

**THE PALESTINIAN PRESS AS SHAPER  
OF PUBLIC OPINION 1929-39**



The Palestinian Press  
as Shaper of  
Public Opinion 1929–39

*Writing up a Storm*

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## *Foreword*

The history of the Palestinian national movement has been the subject of intense research in recent Middle Eastern studies. Its formative years, 1918–1939, marked by the disappearance of the Ottoman Empire and the presence of the British Mandate, have received particular attention. This was the period when the movement formed a national ideology for an organized struggle against Zionism and the British. During the last three decades several serious studies have discussed the development of Palestinian national ideas and practices, the spread of the national idea to new urban middle classes, and eventually to broad sectors of Palestinian society. The shaping of a new national and cultural identity, the emergence of new Palestinian national politics and leadership, have all been researched within the context of Jewish–Arab relations on one hand, and the British–Palestinian dynamic on the other. This research also studies the formation of national official and non-official civil associations and organizations which mobilized Palestinian publics for the national struggle. As well, this scholarly enterprise reconstructs the economic as well as socio-political contexts which laid the background for this struggle.

Mustafa Kabha's path breaking study of the Palestinian press adds a new dimension to the existing scholarly corpus. Using new methods and insights recently suggested by historians and sociologists regarding the major role of the press in molding modern print culture, and specifically in shaping public opinion, Kabha offers a novel perspective on the evolution of the Palestinian national movement during the critical years of 1929–39. Analyzing a large body of previously unresearched newspapers and magazines, dailies, weeklies, monthlies and illustrated press, Kabha demonstrates the role of the press in producing public awareness of the Palestinian national community, and more specifically, in disseminating this collective consciousness to both elite and non-elite publics

in Palestinian society. Special attention is paid to the crucial role of the press during the 1936–39 Palestinian revolt. Although the detailed and original discussion focuses on levels of the production, namely the ways in which the press shaped its ideas, themes and views, it is to the merit of this excellent work that Kabha has dedicated special sections to circulation and reception: how different Palestinian groups in different contexts and different times consumed and assimilated the journalistic national messages and how these forces gave this messages distinct meanings. In analyzing the inter-relations between journalistic production, dissemination, and reception, Kabha successfully reconstructs the national public discourse shared by a variety of Palestinian groups, providing readers a deeper understanding of the inner dynamics of the Palestinian collective self-understanding. In addition, Kabha exposes the processes in which the press served as a medium and an agent for political and cultural participation of growing numbers of Palestinian groups and communities in the political struggle. Kabha presents his findings and conclusions in a most lucid and convincing way. His book will surely serve students and scholars interested in the evolution of literacy and press in Palestinian society and, more generally, in the history of nationalism in the Arab Middle East.

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February 2006



## *Preface*

This book deals with the development of the Palestinian Arabic press during the years 1929–39, years in which the national identity of the Palestinian Arab public was formalized, shaped and characterized by the development of the Palestinian National Movement. During this period the Palestinian National Movement, in addition to its struggle with the Zionist movement, was also involved in a struggle with the British Mandatory government. The primary professed goal of this struggle was to prevent realization of the programme for a Jewish national home, and to lead Britain to a situation in which it would be compelled to grant independence or a certain degree of autonomy to the Palestinian Arabs, as had been granted to other Arab countries, such as Iraq and Egypt.

The press became integrated as a central factor in shaping the development of the Palestinian National Movement in a gradual process: it began emerging in the mid-1920s, its weight increased significantly during the events of 1929, and it peaked in the Great Strike of April–October 1936. The few studies conducted to date on the functioning of the Palestinian press during the Mandatory period dealt with the political aspects of the newspapers and with their articulation of the various political groups and powers in the Palestinian National Movement. In this book we will emphasize social, cultural and institutional aspects, in addition to the national–political aspect.

The book emphasizes the relationship between the development of the Palestinian National Movement and its social and cultural characteristics, and the development of political consciousness which was forming in that era. This relationship is examined by analyzing the background of the development of the press, the readers, the political forces operating at the time and the influence of the press on public opinion within Palestinian society.

Public opinion is defined in this book as the sum of views and opinions of main elite groups in Palestinian society during the period under

discussion. The assumption is that the public debate that gave voice to 'public opinion' was conducted within the press of the period, and therefore a study of the press would in essence be a study of the articulation of public opinion. The ability of the journalist of the time to shape public opinion or the consciousness of the masses, is examined through journalistic language, rhetoric, slogans, photographs and cartoons; while reflection of these methods and their effect on the readers is examined through readers' responses to the messages conveyed in the newspaper by means of letters to the editor, number of subscriptions, advertisements and notices.

The journalistic discourse that took place in the newspapers during this period reflected the manner in which the Palestinians themselves interpreted their national struggle, saw it as significant, and accordingly plotted their political course. The emergence of the press within the political and cultural system contributed significantly in the shaping of the political and cultural consciousness of the readers. The press also reflected, to a large degree, the opinion of different sectors of readers, expressing their cultural expectations and political aspirations. The aim of this book is to lay an important foundation in the study of the history of the Palestinian Arabic press and the development of the written Palestinian Arabic culture in its entirety during the first half of the twentieth century. For this purpose a textual examination of the contents of the newspapers, editorials, letters to the editor and advertising sections has been undertaken.

Following the introduction, which provides a history of the Palestinian press from publication of the first Arabic newspaper in the country (in 1876) until 1929, the book is divided into two main sections. The first part of the book comprises a single chapter which discusses the general profile of the newspapers and journalists during the period under discussion (1929-39). This chapter summarizes the contents and messages that the newspapers wished to convey through articles, advertisements, slogans, etc., and discusses their style and their manner of conveyance. In addition, the chapter also attempts to describe the profile of the journalists and those involved in the work of the press at that period according to their social origins and communities of origin, education and political affiliation.

The second and main section is historical, and comprises four chapters, divided according to the important events of the time or turning points in the history of the Palestinian press during that period.

Chapter 2 discusses the changes that occurred in the Palestinian

press from the formation of the representative institutions and the beginning of the era of the daily newspaper until the establishment of political parties in 1932; Chapter 3 surveys the period between the establishment of political parties and the publishing of the party newspaper until the onset of the Great Strike in April 1936; and the fourth chapter discusses the functioning of the press as a means of organization and supervision during the Great Strike, from April to October of that year.

Chapter 5 proceeds to discuss the functioning of the press during the Revolt of 1936–39 and describes the difficult situation in which the press found itself, caught as it was between the pressures of two opposing sides – the members of the armed groups on the one hand and the British Mandatory government on the other.

I should like to thank everyone who contributed to the publishing of this book: Professor Israel Gershoni, the supervisor for my doctoral thesis (which forms the basis of this book), Professor Ami Ayalon who read the manuscript and offered many helpful comments, Professor Ora Limor, Professor Haggai Erlich and Dr Zvi Elpeleg, for their considerable support.

Finally, I should like to thank my wife Asmaa and my sons Dawoud, Murad and Muhammad, who supported me with much love.



