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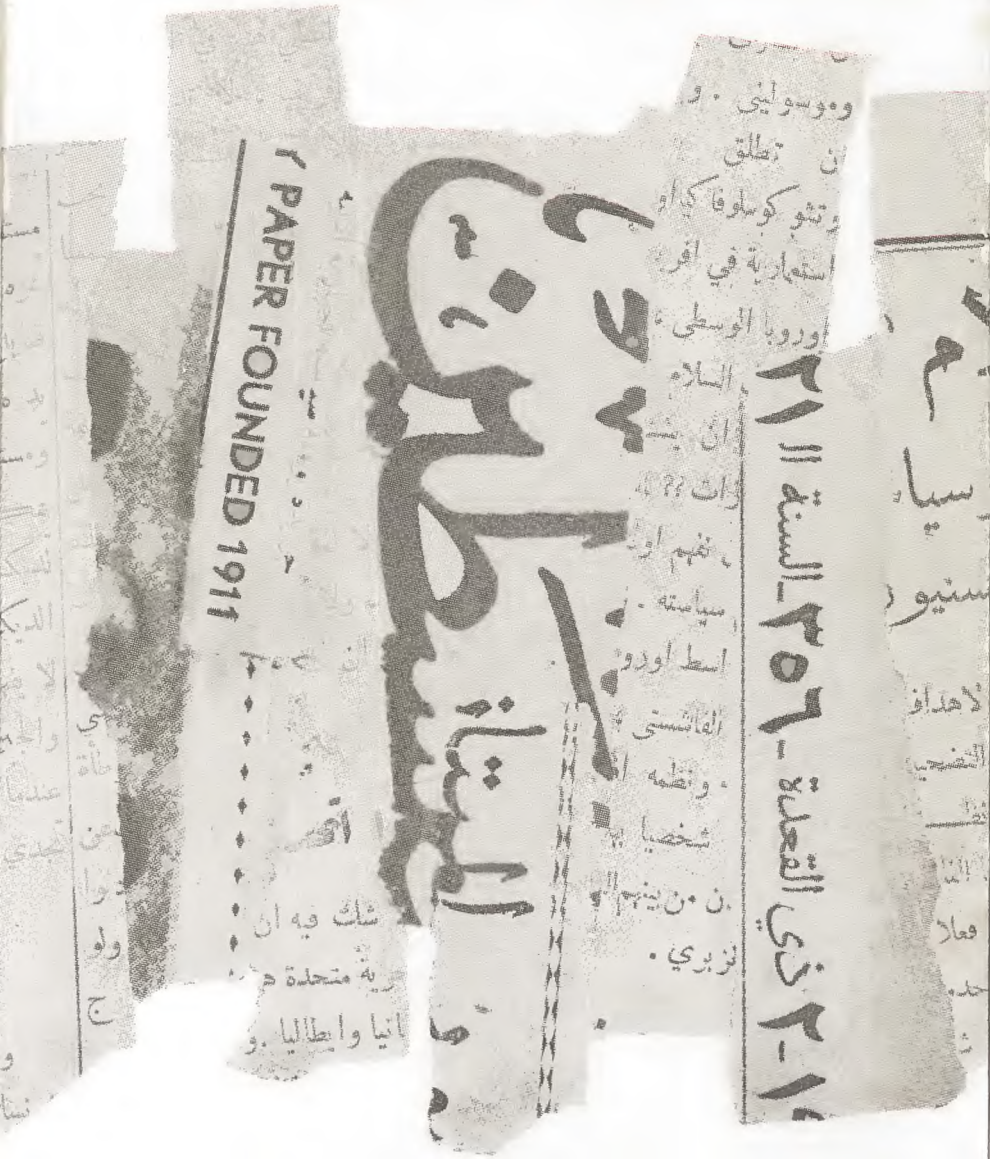
Arab Cultural Nationalism in Palestine



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ARAB CULTURAL NATIONALISM IN PALESTINE DURING THE BRITISH MANDATE

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ADNAN MOHAMMED ABU-GHAZALEH

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PREFACE

The nineteenth century witnessed a marked literary revival in the Arab world. Its initial impulse was provided by the Napoleonic expedition to Egypt, and it developed under Muhammed 'Ali and his son, Ibrahim, through whose influence a school system was established in Syria with Arabic as the medium of instruction. The revival of the Arabic language gathered further momentum from the middle of the nineteenth century as a result of the opening of Western missionary schools.

This literary revival soon became the basis for a cultural nationalist movement. The educated elite began to explore the Muslim Arabic heritage and to display, in a growing number of books, pamphlets and journals, a strong national awareness. At the same time, Western ideas made their first appearance in books written in the Arabic tongue. An increasing number of Arabs sought higher education, some in Ottoman universities, others in Western institutions. Finally, as in so many modern nationalist movements, the cultural nationalism of the Arabs stimulated political nationalism.

The First World War was a crucial period in the history of the Arab nationalist movement within the Ottoman Empire. Sharif Husayn's call for a revolt against the Turks embodied ideals and aspirations already entertained by a large number of Arabs, who cherished the hope of erecting an Arab state which would restore the greatness of their ancestors. But that hope was to be disappointed. Once the war was over, the Arab peoples again fell under foreign occupation.

Unable militarily to oust the new British and French

occupiers of their land, the Arabs resorted to peaceful resistance on some occasions and to civil violence on others. A considerable percentage of the writing done in the Arab world in the decades between the two World Wars referred directly or indirectly to the problem of foreign occupation and expressed the continuing Arab hope for eventual independence and unity.

Palestine, however, constituted a unique problem for the Arabs, as it did for the West. Zionist ambitions in the country added new complications to the already complex situation of foreign occupation, and the perception of a Zionist threat to Palestine gave an increased impetus to the movement of Arab nationalism everywhere. The future of Palestine, more than the future of any other part of the Arab nation, loomed large in the writings that appeared in the Arab world.

Most books and articles concerning the Arab nationalist movement have been either over-all treatments of Arab nationalism or detailed examinations of its development in certain Arab countries. In this study, I have shifted the focus to the interaction between a particular group within a country, the writers of Palestine, and the movement of Arab nationalism, by examining these writers both as exponents of national consciousness and as spreaders of that consciousness.

The first chapter of this study gives a short survey of the Arab cultural revival in the nineteenth century, essential for understanding the general climate in which the older generation of Palestinian writers grew up.

Chapter II gives biographical sketches of the most important writers of Palestine during the Mandate, in order to distinguish particular influences on these writers' point of view.

Chapters III, IV and V examine the writing itself. The first deals with political tracts and the press, the second

with literary works and translations and the third with the contribution of the historians.

Chapter VI describes the educational situation in Palestine of that period and examines the degree to which the writing of the Palestinian cultural movement was disseminated to the public and its relationship to the development of a national consciousness among the masses.

This study ends in the year 1948, a watershed in Palestinian history in general, and in the history of Palestinian writing. The further development of the trends examined here, and the new emphasis in Palestinian writing after the Disaster, are worthy of separate and equally extensive treatment.

Although I have consulted many works in English, most of my basic sources are in Arabic. The Arabic sources used are of four kinds. First, there is the writing of Palestinians published during the Mandate, the primary object of research. Second, there are memoirs of some of these writers written at a later date. Third, there are books written about Palestine by other Arabs. And, finally, there are the records of the Palestine Department of Education, the leading private schools and the important clubs.

In concluding this preface it should be noted that this study is not intended as a survey of all the writers of Palestine during the Mandate, or, necessarily, of those most deserving of attention from the point of view of individual accomplishment. The writers discussed have been chosen, rather, because it is judged that they were the most influential and that they give a representative picture of Palestinian writing as a whole.

CHAPTER I

THE SETTING

The origins of modern Arab national consciousness are in the period between the seventh and tenth centuries, when the Middle East was culturally transformed by Islamization and Arabization. Islam transformed the spiritual and social life of millions of adherents as the peoples conquered by the Islamic armies adopted the new religion. The concurrent emigration out from the Arabian peninsula spread both the Arabic language and an Arab culture.

In the course of time Islam extended from Morocco to Indonesia, but complete Arabization remained limited to West Asia and North Africa, where the Arabic language became the native tongue, Arab manners and traditions supplanted existing ones, and relatively large numbers of Arabs settled permanently. The word Arab came to be used, not only for descendants of Arab settlers, but for all the inhabitants of this larger area, where Arabic is spoken and where the people take pride in the cultural heritage of Arabs.

But, by the turn of the sixteenth century, the Arab civilization of the Middle Ages was exhausted. The Arab lands fell to Ottoman rule. It is true that the new rulers adopted the Muslim faith, used the Arabic script and were influenced by Arab civilization. It is also true that Arabs played an important role in the Ottoman administration and many Arabs became governors, generals and ministers.[1] But the Arabs as a nation had ceased to exist.

More important even than the loss of political indepen-

[1] Zeine Zeine, *Arab Turkish Relations and the Emergence of Arab Nationalism* (Beirut: Khayat's, 1958) p. 50.

dence was the cultural stagnation suffered by the Arabs from the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries. Having lost their own cultural dynamism, they were, as well, isolated by Ottoman rule from the influence of the West. They remained isolated until 1798, when the French invaded Egypt.

Napoleon's adventure was one of the events that led to an Arab cultural and literary revival. An internal factor, however, made such a revival possible: classical Arabic had remained almost unchanged, preserved by the sanctity of the Koran, while the spoken dialects of the various Arab peoples had not become separate languages, as, for example, in the case of the Romance languages of Europe.

Napoleon's expedition to Egypt was a political and military failure, but the cultural impact of the short French occupation was great. The Arabs came into direct contact with European ideological concepts while, at the same time, Napoleon tried to appeal to the local population on a nationalist basis by stressing its cultural differences from the Turks. He addressed himself to the past glories of the Arabs, brought with him an Arabic press for printing his statements, and tried to revive the use of the Arabic language in place of Turkish.[2] As far as the local population was concerned, Napoleon's address was a cry in the wilderness. To them the Christian Frenchman was the enemy, not the Muslim Turk. Contemporary Egyptian historians give a vivid picture of local opposition to the French troops.[3] However, Napoleon's appeal was soon taken up by Muhammad 'Ali (1775-1849), who sought to build an empire by profiting from Ottoman weakness in the early nineteenth century.

[2] Najla Izzedin, *The Arab World* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1953), p. 65.

[3] D. Ayalon, "The Historian Al-Jabarti," *Historians of the Middle East*, edited by B Lewis and P. M. Holt (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1962) p. 392.

Muhammad 'Ali was an Albanian by birth and his native tongue was Turkish. But in his reforms for the modernization of Egypt and Syria, he gave great attention to the Arabs and their language: in his proclamations he often referred to the past glories of the Arabs; he used Arabic as a medium of instruction in his school system; he sent students on scholarships to Europe in order to acquaint Arab youth with nationalist ideas and thus to challenge the traditional conception of Ottoman-Arab Muslim fraternity.[4]

The project of the new empire collapsed in 1839, largely as a result of European opposition. For the future Arab national movement, however, the episode had a two-fold importance. It left in Egypt and Syria an administration that depended on local Arab personnel; it left also the beginnings of the Western missionary activity which was to become the initial stimulus to Arab cultural revival.

After Muhammad 'Ali Arab nationalism followed separate paths in Egypt and in Syria. Although the movement followed the same general pattern in each of the two countries, the contacts between them were occasional and unsystematic. Their nationalist movements merged once again only in the nineteen forties, when pan-Arabism became a distinctive characteristic of Arab nationalism.[5]

The year 1834 marked the beginning of the cultural revival in Syria. In that year the Lazarist fathers opened 'Ainturah Men's College near Beirut, the American Presbyterian Mission's Arabic printing press was moved from Malta to Beirut, and Eli and Sara Smith, American missionaries, opened a girls' school. Ibrahim, Muhammad 'Ali's son and his governor of Syria, initiated a program

[4] Nadav Safran, *Egypt in Search of Political Community* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), pp. 31-33.

[5] E. Dawn, "The Question of Nationalism in Syria and Lebanon," *Tension in the Middle East*, edited by W. Sands (Washington, D.C: The Middle East Institute, 1956), pp. 11-12.

of state education by means of which he hoped to inculcate a sense of Arab national consciousness.[6]

The role of the American missionaries in the Arab revival was immense. The transfer of their Arabic press to the area and their sponsorship of the manufacture of a new Arabic type, the "American Arabic", were among the many steps that contributed to the revival of the language. Securing the services of two Arab scholars, Nasif al-Yaziji and Butrus al-Bustani, the American missionaries launched an ambitious program of Arabic printing, which supplied both their own schools and those of the state with textbooks.[7]

However, the greatest American contribution to the cultural revival came in 1866 with the founding of the Syrian Protestant College in Beirut, which during its early history used Arabic as the main medium of instruction.[8]

The activity of the Catholic missions had a more limited impact. The schools they opened were almost entirely limited to Christians, and from the beginning the medium of instruction was French. Their academic institutions, especially the University of St. Joseph, founded by the Jesuits in 1875, were primarily directed toward strengthening the ties of the Christian Lebanese with France and spreading French culture.[9]

The Arab cultural revival manifested itself in many channels: in scholarly writings about language, literature and history; in a flourishing press; and in literary societies that became the cradle of political nationalism.

The group of Arab scholars who appeared at this time

[6] G. Douin, *La mission du baron de Bois le Comte* (Cairo: Al-Nahdah Co., 1927), p. 138.

[7] George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening* (Philadelphia: Lippincott and Co., 1933), p. 42.

[8] Frederick Bliss, editor, *The Reminiscences of Daniel Bliss* (New York: Fleming Revell and Co., 1920), p. 168.

[9] Haidar al-Shihabi, *Lubnan fi 'Ahd al-Umara' al-Shihabiyyin* ("Lebanon under the Shihabites") (Beirut, 1933), pp. 202-208.

addressed themselves to the past history of the country and emphasized the Arab Muslim heritage. At the same time, they evolved a modern Arabic style suitable for the expression of Western ideas and tried to familiarize their countrymen with Western civilization.[10] Prominent among them were Butrus al-Bustani, Nasif al-Yaziji, Yusuf al-'Asir and Jurji Zaidan.

Al-Bustani (1819-1883) was a Lebanese Maronite who later adopted Protestantism. At the American mission schools he mastered English, Hebrew and Greek. He compiled a dictionary of the Arabic language, the first to be written in more than three centuries. He translated the Bible into Arabic and started working on an encyclopedia, *al-Ma'arif* ("Knowledge"), six volumes of which appeared before his death. Al-Bustani was also active as a journalist. In 1860 he started *Nafir Suria* ("The Clarion of Syria") and in 1871, *al-Jinan* ("The Gardens"). Both in his books and in his newspapers he tried to bring to the reader a sense of devotion to the homeland. As a motto for his second newspaper he chose the phrase "Patriotism is an article of faith."

Al-Yaziji (1800-1871), a Catholic Lebanese, was primarily a linguist. His major works were *Fasl al-Khitab fi Usul Lughat al-'Arab* ("The Final World on the Fundamentals of Arabic"), which was first published in Malta in 1836, and *Majma' al-Bahrain* ("The Confluence of the Two Seas"), a collection of essays written in a rhyming prose style. In both books he tried to imitate medieval Arab linguists.

Al-'Asir (1815-1889) was a Muslim native of Saida, a small town south of Beirut. He received his education in al-Azhar University in Cairo and then taught in Constan-

[10] Jurji Zaidan, *Mashahir al-Sharq fi al-Qarn al-Tasi' 'Ashar* ("Famous Leaders of the Orient in the Nineteenth Century") (Cairo, 1922), II, pp. 27-30.

tinople and at the Syrian Protestant College. In 1875 he founded *Thamarat al-Funun* ("The Fruits of Art"), the first newspaper to be started by a Muslim.[11]

Jurji Zaidan (1861-1914) came to prominence later in the nineteenth century. Born in Beirut, at the age of twenty-one he moved to Cairo, where his scholarly achievement materialized. There he founded *al-Hilal* ("The Crescent"), a monthly periodical, and produced his two masterpieces, *Tarikh al-Tamaddun al-Islami* ("The History of Muslim Civilization") and *Tarikh al-Adab al-Arabiyyah* ("The History of Arabic Literature").[12] Zaidan was also the founder of the Arabic historical novel.

The second aspect of the literary revival was the development of an Arabic language press. The newspapers that appeared tried both to foster national consciousness by stressing the greatness of the Arab cultural achievement and to acquaint their readers with the progress of the West.

In addition to the newspapers of al-Bustani and al-'Asir, American missionaries, with the help of some Arab scholars, founded *al-Nashrah* ("The Publication") in 1866, and in 1870 the Jesuits founded *al-Bashir* ("The Informer of Good News").[13]

The fathers of Arabic journalism were, however, Ya'qub Sarruf (1852-1927) and Faris Nimr (1854-1951). Both were graduates of the Syrian Protestant College and instructors there. They founded and edited *al-Muqtataf* ("The Chosen"), the earliest Arabic scientific and literary magazine. It began in Beirut in 1876 and it disseminated the best scientific and literary thought of the West

[11] *Ibid.*, pp. 64-65.

[12] The first appeared in nine volumes and was published in Cairo in 1902, the second in four volumes and was published in the same city in 1911.

[13] Philip Hitti, *Lebanon in History* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1957), pp. 460-462.

through translations, mainly from the English language. These translations made a major contribution to the adaption of Arabic to the expression of modern ideas. Sarruf and Nimr also founded *al-Muqattam* (named after a mountain near Cairo), the first political and literary daily newspaper to appear in the Arab world. It began in 1898 in Cairo and its articles had a marked nationalist flavor.

The third aspect of the nineteenth century cultural revival was the establishment of a number of literary and scientific societies. The earliest of these, the Society of Arts and Science, was established in 1847. Its secretary was al-Bustani and its librarian al-Yaziji. Its members were all Americans or Christian Arabs. The Oriental Society, similarly, was founded under the auspices of the Jesuits, and its members were all Frenchmen or Christian Arabs. The Muslims, because of their suspicion of missionary activity, abstained from joining. However, these two societies provided models that were copied later. In 1857 al-Bustani and al-Yaziji appealed to the national consciousness of some of the educated Muslims and persuaded them to found an exclusively Arab society, al-Jam'iyyah al-'Arabiyyah al-Suriyyah (The Syrian Arab Society). It brought together a group of Arabs with a novel idea: pride in their Arab heritage.[14]

The Syrian Arab Society was the cradle of a new movement of political nationalism. This movement was shaken by the events of 1860, when a number of clashes between the Muslims and Christians of Beirut resulted in many Christians being killed and in the interference of the Powers. Paradoxically, however, these massacres gave the movement increased impetus. Believing that the root of the country's tribulations lay in a sectarian hatred

[14] Louis Chaikho, *Al-Adab al-'Arabiyyah fi al-Qarn al-Tasi' 'Ashar* ("Arabic Literature in the Nineteenth Century") (Beirut, 1926), pp. 75-76.

that thrived on ignorance, a group of young thinkers, some of whom were members of the Syrian Arab Society, began a campaign to increase education, to free the country from Turkish rule and to foster Arab national consciousness. By the eighteen seventies these men decided to launch a purely political movement. They formed the Beirut Secret Society, which soon had twenty-two Muslim and Christian members representing the intellectual elite of the country. The center of the organization remained in Beirut, but it had branches in many Syrian cities.[15] The texts of some of the street placards by which the society propagated its views have been preserved, since the British Consuls in Beirut and Damascus communicated them to the Foreign Office in London. They can be used as an indication of the society's program.[16]

The society denounced Ottoman misrule and called on the Arabs to rise against the Turks. It demanded the independence of Syria (the provinces of Beirut and Damascus and the Sanjak of Jerusalem), the recognition of Arabic as an official language, the removal of restrictions on the press, and the employment of locally recruited troops for local service only. The program thus revealed some confusion on the part of its advocates: they asked for independence but at the same time made demands that implied local autonomy within the Ottoman Empire. The formulation of the program was the climax of the society's activity. It continued to exist for a few more years but its tangible achievement was negligible.

