husseini, Grand Mufti of Jerusalem
PHOTO: Munim A. Abdul Hadi, Nebi Musa, April 1936



Amin Bey Abdul Hadi (right) and Ruhi Bey Abdul Hadi (left)
PHOTO: Munim A. Abdul Hadi, Cairo, January 1936



Sir Arthur Wauchope (right), High Commissioner for Palestine, at the home of Amin Bey Abdul Hadi (center)

PHOTO: Munim A. Abdul Hadi, Ramallah, June 1933



Count Folke Bernadotte (center) with Col. Abdallah Tal, Military Governor of Jerusalem (to his left) and Glubb Pasha (far left).

PHOTO: PASSIA Archives



King Abdallah (front) and Prince Na'if (second from right) in Jericho. Left of Abdallah are Tawfiq Abu Al-Huda (with the eyeglasses) and Sa'id Al-Mufti.

PHOTO: PASSIA Archives

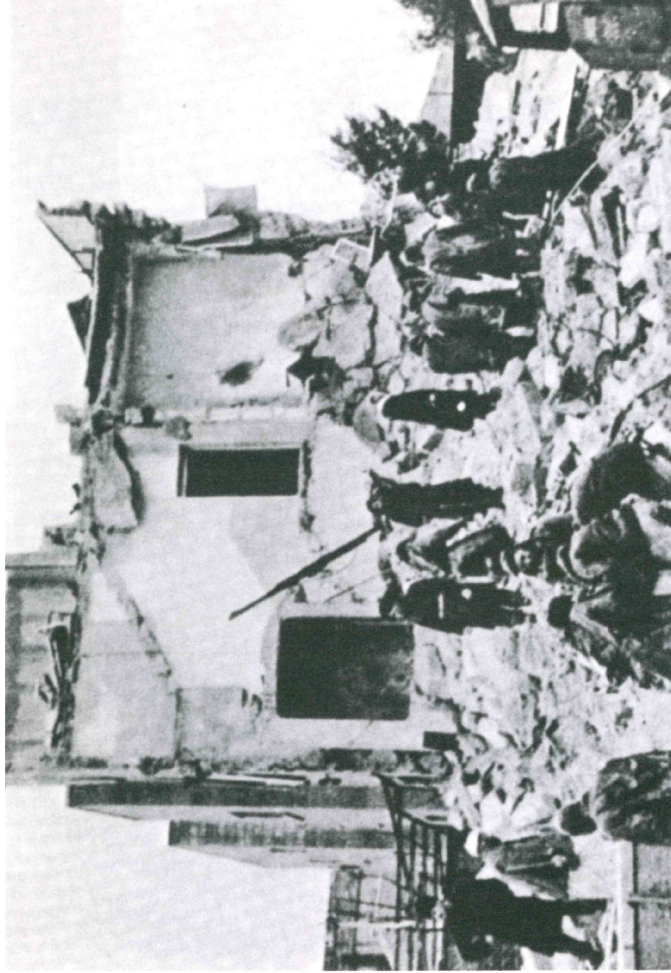


The Arab Higher Committee, 1936

Left to right: front row: Ragheb Nashashibi, Haj Amin Al-Husseini, Ahmad Hilmi, Abdel Latif Salah, Alfred Rock.

Second row: Jamal Al-Husseini, Dr. Hussein Al-Khalidi, Yaqoub Ghousein, Fuad Saba'.

PHOTO: From: Walid Khalidi, *Before Their Diaspora*. Washington, DC: Institute of Palestine Studies, 2nd edition 1991



Ruins of the Hotel Semiramis in Jerusalem, blown up by Haganah on 5 January 1948.

PHOTO: From: Walid Khalidi, *Before Their Diaspora*. Washington, DC: Institute of Palestine Studies, 2nd edition 1991