# *Introduction*

## *The Palestinian Press from its Establishment until the Events of 1929*

### STAGES IN THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE PALESTINIAN PRESS IN THE LATE OTTOMAN PERIOD

The growth of the Palestinian press, and of the Arabic press in general, has been part and parcel of the growth of modern written culture in the Middle East since the beginning of the modern era.<sup>1</sup> This process was expressed by the publication of books from the Arab-Muslim heritage and translation of masterpieces from a number of European languages.<sup>2</sup> The newspapers published were initially aimed at serving the needs of the regimes and rulers who wished to use them to announce orders and regulations concerning proper administration of the government.<sup>3</sup>

It all began with the *al-Waqa'l' al-Misriyya* newspaper, published by Muhammad 'Ali in Egypt in 1828. The first newspaper in Syria and Lebanon was *Majmou'at Fawa'id*, published by the American Mission in Beirut in 1851.<sup>4</sup>

In 1876, thirty years after the first printing press arrived in Palestine, the Ottoman authorities published two newspapers: *al-Quds al-Sharif* and *al-Ghazal*. The franchise for publishing the two newspapers belonged to the Ottoman *mutasarrifiyya* of Jerusalem. Some researchers<sup>5</sup> state that the editor of these newspapers in their initial version was Shaykh 'Ali al-Rimawi,<sup>6</sup> however, they are mistaken as he was born in 1860, and the Ottoman authorities would surely not have chosen a 16-year-old boy to edit their official newspaper. The two newspapers were published erratically and ceased appearing for a number of years. When publication of *al-Quds al-Sharif* was resumed in 1903 in Arabic and Turkish,<sup>7</sup> 'Ali al-Rimawi was appointed editor of the Arabic version, and 'Abd al-Salam Kamal edited the Turkish version.<sup>8</sup> Until July 1909 the Ottoman Empire had no written law defining the work

of the press. The process of obtaining a franchise to publish a newspaper was difficult and complicated, and sometimes took years. The only way of accelerating this process was to bribe the Ottoman authorities.<sup>9</sup> The offices of the Ottoman Sultan issued instructions restricting the press and determining what could and could not be printed. One such instruction stated that:

1. First and foremost, newspapers must inform the people of the precious health of the Honorable Sultan. Then they must discuss matters pertaining to the agricultural crops and the progress of trade and industry in the empire.
2. The use of exclamation marks and successive dots may arouse inquiries and speculations; hence they are forbidden.
3. Newspapers are forbidden from publishing any minority or majority opinion of the population concerning the corruption of government officials. They are also forbidden from noting complaints on this matter referred to the Honorable Magnificent Sultan.
4. The people have no need to be informed of assassination attempts on the kings of foreign countries or of demonstrations held by trouble-makers in those countries. The newspapers are totally forbidden from conveying such news to the people.<sup>10</sup>

These restrictions must have made it difficult for those engaged in journalism and deterred others from joining this limited circle. Indeed, during the years 1876-1908 only four newspapers started up. Two of them were initially published in 1876 (*al-Quds al-Sharif* and *al-Ghazal*) and belonged to the Ottoman government. The other two were:

*Bakurat Jabel Sahyoun*, the franchise of which belonged to the Anglican High School 'Sahyoun'. Its editors were the school teachers and students,<sup>11</sup> and it was published monthly, from early 1906 until 1913.<sup>12</sup> During the British Mandate, its publication was resumed under the same name in January 1922.<sup>13</sup>

*al-Taraqqi*, was published in Jaffa in 1907.<sup>14</sup> The franchise of this newspaper belonged to Martin Alonzo and the editor was 'Adel Jabr.<sup>15</sup> It first appeared as a weekly newspaper and was later published twice a week.<sup>16</sup>

The Revolt of the Young Turks in 1908 and the liberal atmosphere that prevailed for a short time following the revolt aroused high expectations among those involved in journalism.<sup>17</sup> In 1908 alone fifteen newspapers were published in Palestine,<sup>18</sup> the most significant being:

*Al-Karmil*, which appeared in Haifa as a weekly in September 1908.<sup>19</sup> Its owner and editor was Najib Nassar.<sup>20</sup> In August 1910 it was published twice weekly until its closure in 1914.<sup>21</sup> In February 1920 it appeared again as a weekly,<sup>22</sup> continuing until 1942, when it was closed due to the financial difficulties prevalent during the Second World War.<sup>23</sup> The newspaper initially supported the Ottoman governments and even preached pan-Ottoman brotherhood.<sup>24</sup> However, when the Young Turks began suppressing the national Arabs and disrupting the work of the press, *al-Karmil* openly criticized government policy. In March 1909, for example, it said:

We have dedicated this newspaper to the service of the people who are humiliated by the exploiting government. The role of this newspaper is to act to inform citizens of their rights and obligations in this country. It will act to convey the complaints of the citizens to all the (positive) influential factors in Kushta. *Al-Karmil* will always voice the just demands of the people and will not side with any Ottoman group at the expense of another. It will serve the trader, the craftsman, and the *fallah*, and all other sectors of the population.<sup>25</sup>

Most of the work on the *al-Karmil* newspaper was undertaken by Najib Nassar and later by his wife, Sadhaj. During most of its years it retained the same format and did not demonstrate any significant development in the style of writing and manner of publication. In 1927, 'Omar al-Salih al-Barghuthi described the work of Najib Nassar in *al-Karmil* as follows: 'Najib Nassar has not succeeded in advancing his newspaper and utilizing the technological developments in the field. His style was and is clumsy and the level of the newspaper's written language has remained poor during all its long years of publication.'<sup>26</sup>

Ya'qov Yehoshuwa also shared the opinion that the *al-Karmil* newspaper, despite its significance, could not attract readers by its external appearance. The type of paper on which the newspaper was printed for thirty years was never changed, nor was the font.<sup>27</sup> Najib Nassar admitted that he could not compete with the other wealthy newspapers. His devotion, diligence, and good intentions would have to atone for the journalistic deficiencies of his newspaper.<sup>28</sup>

Despite its technical and stylistic deficiencies, the *al-Karmil* newspaper aroused much interest among its readers, who apparently appreciated the

owner's determination to present and discuss issues pertaining directly to the life of the ordinary citizen.<sup>29</sup> For example, the newspaper devoted special attention to the subject of selling Arab lands to Jews. It reiterated the warning to land owners not to sell lands and denounced the engagement of some Arabs in speculation and brokerage for the purpose of financial gain. He greatly placed considerable emphasis on the people's opposition to the intentions of the Ottoman government to sell state-owned lands to the Jewish Agency, just as he emphasized the angry popular responses to the deal in which state-owned lands were sold to Jews in the area of Bisan.<sup>30</sup>

The sharply critical attitude of *al-Karmil* to these issues, along with others that involved the anti-Arab leanings of the new rulers of Istanbul, led to the closing of the newspaper by the authorities in early 1914 and the issuing of an arrest warrant for its editor.<sup>31</sup> The newspaper reappeared after the First World War, in February 1920, and continued to be published until 1942.<sup>32</sup>

*Al-Nafir*, owned and edited by Ilya Zakka,<sup>33</sup> it was first published in Alexandria, Egypt, in 1902.<sup>34</sup> In 1908 the newspaper moved to Jerusalem and in 1913 it moved to Haifa where it was published until the outbreak of the First World War.<sup>35</sup> After the war it was published in Haifa until 1945.<sup>36</sup> For a short period in 1913 the newspaper published a Hebrew appendix entitled *Hasbofar*.<sup>37</sup> It drew many condemnations in popular circles, due to its strong relations with the Jewish Agency. The other newspapers called it 'the biased newspaper' (*al-Jerida al-Ma'joura*).<sup>38</sup> Ilya Zakka managed his newspaper as a commercial business in every way and did not hesitate to provide his services to the highest bidder.<sup>39</sup>