In the last two decades of the nineteenth century the Muslims became increasingly suspicious of the missions. In addition to the Americans and the French, German, Italian, Russian and British missions were established. In a country made up of different religious denominations

[15] Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, p. 79.
[16] *Ibid.*, p. 80.

the diversity of missionary activity was bound to lead to conflicts, the more so since the missionaries, especially the French and the Russians, allowed themselves to be used as tools of political infiltration.[17] The French government, though anti-clerical at home, subsidized the Catholic missions in a bid to strengthen its influence in the region. These missions used their close relations with the Maronite clergy to try to inculcate pro-French sympathies in the Maronite youth. As a result, the majority of Muslims refused to send their children to missionary schools and chose native institutions instead. Here, however, the results of the Arab cultural revival were already manifest. Education in these schools was in Arabic and stressed the history of the Arabs and their ethnic solidarity. Hence, the development of Arabic and Arabism that had been sparked by Western missionaries at mid-century began by the end of the century to influence the Muslims. The result became apparent by 1908, when the leadership of the Arab nationalist movement had become predominantly Muslim.[18]

Meanwhile, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the Arab national movement was bolstered by the rise of a pan-Islamic ideology. Although its pioneer was Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838-1897), who spent most of his life in Egypt, most of the exponents of pan-Islamism were not Egyptians by birth. Al-Afghani's birthplace is not known but, as a mature scholar, he moved between Tur-

[17] Hasan Saab, *The Arab Federalists of the Ottoman Empire* (Amsterdam : Djambatan, 1958), pp. 65-68.

[18] In a recent article, the Palestinian historian A. L. Tibawi challenges this generally accepted picture of the beginnings of the nineteenth century Arab cultural renaissance as placing excessive emphasis on the role of Muhammad 'Ali, of Lebanon, of Christian Arabs, and, especially, of the missionary schools. "Some Misconceptions about the Nahda," *Middle East Forum,* autumn/winter 1971, pp. 15-22. However, the existence of such a renaissance and its culmination in a political movement of Arab nationalism in the first two decades of the twentieth century is not questioned.

key, Syria, Egypt and Persia.[19] In his political writings, he sought to combine a nationalist interpretation of Islam with modernism and reformism.[20] Islamic beliefs, he argued, did not imply the rejection of modern science: if examined intellectually, these beliefs would inspire progress. Al-Afghani concluded that subjugation to the West was a principal cause of Islamic degeneration; once freed from foreign domination, the whole Islamic world would unite under a strong caliph, who need not necessarily be an Arab.

Al-Afghani's ideas on the regeneration of Islam influenced the second exponent of pan-Islamic revival, 'Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi (1849-1902). A native of Aleppo, al-Kawakibi was forced to flee to Cairo to avoid the tyrannical rule of the Ottoman Sultan 'Abd al-Hamid. He combined in his writings the prevailing ideological currents of his time: Islamic revival, Arab nationalism, Westernization and constitutionalism.[21] His views were set forth in two major works, *Tabi'at al-Istibdad* ("The Nature of Despotism") and *Umm al-Qura,* ("The Mother of Towns"), one of the names of Mecca. Both were published anonymously in Cairo in 1901 and then smuggled into Syria. In the first, al-Kawakibi condemned tyranny because of its disastrous influence on the morale of the Muslims and their material well-being. Tyranny, he maintained, could survive only in intellectual darkness, and rulers should, therefore, be subjected to the supervision of a well-educated public. *Umm al-Qura,* al-Kawakibi's second book, was an imaginary dialogue between pilgrims gathered in Mecca, the discussion centering on the religious, political and intellectual decay of Muslim society

[19] Zaidan, *Mashahir,* pp. 52-56.

[20] Muhammad Salam Madkur, *Jamal al-Din al-Afghani* (Cairo 1937), pp. 106-111.

[21] Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798-1939* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), pp. 115-119.

and the means by which the degeneration of the Muslims could be arrested. The Muslims, according to the author, had become a weak people with no common feeling. Their decadence was the result of tyranny, of the decline of Islamic Arab culture and of a lack of firm racial and linguistic bonds. The Ottoman Empire, he maintained, was not fit to revitalize Islam: it was made up of different ethnic groups and divided into numerous sects. Because of their historical connection with the religion, regeneration should be the work of the Arabs, who would provide a caliph, whose seat of government would be in Mecca. This caliph, however, would act solely as a spiritual head of an Islamic union and would exercise no political power.[22]

Al-Kawakibi was an important intellectual precursor of modern pan-Arabism. By advocating a purely spiritual caliphate he became a pioneer for the idea of purely secular politics. Political relations to him were an autonomous activity divorced from divine prescription and completely dependent on the will of men.

Another leading theorist of Islamic revival was Muhammad 'Abduh (1849-1905), a native of Egypt whose influence was felt all over the Arab world. He asserted that Islam could be the basis of a modern and progressive society. To demonstrate this he first stated what he considered Islam to be and then examined its implications for modern society. He argued that the mark of the ideal Muslim society was not only law but also reason, and that Islam looked favorably on rational inquiry and science. Muslim society could not become strong and prosperous again until it learnt from Europe the sciences, the product of the rational activity of the intellect.[23]

[22] 'Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi, *Umm al-Qura* ("The Mother of Towns") (Cairo, 1921), pp. 165-167 and 193-197.

[23] Hourani, *Arabic Thought,* pp. 149-152.

While pan-Islamic ideologists stressed the role of religion in the national revival, other Arab thinkers advocated a purely secular approach. Chief among the latter were Adib Ishaq, a native of Damascus, and Mustafa Kamil, an Egyptian from Cairo.

Ishaq (1856-1885), a Christian Arab, participated in the Arab nationalist movement, wrote many articles on nationalism, and translated several French novels. He was the first Arab to advocate an independent Arab national entity not based on religion. He defined the homeland as

> one's native land; a fatherland where a people lives. As a political concept it denotes a place to which a person belongs, in which his rights are preserved, and to which he owes certain obligations. . . .
> There is no fatherland apart from freedom, no fatherland where tyranny prevails.[24]

Although Ishaq agreed with Western ideas of democratic government, he was sceptical about their usefulness in his own country:

> Republicanism, which in essence is government by the people, for the people, will not work in a land stricken with ignorance.[25]

Mustafa Kamil (1874-1908) was the most influential of the nineteenth century Arab nationalists. His speeches, statements and writings were well-known to his contemporaries. He was the first Arab to advocate that popular sovereignty be applied to the Arab lands. To implement his ideas he formed al-Hizb al-Watani (The National Party), the first party in the Arab world to call for independence and the adoption of a constitution based

[24] Abid Ishaq, *Al-Durar* ("The Pearls"), edited by 'Awai Ishaq (Beirut, 1909), p. 200.

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 194.

on the European parliamentary model.[26]

The same secular national approach characterized the campaign inspired by Najib Azuri, a Christian Arab from Jerusalem. In 1904 he launched from Paris, through his Ligue de la Patrie Arabe, several fiery appeals to the Arabs of Syria and Iraq to overthrow their oppressors. In 1905 he published *Réveil de la nation arabe* and during 1907-1908, in collaboration with some French writers, he issued a monthly review, *L'Indépendance Arabe.* Although Azuri's campaign attracted some attention in Europe, its effect in Syria itself was negligible. Launched from a foreign capital and in a foreign language, it had no access to the Syrian natives. The few educated Arabs who knew of it and read its literature eyed it with suspicion. In this respect the episode, while reflecting the national awareness of some educated Syrians, showed at the same time the changing attitude of Arabs to foreign influences.

1908 has a special importance in the history of the Arab nationalist movement. The Turkish revolution of that year, which resulted in the promulgation of a constitution for the Ottoman empire based on racial equality, greatly strengthened Arab nationalism in Syria. Up to that year the movement's successes had been chiefly cultural. The majority of Muslim Arabs had continued to look to the Ottoman Sultan as the Head of Islam and, as such, the rightful secular ruler.

The initial Arab reaction to the new Ottoman government was favorable. The formal inauguration of the Hejaz railway in September 1908 was enthusiastically celebrated and added to the government's prestige. The appointment of Husain ibn 'Ali, the head of the Hashimite family, who had previously been under house arrest in Constantinople, to the post of Sharif of Mecca was taken as a

[26] Ra'if Khouri, *Al-Fikr al-'Arabi al-Hadith* ("Modern Arabic Thought") (Beirut, 1943), pp. 245-247.

sign of good intentions towards the Arabs. A new society, al-Ikha' al-'Arabi al-'Uthmani (The Arab-Ottoman Fraternity), had as its goals defending the constitution, uniting the various national groups in loyalty to the Sultan, and promoting the welfare of the Arabs.

This mood of Arab-Ottoman friendship vanished immediately after the election of the first parliament. In the new Assembly sixty members represented ten million Arabs (in Syria and Iraq) and one hundred and fifty, seven million Turks. In the appointed Senate the Arabs were allotted only three seats out of forty.[27] When the Arab-Ottoman Fraternity protested against this unfair representation and against the government's policy of centralization, it was suppressed.

In the six years before the First World War Arab national agitation took place on two levels: in open clubs and associations, and in secret organizations. Prominent among the first were al-Muntada al-Adabi (The Literary Club) and Hizb al-La-Markaziyyah al-'Uthmani (The Ottoman Decentralization Party).[23] The Literary Club was founded in Constantinople in the summer of 1909 by Arab officials, deputies, students and a few men of letters. Its purpose was the strengthening of Arab national consciousness through cultural activity. Its membership grew to thousands and it opened branches in Syria and Iraq. The Decentralization Party was formed in Cairo in 1912. Its name reflected its object. Its central administration was vested in a committee of twenty members living in Egypt, but it had as well seventy-five branches in Syria and Iraq.

More important for the development of the nationalist movement were the secret organizations, prominent among

[27] Antonius, *The Arab Awakening,* p. 103.

[28] Hans Kohn. *A History of Nationalism in the East* (New York: Brace and Co., 1929), pp. 275-280.

which were al-Qahtaniyyah, named after Qahtan, a legendary ancestor of the Arabs, al-Jam'iyyah al-'Arabiyyah al-Fatat (The Young Arab Society), and al-'Ahd (The Covenant). Al-Qahtaniyyah was founded in Constantinople, with five branches in Syria, towards the end of 1909. It advocated the transformation of the Ottoman Empire into a dual Turco-Arab monarchy. Al-Fatat was founded by seven young Arab students in Paris in 1911. It called for the independence of all the Arab lands and their liberation from any foreign domination, Ottoman or otherwise. Its headquarters were moved to Beirut in 1913, and a year later to Damascus. Its membership rose to two hundred, most of whom were Muslims.

The activities of these two secret societies culminated in the formation of the Committee of Reform in Beirut early in 1913 and in the holding of a congress in Paris in June of that year.[29] The congress was called following the dissolution of the Committee of Reform by the Ottoman authorities. Fearful of the success of the congress and of the backing of the Western powers for the Arab cause, the Turkish government dispatched an agent to Paris to negotiate with the leaders of the movement. Although an agreement with these leaders was reached, Arab-Ottoman relations remained strained. The Turkish government interpreted the terms of the agreement in a way that convinced the Arab leaders that any attempt at a compromise with the Turks was futile.

Al-'Ahd, the last society to be formed before the outbreak of the First World War, was founded early in 1914 by a group of Arab officers in the Ottoman army led by 'Aziz al-Misri. Its object was the same as that of al-Qahtaniyyah—autonomy for the Arabs within the empire. Although its leader was arrested, tried secretly and ex-

[29] *Al-Mu'tamar al-'Arabi al-Awwal* (The first Arab Congress) (Cairo, 1913), pp. 113-119.

pelled to Egypt, the society continued its activities, especially among the soldiers, and founded branches in Syria and Iraq.[30] Al-'Ahd established contact with al-Fatat in Damascus in 1915. Pooling their resources, the two societies collaborated with Faysal, son of the Sharif of Mecca, to organize an armed revolt against Turkish rule.

The history of the Arab Revolt and the impact of the First World War on the Arab nationalist movement have been extensively treated by many writers. Suffice to say that the political fragmentation that befell the Arab lands after the War encouraged localist sentiments and the formation of separate nationalist movements. At the same time, however, this very fragmentation created a certain national awareness that transcended territorial divisions : a feeling of bitterness at the West's betrayal of the Arab cause and a belief that Western imperialism constituted the main obstacle to the success of Arab nationalist ambitions.

The resentment of the Arabs towards the West's betrayal was felt most strongly of all by the Palestine Arab community. Their country was entrusted to Britain as a mandated territory at the Conference of San Remo in April 1920. The Palestine Mandate, endorsed by the League of Nations in September 1923, included the obligation for the Mandatory Power to carry out the policy of the Balfour Declaration, that is, to encourage the establishment in Palestine of a "Jewish national home". The Palestinian Arabs opposed this arrangement. Its most outspoken critics were the intellectual leaders who had grown to maturity in the nationalist atmosphere of the two decades before the Britsh occupation. Some of them were members of the nationalist societies and had participated in the Arab Revolt. Others were too young to have taken part but were affected just as much by the nationalistic cli-

[30] Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, p. 105.

mate. These men kept alive a national consciousness through the books they wrote during the Mandate. They became the leaders of a cultural nationalist movement, the story of which will be related in the following pages.

CHAPTER II

CULTURAL LEADERS

The social and economic situation in Palestine in the decades between the Two World Wars made the newspaper column and the pamphlet the chief media of expression for cultural leaders. The limited size of the reading public and of the average income militated against long and expensively produced publications. Short pieces took, however, a variety of literary forms and included articles, poems, short stories and political tracts. Only in the late thirties and in the forties did some of the Palestinian intellectual leaders publish lengthy works of scholarship.

These writers were not, in any case, primarily academic specialists. In addition to their cultural pursuits they were actively engaged in practical administrative tasks; some of them were educators, others civil servants, and a few of them reached high positions in the mandatory government. Their writings reflected their role as community leaders and public spokesmen.

The tradition of membership in literary societies continued during the mandatory period and most of these writers belonged to the literary clubs of Jerusalem, Nablus and Jaffa. Through these clubs they spread their views among the literate Palestinian Arabs.

The writers discussed below were selected on the basis of their relative influence and their representative nature in terms of social backgrounds, source of inspiration and the course of their careers. Why, then, did five of the nine leaders discussed come from Nablus, a town of twenty thousand inhabitants, exceeded in size by both Jerusalem

and Jaffa?[1] Before introducing the individual writers, it is necessary to say a word about Nablus' leading role in the Palestinian cultural revival.

Already during the last decades of the Ottoman Empire the citizens of Nablus had played a part in the administration of Palestine out of all proportion to their numbers. In the words of a contemporary historian:

> When we examine the cultural conditions of Nablus, we must not forget the three hundred Nabulsis who live outside their native town. Most of them had their education in Constantinople and in Europe. They now hold senior posts in the ministries of education and justice and in the Sublime Porte, and they exert immense influence which they use for the advancement of their town and their friends there.[2]

The beginning of Nablus' special role goes back to the days of 'Abd al-Hamid, who placed the town under his special protection and showered favors on its leading families. The cause of his patronage was two-fold. First, Nablus, unlike Acre and the towns of the Sanjak of Jerusalem, had not fallen under the predominant control of one family and was, therefore, more open to the influence of the central authority. Second, the town had an almost exclusively Muslim population, was less exposed to the ideological influence of foreigners and, therefore, could be effectively used in the Sultan's policy of emphasizing the religious ties that bound the Arabs to the Ottoman Empire. 'Abd al-Hamid promoted the prosperity of the town by encouraging some of its local industries, especially the manufacture of soap. Prosperity contributed to an increase in the town's middle class and to an interest in

[1] Ihsan al-Nimr, *Tarikh Jabal Nablus wa al-Balqa'* ("The History of the Mountain of Nablus and al-Balqa") (Nablus, 1939), I, p. 182.
[2] Rafiq Al-Tamimi, *Wilayat Beirut: al-Qism al-Janubi* ("Beirut Vilayet : The Southern Part") (Beirut, 1335 Hejirah — 1912), p. 187.

education. At the same time, the Sultan invited leading families of the town to send their children to study in Constantinople at his expense as a prelude to their appointment to key positions in the imperial administration.[3]

After the town passed under British rule these patterns persisted: the people of Nablus remained devoted to education and ready to seek opportunities outside their native town. One-third of the teachers employed by the Mandate government's Department of Education originally came from Nablus. These teachers, in turn, tended to spread to their students the ideas of the cultural leaders who were from Nablus.[4]

Muhammad 'Izzat Darwazah (1885-) was born to a middle class family in Nablus, where he received his primary education and began, but never finished, his secondary education in government schools.[5] Starting to work at the age of sixteen at various jobs with the government, he gave himself a rigorous education by reading classical Arabic literature and Arab history. Within less than ten years, he became a well-known writer as well as a politician and a high government official.

Darwazah's career as a civil servant began in the Ottoman Department of Communications. Eventually he became a postmaster in his native town. When the Arab Revolt broke out in January 1916, he joined the Hashimites, and in 1919 he represented Nablus in the congress held in Damascus to proclaim Faisal ibn al-Husain King of a unified Syria. When the French expelled Faisal from Syria, Darwazah joined 'Abdullah, Faysal's brother, and became the Secretary of the Emirate of Transjordan.

The events of Palestine in the first two years of the

[3] Al-Nimr, *Tarikh Nablus*, p. 121.
[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 152-154.
[5] This biographical data is taken from a summary prepared by Darwazah at the author's request, from his memoirs, and from an interview on February 21, 1964.

Mandate convinced Darwazah that his duty lay in his native town. In September, 1921, therefore, he accepted an appointment as principal and member of the board of trustees of the Najah National College, a leading private institution in Nablus. For the next seven years he tried to impress on his students and colleagues what he considered essential knowledge for all Palestinian Arabs: the danger which the realization of Zionist plans would entail for their country. He gave lectures, wrote in the local press, arranged for discussion groups, and started a fund for buying land that was otherwise likely to be bought by the Zionists.

In 1928 Darwazah became the Director of the Muslim Waqf, charged with supervising the income from property donated by Muslims for religious and charitable activities. In that capacity he attended the Muslim congress held in Jerusalem in 1929 for the purpose of supporting the Palestinian Arabs in their resistance to Zionism. Then, during the thirties, he wrote a number of articles attacking the British Government's policy towards Jewish immigration and purchase of land. In 1937 he was accused by the authorities of having participated with other Palestinian nationalists in instigating the 1936 general strike of the Palestine Arab community and was dismissed from his job. After that Darwazah devoted all his time to politics and writing. He became a member of the National Bloc Party, formed in Nablus, and the Arab Higher Committee which assumed the official leadership of the uprising that followed the strike and lasted until 1939.

Darwazah played an important role in nationalist circles. He remained friendly with political opponents in spite of differences of opinion. That characteristic was an asset, especially, during the negotiations that led to the formation of the Higher Committee, in which he played a lead-

ing role, since he enjoyed the confidence of the rival groups.

In late 1939 Darwazah was accused of helping Palestinian rebels, tried by a military court, and sentenced to five years imprisonment. He was released in November 1940, after serving only one year of his sentence. Early in 1941 he escaped to Syria to avoid being re-arrested, and later, when British forces occupied Damascus, he sought political asylum in Turkey, where he remained until the end of the war. After the war Darwazah resumed his activity in Palestinian national affairs for a short time. He was appointed a member of the new Arab Higher Committee for Palestine, formed in September 1947 by the League of Arab States to represent the Palestinian Arabs. In the same year, however, he resigned his membership and settled in Damascus, where he devotes his whole time to writing and research.

Darwazah has produced both general and specialized works on medieval Islamic Arab history.[6] He published, for example, two general treatments of the beginning of the Islamic era, one dealing with the Hijaz just before the appearance of Islam, the other giving a general account of the life and times of the Prophet.[7] In the latter book he examined some of the implications of the Islamic social system. He wrote on the place of women and of social security in the Koran as well as on the role of the Jews in Islam. More important than these general works, however, is Darwazah's eleven-volume analysis of the Koran.

Darwazah's contribution is also considerable in the field of modern Arab history. He examined the impact of Islam on the historical development of the Arabs. He produced two books on the Palestine problem and on the political, social and economic conditions of the contemporary Arab

[6] A list of his works appears in the bibliography, pp. 107-108.
[7] See below, pp. 70-71.

world. But his major works of modern history are a six-volume study of the Arab national movement[8] and eight volumes on the history of the Arab nation. Darwazah also wrote a number of historical plays.

