

CONCLUSION

The study in this book underlined the major characteristics of the existing relationship between the Arab liberation movement and the Palestinian national movement. The main focus of the work is the rise and evolution of the latter as an offshoot of the former. This required the study of the two as major forces in the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The investigation in this study would consider tracing the foundations of the Arab nationalist movement back as a modern phenomenon. This indeed aided in comprehending the ties and the nature of those ties between the Palestinian Nationalist and the Arab liberation movements.

The relationship between the Arab liberation and the Palestinian national movements can be understood in terms of the historical development in the mid-19th-Century Arab East. The economic transformation and social changes occurring at this time were crucial in granting political and intellectual developments. They were instrumental in creating and deepening political and intellectual diversity in the region. This in essence drove various elements and groups in the Ottoman Empire to assimilate new positions in terms of their ties with the Empire.

The people in the Arab East including the Palestinians at mid-century came under the influence of the process of restructuring administratively and judicially in terms of the existing infrastructure. The reformation plan designed to strengthen the Egyptian central authority in greater Syria employed by Ibrahim Pasha created a state of dissatisfaction and discontent for certain segments in this stage. It also put the whole society on the verge of conflict. The A'yans' loss of influence resulting from the exertion of influence by the central authority must have raised the political consciousness of this group in Greater Syria.

This consciousness manifested itself in rising opposition to Egyptian rule. This also manifested itself in the hostile attitude held by the dispossessed and dislocated A'yans toward those benefactors who proved loyalty to the Egyptians. That is neither to disregard nor to forget they declared total hostility toward Ibrahim Pasha's rule itself.

The Ottoman's attempt to echo the Egyptian experience, dictated by the Empire's entry into the world capitalist market after 1840, acted as a catalyst for increasing political consciousness and the planting of the

seeds for the formation of an Arab liberation movement. The Ottoman endeavor to strip the A'yan leaders of influence and authority, necessitated by the need to clear up the obstacles standing in the way of their employment reform measures, may explain the dissatisfaction and discontent of those leaders. This must consequently have increased their political awareness and grounded the move toward Arab nationalism.

The spreading of education, especially of the missionary and Ottoman military schooling, might have aided in the rise of intellectualism in the region and the emergence of Arab nationalism as political ideology. The desire of the A'yans to have their sons acquire education ensured that they would hold prestige posts in the Ottoman administration. This contributed to the intellectual and political movement in the latter part of the 19th and early 20th Century. One can therefore categorize Arab nationalism in its modern form as expression and intellectual and political ideology, although it was rooted in Arab history and heritage.

The Palestinian A'yans were prominent figures in the movement. Their instrumental role in the formation of the movement politically, ideologically and organizationally was evident from the start. Considering the general trends in history, one understands their role as part of a wider Arab movement. Particularism, however best served in explaining their assumption of the role of vanguard of the Palestinian national movement. This whole dualism was at the heart of the Palestinian ties with the Arab nationalist movement and the formation of the dimensional nature of the Palestinian cause.

Imperialism's advancement into the region after 1840, in pushing for an Ottoman reformation, placed the Syrian A'yan in a peculiar position; a disposition of influence and authority. The Palestinian A'yans were forced to encounter the Ottoman ideology and to assimilate an Arab nationalist ideology as an expression of an Arab identity. They were also obliged to fight the Zionist colonial immigration and settlement as a means to preserving the well being and identity of the homeland.

The Zionist immigration to and settlement in Palestine constituted threat and challenge to various identities and groups in the region. It threatened the unity and stability in the Ottoman Empire. In addition to the expropriation of parts of the Empire, the Zionists in Palestine would add new trouble to the Ottomans and form a new national dilemma for the Empire.

They should have also posed great challenge to the Arab World. This challenge came in two folds. First, Zionism in the region constituted a countering force for the Arab nationalist movement. Second, Zionism, as

formulated, was colonial settlement and served as an instrumental force in subjecting the region and preserving Western interest. At the same time it posed for the Palestinians the threat of effusion and dislocation.

The Palestinians' attempt to utilize earlier stated circumstances in gaining the Ottoman and Arab support in the struggle with Zionism did not bear fruit in the period leading up to the breakout of the World War I. The financial problems and the internal ills and conflicts in the Empire could only lead to open channels of Ottoman negotiation with Zionism, especially under the leadership of the Young Turks after the constitutional revolution of 1908. This development translated into the failure of all Ottoman attempts by Sultan Abdul Hamid II to stop the drift of Jewish immigrants and settlers into Palestine.

The Arab movement's failure to place the Palestinian issue as top priority in their agenda and the attempts of some of Arab nationalists to coordinate efforts with Zionist leaders at the time of the Arab Congress in Paris must have inspired the rise of the Palestinian national movement. The union and expression of Palestinian identity through this movement continued to act as an offshoot the Arab Liberation Movement. This is understandable in light of the Palestinian Arab mutual relationship in dealing with the threat of Zionism. In addition, the Palestinian A'yan family perception as part of a wider Arab struggle and their consciousness as part of the declined old social classes must have grounded their role in the struggle. This vision of the Palestinians was very instrumental as a driving force in their carrying out of activism up to the World War I.