*Al-Asma'i*: According to the franchise this newspaper was a literary periodical. Its owner and editor was Hanna al-Issa.<sup>40</sup> Its first issue was published in September 1908,<sup>41</sup> and it was printed and distributed in Jerusalem, although its offices and management were located in Jaffa.<sup>42</sup> It was only published for a short period, ending in January 1909.<sup>43</sup> In addition to the editor, articles were written by authors Is'af al-Nashashibi, Khalil al-Sakakini and Mananah Sidawi (wife of the journalist 'Adel Jabr, editor of *al-Taraqqi* and later *al-Hayat*). Although the newspaper defined itself as a literary newspaper, it cannot be described as a newspaper specializing in literary matters. It discussed issues that were on the agenda of the Palestinian society and proved adept at presenting the demands and wishes of the public and describing its hardships and difficulties.<sup>44</sup> It emphasized the issue of selling land to Jews and



the subject of the Orthodox community's struggle against the upper echelons of the Greek Orthodox Church. This in addition to subjects of interest to the *fallabin*, such as agricultural development and the founding of commercial banks specializing in providing loans to *fallabin*.<sup>45</sup>

*Al-Nafa'is*: A literary newspaper published in Haifa in November 1908. Its founder and editor was Khalil Baydas.<sup>46</sup> In 1911 the editor moved to Jerusalem, where he published the newspaper under its new name, *al-Nafa'is al-'Asriyya*. At first the newspaper appeared as a weekly, but when it moved to Jerusalem it was published fortnightly.<sup>47</sup> It was the only strictly literary newspaper during the Ottoman period. It was also distributed in other countries – Lebanon and Syria, and some of its subscribers were Arab expatriates living in America.<sup>48</sup> The reputation of Baydas as an author and translator facilitated circulation of the newspaper and attracted other famous writers, such as Is'af al-Nashashibi, 'Ali al-Rimawi, Ma'rouf al-Rasafi and Najib Sa'ati.<sup>49</sup> The newspaper stopped appearing when the First World War broke out, and then reappeared for a period of nine years after the war.<sup>50</sup>

Other less important newspapers that appeared in 1908 were: *al-Quds*, edited by Jurji Habib Hananya, *al-Insaf* edited by Bandali Elias Mashhur, *al-Najab* edited by 'Ali al-Rimawi and *Jerab al-Kurdi* by Matri Halaj.<sup>51</sup>

In addition, there were five underground newspapers that appeared mainly in handwriting and by anonymous editors and franchise owners. These newspapers were: *al-Ta'ir*, *al-Bulbul*, *al-Dik al-Sayyah*, *al-Ablam* and *Muanabib al-Amwat*.<sup>52</sup> These underground newspapers probably appeared as a result of the disappointment felt by Arab journalists over the despotic policies of the leaders of the Young Turks, which were totally contrary to their liberal platform after the successful coup of 1908.

The policies of the new leaders were reflected in the small number of newspapers published in 1909. During that year only two Arabic newspapers were published in the country: *al-Bakura al-Sahyouniyya*, which was closed in 1906 and subsequently reopened,<sup>53</sup> and *al-Akbbar*, owned by Bandali Ghrabi and edited by Alfonso Ya'qoub.<sup>54</sup>

In 1910 the following four newspapers were published:

*al-I'idal* by Bakr al-Samhuri, published in Jerusalem in June 1910, later moving to Jaffa.<sup>55</sup>

*Al-Hurriya*, edited by Tawfiq al-Samhuri, which appeared in Jaffa as a weekly in June 1910 and continued appearing until the outbreak of the First World War.<sup>56</sup>

*Al-Dustour*, edited first by Khalil al-Sakakini and later by Jamil al-Khalidi, appeared in Jerusalem between December 1910 and November 1913.<sup>57</sup>

*Ra'id al-Najah*, edited by Mousa al-'Alami and Anton Shukri. Appeared in Jerusalem between 1910 and late 1911.<sup>58</sup>

The newspapers that appeared in 1910 had only marginal influence and seldom discussed political matters, probably due to the strict policy of the Ottoman government, which suppressed any attempt to discuss political matters.

In 1911 only three newspapers were published, the most prominent of which was the newspaper *Filastin*, established in Jaffa in January 1911 by the cousins<sup>59</sup> 'Issa Dawoud al-'Issa<sup>60</sup> and Yusuf Hanna al-'Issa.<sup>61</sup> The first edition of the newspaper appeared on 14 January 1911.<sup>62</sup> It appeared twice a week until it was shut down by the Ottoman government in November 1914.<sup>63</sup> This newspaper had the highest journalistic standard of all the newspapers that appeared until the First World War. Its two editors were talented and audacious writers who dared to criticize the Ottoman government and the Jewish Settlement. 'Issa al-'Issa's work was described by 'Omar al-Salih al-Barghuthi in an article published in *Mir'at al-Sharq* in January 1928. He wrote:

'Issa al-'Issa was very daring in his criticism. His pen dripped poison[...] There was not a newspaper in Palestine that did not denounce him and criticize his work. He was the angel of death to the Zionists and a sharp critic of the (Ottoman) government. As a result of this activity he was sued a number of times. However he was an excellent journalist, who frequently made use of innovations and new developments'.<sup>64</sup> In the first issues the editor defined his newspaper as 'a constitutional Ottoman newspaper serving the public'.<sup>65</sup> However when the newspaper began criticizing the Turko-German alliance and calling upon the Ottomans to remain neutral in the war, it was closed by the authorities on 12 November 1914.<sup>66</sup> (It reappeared in 1921).<sup>67</sup>

In addition to *Filastin*, two other newspapers appeared in 1911: *al-Akhbar al-'Usbou'iyya*, which appeared in Jaffa in January 1911, edited by Hanna Sabbagha,<sup>68</sup> and *al-Himara al-Qabira*, published in Haifa in September 1911, edited by Khalil Zaqqout and Tawfiq Jana.<sup>69</sup>

In 1912 the following five newspapers appeared:

*al-Manadi*: A weekly published in Jaffa, edited by Sa'id Jar Allah

and Muhammad Mousa al-Mughrabi in February 1912.<sup>70</sup> This newspaper was unique as it was the first newspaper to appear under local Arab Muslim ownership.<sup>71</sup>

*Al-'Asa Lem'in 'Asa*: A weekly that appeared in Haifa in February 1912, edited by Najib Jana.<sup>72</sup> Its front page stated that it dealt with political, comic and literary topics.<sup>73</sup>

*Al-Mahabba*: A weekly that appeared in Haifa in February 1912. The owner of the franchise and the editor was Fadil Faris Abu Halaqah.<sup>74</sup> This newspaper preached cooperation between Arabs and Jews in Palestine. It ceased appearing in March 1913, at which the Hebrew newspaper *Haberut* expressed its sorrow: 'This newspaper struggled against our enemies and defended our community.'<sup>75</sup>

*Abu Shadouf*: Appeared in Jaffa in March 1912. The owner of the franchise was Wahbi Tamari and the editor was Saliba 'Urayda.<sup>76</sup> Its title-page stated that it discusses literary and critical topics,<sup>77</sup> but the editor devoted most of its pages to matters of the Orthodox Christian Community.<sup>78</sup>

*Al-Sa'iq*: Appeared in Haifa in 1912. Its owner and editor was Jamil Ramdan.<sup>79</sup> It appeared once a week and defined itself as an independent newspaper dealing with political and literary topics.<sup>80</sup> It stopped appearing a few months after it was founded.<sup>81</sup>