A close associate of Darwazah in the Ottoman period and during the Mandate was Muhammad Rafiq al-Tamimi (1890-1957). Like Darwazah, al-Tamimi came from a middle class family in Nablus, where he had his elementary and secondary education.[9] But while Darwazah did not have any immediate contact with Western culture and was acquainted with Western thought through other Arab writers, al-Tamimi studied in Constantinople and in Paris. In both places he came into direct contact with Western ideological concepts and he participated in the early phases of the Arab nationalist movement. In Constantinople he joined the al-Qahtaniyyah society and in Paris he became an active member of the Young Arab Society.

After taking a bachelor's degree in history, al-Tamimi was appointed principal of a private school in Beirut. During this period he toured the districts of Beirut, Latakia, Acre and Nablus and published a two-volume work which described conditions in these cities and gave a brief outline of their history.

During the First World War al-Tamimi participated in the Arab Revolt and, on the conclusion of the war, he represented Nablus, along with Darwazah, in the Arab Congress held in Damascus in 1919. The next year he returned to Palestine and settled in Jaffa as the principal of a private school there. Five years later he joined the Palestine Department of Education and became the headmaster of Hebron Secondary School. In 1929 he was trans-

[8] See below, pp. 72-74.

[9] This biographical data is taken from Darwazah (see note 6) and from an interview with al-Tamimi's brother, Sa'id al-Tamimi, on February 22, 1964.

ferred to al-'Amiriyyah Secondary School in Jaffa and remained its principal for eighteen years.

In the twenties and thirties al-Tamimi was a passive participant in the nationalist movement of Palestine Arabs. His activity was limited to educating his compatriots and strengthening their national consciousness through discussions. He played a leading part in opening a literary club in Jaffa, the Cultural Athletic Club, serving as chairman of the cultural committee and organizing lectures and the publication of literary pamphlets and political tracts. The literary pamphlets dealt with aspects of Arab Muslim civilization and Western philosophy. The political tracts concentrated on Arab-Jewish relations: they stressed the danger of Zionism to the future of the Arab homeland. A few of these tracts examined Western ideological concepts like nationalism and self-determination. The club brought well-known persons from other Arab towns to lecture on political and literary topics.

In addition to the pamphlets he wrote for the club, al-Tamimi wrote many articles in the local press, especially *al-Jami'ah al-Islamiyyah* ("The Islamic League"), a daily newspaper published in Jaffa in the thirties.[10] He also produced two books on the Crusades. In the first he examined the causes of these wars, their progress and their impact on the area. In the second he dealt with the social conditions of the Arab countries of the Eastern Mediterranean on the eve of the Crusades. He analyzed the feudal system of that time and compared it with the present conditions of Arab society.[11]

In 1947 al-Tamimi resigned from his work as an educator and accepted an appointment as a member of the Arab Higher Committee. He represented the committee at the various Arab conferences held to discuss the Palestine

[10] A list of his works appears in the bibliography, pp. 105-106.
[11] See below, pp. 80-81.

problem in the last two years of the Mandate. He was also its representative before the United Nations' Special Committee on Palestine in 1947. After 1948 al-Tamimi became a representative of the committee in Damascus, where he remained until his death in 1957.

Another writer who had been active in the early Arab nationalist movement and who, like al-Tamimi, was educated in France, was 'Adil Zu'aitir (1892-1956).[12] Zu'aitir was born into an old and well-to-do family of Nablus land owners. His father was the mayor of the city in the last decade of Ottoman rule. After receiving his primary and secondary education in government schools in his native town Zu'aitir went to study in Constantinople. There he became an active participant in the Arab nationalist societies and distinguished himself by advocating complete Arab independence and the formation of an Arab entity under the Hashimite family and by opposing the moderates' plan for the transformation of the Ottoman empire into a dual Ottoman-Arab monarchy. When the Arab Revolt broke out in 1916, Zu'aitir joined Faisal and early in 1917 he was sentenced to death in absentia by an Ottoman military court. In 1919 he took a leading role in the Syrian congress of Damascus.

After the French occupation of Damascus Zu'aitir left for Paris to study law. There he immersed himself in French culture and read extensively the works of French political ideologists. In 1925 he returned to Palestine and worked as a lawyer for two years. Then he joined the Institute of Law in Jerusalem as a lecturer, a post he kept until 1936, when he resigned in compliance with the movement of civil disobedience launched by the Palestine Arab community in response to the continuation of British support for Zionism.

[12] *Dhikra 'Adil Zu'aitir* ("In Memory of 'Adil Zu'aitir") (Nablus, 1957), pp. 7-11.

Zu'aitir believed that his country could best be protected from the threat posed by Zionist colonization by a well-guided, well-informed nationalist movement among the Arabs. He determined to put at the disposal of the Palestinian nationalist leaders a résumé of European ideas on nationalism.[13] He thus devoted most of his time to translation. Immersed as he was in French culture, and believing that the concept of modern nationalism originated in France, he translated mainly French writers. He tried, however, to select a variety of topics and authors. He translated ten books by Gustav Lebon: *La Civilisation des Arabes, L'Homme et les Sociétés, Les Lois Psychologiques de L'Evolution des Peuples, L'Evolution Actuelle du Monde, Islam, L'Evolution de la Matière, Les Monuments de l'Inde, La Révolution Française et la Psychologie des Révolutions, Socialisme,* and *Psychologie des Temps Nouveaux;* five by Emil Ludwig : *Le Nile, La Méditerranée, Cléopatre, Bismark* and *Napoléon;* three by Rousseau : *Le Contrat Social, Emile* and *Discours sur l'Inégalité:* two by Voltaire : *Candide* and *Lettres Philosophiques; one by* Montesquieu, *L'Esprit des Lois;* and eight works by lesser known writers.

After the Second World War Zu'aitir joined other prominent Palestinians in preparing pamphlets representing the Arab point of view for the various investigative committees that came to Palestine. He also testified before the United Nations' Special Committee on Palestine in 1947. He remained in Nablus after 1948 and continued to be active until his death in 1956.

A fourth major participant in the interwar movement of cultural nationalism in Palestine was 'Arif al-'Arif (1892-), a native of Jerusalem.[14] He received his pri-

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 12.

[14] The data given in this sketch is taken from al-'Arif's private papers, his memoirs, and a bibliographical summary prepared by al-'Arif at the request of the writer.

mary and secondary education in Jerusalem and his university education in Constantinople, where he learnt Turkish as well as French. In the Ottoman capital he was an active participant in al-Muntada al-Adabi (the Literary Club). [15] He graduated with a bachelor's degree, which enabled him to join the Ottoman Ministry of Foreign Affairs as an interpreter.

When the First World War broke out, al-'Arif was conscripted and was sent to the Caucasian front. He was captured by the Russians and spent three years in a detention camp in Siberia, where he acquired a working knowledge of Russian. While in Siberia he heard of the Arab Revolt. Moved by patriotism, and convinced of the necessity of restoring the past greatness of their ancestors, he and twenty other captive Arab officers asked the Russian authorities to release them in order that they might join the revolt. Their request was denied because the Russians continued to consider them Ottoman prisoners. However, they managed to escape during the upheaval that followed the Bolshevik Revolution, making a long and tedious journey across Siberia. When they arrived at Vladivostok, the British Consul arranged for their transportation to the Eastern Mediterranean via Southeast Asia. By the time al-'Arif and his friends arrived home, the war had ended, and Palestine was to become a British mandated territory.

When al-'Arif discovered that the terms of the Mandate included the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jews, he decided to join his countrymen in actively opposing Zionism. To this end he founded an Arabic newspaper, the first to be established after the British occupation, and gave it the name *Suriyyah al-Janubiyyah* ("Southern Syria") in order to emphasize Palestine's inseparable links with the Arab world. The authorities accused the newspaper of instigating the Palestine disturbances of

[15] See above, p. 14.

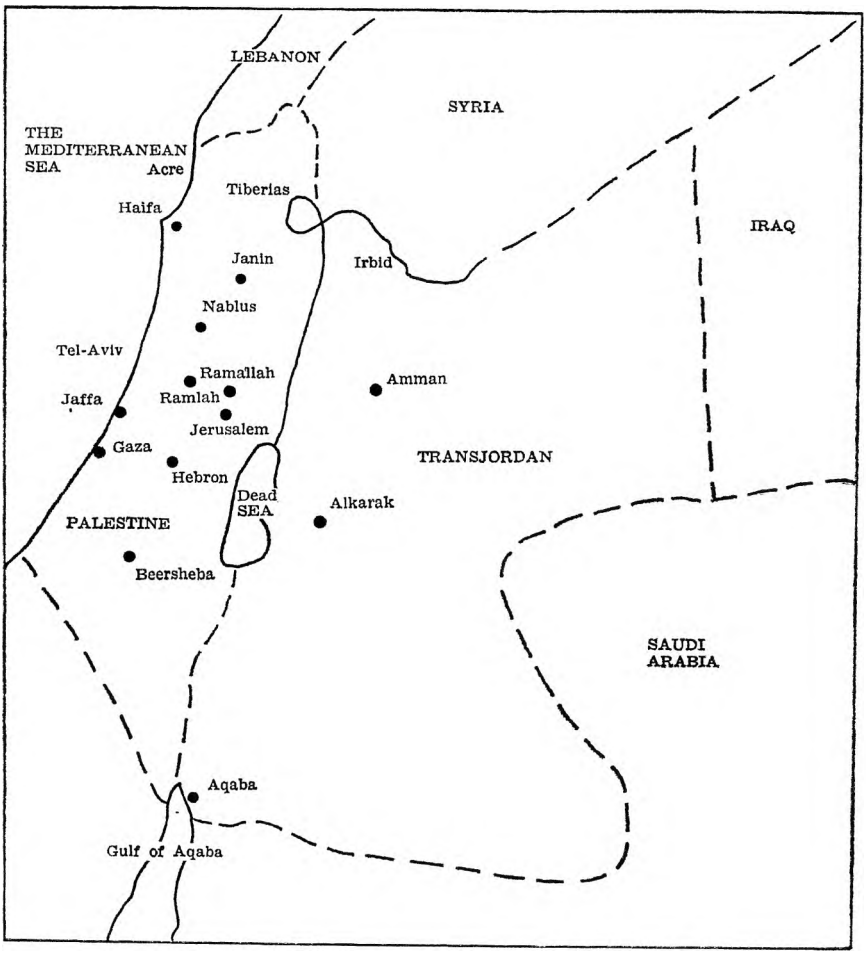
1920-1921. It was suppressed, and al-'Arif was arrested and sentenced to death by a military court. But the sentence was suspended and he was ordered instead to leave the country. He sought refuge in Transjordan, where he became secretary to 'Abdullah, the newly appointed ruler of the territory. During his association with 'Abdullah, his attitude toward the British underwent a marked change: he was converted to the view that Arab needs could best be secured through cooperation with the Mandate administration and by convincing the British of the justice of the Arab demands. Finally, in 1924, 'Abdullah succeeded in obtaining for al-'Arif a pardon from the British authorities.

On returning to Palestine, al-'Arif accepted an appointment as District Officer in Janin, a small town between Nablus and Haifa. He was successively transferred to Nablus, Beisan and Jaffa. After that he was loaned to the government of Transjordan as Chief Secretary, a post he held for three years.

In 1928 al-'Arif returned to Palestine as District Officer of Beersheba. He remained in that semi-tribal community for ten years, during which time Jewish immigration to Palestine continued to increase. Guided by devotion to the Arab homeland and a belief in the role of writing in fostering progress, al-'Arif devoted every spare minute to producing books which he thought would strengthen Palestinian Arab national consciousness. [16] To emphasize the Arab character of the country, he began writing histories of Palestinian cities. First he examined the history of Beersheba and the tribal communities around it.[17] Then, in 1938, he was transferred to Gaza and wrote a history of that town and a history of Asqalan, a neighboring village. In 1943 he was transferred to Ramallah as an

[16] 'Arif al-'Arif. Unpublished Memoirs, May 1932.
[17] See below, p. 84.

Assistant District Commissioner, a post he held until the termination of the British Mandate. In 1950, after the establishment of the Hashimite Kingdom of Jordan, King 'Abdallah appointed him mayor of the Jordanian sector of Jerusalem. In 1955 he served for a few months as Minister of Public Works.



Since 1955 al'Arif has devoted his time entirely to writing.[18] He produced a history of al-Aqsa Mosque of Jerusalem, a history of the Dome of the Rock and a brief history of Jerusalem, which he later expanded. [19] He also wrote a narrative account of the development of the Palestine problem, an annotated pictorial survey of the history of Palestine during the Mandate and an account of the three years — 1925 to 1928 — he spent in Amman.

The four writers discussed so far were Muslims, while Khalil al-Sakakini (1878-1956), a native of Jerusalem, was a Christian and reflected the participation of the Christian Arabs in the nationalist movement. [20] He was educated in an English missionary school in his native city. In 1908 he opened a night school in Jerusalem at which he taught Arabic.

During the First World War al-Sakakini stayed in Damascus, where he was closely associated with the Syrian essayist Nakhlah Zuraiq and the journalist Khair al-Din al-Zirikli. In 1920-1922 he became acquainted with the Egyptian literary revival while serving as headmaster of a Syrian Orthodox school in Cairo. Not only was Egypt at that time assuming the literary leadership of the Arab world, but there was, as well, a growing nationalist climate among educated Egyptians.

In 1923 al-Sakakini was appointed principal of the Teachers' Training College in Jerusalem and in 1925 he became an inspector in the Palestine Department of Education. In January 1936 he was offered the post of Director of the Arabic program of the Palestine Broadcasting Station, but he turned it down because at the opening ceremony the commentator referred to Palestine as the land of Israel. In 1938 he opened al-Nahdah college in Jerusalem

[18] A list of his works appears in the bibliography, p. 104.

[19] See below, pp. 81-84.

[20] This biographical data is taken from al-Sakakini's memoirs, which were compiled and edited by his daughter Halah in 1955.

and remained its principal until the termination of the Mandate. Al-Sakakini's main contribution to the cultural nationalist movement in Palestine lies in his influence on his students and colleagues in this college.

In the decade before the establishment of the Palestine Mandate al-Sakakini had displayed the spirit of toleration which at that time was a prominent characteristic of educated Arabs. He had favored internationalism, seeing in militant nationalism a threat to the welfare of the world.

> Wherever I may live, I will be a man with no political attachment; I will join no political or religious faction. I will always work for the welfare of the people amongst whom I happen to be living, whether they be English, Arab, or American, Christian, Muslim, or Jew. What is nationalism? If it implies morality, enlightenment and orderly behaviour, then I am a nationalist. But if nationalism implies religious and national prejudices, and enmity between men of different countries and creeds, then count me out. I am not a nationalist. [21]

But his outlook changed in the face of political conditions in Palestine after the First World War. Al-Sakakini continued to preach human brotherhood, but he addressed himself at the same time to the wrongs that his fellow countrymen were suffering for the supposed benefit of another group of people.

It was the Zionist threat to Arab Palestine and the British support for the Zionist cause that made al-Sakakini a nationalist. To his students he repeatedly emphasized his pride in his Arab identity.[22] In the few articles he wrote he preached the necessity of patriotic devotion. The strongest bond in the nation, he believed, is language.

[21] Khalil al-Sakakini, *Hadha Ana Ya Dunia: Mudhakkirat Khalil al-Sakakini* ("That is The Way I Am, World: the Memoirs of Khalil al-Sakakini"), edited by Halah al-Sakakini. (Jerusalem, 1955), p. 96.
[22] *Ibid.*, p. 244.

He therefore bitterly attacked those Arabs who used English or French in conversation. Al-Sakakini also criticized the contemporary weakness of the Arabs, which allowed them to succumb to foreign domination.

> The condition of the Arabs in these days does not command admiration. The nation that accepts humiliation must be a dying nation. I will try to help the Arabs feel proud of their nationality. This can be done at school and I am going to do it.[23]

Al-Sakakini was free to adopt such an approach to education only when he opened his own private school in the last decade of the Mandate.

In the thirties a younger generation of writers began to contribute to the cultural nationalist movement in Palestine. A leading figure among them was Qadri Tuqan (1911-1971). Tuqan was born into a family of land owners in Nablus, where he received his primary and secondary education. [24] He took his higher education at the American University of Beirut, graduating with a bachelor's degree in mathematics. After university he joined the staff of the Najah National College in Nablus, which at that time was the leading academic institution of the Arab community in Palestine. He became first the college's assistant director and then its principal and a member of its Board of Trustees. From 1951 to 1955 he represented Nablus in the Jordanian National Assembly.

Tuqan travelled widely in the Arab world and, like al-Sakakini, was in close contact with the literary circles of Egypt and Syria. In 1936 he began his contribution to the cultural nationalist movement with a collection of essays on various aspects of Arab culture.[25] His main interest, however, was the history of science, and espe-

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 271.

[24] This biographical data is taken from a summary prepared by Tuqan in May 1963 at the request of the writer.

[25] A list of his books appears in the bibliography, p. 110.

cially the contribution of the Arabs to that field. He described the scientific method as it had been elaborated by the Arabs and produced biographies of some of the leading medieval Arab scientists.[26]

Like all other Palestinian writers Tuqan had something to say on the political problem of Palestine. His contribution in this field came after 1948, when most of his country had been lost to the Zionists. He analyzed the origin of the Arab-Jewish conflict, stressing the clash of the two peoples' nationalist aspirations. He examined the non-political causes of the Arab defeat and suggested a program of intensive reform of the social and economic conditions of the Arab countries, drawing on the income from Arab oil resources.[27]

Tuqan's views were important in the spreading of national consciousness because of the large number of educated groups with whom he was associated. In addition to his influence through the Najah college — on students, teachers, and trustees — he was a participant in some seventeen cultural conferences.

Mahmud al-'Abidi (1907-) was another Palestinian Arab educator and writer of the same generation as Qadri Tuqan. Al-'Abidi was born to a peasant family in 'Asirah al-Shamaliyyah, a small village near Nablus.[27] He attended primary and secondary government schools and then, without the means to pay university fees, he entered the Teachers' Training College in Jerusalem, graduating with a diploma in education in 1927. He was appointed a teacher at an elementary school in Nablus. He was later transferred to Bethlehem and then to Safad, a large town in the northern part of Palestine, where he

[26] See below, pp. 74-76.

[27] Qadri Tuqan. *Ba'd al-Nakbah* ("After the Disaster") (Beirut, 1950), pp. 186-190.

[28] This biographical data is taken from al-'Abidi's unpublished memoirs and from an interview on March 25, 1963.

became headmaster of an elementary school. He kept that post until the end of the British Mandate. He then worked as a teacher at the Islamiyyah college, a private academic institution in Amman, becoming after two years headmaster of the elementary section. In 1954 he joined the Jordanian Ministry of Education and was appointed principal of Raghdan secondary school in Amman. In 1957 he was transferred to the Ministry as an assistant inspector. Two years later he moved to the Department of Antiquities, which sent him for study in Europe. After six months in Rome and three in London, he returned to Jordan and became Assistant Director of the Department.

Long before joining the Department of Antiquities al-'Abidi had acquired a deep interest in archaeology. In April of 1924, while a student in Jerusalem, he attended a lecture on the archaeological significance of Petra, famous for buildings cut into rocks in the pre-Islamic era. The lecturer, a British archaeological expert, expressed the view that the remains at Petra were not of Arab origin. Al-'Abidi, who knew that these remains had been built by the Nabataeans, a pre-Islamic Arab kingdom, resented what he considered a misrepresentation of facts and decided that he would henceforth channel his efforts to the archaeological aspect of the study of Arab civilization.[29]

Al-'Abidi was mainly involved in the cultural aspect of the nationalist movement, believing he had little competence in politics. He believed that the cornerstone of any nationalist movement was devotion to national history and pride in its legacy.[30] Al-'Abidi tried to foster this devotion through his books and his lectures and discussions with students.