Upon the breakout of the first global war in 1914, the Arab movement, including the Palestinians, found itself under the pressure of deciding with whom to ally itself. Its limited choices were clear in the fact that the Arab movement could only ally itself with the Western Allies. The declaration of an Arab revolution in June 1916 and the Arab contribution to the war effort were stimulated by the Arab hope to achieve independence and establish a united Arab commonwealth.

The war results dictated by the wartime accords (the Sykes-Picot Agreement and the Balfour Declaration) left the Arabs in despair and discontent. The despair and frustration sparked a state of mass unrest. This translated into sporadic mass uprisings in various parts of the Arab East in the years 1919 and 1920. The expression of this despair and discontent did not come through an armed struggle with the colonizers lead by a powerful liberation movement. The Arab liberation movement could not counter the colonial powers, as it was a political movement and not a military force. This failure, coupled with the nature of the movement and

its class foundations and interests led only to some of its leaders negotiating with the British. Gradually this technique was almost commonly shared in the region. The Palestinian traditional leadership, despite the peculiar character of the Palestinian cause in other parts of the Fertile Crescent, echoed their colleagues in the Arab liberation movement in their politics of negotiation and collaboration with the colonizers. This was especially in witnessing the Hashemites in both Transjordan and Iraq who through this type of politics established political entities under British Mandate.

By adopting this sort of politics the traditional leadership in Palestine could not necessarily achieve the Palestinian aspirations and demands. A collaboration with the British implied an acceptance of the British Zionist politics, and the idea of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Such recognition would in turn lead to Palestinian expulsion and dislocation. At the same time, this must have led to the impotence of the politics of the traditional leadership and their inability to deliver on their commitments to achieve national aspirations before the Palestinian masses.

The course of political activism to which the traditional leaders subscribed drove them deeper into elitism. Consequently, they increasingly distanced themselves from the masses. Furthermore, the gaps within those groups committed to armed struggle and opposition to both the British and the Zionists steadily increased. These aspects partly contributed to the weakness, which the Palestinian national movement suffered in the second half of the 1920s.

The reliance of the Palestinian leadership on the Arab liberation movement for support in the struggle with the British and the Zionists had an impact on the Palestinian national movement. The failure of the traditional leadership to accomplish independence through peaceful means put the national movement in a critical situation. The masses gradually lost faith in the traditional leadership and its politics, and the national movement was no longer in a position to bring about events concerning the Palestinian cause. That is not to ignore the fact that the Palestinian traditional leadership's ties within the Arab nationalist movement burdened the Palestinian national movement. The mediation role played by the Palestinian traditional leaders in an attempt to resolve conflict among the Arab rulers founded on adherence to Western politics came at the expense of strengthening and solidifying the position and status of the Palestinian movement.

The divergence of various groups within the movement provided an environment for foreign intervention into the national movement and for in-

fluencing its politics. There was a deliberate attempt on the part of the British and the Zionists to manipulate politics on the basis of their knowledge of the regional, urban, social class and family structures peculiar to Arab culture. Through these basic constructs, they planted additional seeds for crippling the Palestinian national work.

The inability of the Palestinian leadership to properly vanguard the national struggle leading to the accomplishment of the national goals of independence and self-rule added to the Palestinians frustration and dissatisfaction. Their resentment toward and resistance of Jewish immigration and settlement the expropriation of Arab land led to their rising fear of the Zionist idea. The establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine was supported by the Balfour Declaration and was reinforced in the mandate enforced by the British for Palestine. This fear, coupled with the lack of an Arab and Islamic backing to the Palestinians in their struggle were responsible for the rising of critical voices of the Palestinian performance. By 1929, these circumstances played an instrumental role in provoking strong violence and driving the masses to assume the vanguard position within the national movement and the struggle with colonists.

The Al-Buraq incidents of 1929 constituted a turning point in the history of the Palestinian national movement and the struggle with the British and the Zionists. It came as a move to put an end to the discredited, impotent policies of the traditional leadership. It was also supposed to pave way for a new politics and newly energetic and revolutionary young men to lead the struggle with both the British and the Zionists. It was clear at that point that the British and Zionist interests and politics were mutually bound. A Jewish homeland in Palestine could only be realized with British support.

The discovery of oil in Iraq and Saudi Arabia in the Persian Gulf in the first half of the 1930s, brought the region into the world capitalist market. This made the political fragmentation of the nation states more acceptable as part of an emerging Arab order. The Arab rulers under British Mandate moved increasingly toward an alliance and collaborationist relationship with the Western powers. These evolving mutual interests were enhanced by the discovery of oil.

After 1932, the British became more concerned about strengthening ties with Zionism. This stand was stimulated by the British need to pump the Iraqi oil via pipelines across Palestinian soil to the Mediterranean as a step in transporting oil to Europe. They seemed to have thought of the Zionists as a friendly power, which would safeguard the British oil interests.