Three newspapers appeared in 1913:

*Al-Manhal*: A monthly that appeared in Jerusalem in August 1913.<sup>82</sup> Its owner and editor was Muhammad Mousa al-Mughrabi. Its title page stated that it is a literary, historical, and social newspaper;<sup>83</sup> it only appeared for a year.<sup>84</sup>

*Sawt al-'Uthmaniyya*: Its owner and editor was Dr Shimon Moyal. This newspaper appeared in Hebrew and Arabic and preached cooperation between Arabs and Jews.<sup>85</sup> The Arabic newspapers of the period attacked it severely and perceived it, on the contrary, as encouraging feelings of hostility between the two nations.<sup>86</sup>

*Al-'Itidal al-Yafi*: Appeared in Jaffa in March 1914. Its editor and owner was Bakr al-Samhuri.<sup>87</sup> It appeared erratically until the outbreak of the First World War<sup>88</sup>

In 1915 no new Arabic newspaper was published in Palestine and in 1916 the Ottoman authorities in Beer Sheva published a newspaper in Turkish and Arabic named *al-Sabraa' al-Musawwara*. The owner of the franchise for the newspaper was Jamal Pasha, commander of the Fourth Turkish Army, centered in Beer Sheba.<sup>89</sup> It was the last newspaper to appear in the country under Ottoman rule.

## OTTOMAN PERIOD NEWSPAPERS: A COLLECTIVE PORTRAIT

Towards the end of the Ottoman rule, approximately thirty-nine newspapers were published. Three of them appeared twice a week, thirteen were weeklies, two appeared twice a week, four monthlies, and the others were published erratically and their frequency of publication was not stated. Regarding ownership of the newspapers, four were published by the government, the owners and editors of five of the newspapers were anonymous, four were owned by private parties and institutions (mainly Christian), twenty-one were owned by Christians, four by Muslims, and one was owned by a Jew.<sup>90</sup>

The circulation of the newspapers was fairly limited. There is almost no precise information on this subject. Nissim Malul states that in 1914 all the Arabic newspapers in the country printed approximately 4,500-5,500 copies.<sup>91</sup> However if we consider that this number includes at least 1,000 copies of *Sawt al-'Uthmaniyya* printed by Shimon Moyal,<sup>92</sup> we find that most of the newspapers were printed only in a few dozen copies.

The geographical distribution of the newspapers focused primarily on the large cities (Jerusalem, Jaffa and Haifa) and their surroundings. Very few newspapers reached the rural sector, due to transportation difficulties and probably also due to the disinterest of the rural population, the majority of whom were illiterate. Only *Filastin* sent a copy of each issue to the Mukhtars of villages numbering more than 100 people, 'so that each fallah will know what is happening in the Empire, on the one hand, and what his rights are, on the other, and thus the exploiters and tyrants will not be able to exploit him and steal his livelihood'.<sup>93</sup>

No Palestinian newspapers are known to have been distributed in other countries during this period, aside from the literary newspaper *al-Nafa'is* by the writer Khalil Baydas, which was also distributed in Syria, Lebanon and America. Due to its wide circulation, 1,800 copies were printed.<sup>94</sup> This newspaper was also unique in its high journalistic level in comparison to the other newspapers, most of which were poorly written and amateur.<sup>95</sup> It should also be emphasized that the readers of the period were uncertain of their identities, and this was expressed in the different tendencies of the newspapers and their readers.

THE PALESTINIAN PRESS DURING THE EARLY  
MANDATE PERIOD: 1919-29

In October 1919, once the British authorities had established themselves in Palestine following the First World War, the British Military Governor announced that the press would no longer be censored. He also used this opportunity to decree that anyone who wished to publish a newspaper might do so.<sup>96</sup> Some of the newspapers that had appeared before the war resumed their publication. The most persistent of these were *al-Nafir*, which renewed its appearance in November 1919, and *Bayt al-Maqdis*, which reappeared in December of the same year. *Al-Karmil* renewed its appearance in February 1920 and *Filastin* in March 1921. In addition, between 1919 and early 1929 about 45 newspapers began appearing, which can be divided into two main groups. The first group encompasses those newspapers that appeared during the early Mandate period and had ceased to appear by 1929. The second group includes those newspapers that appeared during the early Mandate period and continued to appear after 1929, with some continuing even until the end of British rule of Palestine in 1948.<sup>97</sup> The main newspapers that ceased to appear by 1929 were:

*Surya al-Janubiyya*, Published in Jerusalem as a weekly in September 1919.<sup>98</sup> The owners and editors of the newspaper were 'Arif al-'Arif<sup>99</sup> and Muhammad Hasan al-Budayri. Most of this newspaper was devoted to severe attacks against the Zionist Movement and to pan-Arab preaching.<sup>100</sup> It was closed by the British authorities after the 1920 events. It was the first newspaper to be published during the British rule of Palestine, and the first newspaper that tried to express the new national feelings in the country after the First World War and the initial peace treaty discussions following the war.<sup>101</sup> The name of the newspaper (*Southern Syria*) expressed the aspirations of the Palestinians at the time to become an inseparable part of Syria.<sup>102</sup> This newspaper was also the only Muslim-owned newspaper to appear during the first year of the British rule. It attempted to counterbalance the newspaper *Mir'at al-Sharq*<sup>103</sup> (*Mirror of the East*) published by Boulous Shihada.<sup>104</sup> Shihada's newspaper was accused by his journalist colleagues of tending to comply with the wishes of the British authorities, while at times opposing the will and aspirations of the people.<sup>105</sup> *Surya al-Janubiyya* also opposed the slogan coined by Boulous Shihada, 'Palestine for the Palestinians' (*Filastin Lil-filastiniyyin*).<sup>106</sup> 'Arif al-'Arif preached pan-

Arabism, of which the first stage is unification of Greater Syria. Based on this ideal of unification, he conceived of Palestine as the southern part of Syria (*Surya al-Janubiyya*).<sup>107</sup>

*Al-Quds al-Sharif*: appeared in April 1920.<sup>108</sup> Its owner and editor was Hasan Sidqi al-Dajani.<sup>109</sup> This newspaper differed from the newspaper published by the Ottoman authorities under the same name in 1876. It appeared as a weekly, although its publication was erratic.<sup>110</sup>

*Hayfa*: appeared in Haifa in March 1921. Its owner and editor was Ilya Zakka, the owner of *al-Nafir*, and it was the first newspaper that claimed to represent the workers.<sup>111</sup> The newspaper did not appear regularly; a small number of issues appeared in 1921, after which its publication was only resumed in 1925, when it was published for one year before ceasing publication altogether.<sup>112</sup>

*Lisan al-Arab*: was first published in Jerusalem in June 1921,<sup>113</sup> under the ownership and editorship of Ibrahim Salim Najjar.<sup>114</sup> This was the first attempt at publishing a daily newspaper, but it was unsuccessful, due to the high costs involved, and only appeared for a short period.

*Al-Sabab*: appeared in Jerusalem as a weekly in 1921. Its owner and editor was Muhammad Kamil al-Budayri.<sup>115</sup> This newspaper was the first to serve as the voice of an organized political entity,<sup>116</sup> the Palestinian Executive Committee, established in 1920 with the aim of representing Palestinian Arabs vis à vis the British authorities.<sup>117</sup>

*Al-Jazira*: was published as a weekly in Jaffa in January 1924.<sup>118</sup> Its owners and editors were Hasan Fahmi al-Dajani and Muhammad Kamil al-Dajani.<sup>119</sup> An attempt was made to publish this newspaper on a daily basis, but it was very short-lived.