[29] Mahmud al-'Abidi. Unpublished Memoirs, April 16, 1924. See below, pp. 77-78.
[30] *Ibid.*, March 13, 1937.

Al-'Abidi's work on Arab civilization described the contribution of the Arabs to world civilization and emphasized the role the Muslim religion had played in the creation of a strong Arab state. He believed that an Arab revival should look to the West for advice and guidance only within a framework of Muslim customs and traditions.[31] Al-'Abidi's writings on Arab archaelogoy — including studies of Petra, Jarash and the Umayyad palaces — were intended to emphasize the Arab character of Palestine and to challenge Jewish claims to the country.[32]

While Tuqan and al-'Abidi were educators, Ya'qub al-'Udat, (1909-), who wrote under the pseudonym of al-Badawi al-Mulaththam (the veiled bedouin), was chiefly a civil servant. Al-'Udat was born in al-Karak, a small town in the southern part of Transjordan.[33] He had received elementary education in his birth place and went to high school in Irbid, a large Jordanian town near the Syrian border. He had no higher education and, therefore, no direct contact with Western culture.

Al-'Udat began his public life as a teacher in the Transjordanian Department of Education. He served first in Jarash and then in Amman. During his work as a teacher he prepared himself for a writing career through extensive reading. In 1932 he was appointed secretary to the Transjordanian Council of Ministers, a post which gave him opportunities for cultural advancement. He came into contact with some of the important men of letters who visited the court of Amir 'Abdullah and was encouraged in his desire to write. His first book was a collection of stories relating to the pretended conversion of Napoleon to the Muslim faith. Al-'Udat saw the local population's disbelief in the conversion as a sign of national solidarity

[31] *Ibid.*, May 20, 1938.

[32] A list of his books appears in the bibliography, pp. 103-104.

[33] This biographical data is taken from an interview with al-'Udat on April 10, 1963.

against foreigners. A few years later he examined the lives of Arab leaders who had distinguished themselves as opponents to foreign domination, a group he called the forgotten caravan.

In 1942 al-'Udat moved to Jerusalem where he worked in the translation division of the office of the Chief Secretary of the Government of Palestine. He began to gain fame as a man of letters. He wrote articles on the literary movement in Egypt, Syria and Lebanon. He showed great interest in the literary accomplishments of Arab emigrants to North America, which he examined in *Al-Natiquun bi al-Dad fi Amairika al-Shamaliyyah-* ("The Arabic Speaking People in North America"), stressing that part of their writing that reflected their emotional ties to the Arab homeland.

The events of 1948 necessarily had their effect on al-'Udat. He decided to go to South America to collect data for a book he had begun about the writing of the Arab emigrants to that continent. He stayed there for two years, 1952-1954, spending most of his time in Brazil and Argentina, the countries with the largest Arab populations. In his *Al-Natiquun bi al-Dad fi Amairika al-Janubiyyah* ("The Arabic Speaking People in South America") he emphasized the reactions of the writers he studied to the progress of Arab nationalism.

Al-'Udat's interest in national literature continued after his return to Jordan. His latest contribution in that field is a study of the national poetry of Palestine and Transjordan after the First World War.

Niqula Ziyadah (1907-), the last writer to be examined, represents the Christian Palestinian Arabs among the younger generation of writers. His contribution to historical scholarship began in the last decade of

the British Mandate.[34] Although he was born in Damascus, his parents settled in Palestine when he was young. He was educated in Jerusalem, receiving a diploma from the Teachers' Training College in 1924. He served as a teacher in the government secondary school in Acre for ten years and then was sent on scholarship to the University of London by the Palestine Department of Education. Receiving his B.A. in 1939 with honors in classical history, he joined the staff of the government-run Arab College in Jerusalem. After the termination of the Mandate he spent one year at Cambridge University and another as an assistant director of education in Cyrenaica, Libya. In 1950, he received his Ph. D. from the University of London and joined the faculty of the American University of Beirut. He is now professor of modern Arabic history and has been a visiting professor at Harvard University in 1957-1958 and again in 1962-1963.

During the nineteen forties Ziyadah's views found their way to thousands of students and hundreds of teachers through his work at the Arab College, which supplied teachers to all government Arab schools in Palestine.[35] The Arab feeling of national solidarity, Ziyadah believed, was not a new phenomenon; he traced it to the late seventh and eighth centuries, the period of the Umayyad dynasty.[36] He maintained this thesis in a number of books written before the end of the Mandate. He also wrote a collection of biographies, the subjects of which were known for their devotion to the idea of Arab nationality. Himself a Christian, he stressed the role of Islam in the rise of the Arabs to power, while describing at the

[34] This biographical information is taken from a summary prepared by Professor Ziyadah in May 1964 at the request of the writer.

[35] J. Katul, *Al-Ta'lim fi Filastin* ("Education in Palestine") (Beirut, 1950), pp. 123-124.

[36] Niqula Ziyadah. *Al-Qawmiyyah wa al-'Urubah* ("Patriotism and Arabism") (Jerusalem, 1945), pp. 72-73. See below, pp.

same time the historical existence of Arab nationalist feeling among non-Muslim Arabs.[37]

Ziyadah's major works were written in the decade after 1950. In that period he wrote ten books and eight articles in Arabic and seven books and nine articles in English. These, however, fall outside the scope of Palestinian cultural nationalism during the Mandate.

The common theme uniting all these Palestinian cultural leaders is a pride in their Arab heritage, arising as a result of the discovery of European learning, and nascent nationalist reaction to the exclusively Western content of this learning. They saw a consciousness of Arab history and culture as the necessary basis for a consciousness of Arab nationalism, a consciousness whose urgency of dissemination became increasingly apparent as they watched the threatening influx of Jewish immigrants into Palestine. How these cultural leaders, and others like them, attempted to communicate this consciousness is the subject of the following chapters.

[37] Niqula Ziyadah. *Wathbat al-ʿArab* ("The Rise of the Arabs to Power") (Jerusalem, 1945), pp. 121-122. See below, p. 79.

CHAPTER III

POPULAR WRITING

Palestinian writers treated Arab national issues somewhat differently from other Arab writers. Modern writers of all Arab countries have treated the Arab national movement, the independence movements of individual Arab countries, and the form Arab unity should assume. Palestinian writers were equally interested in the Arab national movement, but they saw it from the perspective of the threat posed by Zionism and the "national home" policy of the British government: while other Arab countries fought for national independence, the Palestinian Arabs were fighting for the preservation of their national existence.

While many Palestinian Arabs resorted to armed resistance in order to prevent the execution of the declared intentions of the Zionists and the British, the reaction of the writers came in a flood of polemical tracts, booklets, articles and essays. The origins, aims and techniques of the Zionists were described, analyzed and condemned, and in some cases counter-measures were suggested.

The plans of the Zionists for a Jewish return to Palestine and the danger that the realization of such plans posed for the Arab character of the country had figured in some political tracts that appeared even before the establishment of the Mandate. Writing in 1911, Najib Nassar, a Christian journalist from Haifa, analyzed the implications of the Zionist movement for the future of Palestine. He concluded that if the country were opened to unrestricted Jewish immigration, its Arab population

would quickly become a minority, and Palestine would cease to be an Arab country.[1]

The passage from Ottoman to British rule brought with it a realization of the immediacy with which Zionist plans threatened to disrupt the progress of Arab national independence. The first reaction to Zionism after the establishment of the Mandate came from another Christian Arab, Bulus 'Abbud, a lawyer from Jaffa, who foretold a bleak future for the Arabs of the Holy Land if the new administration carried out the stipulations of the Balfour Declaration. He stressed the freedom which the Christians of Palestine had enjoyed among the Muslims, the absence of religious conflicts during the preceding decades, and the feeling of solidarity and trust between Christian and Muslim Arabs. The establishment of a Jewish national home in the country would not only undermine the Arab national character of the Holy Land, it would also interrupt the peace that had reigned in the Holy City for such a long time, because its Arab population was bound to oppose by force a plan that would make them a minority in their own homeland.[2]

As a result of the improvement of the economic conditions of the country through the efforts of the British administration during the twenties, the resistance of the Palestinian Arabs became temporarily less intense, but such material ameliorations of the Arab situation could not long affect disappointed nationalist sentiment, and the increase in the rate of Jewish immigration toward the end of the decade re-awoke Palestinian Arabs to the threat to their national integrity. By 1929, despite a certain degree of governmental control over immigration, the number of the Jews in the country had increased to about

[1] Najib Nassar, *Al-Sahyuniyyah* ("Zionism") (Haifa, 1911), pp. 150-153.

[2] Bulus 'Abbud, *Al-Ard al-Muqaddasah wa al-Sahyuniyyah* ("The Holy Land and Zionism") (Jaffa, 1920), pp. 85-88.

160,000, more than double the figure in 1920.[3] In August 1929, some Palestinian Arabs launched a series of attacks on Jewish settlers, especially in the Hebron area south of Jerusalem. The Shaw Commission, sent by the British to investigate the outbursts, submitted a report that stressed the purely economic aspect of the problem. It warned that the Palestinian Arabs might face a land shortage if unrestricted Jewish immigration and purchase of land were to continue. The Passfield White Paper, a statement of British policy which followed the Shaw Report, proposed limiting immigration to an amount consistent with the economic capacity of the country.[4] But even this limited awareness of the Palestinian case was overcome by Zionist protest, however, and Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald felt compelled to explain away the Paper in a letter to Chaim Weizmann, the Zionist leader, in which he denied that any prohibition of Jewish purchase of land or immigration was contemplated by the British government.[5] By 1936 the number of the Jews in the country had risen to about 200,000 and the land held by them had increased from 110,000 acres to 308,000.[6]

Until the mid-thirties however, Arab opposition was sporadic and lacking in central organization, though increasingly vocal and violent. Arab leadership after the establishment of the Mandate was taken over by the Husaini family, whose position was recognized by the authorities in the choice of Hajj Amin al-Husaini as Mufti of Jerusalem and the Head of the Supreme Muslim Council. As a balancing force, Raghib al-Nashashibi, the head of

[3] J.C. Hurewitz, *The Struggle for Palestine* (New York: Norton and Co., 1950), p.28.

[4] *The Political History of Palestine Under the British Administration,* p. 25.

[5] Great Britain, Parliament, *Parliamentary Debates* (House of Commons), 5th ser., Vol. 248, cols. 756-757.

[6] Hurewitz, *The Struggle for Palestine,* p. 29.

the second most powerful Arab family in Jerusalem, was appointed mayor of the city. Local Arab politics in Palestine focused on the rivalry between these two families. The Husainis advocated an extreme uncompromising nationalist policy; the Nashashibis declared themselves in favor of moderation towards the British and close relations with Amir 'Abdullah of Transjordan. An Arab Congress, held in Jerusalem in 1928 to choose spokesmen for the Arab community, failed to unify the Palestinian nationalist movement.[7]

Despite this failure of political unity, the renewed awareness of the Zionist threat among the Palestinian Arabs in the late 1920's and early 1930's was expressed by Muhammad 'Izzat Darwazah. Writing in 1929, he linked the future of Palestine with the development of the Arab nationalist movement. He believed that the Palestine problem, and specifically Muslim solidarity in the face of Zionism, could serve as a unifying force among the Arabs. While other Arab countries were on the way to achieving some form of independence, the future of Palestine was still in jeopardy. Darwazah wanted it made clear to all Arabs that its loss would be a blow to the Arab nationalist movement.[8]

The majority of these polemics, however, concentrated on the situation in Palestine itself as an outcome of the events of the First World War. Isa al-Sifri, an active member of the Cultural Athletic Club of Jaffa, surveyed the negotiations during the First World War in which the British had promised Husayn that Palestine was to be included in the projected Arab kingdom, and then described the legal basis of the Mandate and the implications of its provisions regarding the future of the country. He empha-

[7] Yusuf Haikal, *Al-Qadiyyah al-Filastiniyyah* ("The Palestine Problem") (Cairo, 1950), pp. 50 ff.

[8] Muhammad 'Izzat Darwazah, *Filastin wa al-Urubah* ("Palestine and Arabism") (Jerusalem, 1929), pp. 4-5.

sized the necessity of building the national morale of the young Palestinian Arabs and of acquainting the rest of the Arab world with the nature of the Zionist danger.[9]

Another important tract was written by Muhammad Yunis al-Husayni, a member of the same family as the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem. Al-Husayni attacked the legal and ethical basis of the Balfour Declaration. He maintained that the Declaration had no authority in international law because it had been issued in the form of a letter, and that the British Government thus was not bound by its stipulations. Furthermore, he pointed out, His Majesty's Government had neither the legal nor the moral right to issue such a declaration, purporting to dispose of a territory over which England had no legal jurisdiction and to create a "homeland" in a country that already belonged to another nation.[10]

Sidqi al-Dajani, a native of Jerusalem, examined the situation in the country during the twenties and early thirties, stressing the hardship that had befallen the Palestinian Arabs as a result of Jewish immigration and purchase of land:

> . . . many Arab villagers have been ousted from the lands their forefathers had tilled for centuries; they are not even allowed to work as wage-earners on these lands. The Jewish influx to the country has benefited only those Arabs who live largely outside Palestine, like the family of Sursuq, whose members sold what land they possessed in the fertile sections of the country at very high prices. It is true that the Jews have suffered, but it is a grave

[9] Isa Al-Sifri, *Filastin al-'Arabiya bayn al-Intidab wa al-Sahyuniyya* ("Arab Palestine between the Mandate and Zionism") (Jerusalem, 1929).

[10] Muhammad Yunis al-Husaini, *Tahlil Wa'd Balfour* ("The Analysis of the Balfour Declaration") (Jerusalem, 1936), pp. i-ii.

injustice to try to solve the misfortunes of some human beings at the expense of others.[11]

The rivalry between the Husayni and Nashashibi families which had bedevilled Palestinian unity, prompted some younger members of the Arab intelligentsia to form new political groups independent of the two leading families, and by 1936 Palestine had six Arab political parties. Firstly, there was the Palestine Arab Party, led by Jamal al-Husaini and backed by the Mufti; its platform, calling for an outright termination of the Mandate and for the creation of an independent Arab Palestine, commanded wide support from the Arab community. The second party, the National Defense Party, was sponsored by the Nashashibi family, maintained close contact with the Emir of Transjordan, and advocated an independent Palestine linked to Britain by treaty. It was supported by the Arab Workers Society of Palestine. The third party, the Independence Party, was the only one that emphasized an ideology of Arab unity. It was formed by 'Awni 'Abd al-Hadi, a lawyer from Nablus and a prominent participant in the early Arab national movement, and it enjoyed the backing of young doctors, lawyers and teachers. The remaining parties were less significant; they included the Reform Party of Husain Fakhri al-Khalidi, a physician from Jerusalem, the National Bloc of 'Abd al-Latif Salah, a native of Nablus and the President of the Society of the Palestine Arab Lawyers, and the Arab Youth Congress of Ya'qub al-Ghusain, a teacher from Ramlah. Some of the Palestinian Arabs joined the Communist Party, but its common Arab - Jewish membership rendered its appeal to the Arabs negligible, and its advocacy of an independent Palestinian state met with

[11] Hasan Sidqi al-Dajani, *Tafsir Zulamat Filastin* ("The Explanation of the Palestine Injustice"). (Jerusalem, 1936), p. 82.

little response among the Jews.[12]

The common denominator of all six Arab parties was their unqualified opposition to Zionism. Their differences were in the realm of tactics. In 1936 they were able to reconcile their differences sufficiently to form a supreme Arab committee under the chairmanship of the Mufti. In April of that year the committee ordered a general strike, which soon turned into an armed revolt. British forces were dispatched to restore order, and a Royal Commission of Investigation arrived in the country to examine Arab and Jewish claims and grievances.

The Peel Commission Report, published in July 1937, declared that the aspirations of the million Arabs and four hundred thousand Jews living in Palestine were irreconcilable and that the existing Mandate was unworkable. The report recommended that the country be divided into three parts : 1) Nazareth, Jerusalem and a corridor between Jerusalem and Jaffa would remain a British Mandate; 2) the fertile coastal plain would become a Jewish state; and 3) the rest of Palestine would be annexed to Transjordan.[13] Denounced by both Arabs and Jews, these recommendations were dropped by the British government.

Meanwhile the Arab rebellion in Palestine continued despite British military measures, and order was not completely restored until 1939.

The increasingly unsettled condition of the country was reflected in the writings of the late thirties. Amin 'Aql, Ibrahim Najm and 'Umar Abu al-Nasr, three Muslims from Jaffa, in a collaborative work published in 1939 under the title *Jihad Filastin al-'Arabiyyah* ("The Holy

[12] W.Z. Laqueur, *Communism and Nationalism in the Middle East* (New York: Praeger, 1956). pp. 86 ff. Also Akram Zu'aitir, *Al-Qadiyyah al-Filastiniyyah* ("The Palestine Problem") (Cairo, 1956), pp. 149-150.

[13] Cmd. 5479, cited in Hurewitz, *The Struggle for Palestine*, pp. 75-76.

War of Palestine"), concentrated on the measures taken by Palestinian Arabs to prevent the Zionist domination of the country and to resist British coercion. They examined the various revolts of the Palestinians in the twenties and thirties, paying special attention to the insurrection of 1936, in which they themselves had participated. Stressing the necessity for Arab solidarity to preserve the Arab character of Palestine, they solicited material and political help from the neighboring Arab governments.[14]

Meanwhile, the increasing anti-Zionist feeling in the nineteen thirties brought about a new solidarity between Muslim and Christian Arabs and Christians participated actively in the national movement, many of them joining the various political parties. A Christian from Jerusalem, Emile al-Ghuri, became the Vice-President of the Arab Higher Committee. Al-Sakakini, another Christian, whose career has been outlined in the previous chapter, argued in his memoirs that it was the duty of every Arab, whatever his sect or community, to sanctify the memory of Muhammad and to interest himself in Islam, the product of the Arab national genius which had enabled the Arab nation to assert its place in the world.[15]

Khalil Iskandar Qubrusi, an Arab Orthodox Christian from Jerusalem, went further still. He was enraged by the backing the Christian West gave to the aims of the Zionists and by the role of the Christian British in the Arab world. He enumerated ways in which European Christians had oppressed Arab Christians in religious terms : monopolizing high religious offices such as cardinal and bishop; making a monopoly of holiness — not a single Arab had been proclaimed a saint; denying the Arab clergy the administrative independence enjoyed in other

[14] Amin 'Aql, Ibrahim Naim and 'Umar Abu al-Nasr, *Jihad Filastin al-'Arabiyyah* ("The Holy War of Arab Palestine") (Beirut, 1939), pp. 135-136.

[15] Al-Sakakini, *Mudhakkirat,* p. 150.

countries; begging for alms in the name of the Arab Christians in such a way as to lower their dignity. In contrast to this, Islam, Qubrusi pointed out, was a benevolent, egalitarian and democratic religion. Furthermore, and of greater significance, Islam was the religion of the Arabs. Since the Eastern Christians were also Arabs, and since they were equally oppressed with the Muslims by Europeans, they should embrace Islam :

> What harm would it do the Christian Arabs if they should be guided by the teachings of Islam, which is a true Arab religion recognized even by European thinkers? If I advocate it, it is because such a union will serve to strengthen the Arabs. It will help us free ourselves completely from the yoke of the British, the Zionists and foreign imperialism, since the struggle after such conversion will be between Muslim Arabs and Christian foreigners.[16]

In May 1939 the British government, in a bid to secure a favorable attitude in the Arab world in view of the worsening political situation in Europe, issued a new "White Paper" or statement of policy. This document envisaged the establishment within ten years of an independent Palestine linked to Britain by treaty relations. The Arabs and the Jews were to share in the government, and their interests were to be safeguarded. During the transitional period the sale of Arab land to non-Arabs was to be restricted and Jewish immigration into the country was to be set at seventy-five thousand.[17] Arab moderates considered the White Paper of 1939 as a modest victory for the Arabs, but the Palestine Arab Party rejected these

[16] Khalil Iskandar Qubrusi, *Da'wat Nasara al-'Arab ila al-Dukhul fi al-Islam* ("A Call to Christian Arabs to Embrace Islam") (Cairo, 1931), p. 42.