The Arab regimes at the same time became more occupied with domestic matters and the subscription to British policy in the region. This greatly affected the Palestinians. On one hand they found themselves obliged to deal single-handedly with both the British and the Zionists in their struggle for independence and self-rule. On the other hand, they could not wait for concrete support from the Arab rulers, because this support would embarrass them before the British.

The transitional period following the Al-Buraq incidents of 1929 up to 1936 witnessed a political polarization and regrouping as well as party formation. The previous groups established themselves ideologically and organizationally in accordance with their interests. With the exception of the class-based Al-Istiqlal Party, the other bodies were formed along family lines. The Palestinians' need to rely on themselves on the battlefield and the rise and decline of various groups must have inspired the phenomenon of party formation in the Palestinian scene. The phenomenon could be held responsible for stirring political and intellectual debate and preparing the ground for rivalry among the various groups. But their main concern was the search for the best reliable means to achieve national goals. This put all of them together either forcefully or voluntarily in opposition to the British. This formation also supplied the country with the alternative for the finally dissolved Executive Committee of the Palestinian Arab Congress.

Polarity in Palestine during this period prepared the scene for the implementation of a democratic parliamentary system, the absence of which would always leave the country at the whim of political party competition. However, in the case of Palestine, this merely established a representation of various political interest groups within the national movement. More importantly, this polarity moved the leading role of various groups, especially that of the traditional leadership, to the next stage, the era of Palestinian national uprising from 1936 to 1939.

The developments in the period under study had left the Palestinian masses with no option but to take the lead in the national struggle for independence. The Arab and the Islamic *ummahs* would not come separately or together to physically aid in resisting the colonizers in Palestine. The Palestinian traditional leadership at the same time could not evidently carry out its historical role in leading the struggle toward accomplishing independence.

The armed struggle adopted by 'Izz Ad-Din Al-Qassam and his followers in 1935, which might represent the early foundation for an Islamic front in Palestine, collapsed in its embryonic stage. The Palestinian fears of

Zionist success in installing a Jewish homeland and a state in Palestine were on the rise due to anti-Semitism in Nazi Germany and in Europe in general.

The success of the rising Syrian and Egyptian masses in forcing the French and the British to sign treaties and the intent to utilize the shaky global conditions, especially in Europe, to Palestinian ends might have contributed to the rise of the Palestinian masses in April 1936. The discontent was the catalyst for the outbreak of the Palestinian national uprising. This state of frustration translated itself in the masses' move to assume the lead in the struggle for independence.

The Arab Higher Committee formed on 25 April 1936 mirrored the political spectrum in Palestine. It was designed to act as a leading body and organizational umbrella to the uprising activities. The representation of the traditional leadership in the committee must have limited the course and the lifetime of the mass uprising due to the class interest of the leadership in utilizing the uprising as a means to achieve political ends.

This formation also paved the way for the Arab leadership in the nearby Arab countries to interfere in the uprising and to bring it finally to a halt. The ideological and political ties, in addition to the class foundation of both the Palestinian and Arab leadership, must have facilitated the role the Arab leaders played in 1936. The mutual class interest of this leadership and the British and the adherence to British policy may explain the role played by the Palestinian and Arab leadership in finally aborting the general strike in 1936.

The unsuccessful attempt by the British to realize the Zionist policy through political initiative (the partition plan of 1937) was a result of huge opposition by the Palestinian people and their leadership. This led to the outbreak of the second stage in the Palestinian national uprising.

The attempt by the Palestinian and Arab leaders through the Bludan Conference of September 1937 to maintain control over the fate of the uprising in the second stage proved relatively unsuccessful. They would not necessarily control the rebellious activities of the people. The leadership inside Palestine, which was in control of the battlefield, was not motivated by class interest, nor did the citrus cultivation season have influence over their decision making. The British war machine, therefore, played the decisive role in finally crushing the uprising.

The British strategic and political interests moved rapidly to end the Palestinian national uprising. This also grounded their concern about putting

a fourth political settlement to resolve the Palestinian-Zionist conflict over Palestine. However, the British failed to impose a political settlement on either side, Palestinian or Zionist, during the Round Table Discussion in London in 1939. The escalating tension leading up to the possible outbreak of a war in Europe forced the British to act unilaterally, and they issued the White Paper of 1939. This paper, though it seemed to have favored the Arab side, was opposed by the Palestinian leadership and subsequently rejected by some of the Arab rulers. It came at the end of an era in the Palestinian struggle for the independence. Meanwhile, it constituted a crucial turning point in terms of the Zionist British relationship and the newly emerging Zionist relationship with United States of America. The developments related to the policy of the White Paper of 1939 would have a crucial impact on the course of the history of Palestine and the Palestinian struggle with Zionism in the coming years. The year 1939 marked the end of an era in the Palestinian resistance, but it opened the way for a new one in the long road of struggle for independence.