*Al-Ittihad al-Arabi*: was a weekly that appeared in Tul Karim in April 1925. Its owner was Salim 'Abd al-Rahman and its editor was the Syrian journalist, Mahmoud Chirqas.<sup>120</sup> The newspaper had pan-Arab leanings. Its title-page carried the slogan: 'In the name of the Arabs we shall live and in their name we shall die' (*Bism al-'Arab nabya wabism al-'Arab namut*).<sup>121</sup> It continued to appear until 1927.<sup>122</sup>

In addition to these newspapers, fifteen other newspapers were published during this period, and they continued to appear after 1929. The others were less significant, and a large majority of them appeared only for a very short period.<sup>123</sup>

In total, fifty-two Arabic newspapers were published in the country from the early British period until 1929.<sup>124</sup> The division of the newspaper owners by affiliation to the various communities was: 21 Muslims, 30 Christians, 1 Jew.<sup>125</sup>

### General Characteristics

The most popular newspapers during the first years of the British rule of Palestine were actually those brought from neighbouring Arab countries, primarily Egypt. These newspapers were sufficiently advanced to make it difficult for the local Arabic press to compete. This led to extreme changes in the structure of the Palestinian newspapers, their contents, and the messages that they attempted to convey. Journalistic language underwent a total revolution, the rhetorical and complicated style disappeared, and new sections for literature and culture began to appear in the various newspapers. The readers, and particularly the emerging intelligentsia, responded positively to these changes.<sup>116</sup> The improvement in the level of the Palestinian newspapers of the period was particularly enhanced by experienced Arab journalists who came to Palestine from other countries. For example 'Ali Mansour (Egyptian), Kamal 'Abbas, Hani Abi Muslih and Ibrahim Salim Najjar (Syrian and Lebanese).

The first newspaper to demonstrate satisfactory journalism and topics that interested the readers was *Surya al-Janubiyya*, edited and owned by 'Arif al-'Arif and Hasan al-Budayri.<sup>117</sup> Owing to its strong resistance to the Zionists and the British, it became the most prominent newspaper during its period of publication and the British treated it with suspicion.<sup>118</sup> *Filastin* and *al-Karmil* acted to raise ideological awareness. In 1922 *Filastin* published two series of ideological articles: one series of fifteen articles discussed the topic 'Palestine from the Islamic Conquest (*al-Fath*) until the early twentieth century'; a second series of twenty-six articles discussed the topic 'Palestine in the nineteenth century', in which the author reviewed the economic and social conditions in the country and discussed the settlement activity of the Zionist Movement.<sup>119</sup> *Al-Karmil* also tackled the subject and published a series of articles on the Zionist Movement, written by the editor, Najib Nasir, and another series by the historian Ihsan al-Nimr about the new groups in Islam.<sup>120</sup>

The editors of the newspapers and the journalists who wrote for them also conducted ideological discourses on important topics that began appearing on the public agenda, expressing the stages of formation of the Palestinian National Movement. For example, the question that occupied the newspapers during the second half of the 1920s was affiliation with and loyalty to pan-Arabism or the idea of pan-Islam, or developing local Palestinian national loyalty.<sup>121</sup> The appearance of *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim* by Shaykh Abdullah al-Qalqili (1924), who

expressed pan-Islam leanings, and *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* by Munif al-Husayni (1927), with pan-Arab leanings, added new dimensions to the ideological debate.<sup>122</sup>

## NOTES

1. For more on the expansion of the press in the various Arab countries see: Ayalon.
2. For more on the cultural renaissance in the Middle East in the modern era see: Hurani.
3. Ayalon, pp. 11-13.
4. Tarazi, p. 13.
5. This fact was mentioned by Khouri, p. 3, and other researchers copied from him.
6. 'Ali al-Rimawi (1860-1916) was born in the village of Beit Rima in the Jerusalem district. He completed his primary studies in his village and then studied in a Jerusalem high school. He studied at the al-Azhar College in Cairo and was ordained there as an 'alim. While in Egypt he was engaged in extensive journalistic activities, and wrote for the newspapers *al-Insaf* and *al-Manbal*. Upon returning to Palestine in 1903 he was appointed as editor of *al-Quds al-Sbarif*. In 1907 he founded the newspaper *Bayt al-Maqdis* but the Ottoman authorities closed it down. In 1908 he published another newspaper, named *al-Najab*, which was also targeted for closure. He died in 1919 and was buried in his village. For more details see: aAl-'Udat, 1992, pp. 221-2.
7. Khouri, p. 4.
8. Sulayman, 1987, p. 47.
9. Yehoshuwa, p. 13.
10. Sa'adah, p. 131.
11. Khouri, p. 5.
12. Al-'Aqqad, p. 122.
13. Tarazi, p. 138.
14. Khouri, p. 6.
15. Al-'Aqqad, p. 186.
16. Yehoshuwa, (pp. 110-11) claimed that this newspaper was published twice a week.
17. Sulayman, 1987, p. 50.
18. Ibid.
19. Khouri, p. 14.
20. Najib Nassar (1865-1948) was born in 'Ein 'Anoub in southern Lebanon to a family from Nazareth. At first he worked as a pharmacist at the Scottish Hospital in Tiberias and from there he moved to Haifa. In 1908 he founded the newspaper *al-Karmil*. In 1914 the Ottoman government closed the newspaper and persecuted its owners and he escaped to Nazareth and from there to the Bisan Valley and Transjordan. In 1917 he surrendered to the Ottoman government in Nazareth and from there was transferred to Damascus and held under arrest until the end of the Ottoman rule in 1918. He recorded his days of wandering and evasion in his autobiography *Riwayat Miftib al-Gbasani*. In 1920 he published *al-Karmil* again with the help of his wife Sadhaj. He died and was buried in Nazareth in 1948 (al-'Udat, 1992, pp. 632-5).
21. Khouri, p. 14; Al-'Aqqad, p. 175.
22. Yehoshuwa, p. 140.
23. Khouri, p. 14.
24. Al-'Udat, 1992, p. 633.
25. *Al-Karmil*, 27 March 1909.
26. *Mira't al-Sbarq*, 22 September 1927.
27. Yehoshuwa, p. 138.
28. *Al-Karmil*, 27 March 1909.
29. Sulayman, 1987, p. 78.
30. *Al-Karmil*, 1 August 1913.
31. Al-'Udat, 1992, p. 633.
32. Al-'Aqqad, p. 175.
33. Ilya Zakka (?-1926) was born in Haifa and studied at the Russian College in Nazareth. His newspaper *al-Nafir* was published at first in Alexandria (1902) and then in Jerusalem (1908) and Haifa (1913). In 1919 he founded a printing house in Haifa, where his newspaper was



printed, as well as other newspapers published there. He died in 1926. His two sons, Zaki and Suhayl, continued publishing the newspaper until 1945. For more details see: Abu Hamad, p. 103.