[17] Cmd. 6019, cited in Hurewitz, *The Struggle for Palestine*, pp. 101-102.

proposals and continued to press for immediate independence. The Zionists vehemently opposed the White Paper.

The publication of the 1939 White Paper brought about another alteration in the approach of the nationalist writers to the problem of Palestinian independence, reflecting a new confidence in the future of Palestine and a concern less limited to the immediate threat of Zionism. Armed clashes between the Arabs and the British subsided — because of the large number of the British forces in the country, because the Arab moderates had accepted the stipulations of the White Paper, and because the extreme nationalists were either in exile or in detention. Many members of the intelligentsia began to feel that the Arab character of the country had become secure, as the Arabs would be a majority in an independent Palestinian state. They began to address themselves to the place Palestine was to have in the Arab nationalist movement.

The first reference to Arab unity to appear in Palestine was written in 1932. 'Abd al-Rahman 'Azzam, a future secretary of the League of Arab States, wrote in the *Jerusalem Review*, a newspaper which began publication in that year:

> Arab unity is a historical reality. The fragmentation of the Arab nation into peoples and tribes is not a sign of dissolution or lack of vitality; it is simply a sign of ignorance and an example of European influence on the East. These divisions will not prevent the Arabs from unity.[18]

One of the Palestinians who addressed himself to Arab nationalism in the changed circumstances existing after 1939 was Najati Sidqi, a Muslim from Jerusalem. He gave a summary of the stages through which the Arab national movement had passed from the Young Turk revolt

[18] *Jerusalem Review*, August 27, 1932.

of 1908 up to the Palestinian Arab revolt of 1936. After the First World War the Arab world had a number of separate nationalist movements, Egyptian, Iraqi, Syrian and Palestinian. The year 1936 witnessed, according to him, the fruitful results of these movements : an Anglo-Egyptian treaty that recognized the full independence of Egypt was concluded; treaties were signed that arranged for the transfer of authority from the French to the Syrians and the Lebanese; the Iraqi nationalist, Bakr Sidqi, seized control in Baghdad; the Palestinian Arabs created a unified command and began an armed revolt to force the British to grant them independence. Moreover, during the period of Western occupation in the two decades after the War, Arab national consciousness had begun to permeate the masses. This, he believed, was bound to lead to pan-Arab sentiment and eventually to Arab unity.[19]

Ahmad Kamal, a Muslim, from Nablus and a member of the Independence Party, described Arab nationalism after the First War as strengthened by four stimuli. In the first place, the liberation movements of the Eastern Mediterranean had a common target : British and French imperialism. Secondly, the acceleration of modern means of communication increased the contacts among the Arabs of the various countries. The consciousness of the kinship among the Arab peoples, which had previously been limited to a small number of the intellectual elite, began gradually to reach the uneducated masses. Thirdly, the cultural revival which had begun in the nineteenth century gained momentum and contributed greatly to the sharpening of Arab national consciousness. And, finally, the bond of religion continued to bring the majority of Arabs together. He

[19] Najati Sidqi, *Tarikh al-Harakah al-'Arabiyyah min 'Ahd al-Inqilab al-'Uthmani hatta 'Ahd al-Kwtlah al-Wataniyyah* ("The History of the Arab National Movement from the Ottoman Revolution until the Formation of the National Bloc") (Beirut, 1939).

concluded that some form of Arab unity would eventually occur.[20]

Yusuf Haikal, the mayor of Jaffa in the forties, came to a similar conclusion about the inevitability of Arab unity. Popular clamor, he predicted, would force the Arab rulers to take steps toward unity. The lead most probably would come from Egypt because of its dominant cultural role in the Arab world and its large population. The first move, he believed, should be the formation of an association of sovereign Arab states, which would gradually achieve a closer unification.[21]

Although, as we have seen, the first expression of Palestinian aspirations for Arab unity had appeared in the press, it was not until the late thirties and the forties that newspapers assumed a leading role in the dissemination of Arab nationalist thought.

The history of the press in Palestine begins in 1908 when there simultaneously appeared in Jerusalem three newspapers: *al-Aama'i;* named after a famous man of letters, *al-Quds* ("Jerusalem"), and *al-Nafa'is al-'Asriyyah* ("Modern Treasures"). Two others appeared five years later : *al-Manhal* ("The Spring") and *al-Munadi* ("The Caller").[22] These newspapers had a limited duration; by the end of the twenties they had all disappeared. Their general themes before the British occupation were the necessity for Arab independence and the greatness of the Arab cultural heritage. They were of little significance after the occupation.

The most important newspapers after the establishment of the Mandate were *Filastin* ("Palestine"), *al-Difa'*

[20] Ahmad Kamal, *Usus al-Nuhud al-Qawmi* ("The Foundations of the National Revival") (Beirut, 1939).

[21] Yusuf Haikal, *Nahwa al-Wahdah al-'Arabiyyah* ("Towards Arab Unity") (Cairo, 1945), pp. 231-232.

[22] Nasir al-Din al-Asad. *Al-Ittijahat al-Adabiyyah al-Haditha fi Filastin wa al-Urdun* ("Modern Literary Trends in Palestine and Jordan") (Cairo, 1958), pp. 47-48.

("Defense") and *al-Jami'ah al-Islamiyyah* ("The Islamic League").[23] *Filastin* was established in 1911 as a semi-weekly by 'Isa al-'Isa, a Christian Arab from Jaffa. The First World War interrupted its publication, which resumed in 1920. In 1929 it became a daily and began to issue a weekly literary supplement. In the 1930's it supported the National Defense Party; in 1940-1943 it was independent; it supported the Independence Party in 1943-1946, and, during the last two years of the Mandate, it was anti-Husaini. By 1946 il had a circulation of nine thousand. *Al-Jami'ah al-Islamiyyah* was started in 1931 as a daily newspaper by Sulaiman al-Faruqi, a religious leader from Ramlah. In the mid-thirties it supported the National Defense Party. It was discontinued after the death of its owner in 1939. *Al-Difa'* was established as a daily newspaper by the Shanti brothers, two reporters of *al-Jami'ah al-Islamiyyah,* in 1934. From 1934 to 1939 it was the Independence Party mouthpiece; during the Second World War it was independent and subsequently it voiced the opinions of the Palestine Arab Party and the Arab Higher Committee. In 1946 it had a circulation of thirteen thousand.

Of some significance also were the journals that came into existence in order to advocate a specific political view. Most important of these was the *Jerusalem Review*, which began circulating in 1932 as the organ of a group of Arab intellectuals who advocated immediate Arab unity as a means of containing the Zionist threat to Palestine. It was suppressed by the authorities after the outbreak of the revolt of 1936.

Al-Munabbih ("The Tocsin"), the official organ of the Palestine Communist Party, began publication in the late twenties. It was replaced after a couple of years by the monthly *Ila al-Amam* ("Forward"). The new journal advocated a Palestinian state in which the Jews would play

[23] *Ibid.*, pp. 48 ff.

a role proportionate to their numbers in the country. The most important communist journal, however, was *al-Ittihad* ("Unity"), edited by Emile Tuma, a Christian Arab from Jerusalem, and founded in 1934, when the Arab Palestinian communists split from the Jewish-Arab Communist Party and formed a new organization by the name of Usbat al-Tahharur al-Watani (The League of National Liberation).[24]

The role of these newspapers and journals in the Palestinian Arab nationalist movement began to assume significant proportions towards the end of the Second World War. Palestinian writers began once more to give the specific problem of Palestine increasing consideration, because it was clear to them that the Allies were not far from victory and that the disclosure of German atrocities toward the Jews of Europe was being used successfully to elicit world sympathies for the Zionist cause. This was especially true in the United States, where the American government began to put pressure on the British for the lifting of restrictions on Jewish immigration to Palestine. The British government seemed to be wavering in its determination to execute the policy declared in the 1939 White Paper.

The cautious optimism that emerged among the Palestinians after 1939 gave way to a new sense of urgency. The Palestinian Arabs became convinced that they could not face up to the danger alone, and that their only hope lay in united Arab action against the British and the Zionists. They therefore welcomed the formation of the League of Arab States. In October 1944 a protocol was signed in Alexandria by representatives of the seven independent Arab states, giving the general outlines of the new body. Then, on March 22, 1945, the Pact of the League

[24] Laqueur, *Communism and Nationalism in the Middle East*, pp. 110-111.

of Arab States was signed by Egypt, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Lebanon, Transjordan and Yemen. Palestine, owing to its peculiar circumstances, was to be represented at the League's Council without membership.[25]

Some Palestinian thinkers viewed the formation of the League with suspicion from the very start. They saw it as a product of British diplomacy designed to give some artificial satisfaction to the Arabs. They cited as evidence the fact that the first hint of its formation came from Anthony Eden, the British Foreign Secretary, and that it came shortly after the defeat of the Iraqi coup of Rashid 'Ali al-Kilani.[26]

The majority of the Palestinian Arabs, however, approved of the principle of Arab unity and saw in the formation of the League the first step in the process of unification. This line of thought was reflected in most of the Palestinian Arabic press. On March 23, 1945, the day after the Pact was signed, the leading newspapers, *Filastin* and *al-Difa'a,* printed editorials defending the principle behind the League. While urging caution and watchfulness, they thought that for the time being the Arabs should take the British government's support of Arab unity at its face value. The ediotrial in *Filastin* was written by 'Adil Zu'aitir, who has been mentioned in an earlier chapter.[27]

Niqula Ziyadah also defended the principle of unity among the Arabs in *al-Qawmiyyah wa al-'Urubah* ("Patriotism and Arabism"). He considered that the League would contribute immensely to the strengthening of na-

[25] G. Lenczoski. *The Middle East in World Affairs* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962), pp. 635-638; Fayez Sayegh, *Arab Unity (New York :* The Devin Adair Company, 1958), p. 133.

[26] George Kirk, *The Middle East in the War : Survey of International Affairs, 1939-1946* (London : Oxford University Press, 1953), p. 400.

[27] See above, pp. 25-26.

tional consciousness among the Arabs.[28]

The formation of the Arab League was not the only framework for the discussion of Arab unity by Palestinian writers in the mid-forties. Rafiq al-Tamimi, the historian,[29] searched in the past history of the Arabs for events comparable to the hostility of the West to the Arabs and its backing of the Zionist cause. According to him, twentieth century westerners were like the Crusaders in that they come to avenge a previous loss of position in the area. Some of them, like the British and the French, had come to conquer and to exploit; others, the Zionists, were more dangerous, for they had come to settle and in due course to dominate the whole area. Westerners had won the first round in the second encounter, as in the Middle Ages, because of the disunity among the Arabs. Once again Arab unity was the only means of victory. This unity, he believed, would eventually come under the leadership of a new Saladin. In view of the deterioration of the Arabs, it could not be initiated by popular endeavor. A benevolent autocratic regime was the best means for revitalizing the Arabs, stamping out parochialism and enforcing the necessary reforms. After a transitional period the new unified Arab state would be able to adopt a Western democratic form of government.[30]

Autocratic rule had been advocated earlier as a necessary forerunner of unity and democracy by Khalil Baidas, a historian educated at the Russian missionary schools. In his book *Muluk al-Rus* ("The kings of the Russians"), published in 1913, he drew comparisons between certain aspects of Russian and Arab history. He stressed the similarity between the average Arab's and the average Russian's submissiveness to authority and de-

[28] See above, pp. 37-38.

[29] See above, p. 23-25.

[30] Niqula Ziyadah, *Al-Hurub al-Salibiyyah* ("The Crusades") (Jerusalem, 1945), pp. 85-87.

votion to religion. He believed in democracy and constitutional regimes, but he thought that the Arabs were still not ready for them. He therefore suggested the establishment of an independent Arab entity under a patriarchal, enlightened monarch, who would put the Arabs on the path of progress. Only after the Arabs had proved themselves ready for a democratic form of government should that type of rule be introduced.[31]

Reform, unity and democracy were also stressed by Muhammad 'Izzat Darwazah and Qadri Tuqan;[32] neither, however, emphasized the necessity for a transitional autocratic regime to the same degree as did Baidas and al-Tamimi.

In 1945, under pressure from the American government, the Labour government in Britain agreed to the creation of an Anglo-American Commission to study the situation in Palestine and among the Jewish refugees in Europe. This Commission recommended, among other things, the abolition of the policy of the White Paper of 1939 and the immediate entry into Palestine of a hundred thousand Jews.[33] Realizing that the fulfillment of this recommendation would require a considerable use of military force, the British decided to refer the Palestine question to the United Nations.

At a special session of the General Assembly in April 1947, a Special Committee was formed to investigate the situation and to make recommendations for the future of Palestine. The report of the majority of the committee recommended the division of the country into an Arab state, a Jewish state and an international zone around Jerusalem. In November 1947 the General Assembly voted, in the face of bitter opposition by the Arab

[31] Khalil Baidas, *Muluk al-Rus* ("The Kings of the Russians") (Jerusalem, 1913), pp. 244-245.

[32] See below, pp. 20-22.

[33] Hurewitz, *The Struggle for Palestine*, pp. 253-259.

members, in favor of this form of partition. In Palestine itself Arabs and Jews fought for control of areas of the country between late 1947 and the termination of British authority on the fifteenth of May, 1948.

On the day before the Mandate came to an end the Jewish National Council, meeting in Tel-Aviv, announced the establishment of the State of Israel. The armies of the Arab states then entered Palestine and military operations continued for twenty-six days. On June 11 the Arab countries accepted a cease-fire — partly because of an order of the Security Council and partly because of the pressure of the Great Powers, especially Britain. The truce remained in force until July 9, when hostilities were resumed after both the Arabs and the Jews had rejected a compromise solution worked out by the United Nations' Mediator, Count Bernadotte. Now the Jewish forces, having made use of the truce to bring in volunteers and weapons, gained ground. Another cease-fire was ordered by the Security Council, and both parties complied. In August 1949, after indirect negotiations on the island of Rhodes, armistice agreements were signed by Israel and each of the bordering Arab states.

In December 1948 the name of Palestine disappeared from the political map of the Middle East, when that part of the country which remained under Arab control was joined to Transjordan. In 1949 the name of the state was changed from Transjordan to Jordan, reflecting its jurisdiction over territory on both sides of the Jordan River.

During the last year of the Mandate immediate political demands restricted publication of books to a small number. The main channel of expression was newspaper editorials, which reflected the life and death struggle that the country was experiencing. These editorials urged opposition to partition by whatever means and warned the

Palestinians against taking false security from the commitment of the Arab states to help the Palestinian Arabs liberate their country from the Zionists should partition occur. The average daily circulation of the major newspapers reached twice that of the preceding decade; an increasing reading public, particularly amongst the masses of the Palestinian Arabs, was displaying a desperate concern in the events of these years.[34]

Responding to the changing political climate of the Mandate period, apprehensive warnings of the Zionist threat and criticism of the legal basis of the Balfour Declaration gave way to an increasingly pan-Arab tendency in the polemical literature of the late thirties and forties. At first this was an identification of the Palestinian independence struggle with similar struggles elsewhere in the Arab world, the moderate hopes raised by the 1939 White Paper tending to obscure the peculiarity of the Palestine problem. The re-emergence of that problem after the Second World War, however, only served to strengthen the pan-Arab sentiments of writers, for only in pan-Arabism could any hope be seen for Palestinian nationalism.

[34] Interview with Ibrahim al-Shanti, the owner of *al-Difa'a* newspaper on June 10, 1964. Although no specific figures are given the increase in the circulation of the daily newspapers is also stressed by al-Asad, *Al-Ittijahat al-Adabiyyah,* pp. 70-71.

CHAPTER IV

LITERARY WRITING

Though best equipped by its nature to serve the cause of Arab nationalism, polemical writing was not alone in its espousal of the Palestinian cause. The same fears and aspirations characterize, and may indeed underlie, the marked literary revival that Palestine experienced in the years of the British Mandate. Those Palestinians who had been trained in the various literary clubs in the decade before the First World War, together with students returning from universities where they had received an education in the humanities, provided a body of writers with varied viewpoints and interests. At the same time, the economic development of the country and the multiplication of schools began to supply a reasonably large audience. Some of the authors wished to revive Arabic masterpieces; some tried to introduce new literary forms, like the historical novel and the short story; others produced translations of Western works. And as this literary revival gained ground during the Mandate, it produced a number of influential and accomplished poets.

Prose, however, was the most common form of writing in Palestine after the First World War. The exploitation by the literary modernists of Egypt of Islamic material, such as the retelling by Taha Husain of the early Muslim legends and the studies of early Muslim personalities by 'Abbas Mahmud al-'Aqqad, had its influence upon Palestinian writers. Under this influence Muhammad 'Izzat Darwazah[1] set out to retell old Arab legends in *Wufud al-Nu'man ila Kisra Anushirwan* ("The Missions

[1] See above, pp. 20-23.

of al-Nu'man to Anushirwan").[2] However, in the process of writing the book, Darwazah changed its nature, so that, on publication, it was an analytical study of Arabic literature, including an anthology of old stories in their original form.

Darwazah examined in this book the influence which Persian culture exerted on the literature written by Arabs in the pre-Islamic period, especially the literature of al-Manadhirah, a group of tribes that then lived in an area of Iraq under Persian rule. In 555 Kisra Anushirwan (Khosrau I), the Persian king, established an academy at Jundi Shapur, a small town in northwest Persia, employing Christian professors who spoke Syriac and Pahlavi, the language of the Persians. On the eve of the appearance of Islam this academy had become the center of Persian scientific and literary activity. The chiefs of the al-Manadhirah tribes, especially al-Nu'man, sent a number of missions to Jundi Shapur, and it was through these missions that Persian literary accomplishments became known to the Arabs. The first mention in the Arabic language of the Bidpai fables, which had been introduced into Persia from India, dated, according to Darwazah, to this period. Reference was also made by the Manadhirah writers to the sayings of Zoroaster, the Persian prophet. Yet Darwazah emphasized that the bulk of the literary writings of the Arabs was little affected. Their literary production continued after this contact with Persian culture to display in style as well as in content the characteristics typical of pre-Islamic Arabic literature, concentrating on poetry of orations, which stressed the pride of the authors in their Arabhood, their belief in generosity and revenge, and their praise of their chiefs.

Darwazah's examination of the literature of al-Manadhirah was a prelude to a more inclusive work dealing

[2] Beirut, 1945.

with Arabic culture and literature both in the pre-Islamic period and after the appearance of Islam. He described the customs which fostered a unified Arabic literature. Pre-Islamic Arab tribes would make trips to the abode of their gods. These visits, especially that made to 'Ukaz, a village in Hejaz, became festival days, occasions on which the participants marketed their goods and discussed ideas.[3] Poets came from all over Arabia to recite mu'allaqat (poetic masterpieces) and to receive recognition. These encounters, according to Darwazah, produced a common Arab outlook, based in large part on the notion of honor, as well as established forms for poetic expression and a common language. Poetry thus both encouraged and reflected an Arab national identity, which transcended tribal contradictions. Tales of the wanderings of the poet king Imru' al-Qays of the Kinda tribe, the poetry of Zuhair ibn Abi Salma and of the bards of al-'Asha, and the love story of 'Antar and 'Ablah were recited all over Arabia. Darwazah examined the way in which these poems reflected the religion and customs of early Arab society.[4]

Although Darwazah wrote these two books in flowery language imitating the style of early Arab writers, they are, in effect, historical literary criticism from a modern standpoint.

Another form of interest in old Arabic literary works was the editing of manuscripts. Contemporary political concerns were evident in some of this editorial work. For example, Ahmed Samih al-Khalidi, who was Principal of the Arab College in Jerusalem, chose to edit, among others, two works written by al-Yaquti in the twelfth century — during the Crusades — in order to solicit help for

[3] Muhammad 'Izzat Darwazah, *'Asr al-Nabi 'alayhi al-Salam wa Bi'atihi qabl al-Bi'that* ("The Arabic Culture of the Times of the Prophet Before the Appearance of Islam") (Damascus, 1946), pp. 121-125.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 232-238.

the defense of the Holy Land against the foreign invaders. The Zionist threat to Palestine seemed to al-Khalidi to evoke this precedent because Yaquti, to make the land dearer to the reader, had stressed the productivity of the country, the moderate climate and the pleasant living conditions,[5] as well as the country's religious importance and its Muslim Arab historical character. By editing these books al-Khalidi hoped to strengthen the feeling of patriotism of the Arabs who read them.[6]

In al-Khalidi's commentary on the texts he edited, the reader can feel the impact of a new loyalty that was becoming manifest among the educated Palestinian Arabs, a loyalty which is best described as patriotism rather than as nationalism. It was inspired by the example of Western Europe, particularly France and England, where nationhood and statehood were identical, and where patriotism was the loyalty which the citizen owed to his country. Al-Khalidi saw the devotion which the Syrian Arabs of the twelfth and thirteenth century showed to their country as identical with that which nineteenth century Englishmen and Frenchmen and twentieth century Palestinians felt towards their respective countries.[7]

National consciousness on the part of Arab Palestinian writers was also reflected in the short stories written during the Mandate. This Western literary form, which had first appeared in Lebanon and Egypt late in the nineteenth century, had become common by the nineteen thirties in most Arab countries, including Palestine.

Some Palestinian short stories pictured the social conditions of Palestinian Arab society : the family ties,

[5] Ahmed Samih al-Khalidi, trans., *Targhib Ahl al-Islam fi Suknat al-Sham* ("Encouraging the Muslims to Live in Syria") (Jerusalem, 1940), pp. ii-iii.

[6] Ahmed Samih al-Khalidi, trans., *Muthir al-Gharam bi Fada'il al-Quds wa al-Sham* ("The Attractive Side of the Qualities of Jerusalem and Damascus") (Jaffa, 1946), pp. i-ii.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 40.

the poverty in the villages, and the transformation of social habits under the impact of new conditions, especially urbanization. Many stories, however, reflected the impact of foreign occupation and of Jewish immigration and purchase of land on Palestinian Arab families.

The stories of Najati Sidqi, eighteen of which appeared in a collection entitled *Al-Akhwat al-Hazinat* ("The Grieving Sisters"),[8] reveal his preoccupation with the social and political problems faced by the Arabs of Palestine and other countries. In the title story, he describes the transformation of Jaffa from a quiet, romantic Arab place into a busy city inhabited by aliens who have introduced strange habits and ways of life. In another story he depicts the inability of a young man brought up in a traditional family to adjust to new conditions which include female emancipation.

Another short story writer, 'Abd al-Hamid Yasin, stressed the efforts of the educated elite to adapt themselves to new circumstances. In "The Feast of the Philosopher" Yasin portrays an intellectual who tries to substitute for the traditional way of celebrating a feast a new way, one of contemplation and constructive thinking. In "The Face of Voltaire" Yasin describes life as a "series of miseries interrupted by glimpses of happiness."[9]

The novel became popular as a literary form in the Arab countries at a later date than the short story and was somewhat awkwardly employed by Arab writers. The mainstay of many European novels is the concept of romantic love. The social conservatism which persisted in the Arab countries during the Mandate prevented the Arab writer from depicting a realistic unfolding of a romantic plot in an Arab setting. Palestinian novelists tried to avoid

[8] Jerusalem, 1928.

[9] These stories appeared in *Aqasis* ("Stories") (Jaffa, 1949), which includes two other stories written by Yasin and four translated by him.

this problem by eliminating the element of love altogether from their novels. The only exception is 'Abd al-Halim Abbas' *Fatat min Filastin* ("A Girl from Palesitne"), in which he places in a local setting characters who are Arab in little more than name.

In *al-Malak wa al-Simsar* ("The Angel and the Land Broker")[10] Muhammad Izzat Darwazah describes the methods used by Zionists to entice Arab land owners to sell their lands to the Zionist organizations. The story begins with a description of a typical Palestinian Arab family in the mid-twenties. The head of the family, who is about forty, has spent all his life as an illiterate farmer and has never been exposed to the attractions of life in the cities. Under the influence of a Jewish broker he makes his first visit to Tel-Aviv. He is introduced to a girl who encourages him to spend himself into debt. The yield of the land he owns proves not enough to meet his obligations and the land broker arranges for a mortgage. When the payment falls due, he cannot meet it. The broker offers him a price for his land far below its value, and he is willing to sell. Within a short time he spends the money he receives. He deserts his wife and children and, turning into a beggar, he ends his life in a lunatic asylum. Darwazah's frankly political aim becomes clear towards the end of the story, when he describes in great detail the way in which other villages decide to create a fund to save lands threatened by Zionist buyers.

Another novel, *Mudhakkirat Dajajah* ("The Diaries of a Hen")[11], by Ishaq Musa al-Husaini, is a parable of modern Palestinian history, told in the first person by a hen. The diary of the hen begins when she is owned by a peasant family. She can move around as she pleases; food is plentiful and life is easy. The hen records the life

[10] Nablus, 1934.
[11] Cairo, 1943.

of her owners, their dependence on the produce of the land, and their care-free approach to whatever they do. One day the hen finds fences blocking her way. She ascertains from her owners that some of their land has been sold to a rich foreigner in order to pay the increasing taxes. The land that remains is not enough to provide the family with its needs, so the head of the family begins to sell his belongings. The hen is sold to a shopkeeper in a neighboring town. She is put in a cage and can no longer enjoy the freedom to which she is accustomed. Although she does not starve, she has to obey the whims of her master, who sometimes feeds her well and sometimes withholds food altogether. The situation becomes worse when the master brings in a number of other hens to add to those already in the cage. Now the hen has to limit her movement to a corner of the cage. What makes the situation more distasteful is that these new hens are most sophisticated : they speak a language the old hens cannot understand and they know how to get the largest share of the food that is thrown into the cage. Gradually the hen begins to understand their strange talk; she begins to realize that she is not the only suffering hen. Most of the other old hens are suffering, too. She even hears that the new hens are planning to expel all the old ones. The master, however, takes pity on the old hens who have been entrusted to him and, for some time, prevents new arrivals. When he subsequently changes his mind, the hen begins to realize that in time the number of the new hens will exceed that of the old if the master is not persuaded to change his intentions. All the old hens must participate in working out a plan to accomplish this. The last lines show the hen thinking deeply about this plan and unsure about the future.

While al-Husaini's novel describes the conditions of Palestine during the first two decades of the Mandate, the fighting between Arabs and Jews at the end of the

Mandate provides the background for *Fatat min Filastin* ("A Girl from Palestine"). Abd al-Halim 'Abbas, who participated in the events of 1948, places his novel in the period between early 1947 and the signing of the armistice agreements between Israel and the Arab states in early 1949. The novel centers around a love affair between a Palestinian couple in a village near what becomes the armistice line between Israel and Jordan.

Fatat min Filastin pictures the hardships an Arab refugee family underwent immediately after its flight from Palestine. It abounds in nationalist sentiment, showing the strong appeal of Arab nationalism to Palestinian Arab youth and the devotion of these youths to regaining their occupied homeland. The hero of the novel works with secret organizations smuggling weapons for the coming conflict. He speaks to the youth of his village of the necessity of the Arab countries achieving independence and eventual unity and of his satisfaction at hearing that the Arab governments of the neighboring countries have agreed to form a unified command for the coming war. He considers this agreement significant in two ways: it will protect the national character of his homeland and will serve as a first pratical step in the path to full unity.[12]

Because these stories and novels dealt with contemporary problems, Palestinian Arabs found in them reflections of their own problems and identified themselves with their characters. Memoirs of the period reflect their important role in the intellectual life of the educated groups.[13]

Of the many Palestinian poets who expressed nationalist feelings during the period of the Mandate, Ibrahim Tuqan and Burhan al-Din al-Abbushi were especially im-

[12] 'Abd al-Halim 'Abbas. *Fatat min Filastin* ("A Girl From Palestine") (Amman, 1949), pp. 151-154.

[13] Mahmud al'Abidi. Unpublished Memoirs, June 1934 and September 1943; also 'Arif al-'Arif, Unpublished Memoirs, September 1928 and October 1940.

portant. Both modelled their work on the masterpieces of classical Arabic poetry. But where classical poets addressed themselves to a wealthy patron, Tuqan and al-'Abbushi spoke to the general public. Thus, their poetry could serve as expression of national loyalties and aspirations.

Ibrahim Tuqan was a cousin of Qadri Tuqan, mentioned in Chapter II,[14] and had experienced the same influences. Like his cousin he was a graduate of the American University of Beirut and was acquainted with Western ideological concepts. Most of his poetry called his compatriots to rebel against the British authorities and to liberate their homeland from foreign rule. Some of his poems solicited material help from Arabs everywhere. His success in inflaming the nationalist feelings of his fellow Palestinians caused the mandatory authorities to order his arrest. He sought refuge in Iraq for three years and returned to Palestine shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War. He died the same year at the age of forty after a short illness. By then his poetry had become known all over the Arab world through biographies, anthologies and frequent reprinting of his poems in the Arabic press outside Palestine.[15]

A good example of Tuqan's nationalist poetry is "al-Thalatha al-Hamra") ("Red Tuesday") which he wrote in memory of three Palestinian Arabs from Hebron who were executed by the British authorities for their part in violence between the Arabs and Jews of that town. The poem displays his simple vocabulary, smooth style and

[14] See above, pp. 31-32.

[15] Among the most important books on Tuqan are : Fadwa Tuqan, *Akhi Ibrahim* ("My Brother Ibrahim") (Beirut, 1955), an anthology; Zaki al-Mahasini, *Ibrahim Tuqan, Sha'ir al-Watan al-Maghsub* ("Ibrahim Tuqan, Poet of the Usurped Homeland") (Cairo, 1956); Yaqub al-'Udat, *Ibrahim Tuqan fi Wataniyyatihi wa Wijdaniyyatihi* ("The Nationalist and Emotional Poetry of Ibrahim Tuqan") (Amman, 1964).

mastery at playing on the reader's emotions. The poem begins with a general description of the past greatness of the Arabs, their devotion to justice and their readiness for sacrifice in the service of Arab causes. It then describes the events which led to the arrest of the three men, their trial by a military court and their execution in one of the squares of Hebron. Tuqan ends the poem with the moral:

> ..these heroes are no criminals although those who have condemned them think so. They have been crucified in the same manner as Jesus Christ in order to pay with their blood the price of your redemption. They will go straight to Heaven and reap the reward which God has promised for martyrs. Should not you follow in their path and reap the blessing of God?[16]

Like Ibrahim Tuqan, Burhan al-Din al-'Abbushi was born into a family of wealthy landowners, in this case in Janin, and received a Western education. An example of his nationalist poetry is his verse play, *"Watan al-Shahid"* ("The Homeland of the Matyr"). In his introduction, al-'Abbushi sums up the nature of the play and his reason for composing it:

> This play of mine is, to my knowledge, the first of its kind to be written on the Palestinian problem. In it I have discussed, in verse, the designs of our enemies and their plots against our beloved country, Palestine. I have collected data from the press, from every available document, from historical works, and from any source to which I had access in order to show the preparedness of our enemies, their watchfulness, and their dangerous plots against our homeland. This work of mine is in the first place an exhortation to the common man to

[16] Fadwa Tuqan, *Akhi Ibrahim,* pp. 82-83.

lay aside his slumber.[18]

The Western reader will notice the writer's extremely emotional approach and the large proportion of narrative passage which extol the achievements of the Arabs in their early history, their sense of justice and devotion to the protection of their rights. He will also notice that al-'Abbushi associates patriotism with the Muslim faith, while at the same time he venerates pre-Islamic Arab heroes. On one occasion he cites the oft-quoted dictum, attributed to the Prophet, "love of one's country is a part of the faith."[19] On another he identifies the Palestinians' attachment to Palestine with the pre-Islamic Arabs' loyalty to particular sections of the Arab homeland. [20]

Yet another aspect of the literary revival in Palestine under the Mandate was the translation of western works—mostly from English and French. These translations reflected the national consciousness of the translators. Some of these men, like 'Adil Zu'aitir, tried to acquaint their compatriots with western political thought on popular sovereignty and other ideas of government.[21] Other translators wanted to make available to their readers the writings of western scholars on Muslim Arab civilization. In this group were 'Ajaj Nuwayhid, an essayist from Haifa, and Mahmud Zayid, an educator from 'Anabtah, a village near Nablus, who later taught at the American University of Beirut. A third group specialized in the translation of Western literary masterpieces; an example was 'Anbarah Salam al-Khalidi, a native of Beirut who settled in Palestine after she

[18] Burhan al-'Abbushi, *Watan al-Shahid* ("The Homeland of the Martyr") (Jerusalem, 1947), pp. i-ii.

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 45.

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 61.

[21] See above, pp. 25-26.

married Ahmad Samih al-Khalidi.[22]

'Ajaj Nuwayhid, in an introduction to his translation of John Stoddard's *The Present Islamic World,* maintained that every Arab who had the ability should contribute to the enrichment of Arabic literature. By translating Stoddard's work Nuwayhid hoped to make his readers feel proud of what their ancestors had done. At the same time he wanted them to learn from Western criticisms of Arab society.[23]

Mahmud Zayid, who translated Norman Baynes' The *Byzantine Empire* in collaboration with Husain Mu'nis, an Egyptian writer, said that he wanted to provide detailed knowledge of Byzantine civilization because of its immense influence on the development of Muslim Arab civilization in its formative stages.[24]

'Anbarah Salam al-Khalidi attempted to acquaint the Palestinian Arab reader with one of the basic sources of Western literary tradition by translating Homer's *Iliad* into Arabic from Alfred Church's English translation.

There seems no doubt that the very literary revival itself was a function of the Palestinian consciousness of the Zionist threat, and consequently, the literature of the Mandate period derives much of its inspiration from Palestinian and Arab nationalism. It is most fairly judged therefore as a contribution to the dissemination of national consciousness, and its efficacy in this role will become clear when we examine educational opportunities that were open to the masses. Meanwhile, a similar consciousness of the impact of the Arab heritage upon twentieth century Arab nationalism was displayed by Palestinian historical writers, to whom we now turn.

[22] See above, pp. 60-61.

[23] 'Ajaj Nuwayhid, trans., *Hadir al-'Alam al-Islami* ("The Present Islamic World") (Cairo, 1924), pp. ii-iii.

[24] Mahmud Zayid and Husain Mu'nis, trans., *Al-Imbaratoriyyah al-Bizantiyyah* ("The Byzantine Empire") (Cairo, 1960), pp. iii-iv.

CHAPTER V

HISTORICAL WRITING

The tradition of historical scholarship has been strong among the Muslims in general, and particularly among the Arabs since the nineteenth century. In modern times Arab history has become to a large degree an instrument in the hands of nationalists. Arab historians have tried to diffuse a national consciousness through the revival of the past and the glorification of its accomplishments.

The interest of Palestinian Arab writers in history, and particularly in local and national history, grew in the three decades after the First World War. Works written during the Mandate cover a wide range of subjects and include studies of Islam, Muslim institutions and civilizations; biographies of outstanding Arabs; archaeological studies; local histories; and studies of Arab nationalism.

Two major tendencies in the study and interpretation of history are discernible in Palestinian historiography : the traditional Islamic tendency to deal almost exclusively with the Islamic era and the Arabist tendency to treat the pre-Islamic and Islamic periods as equally important periods in the indivisible historical mission of the Arabs. According to this second view Islam is merely an important episode in the long sweep of Arab history.

Both approaches, the Islamic and the Arabist, are discernible in the writings of Muhammad 'Izzat Darwazah. Darwazah started as a follower of the first trend and shifted to the second under the impact of Arab nationalism. His earlier views are expounded in his *Sirat al-Rasul ,alayhi al-Salam Mushtaqqah min al-Qur'an* ("The Life of

the Prophet as Reflected in the Koran"). Though published in the last year of the Mandate, this book was written in the late thirties and early forties.[1]

After sketching the main events in the life of Muhammad, Darwazah examines the impact of the new religion on Arab society. He compares the social and political conditions of the Arabs before and after the appearance of Islam. He stresses the disunity of the Arabs in the pre-Islamic period, their lack of purpose, the continuous strife among the tribes and their backward social habits.[2] He contrasts the achievements of the Arabs after their adoption of the Muslim faith. Not least among the beneficial influences of the new religion was the transformation of the Arabs into a cohesive political entity. According to Darwazah:

> The major factors that contributed to the transformation of the Arabs into a cohesive political entity derive their origin from the Muslim faith. The Arabs owe to the Koran the preservation of their language in a pure, unchanged form; without it the Arabic tongue would have split into local subdivisions as in the case of the Romance languages. To Islam the Arabs owe an outstanding civilization in the middle ages, pride in which has an important place in the forces that unify the Arabs at present and bring them closer together.[3]

A significant part of Islamic teachings, according to Darwazah, concerned toleration towards Christians and Jews. Muhammad distinguished between religions which had a divine book and those which did not. He called Christians and Jews ("People of the Book") and left them free to practise their beliefs and enforce their own laws.

[1] *Sirat al-Rasul alayhi al-Salam Mushtaqqah min al Qur'an* ("The life of the Prophet as reflected in the Koran") (Cairo, 1948), pp. i-ii.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 60-65.
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 135-136.

Other non-believers had to accept the Muslim faith or perish. Such an attitude, according to Darwazah, accounts for the friendly relations that developed between Muslim and non-Muslim Arabs and enabled Christian and Jewish Arabs to play an important role in Arab civilization and to become an integral part of the Arab nation.[3a]

Finally, according to Darwazah, the new religion endowed the Arabs with a sense of purpose and a commitment to duty. Their belief in the necessity of propagating the new faith made them launch an expansionist movement that established an extensive empire. This sense of duty was increased by the teaching of Islam that all Muslims are equal in the eyes of those in authority.[3b]

The growing strength of Arab nationalism, the formation of the League of Arab States, and contacts between Darwazah and other Arab historians led him to change his views. He became a believer in the unity of Arab history and considered Islam as an outcome of the Arab genius, rather than its author. This change of approach is best seen in *Hawl al-Harakah al-'Arabiyyah al-Hadithah* ("On the Modern Arab Nationalist Movement").[4]

In this work, Darwazah subscribed to the views of a new school of Arab historians, who contended that the Arabs were identical with the Semites, an opinion first introduced by Sami Shawkat, Director of Education in Iraq in the late thirties. Shawkat had gone so far as to assert that all the peoples who made major contributions to civilization in the Ancient Middle East — Chaldaeans, Assyrians, Israelites and even the Hamitic Pharaohs of Egypt — were Arabs. Darwazah did not go to that extreme. In

[3a] *Ibid.*, pp. 145-146.
[3b] *Ibid.*, pp. 162-164.
[4] Muhammed 'Izzat Darwazah. *Hawl al-Harakah al-'Arabiyyah al-Hadithah.* ("On the Modern Arab Nationalist Movement") Sidon, 1948-1952).

his view three ethnic groups dominated the Ancient Middle East : the Arab Semites, the Hamites and the Indo-Europeans. Islam, according to this theory, represented the last, though the most important and the most enduring, link in the chain of the historic mission of the Arabs. Along with the spreading of the new religion went the dissemination of Arab culture.[5]

Darwazah devoted most of the second volume of his history of the nationalist movement to an examination of the development of Arab racial consciousness in the various stages of the Islamic Arab history : its strength under the Umayyads, its decline under the Abbasids, and its reawakening during the Crusades. During the period of Ottoman rule Darwazah saw nothing but political and cultural stagnation.

Like most Arab historians, Darwazah dated the beginning of the modern type of Arab national consciousness from the early nineteenth century and considered it the result of the contact between the Arabs and the French. He examined the influence of Christian missionary institutions on the revival of the Arabic language; the rise of the pan-Islamic movement; the part played by the literary and political societies in nationalist agitation; and the spread of national consciousness among the Muslim Arabs.

Darwazah asserted that in the nineteenth century the Egyptian and the Syrian nationalist movements were closely related. Only in the decade before and the decade after the First World War had Egyptians showed indifference to pan-Arab sentiment.