34. Tarazi, p. 66.
35. Al-'Aqqad, p. 172.
36. Ibid.
37. Sulayman, 1987, p. 71.
38. Ibid.
39. Interview with Boulous Farah who worked at *al-Nafir* as print worker and reporter.
40. Hanna al-'Issa (1886–1955) was born in Jaffa. During the Ottoman period he represented the Orthodox Christians in Istanbul. In September 1908 he published the newspaper *al-Asma'i*, which was the first of a group of newspapers published by the al-'Issa family of Jaffa (Abu Hamad, p. 146).
41. Al-'Udat, 1992, p. 470, note 1.
42. Yehoshuwa, p. 86.
43. Abu Hamad, p. 146; Yehoshuwa, p. 88.
44. Sulayman, 1987, p. 95.
45. Yehoshuwa, p. 90.
46. Khalil Baydas (1874–1949) was born in Nazareth where he completed his primary studies (at the Orthodox School) and his higher education (at the Russian College). After graduating, he was appointed as director of the Russian schools in Homs, Syria, Lebanon, and finally director of the Orthodox School in Haifa. In 1908 he published the newspaper *al-Nafa'is*, which was one of the most important newspapers in the east. In 1911 he moved with his newspaper to Jerusalem and changed its name to *al-Nafa'is al-'Asriyya*. Towards the end of the Ottoman rule, he was imprisoned and tortured. During the British Mandatory period, in the years 1920–45, he worked as an Arabic teacher at the French School in Jerusalem. In 1949 he died in Beirut. He translated many books into Arabic and wrote nearly 35 books. For more details see: al-Asad.
47. Khouri, p. 9.
48. Yehoshuwa, pp. 95–7.
49. Ibid.
50. Al-'Aqqad, p. 125.
51. For more on these newspapers see: Khouri, pp. 7–15.
52. For more on these newspapers see: Yehoshuwa, p. 77.
53. Khouri, p. 17.
54. Salha, p. 148.
55. Yehoshuwa, p. 106.
56. Al-'Aqqad, p. 188.
57. Salha, p. 149.
58. Yehoshuwa, p. 99.
59. Many researchers mistakenly stated that the two founders of *Filastin* were brothers.
60. 'Issa Dawoud al-'Issa (1878–1950) was born in Jaffa, completed his primary studies in his city of origin and his secondary studies in Lebanon. He graduated from the American University of Beirut. In 1911, together with his cousin, Yusuf al-'Issa, he founded the newspaper *Filastin*, which became the most important Palestinian newspaper during the British Mandatory period. At the onset of the First World War the newspaper was closed and its two owners deported to Anatolia. At the end of the First World War 'Issa joined Faysal's entourage and became his personal secretary. In 1921 he returned to Palestine and resumed publication of his newspaper. He was also chosen to represent the Orthodox Christians on the Palestinian Executive Committee, and when the National Defence Party was founded he was one of its conspicuous activists. During the Arab Revolt he left the country and settled in Beirut, where he died in 1950 (al-'Udat, 1992, pp. 477–8).
61. Yusuf Hanna al-'Issa (1870–1948) was born in Jaffa and studied at the Orthodox School. His journalistic activities began with the newspaper *al-Asma'i* that appeared in Jaffa in 1908. In 1911 he cooperated in founding the newspaper *Filastin*. In 1920 he published the newspaper *Alef Baa'* in Damascus. He died in 1948 in Damascus, where he was buried (al-'Udat, 1992, pp. 478–9).
62. Khouri, p. 20.

63. Sulayman, 1987, p. 83.
64. *Mir'at al-Sharq*, 19 January 1928.
65. *Filastin*, 15 July 1911.
66. Sulayman, 1987h, p. 86.
67. Al-'Aqqad, p. 188.
68. Salha, p. 149.
69. Tarazi, p. 70.
70. *Ibid*, p. 66.
71. Yehoshuwa, pp. 54-63.
72. Tarazi, p. 70.
73. Khouri, p. 22.
74. Yehoshuwa, p. 134.
75. *Haberut*, 11 March 1913.
76. Tarazi, p. 70.
77. Khouri, p. 23.
78. Al-'Aqqad, p. 191.
79. Khouri, p. 24.
80. *Ibid*.
81. Yehoshuwa, A, p. 134.
82. Khouri, p. 25.
83. Al-'Aqqad, p. 127.
84. Yehoshuwa, pp. 90-2.
85. *Ibid*, pp. 120-125.
86. *Filastin*, 11 April 1914.
87. Khouri, p. 26.
88. Al-'Aqqad, pp. 191-2.
89. Tarazi, p. 140.
90. This data was taken mainly from the issues: Abd al-Qadir Yasin, '*al-Sibafa al-'Arbiya Fi Filastin*', *al-Mawsou'a al-Filastiniyya*, Part II, pp. 430-2.
91. Malul, p. 449.
92. Yehoshuwa, p. 88.
93. *Filastin*, 30 September 1913.
94. Sulayman, 1987, p. 96.
95. For a more detailed analysis of the level and style of writing during this period, see: Yaghi.
96. *Al-Kawakib* (Cairo), 14 October 1919.
97. See Chapter 2 for more on this group of newspapers.
98. *Al-Hilal*, Vol. 28 (1919), p. 175.
99. 'Arif al-'Arif (1892-1973) was born in Jerusalem. He completed his academic studies in 1913 in Istanbul, capital of the Ottoman Empire. During the First World War he fought as an Ottoman officer on the Russian front where he was captured by the Russians. In 1918 he returned to Palestine and in September 1919 he published the newspaper *Suriya al-Janubiyya*, closed by the government following the riots of 1920. The British accused him of participating in the organization of the riots, and he fled Palestine for Transjordan. In 1921 he returned and served in various roles in the British administration until 1948. Al-'Arif wrote important history books, particularly about the history of the land of Israel. He died in Ramallah in 1973. For more details see: al-'Udat, 1992, pp. 400-3. Abu-Hamad, pp. 220-1.
100. Al-'Aqqad, pp. 127-128.
101. Budayri, p. 17.
102. *Ibid*.
103. See Chapter 2 for more information about this newspaper.
104. Boulous Shihada (1922-43) was born in Ramallah. He studied at the Anglican High School in Jerusalem and for two years at the English College in Jerusalem. In 1907 he served as principal of the Orthodox High School in Haifa. In 1908, having spoken out again the Ottoman regime, he fled the country for Egypt. While in Egypt he wrote for various Egyptian newspapers. In 1919 he published the newspaper *Mir'at al-Sharq*. In 1926 he was appointed as member of the Arab Executive Committee. He was a regular member of the various national conventions. Side by side with his journalistic activities, he wrote stories and poetry (al-'Udat, 1992, pp. 302-5).

105. Shoumali, pp. 82–3.
106. Ibid.
107. For more details see: Khalidi.
108. Khouri, p. 20.
109. Hasan Sidqi al-Dajani was born in Jerusalem. His initial journalistic activities were at the newspaper *Bayt al-Maqdis* of Bandali Mashhur. In 1920 he published the newspaper *al-Quds al-Sbarif*. In addition, he translated books from Turkish to Arabic and was active in the trade unions. He was murdered in 1938. For more details see: Nuwayhid, pp. 179–80.
110. Al-'Aqqad, p. 133.
111. Khouri, p. 34.
112. Al-'Aqqad, p. 177.
113. Tarazi, p. 68.
114. *Al-Manar*, 22 (1921), p. 720.
115. Ibid.
116. Shimoni, p. 404.
117. About the conditions of establishment of the Executive Committee, see: al-Kayyali, 1985, pp. 104–26.
118. Al-'Aqqad, p. 195.
119. Khouri, p. 45.
120. Ibid., p. 44.
121. *Al-Ittihad al-'Arabi*, 15 April 1925.
122. Al-'Aqqad, p. 215.
123. About these newspapers see: Khouri, pp. 38–52; Tarazi, pp. 68–70.
124. *Al-Mawsou'a al-Filastiniyya*, pp. 436–7.
125. The Jewish newspaper that appeared in Arabic during this period was *al-Salam*. Its owner and editor was Dr Nissim Malul, who worked for many years in the Arabic press in Palestine and Egypt.
126. Abu Ghazala, pp. 56–60.
127. Khalidi, pp. 581–3.
128. Ibid.
129. *Al-Mawsou'a al-Filastiniyya*, pp. 440–3.
130. Al-Nimr, 1967, p. 95.
131. For more details see: Mahaftha, pp. 27–40.
132. See Chapter 2 for more information on these newspapers.