Darwazah emphasized the influence on the national movement of the World War I Arab Revolt. He saw the Revolt's leaders, especially Faysal, as symbols of Arab nationalism. The Revolt was significant to the movement, he believed, both for what it did and for what it failed to

[5] *Ibid.*, I, pp. 112-115.

do. On the one hand it intensified national consciousness among the Arabs; on the other it revealed their weakness, which resulted in the political fragmentation of the Arab world after the First World War.[6]

Darwazah advocated a revitalized Arab society drawing from the best in Western practises without abandoning Arab Muslim tradition. In order to succeed in creating this society the Arabs must have an independent political entity with all Arabs, Muslims, Christians and Jews, enjoying equal status. A unified and independent Arab state would, also, provide the best answer to the Zionist threat to Arab Palestine.[7]

While Darwazah stressed at different times the Islamic and the Arabist view of Arab history, most of the Palestinian historians were Arabists, as were the majority of historians in other Arab countries. These men were led by national consciousness "to a sharing of pride in the glories of the past and a collective sorrow over present misfortunes."[8] Some of the Palestinian historians tried to stimulate that pride by stressing the advances of the Arabs in the field of science; others, by examining their contributions in architecture and building.

Qadri Tuqan described in *Turath al-'Arab al-'Ilmi* ("The Scientific Heritage of the Arabs")[9] the contribution of his ancestors to the scientific knowledge of present-day Europe. He first examined the factors that underlay the Arab cultural awakening of the ninth and tenth centuries. In his opinion the first of these was the importance ascribed by Islam to education and knowledge. The Koran and the Sunnah (the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad)

[6] *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, pp. 320-322.

[7] *Ibid.*, Vol. V, pp. 285-287 and Vol. VI, pp. 268-271.

[8] Sati' al-Husri, *Ara'a wa Ahadith al-Wataniyyah wa al-'Urubah* ("Views and Addresses on Nationalism and Arabism") (Cairo, 1944), p. 20.

[9] Qadri Tuqan, *Turaht al-'Arab al-'Ilmi* ("The Scientific Heritage of the Arabs") (Cairo, 1941), pp. i-ii.

stressed the necessity of education and required Muslims to seek knowledge from any possible source. The desire for knowledge and the search for intellectual betterment was a sign of piety to the average Muslim, while the patronage of scholars became a religious obligation for the ruler. There was also the impact of the contacts between the Arabs and other peoples — Byzantines, Persians, Syrians and Copts. Another factor was the multiplication of academic institutions, the best known of which were Bait al-Hikmah (The House of Wisdom) in Baghdad and Dar al-'Ilm (The Hall of Science) in Cairo. It was in such institutions that most of the Arabs' discoveries in the field of science occurred.

To the Arabs, according to Tuqan, science meant both mathematical and rational studies. The first included geometry, astronomy, arithmetic, algebra, music, politics, ethnics and domestic economy. The second included logic, dialectic, metaphysics, natural science, medicine and chemistry. In both fields Arab scientists were initially stimulated by translations of the works of the ancient Greeks : eight books of Plato, nineteen of Aristotle, ten of Hippocrates, twenty of Galen, in addition to the complete works of Euclid, Archimedes and Ptolemy. The value of these translations was not limited to the part they played in the advancement of scientific knowledge among the Arabs. Most of the original texts of these translations were lost, and much of what Europeans know about Greek scholarship came through Arabic translations.[10]

Tuqan stressed the comprehensiveness of Arab scientists' knowledge. Most of them displayed a command of a wide variety of subjects. Ibn Sina, who lived in Buchara in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, was physician, philosopher, philologist and poet; al-Kindi, who lived

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 75.

[11] Qadri Tuqan, *al-Uslub al 'Ilmi 'ind al-'Arab* ("The Scientific Method in Arab Civilization") (Cairo, 1946), pp. 26-27.

in Baghdad in the tenth century, was philosopher, astrologer, alchemist, optician and musician.

Tuqan concluded his book by examining the influence of Arab knowledge upon the European cultural revival of the late Middle Ages. The discoveries of the Arabs, he pointed out, found their way to Europe through the centers in which the two civilizations came into contact: the Arab academic institutions in Spain, Sicily and southern Italy.

Another contribution of Tuqan's to the history of Arab scientific achievement was his examination of the scientific method as it was developed by the medieval Arabs. The book was heavily documented and revealed the author's deep knowledge of medieval Islamic records. He argued that the Arabs had perfected the scientific method used in Europe in the seventeenth century and had surpassed the Greeks in that respect. The book was woven around the life and work of al-Khawarismi, the principal figure in the history of Arab mathematics.[1] In addition to examining the methods used by this scientist, Tuqan described his contributions: the composition of the earliest astronomical tables and the earliest works on arithmetic and algebra. The Arabic manuscript of al-Khawarismi's *Hisab al-Jabr wa al-Muqabalah* ("The Calculus of Integration and Equation") had been lost, but a twelfth century translation of it by Gerard of Cremona continued to be used as a mathematical textbook in European universities until the sixteenth century. The book also helped to introduce Arab numerals to the West.

Most of Tuqan's books are a call to the Arab intellectuals to make the Arab cultural heritage a moving force toward progress and a means for improving present conditions and building a better future.

While Tuqan concentrated in his writing on Arab science in order to strengthen national consciousness

among the Palestinian Arabs, Mahmud al-'Abidi tried to produce the same feeling in his readers by concentrating on Arab architecture.

Al-'Abidi noted the scarcity in Palestine of pre-Islamic archaeological remains. Pre-Islamic monuments, some of which were built by Arabs during Roman rule, were numerous in the neighboring countries of Transjordan, Syria and Lebanon : the Nabataeans had built Petra on the side of a rocky mountain in southern Transjordan, and the Palmyrenes had built Tadmur (Palmyra) on the edge of the Syrian desert. Both towns had served as posts on the trade route between southern Arabia and the Fertile Crescent.[12]

Most of the archaeological remains in Palestine dated, according to al-'Abidi, from the Muslim era, especially from the Umayyad caliphate. Mu'awiyah, the first of the dynasty, contemplated building a large mosque in Jerusalem because the Holy Places in Mecca and Medina were controlled by his opponent 'Ali, the last of the Orthodox Caliphs and a cousin of the Prophet. This plan was dropped when the two Arabian cities were occupied, but the Mosque of Omar in Jerusalem was eventually built by another Umayyad caliph. The Umayyads also built winter palaces in the Ghor (Jordan Valley) area of Palestine.[13]

Umayyad winter palaces had a special attraction for al-'Abidi. Since the majority of these were no longer standing, he searched through available records to ascertain the number of these palaces, the nature of their buildings, their sites, and statistics about the cost of building them. He published a résumé of his finding as *al-Qusur*

[12] Mahmud al-'Abidi, *Tarikh Filastin al-Qadim wa al-Mutawassit : al-Nahiyah al-'Umraniyyah* ("The History of Palestine in Ancient and Medieval Times : The Architectural Side") (Cairo, 1943), pp. 20-21.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 45.

al-Umawiyyah ("The Umayyad Palaces").[14] According to him, the palace built by Hisham ibn 'Abd al-Malik, the sixth Umayyad caliph, three miles north of Jericho, is a typical example of these palaces. This palace is one of the few whose ruins still exist.

Hisham's palace displayed an intermingling of Byzantine and Islamic artistic styles. The number of persons who participated in its building, the amount of money that was spent on it, the majesty of its plan and the splendor of its adornment bore witness to the immense wealth and power which the Umayyad caliphs enjoyed and the high standards which Islamic architecture had reached.

By examining Arab archaeological remains in Palestine al-'Abidi was trying to achieve two goals: on the one hand he wanted to stress the historic connections of the Arabs with Palestine, which would serve as an answer to Jewish historical claims, and on the other he wanted to remind his readers of the remarkable accomplishments of their forefathers and thus to enhance their national sentiment.[15]

Many Palestinian historians believed that a good way to strengthen the attachment to their country of the Arabs of Palestine was to retell the story of Arab expansion and Arab unity in the face of foreign attacks. Playing down the domestic wars and internal rivalries of Arab history, Palestinian historians presented Arab military history in a way which would command admiration and pride. Such an approach to Arab history is exemplified in the writings of Niqula Ziyadah and Muhammad Rafiq al-Tamimi.

Ziyadah's *Wathbat al-'Arab* ("The Rise of the Ar-

[14] Mahmud al-'Abidi, *al-Qusur al-Umawiyyah* (Amman, 1957) 1957).

[15] *Ibid.*, pp. ii-iii.

abs")[16] reflected the pride which Palestinian Arabs, Christian and Muslim alike, felt in the rise of the Arabs, under the banner of Islam to the status of a world power. In explaining the causes behind the rapid expansion of the Arabs Ziyadah stressed the help that the Ghassanid Christian Arab tribes of Syria had offered to their brothers against the Christian Byzantines in the seventh century. This was, of course, only one of several factors which had contributed to victory, some related to the conquered countries, others having to do with the Muslim Arabs themselves. Chief among the first type was the weakness of the enemies of the Arabs, the Byzantines and the Persians. Their armies were not strong, their rule was oppressive, and their subjects — whether in Syria, Egypt or Mesopotamia — welcomed the opportunity of casting off their rule. More important were the internal factors. The Muslim soldiers were convinced that death while propagating the faith was a sure way to heaven; consequently, they displayed courage and devotion unmatched by their opponents. Arab commanders also showed a skill far superior to that of their enemies. The early victories in Iraq and Syria owed much to the quality of leadership displayed by Khalid ibn al-Walid, the Arab commander in Iraq. His crowning achievement was to cross the Syrian-Iraqi desert, with all his army, in less than two weeks in order to go to the rescue of the hard pressed Arab army in Syria. Similar skill was displayed by Tariq ibn Ziyad, who, with a small force, crossed the straits between Africa and Spain and defeated an enemy force of superior numbers. He burned the boats that had carried his army as a sign of the complete faith he had in the fighting ability of his followers.

Ziyadah described the projects of the Arabs for the

[16] Niqula Ziyadah, *Wathbat al-ʿArab* ("The Rise of the Arabs") (Jerusalem, 1945).

creation of a naval force, part of which participated, with little success, in the campaign against Constantinople. The Arabs controlled the Mediterranean not because of the strength of their maritime power but because of the weakness of their enemies.

In dealing with the social classes in the early Arab Empire, Ziyadah made only passing reference to the institution of slavery. He pointed out that though Islam condoned slavery, it looked with disfavor on slave owners and encouraged the freeing of slaves; he asserted, too, that slaves were well treated and that some of them, especially those owned by the royal household, became accomplished musicians, doctors and officers. He described medieval Arab society as made up of three main groups. These were, in order of importance, the ruling Muslim Arab group, which was very limited in number, the bulk of the Muslim and Christian Arabs and the non-Arab Muslims. The disabilities of the last group, which was the most numerous, led to a reaction, mostly among the Persians, which resulted in the overthrow of the Umayyad dynasty and the establishment of the Abbasids of Baghdad.

While Ziyadah examined the offensive side of the Arab wars, Muhammad Rafiq al-Tamimi dealt with the wars of defense. The unsettled conditions of the Arabs in the eleventh century, he maintained, contrasted with those of the seventh and eighth. Their political unity had disintegrated. Instead of one caliph they had three : the Abbasid in Baghdad, the Fatimid in Cairo and the Umayyad in Cordova. The weakest of the three was the Abbasid, although his nominal authority extended over Iraq, Syria and most of Persia. Real power in these three caliphates was in the hands of a number of local rulers : Arabs, Persians, Turks and Moors. Political disunity was accompanied by economic poverty and social instability.

These conditions enabled Syria to be overrun by the Crusaders and a Latin kingdom to be established in Jerusalem. Shocked by their defeat, the Arabs of the area launched a movement of re-awakening which reached its climax under Saladin, who decided that the only hope was the re-establishment of the lost unity of the Eastern Mediterranean. Using the negotiations between the Fatimids of Egypt and the Crusaders in Jerusalem as his excuse, Saladin attacked Cairo and abolished its caliphate. He then forced the Abbasid ruler in Baghdad to recognize his authority over Egypt, northern Iraq and the interior of Syria and crowned his achievements by defeating the crusaders and occupying Jerusalem. This victory, according to al-Tamimi, was the product of three factors: the genius of Saladin, the nationalist consciousness of the average Arab and the disunity and the rivalry among the various Crusader rulers.[17]

In dealing with the last stages of the war against the Crusaders, al-Tamimi stressed the part played by Egypt in the ultimate victory, in view of its rich resources and its larger population. In ending his book, he expressed the opinion that the Crusades had taught the Arabs that "unity proved a solution for any misfortune that befell the Arabs and in such a unity Egypt was bound to play an important role".[18]

The underlying thinking of the Palestinian writers is also reflected in their histories of Palestinian towns and cities. The Arab character of these towns, the historians believed, must be emphasized in order to promote nationalist sentiment and patriotic feeling. In his introduction to *Tarikh al-Quds* ("History of Jerusalem") 'Arif al-'Arif summed up his purpose as follows :

[17] Muhammad Rafiq al-Tamimi, *al-Hurub al-Salibiyyah* ("The Crusades") (Jerusalem, 1945), pp. 60-160.
[18] *Ibid.*, p. 265.

> My acquaintance with the line of argument used by Jewish writers to assert the Jews' historical links with Palestine makes it my duty to try to refute their claims by examining the history of Jerusalem, with which city the Jews particularly stress their links, and making it clear that the history of the Holy City reveals its Arab character, the tolerance of its people towards Christians and Jews, and the peaceful relations that have characterized the life of its inhabitants during the last ten centuries.[19]

Al-'Arif dated the origins of Jerusalem from early antiquity, pointing out that the city was built centuries before the ancient Israelites arrived in Palestine. He concentrated, however, upon Jerusalem's history beginning with the middle ages, when records began to be more complete and trustworthy. A thorough knowledge of Islamic sources, enabled him to describe in detail the development of the city's history and reconstruct the activities of its citizenry.

In examining Jerusalem's political history, al-'Arif stressed the humane behaviour of the Arab conquerors on the two occasions they occupied the city. In the seventh century the caliph himself came from Medina, the seat of his government in the Hejaz, to supervise the occupation. A general amnesty was granted and its Christian and Jewish inhabitants were allowed free practise of their beliefs. The Christians received special treatment under the Umayyads, who provided the city with many public buildings that served Muslims and non-Muslims alike. The Umayyad caliph, al-Walid ibn 'Abd al-Malik, endowed the city with the Dome of the Rock mosque, a masterpiece of Islamic architecture built on the site from which the

[19] 'Arif al-'Arif, *Tarikh al-Quds* ("History of Jerusalem") (Cairo, 1947), pp. i-ii.

prophet Muhammad, according to Muslim belief, began his journey to Heaven. The city developed peacefully until it was taken by the Crusaders in the late eleventh century. They not only occupied it but also killed all its inhabitants in spite of a promise of safety they had given to its defenders. This treatment contrasts with that of Saladin, who, on reoccupying the city two centuries later, showed typical Muslim tolerance. Jerusalem enjoyed special freedoms under the Ottomans, who gave it a form of self rule and linked it administratively directly to the Sublime Porte. This peaceful life was again interrupted after the establishment of the British Mandate, and suspicion and hostility replaced the amity and trust that used to characterize the relations of its inhabitants.

Al-'Arif took great interest in the city's mosques and churches. To him these holy places were monuments of antiquity and repositories of valuable records. For example, he tried to trace the names of the men who were buried in the various mosques and churches and their contributions to the history of the city.[20]

Al-'Arif also examined certain aspects of the economic development of the city. He noted occupational and recreational customs, prices, charitable bequests and other indicators of economic change between different periods. Moreover, he was concerned with the city's demography and attempted to estimate population statistics at various dates.

In al-'Arif's view the basic requirement of all historical scholarship is the verification of statements of fact. His book is based on a variety of historical materials, including copies of letters and proclamations, Islamic religious sources, lists of names, statistics and topographical observations.

Al-'Arif's interest as a local historian was not limited

[20] *Ibid.*, pp. 176-177.

to the history of towns. *In Tarikh Bir al-Sabi' wa Qaba'ilihi* ("The History of Beersheba and Its Tribes"), he sketched the history of the Arab tribes that had settled in southern Palestine around the small market town of Beersheba.

As in his history of Jerusalem, al-'Arif's desire to refute claims concerning the special Jewish historic connection with Palestine is felt in his treatment of the tribes. He begins by asserting that the population of Palestine is descended from Arab stock more than that of the neighboring Arab countries. He cites the opinion of Louis Massignon, a French orientalist, in an article published in *Revue du monde musulman* in 1924, that original Arab stock constituted seventy per cent of the Muslim population of Palestine and Transjordan.[21] These tribes, according to al-'Arif, had retained their traditional way of life and had kept alive early Arab culture. Al-'Arif provided a wealth of examples, such as the tribal marriage customs and the ceremonies on feast days and other religious occasions.[22]

While al-'Arif described himself as motivated by a desire to refute Zionist claims and to foster patriotic sentiment in his readers, Ihsan al-Nimr, another local historian, perhaps unintentionally, accomplished the same thing.

A native of Nablus, Ihsan al-Nimr was different in many ways from 'Arif al-'Arif. He did not enter government service and played no active part in the Arab national movement.[23] His education did not acquaint him with modern methods of historical writing; he did not attend a Western education institution and knew no foreign language besides Turkish. He was also less

[21] 'Arif al-'Arif, *Tarikh Bir al-Sabi' wa Qaba'ilihi* ("The History of Beersheba and Its Tribes") (Jerusalem 1934), p. 6.

[22] *Ibid.*, pp. 15-20.

[23] Based on an interview with the writer on January 16, 1964.

productive than al-'Arif: his only publication is a history of his native town.

Al-Nimr's *Tarikh Jabal Nablus was al-Balqa'* ("The History of the Mountain of Nablus and al-Balqa'a"), is important because of the cultural leadership of Nablus discussed earlier.[24] In 1928 Nablus suffered from a violent earthquake which destroyed about one-third of the city. Fearing another such mishap would wipe out family records, al-Nimr determined to write a history of the city and a record of its most important families. It took him about ten years to complete the first volume of his work.[25]

Al-Nimr followed traditional Arab historical methodology: the book followed a narrative form and much of the data was based either on conversations with the older members of the leading families or on geneaological tables.

The author began by listing the main Nabulsi families of the time of writing. He then traced the ancestry of each individual family as far back as he could and described the part which members of each family had played in the history of the city. He concluded that by the beginning of the eighteenth century the ancestors of the leading families had settled in the areas which subsequently became the Samaria district of Palestine and the Balqa district of Transjordan. Together these constituted under Ottoman rule the Sanjak of Nablus, which was part of the wilayet of Damascus. Al-Nimr then described 'Abd al-Hamid's favors to the leading families of Nablus and the part their members played in Ottoman administration in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.[26] He emphasized, too, the national consciousness which the Nabulsis displayed after the establishment of the Mandate, pointing out that in spite of high prices

[24] See above, pp. 18-20.

[25] Ihsan al-Nimr, *Tarikh Jabal Nablus wa al-Balqa'a,* (Nablus 1938), Vol. I, p. ii.

[26] See above, pp. 19-20.

offered by Jewish organizations for some of the lands they owned, not one inch of Arab land in the district of Nablus was sold to the Jews.

By dealing with the history of Nablus and al-Balqa' together, al-Nimr emphasized the political fragmentation that had befallen the Arab countries after the First World War.

Palestinian Arab historians, then, leaned heavily towars secular outlook in which Islamic elements, though still strong, were by no means the most important. History was considered by them as a pillar of Arab nationalism and Islam was one indication of Arab genius. The idea of Arab historical unity as the continuous story of a united and indivisible Arab society throughout the ages was thought by them to serve as a theoretical basis and justification for pan-Arab trends in the modern Arab world. One notes a striking similarity between the Palestinian Arabs' conception of history and that of European thinkers of the nineteenth century, especially the Germans. Despite the lack of any proof of direct German influence on them, the Palestinians seem to have followed the same path as Herder, Fichte, Arndt and Niebuhr. Like these German authors, the Palestinians wrote in the face of a territorially divided and politically disunited nation and were living in the recent memory of foreign invasion; like the Germans, they sang the glory of bygone times and appealed to their readers to recapture and rejuvenate the spirit of the past.

Before concluding this chapter it should be stated that, despite the variety of topics with which Palestinian Arab historians dealt, they left many aspects of history untouched. None of them attempted a full scale examination of the social and economic side of Arab history; none produced a historiographical study. They also neglected political theory. Whatever views they held on the form

of government the Arabs should adopt, or on the right relations between rulers and subjects, were not elaborated in detail but were scattered throughout their books. However, the aim of all these historians was to promote a certain pride in the heritage of Arab history, to emphasize the historical consciousness displayed by the Arab people in previous ages, and to demonstrate the 'Arabness' of Palestine. By recalling how foreign invaders had been thrown out of Palestine in the Middle Ages through the combined efforts of Arabs, how the greatest accomplishments of the Arab empire had occurred in times of Arab unity, and how much Western society owed to Arab learning as a whole, they hoped to bring about the necessary move towards Arab pride and Arab solidarity as the only means of combating Zionism. As with polemical and literary writing, the problem of the future of Palestine was their dominant concern, and Arab unity was their solution.

Such were the intellectual and cultural components of Palestinian Arab nationalism. What remains to be seen is whether the ideas remained limited to a relatively small proportion of the population or whether they gradually spread. To attempt an answer we must now examine the educational opportunities that were open to the bulk of the Palestinian Arabs during the British Mandate.

CHAPTER VI
EDUCATION

Educational opportunities were provided for the Palestinian Arabs during the Mandate through three media : schools established by the government; schools established by natives and usually given the name of private national schools to distinguish them from private foreign schools; voluntary groupings such as clubs, societies and cultural organizations.

The base upon which these educational institutions had to build was flimsy indeed. Until 1908 the Ottoman government had neglected educational services in Palestine, especially in the semi-independent Sanjak of Jerusalem. Most of the work in this field had been left to private initiative. Facilities for education in the villages were almost non-existent and in the towns very rare.

The Turkish authorities, in a bid to conciliate Arab public opinion after the Young Turks' Revolution in 1908, imposed a special tax, collected from both town dwellers and farmers, for the purpose of opening schools in the Arab areas of the Empire. The medium of instruction in the new schools was Arabic rather than Turkish; the authorities thus hoped to assure the Arabs that the new government would allow them to develop their own culture. Although it was intended as a step calculated towards lessening the influence of the secret societies that were active in the Arab provinces, the move played into the hands of these organizations, which used the schools as a means for strengthening Arab national consciousness.[1]

The number of pupils reached by these schools,

[1] Antonius, *The Arab Awakening,* pp. 220-221.

however, was limited, for, realizing their mistake, the Ottoman authorities halted the execution of the plan. According to the statistical data available for 1911, the school age population of Palestine was about thirty-eight thousand boys and 35 thousand girls. Six thousand boys and fifteen hundred girls attended government schools, while private and foreign schools took charge of about seven thousand boys and twenty-five hundred girls.[2] In other words only slightly more than twenty per cent of the school age population was in school.

The form of the mandatory authorities' plan for educational services in Palestine was determined by the attitude of the Jews, who intended to run their schools on ethnic lines, with as little interference by the authorities as possible. The resultant provision of the Mandate gave each Palestinian community the right to maintain its own schools for the education of its members in its own language. However, the passive attitude of the Arabs in this field in the first two years of the Mandate forced the authorities to assume direct control over an educational system for the Arab population.

In spite of the efforts by the Palestine Department of Education in providing educational opportunities for the Arabs, facilities remained inadequate throughout the Mandate. The last figures available for the period show that in 1946 the Department of Education engaged eighteen hundred teachers, while attendance at its schools in towns and villages had reached 63,141, 49,375 boys and 13,766 girls. Non-government schools were attended by 40,723 students, 24,791 boys and 15,932 girls. The total Arab school age population was estimated at 157,700

[2] These statistics were gathered by Ahmad Samih al-Khalidi, the principal of the Arab College in Jerusalem; cited in M. F. Abcarius. Palestine (London: Hutchinson and Company, 1946), pp. 101-102.

boys and 144,250 girls.[3] Thus still only thirty-four per cent of the school age population was receiving education.

A far greater proportion of children went to school in the towns than in the rural areas. In 1946 only twenty per cent of the village school age population was in school, while of the school age children who lived in towns sixty-seven per cent were in school. Among town dwelling boys fully eighty-five per cent were receiving education. Although there are no figures available for the percentage of literacy in the Palestinian Arab community, one can judge from the educational statistics that the number of literate adults increased gradually during the Mandate and that the townspeople became predominantly literate.

From the beginning the schools that were opened by the Palestine Department of Education used Arabic as a medium of instruction. The system was divided into three levels of schools: elementary, in which students spent seven years ; lower secondary, where instruction continued for two more years; and higher secondary for two additional years. After completing this eleven year program, a pupil usually sat for the Palestine Matriculation Examination, which would entitle him to a high school diploma.

The majority of schools opened in the twenties and early thirties were on the elementary level. As of the mid-thirties Palestine had only six lower secondary government schools, and these were located in Jerusalem, Haifa, Jaffa, Nablus, Hebron and Gaza — the centers of the administrative districts of the Mandate. The top two students in the senior classes of each of these schools were admitted, upon graduation, to one of the two higher secondary schools in Jerusalem, the Arab College and the Rashidiyyah College. Some of the students of these two

[3] *Hawliyyat al-Thaqafah al-'Arabiyyah* ("The Encyclopedia of Arab Education"), edited by Sati' al-Husri (Cairo : Arab League Publications, 1949), vol. II, pp. 13-14.

institutions continued for professional training for two years in the education section of the Arab College and were subsequently appointed as teachers in government schools. By the end of the Mandate, the number of lower secondary schools opened by the Department of Education had risen to twenty and that of the higher secondary to eight.[4]

In the higher secondary schools emphasis was placed upon the Arabic language and Arab history. European history was also taught. In addition, all of these schools had cultural and educational societies, which held weekly sessions and invited prominent persons to address the students. Because of the official hostility toward purely political topics, most of these lecturers addressed themselves to topics from Arab history or compared the progress of the Europeans with the backwardness of the Arabs. Some tried to offer solutions for the problem of cultural and technical stagnation and encouraged their listeners to drop outmoded practices. A few lecturers, however, dealt directly with the Zionist threat to the country; one such lecture led to a demonstration and resulted in the secondary school in Nablus being closed for a week.[5]

Textbooks for these schools, especially in Arab history and Arabic literature, were brought from Egypt until the early forties, when Palestinian Arab writers began to produce their own. Most of the Palestinian Arab students thus became acquainted with the contributions of Egyptian cultural leaders such as Taha Husain, Ahmad Hasan al-Zayyat and 'Abd al-Qadir al-Mazini. They read the historical novels of Jurji Zaidan, which provided a

[4] Katul, *al-Ta'lim fi Filastin*, pp. 125-130.

[5] Abd al-Qadir Yusuf. *Mustaqbal al-Tarbiyah fi al-'Alam al-'Arabi fi Daw' al-Tairbiah al-Filastiniyyah* ("The Future of Education in the Arab World in the Light of the Palestine Experience") (Cairo, 1962), pp. 60-63.

survey of the development of Arab history.[6]

Teachers for these schools were recruited from the holders of the Palestine Matriculation Certificate, from the few who had studied at universities in other Arab countries — mostly in Egypt or at the American University of Beirut, and from the graduates of the Arab College in Jerusalem. The Arab College (formerly known as the Government Teachers College) assumed increasing importance as a supplier of teachers in the late thirties and in the forties. Most of the professors at the college had received their education in Western universities, chiefly in England, where they had become acquainted with European nationalist ideas. During the forties Niqula Ziyadah, in particular, imbued his students with a feeling of national consciousness which they carried with them to the various schools to which they were assigned after graduation. He personally supervised the activities of the cultural society at the college and encouraged the students to invite persons known for their national devotion to speak at the society's weekly meetings. He also arranged student trips to places of national historic importance.[7]

Some Palestinian Arabs were not satisfied with the way the mandatory authorities discharged their educational obligations. In the thirties Georges Antonius, a senior official at the Department of Education, and Khalil Totah, the principal of the Government Teachers College in Jerusalem, summarized these complaints before the Investigation Commission of 1936. Antonius accused the Department of Education of not taking into account the social and cultural development of the Arabs. He charged that the personnel of the Department lacked flexibility and that the attitude of the directors of the Depart-

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

[7] These comments are the result of the personal experience of the writer who was one of the students of Niqula Ziyadah in the Rashidiyyah College in the late forties.

ment's program for education would inevitably alienate the Palestinian Arabs from the administration. Totah stated that the Arabs were aggrieved by not being given direct control over the education of their children. The educational system as applied, he explained, was entirely aimed at creating a submissive mentality among Palestinian youth, who would then acquiesce in the formation of a Jewish national home in Palestine.[8]

The assertions of Antonius and Totah notwithstanding, the Arab school system of Palestine did contribute immensely to the enhancement of national consciousness in its students. As the report of the Royal Commission of 1936 described it, it was :

> ..as purely Arab in its character as the Jewish system is Jewish. The teaching is in Arabic only; apart from scientific subjects, the curriculum is almost wholly devoted to the literature, history and traditions of the Arabs; and all schoolmasters from the humblest village teacher to the head of the Government Arab College are Arabs.[9]

Moreover, the events of the thirties and forties revealed that the spirit of nationalism dominated the majority of the pupils at government schools. They participated in the strikes that took place in 1929 and 1933, and in 1936 they took part in the movement of civil disobedience called for by the Arab Higher Committee, forcing the authorities to close schools all over Palestine for six months.[10]

Another medium of education in Palestine, in addition to the government schools, was the private academic institution; some of these were opened by Arabs and some

[8] *Palestine Royal Commission: Minutes of Evidence Heard at Public Sessions* (London : HMSO, 1937), pp. 351-364.

[9] Cmd. 5479; cited in Hurewitz, *The Struggle for Palestine*, pp. 57-58.

[10] Yusuf, *Mustaqbal al-Tarbiyah*, pp. 142-143.

by foreigners. In the forties the private schools gave instruction to forty per cent of the Arab student population of the country.[11] While Arab private schools were scattered all over Palestine, foreign schools were concentrated in Jerusalem, which had eleven government schools, seven Arab private, and forty foreign.[12] Palestine had six leading Arab private secondary schools, one in each of the centers of the administrative districts. All of them gave eleven years of instruction and prepared their students for the Palestine Matriculation Examination. The most important were the Najah National College of Nablus and the Nahdah College of Khalil al-Sakakini in Jerusalem.

Al-Najah College was established in 1920. The founding Board of Trustees defined its goals as: firstly, providing a suitable atmosphere for adolescence and bringing out the students' potential for responding to his society; secondly, forming character and breeding love of work; third, strengthening the national consciousness of the student and implanting in him respect for, and devotion to, the Arabs' cultural heritage, and awareness of the inseparable bonds of the Arab nation throughout the Arab world. In view of the conditions in Palestine during the Mandate, the third goal came to overshadow the first two. The curricula of the college, while following the basic requirements of the Department of Education, devoted more time than government schools to Arabic language and literature and Arab history. Furthermore, a greater emphasis was put on extra-curricular activities, in particular on discussions, lectures and trips.[13]

[11] See above, p. 89.

[12] 'Arif al-'Arif, *Al-Mufassal fi Tarikh al-Quds* ("A Detailed History of Jerusalem") (Jerusalem, 1961), p. 444.

[13] This information is based on the official records of al-Najah College to which the writer was given access by Qadri Tuqan, the former principal of the college.

The secondary division of al-Najah College drew students from all the major towns of Palestine, especially after the opening of boarding facilities in 1929. The college's records of the mid-thirties show that of the two hundred and fifty students in the secondary division one hundred came from outside Nablus. During the forties the students constituted only one-half of a total attendance of three hundred and twenty.

One of the more conspicuous activities of the college was an annual festival to which the leading personalities of the Palestine Arab community were invited. The students usually produced a stage performance based on episodes in the history of the Arabs. This festival was held each year from 1930 to 1946, with the exception of the three years of the 1936-1939 revolt. Early in 1936 a demonstration by the students of the college prompted a movement of civil disobedience in Nablus and led to the closing of the college by the military authorities in the town. After one year the college was reopened under the close supervision of the British administration, and only resumed its regular activities after 1939.

Another activity of the college that attracted large audiences was the semi-annual lecture sponsored by the Literary Club of the school, at which a leading man of letters was invited to speak. A committee of students usually chose the topic and the lecturer and, as in the case of the annual festivities, invitations were sent to the leading Palestinian personalities. The text of the lecture would appear in the local press.

Foreign schools played a less important role than the Arab private schools in spreading national consciousness among Palestinian youth. Most of the foreign schools were run by missionary bodies and the medium of instruction was a foreign language, usually English or French. The teachers at these schools were either foreigners or

Arabs with a Western educational background. Hence, the students who attended such institutions acquired some knowledge of Western attitudes and modes of life. Most of the graduates of these schools held the view that the welfare of the Arabs in the future depended on the degree to which the Arab people could substitute Western ideals and habits for traditional ones.[14]

In some other Arab countries, notably Lebanon and Egypt, Western missionary schools had the unintended effect of heightening national consciousness, as resentment against their methods of discipline and occasional religious bias became part of a general anti-foreign sentiment. However, no such development took place in Palestine.[15]

The third educational medium for the Arab community of Palestine was some thirty clubs located in the various towns and big villages. Some of them (two in Nablus, three in Jerusalem, and one in Hebron) were founded in the early twenties. Others, in Jaffa, in Acre, and two in Haifa, were opened in the thirties. By the late forties, every Palestinian Arab town with a population of ten thousand or more had at least one such club.[16]

The activities of these clubs and their participation in the life of the society differed from one to another, but the typical club had a literary committee, a political committee, an athletic committee and a library; a few also had students' committees. All educated Palestinian Arabs were members of one or another of these clubs. The total membership in each of them varied between three thousand, in the case of the Arab Club of Nablus,

[14] Habib Amin Kurani. "The Inter-action of Islamic and Western Thought in the Arab World," *Near Eastern Culture and Society,* edited by T. C. Young (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951), p. 155.

[15] Katul, *al-Ta'lim fi Filastin,* pp. 180-183.

[16] Yusuf, *Mustaqbal al-Tarbiyah,* pp. 290-294.

which was sponsored by the Palestine Arab Party during the thirties, and about a hundred, in the case of the Literary Arab Club of Beersheba.[17]

A major activity of these clubs was lectures and discussion groups. Some lectures dealt with aspects of Arab civilization; others with the social and economic ills of Arab society in Palestine and the other Arab countries. Religious occasions, like the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad, the New Year's day of the Muslim calendar, and the first day of the Muslim holy month, Ramadan, were usually celebrated by a festival which began with an address discussing the historical role of the occasion being celebrated. The political committees of the clubs sponsored lectures on the danger of the Zionist movement to the Arabs, on pan-Arabism and on Western imperialism. Certain anniversaries served as occasions for lectures and discussions in all the clubs: the Balfour Declaration; the first shot fired by Husain ibn Ali, marking the beginning of the Arab Revolt against the Ottomans; the execution of the three Arabs of Hebron;[18] the beginning of the 1936-1939 revolt.

Discussion groups usually examined a specific episode of the history of the Arabs or a contemporary event in Palestine or other Arab country. Sometimes the discussion would be based on a recently published book that was to be discussed, copies of it circulated among the members prior to the session.

An examination of the records of these clubs and

[17] The information given here is derived from the personal experience of the writer in the late forties, from conversations with some of the members of the clubs, and from examination of the records and libraries of the nineteen clubs that continued their activity in the Arab part of Palestine after the termination of the British Mandate. Most important of these latter were the clubs of Jerusalem, Nablus, Hebron, Janin, Ramallah, Bethlehem, and Tulkarm.

[18] See above, pp. 66-67.

of the holdings of their libraries during the Mandate reveals that members had access to the political tracts written in Palestine during the period, the daily newspapers and the journals that appeared in the country, the literary and historical books published by Palestinian Arabs, and a large number of publications from other Arab countries.[19] Most popular of the last group were *Umm al-Qura* ("The Mother of Towns") of 'Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi,[20] which was republished in Cairo in 1931; *Dustur al-'Arab al-Qawmi* ("The National Constitution of the Arabs") of 'Abdullah al-'Alayili, a Muslim Arab Lebanese writer; and *Ara' wa Ahadith fi al-Wataniyyah wa al-Qawmiyyah* ("Views and Addresses on Patriotism and Nationalism") of the prominent Iraqi historian Sati al-Husri. These three books supplemented the writing of the Palestinian Arabs themselves with discussions of the theoretical basis of Arab nationalism.

It is true that the number of the Palestinian Arabs who were immersed in the cultural nationalist climate was small in comparison with the total Arab population of the country and was mostly limited to the towns. It should be remembered, however, that Palestinian Arab society was in the process of rapid change, with education and general development always increasing the number of those who joined the educated sector of the society. Because this educated sector, in relation to the rest of the population, constituted an economically and socially dominant group, the process of winning ever larger elements of society to its views became irresistible. All this is not markedly different from the process by which ideological change takes place in any society. All the ideologies of the West since the eighteenth century spread in a similar pattern. They passed in ever-widening circles

[19] See note 17.

[20] See above, pp. 10-11.

from the few who first advocated them to the large groups who found them meaningful and relevant to the needs of the time and, finally, to the great masses of the people.

POSTSCRIPT

In tracing the progress of Palestinian nationalism, certain factors — the identity of interest, the normal attachment of people to its land, the pressure of foreign threat — are of great significance. The role of the intellectuals and writers of the Mandatory period is equally important. Their work helped to delimit the boundaries within which the current of ideas flowed among the upper sectors of the population. Their nationalism was an expression of an existing sentiment and the body of literature they created firmly consolidated this sentiment in the minds of the educated. In addition to spreading the ideal of Palestinian nationalism, many of their themes became common currency in Palestinian political thinking.

The cultural and intellectual leaders of Palestine during the British Mandate left their imprint on those who were exposed to their writings in a variety of ways. In the first place these writers supplemented religious with nationalist motivation by stressing Muslim-Christian solidarity in opposing Zionist designs in the country. Even the Christian writers like al-Sakakini and Ziadah emphasized the importance of Muslim heritage as a unifying force among Christian and Muslim Arabs. This was very important because this trend of writing was one of the first steps which was to transform the Arab nationalist movement in the nineteen fifties and sixties to an essentially secular movement. These writers, by refraining from addressing themselves to purely religious issues, broke a long tradition based on religious universalism. By their writing they helped to emphasize the principle of Arab nationality as a foundation of political life.

In the second place Palestinian writers tried to

remove from their readers' consciousness the memory of the political fragmentation that befell the Arab World after the First World War. The Arab countries had been subjected to different foreign powers with different systems, cultures and purposes. These writers, by emphasizing the strength of World Zionism, the Western Powers' backing of it, and its future danger not only to Palestine but also to the Arabs in general, provided a unifying force which manifested itself in the popular backing for the formation of the League of Arab States in the mid-forties and the pan-Arab sentiment of the fifties.

Thirdly these writers helped to introduce an element of bitterness towards the West among the masses of the Palestinians. This element, which was stressed by non-Palestinian Arab writers as well, was caused primarily by the deep disillusionment felt by the Arabs after the First World War, when the Allies failed to honor their pledges of support for the unity and independence of the Arabs. Because the biggest blow fell on the Palestinian Arabs, this bitterness was most noticeable in the works written by Palestinians, whose attitude towards the West led to the creation of the general suspicion which characterized the whole Arab movement's relation with Western Powers.

Finally these writers, in view of the special need of their country, considered nationalism as a program of action. They took the realization of national consciousness among the Arabs as a foregone conclusion, advocating the view that this consciousness should be channelled in such a way as to allow the Arabs to form a united front against both Zionists and the Western Powers. Such a view of nationalism is accepted by the majority of the Arabs who judge the strength and degree of success of nationalism and nationalistic leaders by the help they give to the occupied Arab countries and by the opposition these leaders show to foreign imperialistic Powers.

Palestinian Arab writers during the British Mandate, therefore, did not produce literature that was only of abstract historical interest. On the contrary, by influencing the nationalism of the upper sectors of the population, they played an integral part of the historical process by which national consciousness spread through the various classes of Palestinian Arabs until it reached the masses of the population.

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