## *The Palestinian Press, 1929–39: Social Aspects*

The appearance of the Arabic newspapers and journalistic discourse on the Palestinian political, social and cultural stage during the Mandate period played a significant role in shaping the social and cultural awareness of the readers. The newspapers reflected the various opinions prevalent among the different sectors of readers and expressed the readers' social and cultural expectations, and not only in the political sphere. The various social classes perceived the newspapers and the journalistic discourse contained therein as a suitable platform for expressing themselves generally and presenting their demands, desires and criticisms.

Some newspapers gave voice to the causes of these sectors as practical fulfilment of their role as an informative instrument shaping and influencing public opinion. The newspaper *al-Karmil*, for example, alongside years of political activity, also devoted a great deal of attention to the rural classes and to topics of land and agriculture. It often addressed the peasants and guided them on issues such as modern methods of cultivation, desirable crops, circumventing the dominance and the control of the wealthy families who owned the large agricultural assets, or fighting the phenomenon of the speculative sale of land, which had become very prevalent.

Najib Nassar (editor of *al-Karmil*) believed, in contrast to the various Palestinian political organizations and institutions, that words were not sufficient. He often visited distant villages and Bedouin encampments, in particular in the north and in the Valley of Bisan. In his travels he tried to organize alternatives to the traditional leadership institutions that would be capable of assisting the peasants with their problems so that they would not be compelled to accept the proposals of agents and speculators.

This activity is attested to in letters sent by readers from the villages visited by Nassar. They expressed their thanks to the editor for his actions as well as posing questions related to agricultural work and desirable crops or how to avoid paying commissions and to bypass the marketing monopoly of the more powerful urban families who owned the most significant agricultural assets.<sup>1</sup>

Despite the responses and reactions of the readers, Nassar constantly complained of being poorly compensated for supporting the cause of the peasants and other underrepresented groups. From time to time he addressed the rural subscribers and demanded that they pay their debts, and when general appeals proved of no avail he began to list names, criticizing those who enjoyed reading the paper but did not enjoy paying for it.

Other influential newspapers controlled by the rich urban families chose not to dwell as much on these issues and their reporters in the rural sector were apparently also discouraged from doing so. Thus they avoided harming the interests of newspaper owners who had accumulated their fortunes from profits made in the agricultural sector (the al-'Issa family, who owned the newspaper *Filastin*, reaped profits from their involvement in the citrus industry, and some of these profits were invested in the newspaper).<sup>2</sup> The newspapers owned by these families usually expressed conservative views, claiming that Palestinian society had been debilitated by the pervasion of foreign ideologies, particularly communism, among the new Palestinian intelligentsia. The newspaper editors and journalists affiliated with the traditional camps claimed that the communist ideology was potentially very harmful to working-class sections of society which were targeted by the communists. These editors and journalists were apparently apprehensive of the increasing power of the workers' unions in the early 1930s, when they began their struggle for higher wages and shorter working days,<sup>3</sup> and they conducted an extensive campaign against communism and against strikes in general. The newspaper *Filastin*, for example, objected to the use of strikes as a means of achieving goals.<sup>4</sup> In contrast, *al-Karmil* attacked this view and stated that it was based on the concerns of employers and merchants who feared for their own best interests.<sup>5</sup>

*Filastin* and other newspapers owned by rich urban families were not able to convince the readers of their conflicting views on the two most important issues occupying the Palestinians at this time: the sale of lands and the accelerated process of urbanization that was bringing thousands of destitute villagers to search for work in the rapidly developing coastal cities (mainly Haifa and Jaffa). These two processes were interrelated. Following the sale of extensive agricultural lands to the Jewish Agency, thousands of tenants and peasants lost their main source of livelihood and were forced to converge on the cities in search of work. Since they could not return home at the end of the workday, they built tin huts and shacks around the large workplaces or the Arab neighborhoods. Over time numerous slums developed, which in turn

became fertile breeding grounds for the vigorous activities of religious activists such as Sheikh 'Iz al-Din al-Qassam and Sheikh Yusuf al-Zibawi, or communist activists such as Boulous Farah, who tried to organize the masses of poor and exploited workers into groups and organizations striving to improve their miserable conditions. The religious activists saw Britain and the Jewish Settlement as the target of their protests and struggle, among others through violent underground activities (achieving political and social goals through violence). The communist activists, on the other hand, saw the Palestinian upper class as equally responsible for the existing situation, making the situation into a class struggle which should be led by the unions. The Palestinian newspapers, most of whose owners belonged to the new intelligentsia bourgeoisie, tended to accept the religious activists, version and even cooperate with them (a phenomenon facilitated by the death of Sheikh al-Qassam in November 1935, recognized as a national hero and a symbol of the Palestinian struggle). These newspapers rejected the platform of the communist activists, and even fought against it. Thus the press evidently served some of the political causes of the weak classes and even contributed to the nature of their activities, although it did not further their social goals.

The newspaper owners, editors, along with members of the rich families, benefited considerably from both processes – the sale of lands and urbanization – and had little interest in ending them. With regard to the sale of lands, for example, some newspaper editors received payment from the Jewish Agency in return for publishing articles that attempted to moderate the enraged reactions against those engaged in such dealings, or at least for not publishing such reactions.<sup>6</sup> As far as cheap labour arriving in the cities from the villages was concerned, some newspaper owners (for example the al-'Issa family) owned businesses that employed rural workers for many hours a day in return for very low wages. These people had no interest in changing the situation or in allowing workers' unions to use their newspapers to campaign for change.

Other newspapers whose owners did not belong to the urban notables at first attempted to attack the more senior newspapers on this matter. However, in time they learned to cooperate with the efforts and actions of the veteran press. The newspaper *al-Difa'* is a good example of this group. It was owned by the rural al-Shanti family from Qalqilya who moved to Jaffa at the beginning of the Mandate period. In April 1934 al-Shanti founded the newspaper together with expatriate Syrian journalists. At first the newspaper criticized its rival *Filastin* for repre-

sending the urban wealthy strata, which was mainly Christian. *Al-Difa'* presented views objecting to urban Christian dominance of the national press and institutions, thus seeking to win the approval of both villagers and Muslims.<sup>7</sup> Eventually, however, the al-Shanti family took over full control of the newspaper and some of its members became involved in deals related to the sale of lands and also in the citrus industry, thus acquiring interests which differed from those of the villagers they supposedly represented in their earlier journalistic activities.<sup>8</sup>

This was also true of the newspaper *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim* and its owner, 'Abdullah al-Qalqili. Al-Qalqili also moved from Qalqilya to Jaffa, where he was known for his opposition to the Mufti and the Mufti's relatively moderate attitude to the Mandate authorities and the Jewish Settlement.<sup>9</sup>

During the Great Strike and the revolt of 1936-39 the peasants earned themselves greater respect, and the newspapers that expressed the views of the urban notable families, headed by *Filastin*, were compelled to become more flexible in their attitude towards the villagers. The armed bands founded at the time were comprised of low-class peasants and their struggle encompassed elements of the class struggle. The leaders of these bands ('Abd al-Rahim al-Haj Muhammad, 'Arif 'Abd al-Raziq, Yusuf Abu Durra and Hasan Salame) initiated a new social order during the years of revolt (in the cities as well as in the rural areas). The residents of the cities, who scorned and disdained the peasants, did not approve of this course, and some of their leaders preferred to leave the country rather than submit to the dictates of the peasants. 'Issa al-'Issa, editor of *Filastin*, and 'Issa al-Bandak, editor of *Sawt al-Sha'b*, fled the country in 1938. This stemmed among other things from their objection to the band leaders' demand that all city residents wear a *kufiyyah* and 'Iqal (the rural head covering) instead of the fez, in order to make it difficult for the British authorities to search for members of the armed bands.<sup>10</sup>

#### NEWSPAPER PUBLICATION PATTERNS

During this period thirty-eight new newspapers were published: eleven dailies, fourteen weeklies, nine monthlies and four which appeared twice a week. Weeklies and monthlies had been appearing for twenty years, however the innovation of the period was the emergence and establishment of daily newspapers.<sup>11</sup> Daily newspapers began appearing in response to the many decisive political developments con-



cerning the struggle for the land. Until the establishment of the radio station (supervised by the British) in 1936, the press was the only medium providing the public with news concerning the Palestinian issue and other global issues. The weeklies could not keep up with the rate of developments and were unable to provide prompt reports. This led to the evolvement of daily newspapers, for example *Filastin*, the first newspaper that appeared and persisted as a daily. Another veteran newspaper, *al-Karmil*, repeatedly promised its readers that it would become a daily newspaper<sup>12</sup> but never succeeded in doing so. For a time it did manage to appear twice a week, but even this increase placed too heavy a burden on its financial resources, and it was forced eventually to resume its weekly appearance. When its financial difficulties grew during the Second World War it was forced to cease publication.<sup>13</sup>

The status of *Filastin* as a daily newspaper and the rise in its circulation was supported by the large financial resources provided to the newspaper's workers and journalists by 'Issa al-'Issa, the newspaper's owner. His businesses and properties enabled him to manage the newspaper as a commercial enterprise. The newspaper was a type of family business, and many of the al-'Issa family members worked for it and helped in its distribution.

The founder of *al-Difa'* learned from *Filastin* and raised the necessary funding to manage the newspaper. He received favourable credit terms from the Arab Bank at which he had been employed,<sup>14</sup> and he also sold citrus groves belonging to the family and invested the returns in the newspaper.<sup>15</sup>

Political organizations and institutions supporting newspapers affiliated with them or belonging to them also contributed to their stability. However when this support ended, once the political organization ceased to exist or weakened, the newspaper stopped appearing or appeared less frequently. This is what happened to *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* and *al-Yarmuk*, newspapers that supported the Husayni institutions. They stopped appearing when these institutions weakened. A similar fate befell the newspaper *al-Arab*, voice of the al-Istiqlal party.

Most of the daily newspapers were printed on eight pages in a large format and some on sixteen pages in a smaller format. Often the format was determined by the current financial situation or by the quantity of paper that reached the country, and not by the newspapers. In October 1936, for example, *Filastin* appeared in a small format and informed its readers that this is the result of a lack of paper. The newspaper added that in the event of a long-term shortage it would be

forced to reduce the pages of the newspaper even further and even cease appearing, as it has only a limited quantity of paper in reserve.<sup>16</sup> Three days later the newspaper told its readers that the necessary paper had arrived in a shipment from Europe, and that the newspaper would resume its previous format.<sup>17</sup> In 1937 the newspaper held a poll to ask its readers which format they preferred. The results "surprised" the editors, as the readers indicated that they prefer the smaller format.<sup>18</sup> The newspaper mentioned that the poll was held through letters sent to the editorial offices, although it did not state the exact number of letters, reporting instead that a large majority of the readers who sent letters preferred the smaller format as it was easier to read.<sup>19</sup>

Until the newspaper *al-Difa'* began appearing in 1934 the Palestinian press suffered from poor professional quality in the arrangement and presentation of the journalistic material. Most of the journalistic material was comprised of news, which was scattered throughout the paper, usually with little or no logical order. In many cases sentences were mistakenly omitted, or the editor did not refer readers to continuations of items appearing on the first page, and in some cases there were no such continuations. At the time there were almost no editorials, aside from the owners of *al-Karmil*, *Filastin*, and later *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, who wrote short leaders in almost every issue.<sup>20</sup> The publication of *al-'Arab* and *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, written by the best contemporary journalists and intellectuals, raised the professional level of the press. However the publication of *al-Difa'* in April 1934 was the most important event in the history of the Palestinian press during the British Mandate period. This newspaper succeeded in attracting skilled and professional journalists with much experience in journalism from various Arab countries, such as Khayr al-Din al-Zirakli and Sami al-Sarraj, in addition to the newspaper's owner and editor-in-chief, Ibrahim al-Shanti, who wrote the editorials and signed them "Ibrahim". At the time when Sami al-Sarraj served as acting editor of the newspaper and wrote the editorial, Ibrahim al-Shanti had two regular columns: one was '*al-Naqqada*'<sup>21</sup> (The critic) and the other appeared under the title '*Abadith Ila al-shabab*'<sup>22</sup> (Words to the young). *Al-Dif'a* often used pictures from all over the world, and it had a wide network of reporters in the capitals of major countries.

One month after it began appearing, *al-Difa'* boasted of its innovative contributions and improvements in the newspaper industry. It even bragged of its superiority to other newspapers and said: "The greatness of *al-Difa'* lies in its ability to print fresh news 48 hours before other newspapers. This proves beyond a doubt its advantage in eliciting firsthand

news ... Our newspaper is always first and thus throws salt in the eyes of the jealous."<sup>23</sup>

The staff of *Filastin* was well aware of the successes of *al-Difa'*. They made many improvements in their news presentation and began dividing items by topics. The acting editor, Yusuf Hanna, began writing editorials, entitled '*Masa'il al-yawm*' (current affairs). He often apologized to the readers for mistakes in the presentation of the journalistic material due to the newspaper's difficulties and promised that everything would be done to correct these mistakes as soon as possible.<sup>24</sup>

Once the necessary improvements had been implemented, the staff of *Filastin* challenged *al-Difa'* and published alleged attestations of its readers concerning the quality and merits of the newspaper. In one of these statements, a truck driver named 'Omar 'Abdullah from the village of 'Arrabeh near Jenin said:

I am a driver from the village of 'Arrabeh. Reading the newspaper *Filastin* gives me special pleasure. I would be unwilling to read any other newspaper, as this is the only newspaper whose news and articles can be understood by any person, and I think that its news items are always one hundred percent true'.<sup>25</sup>

This testimony was part of the strong rivalry between the two largest daily newspapers, *Filastin* and *al-Difa'*. During this period the *al-Difa'* readership grew among the rural population in particular and among the Muslim population in general – the Muslims saw the newspaper as a counterbalance to the Christian *Filastin*.

*Filastin* intentionally chose a member of the rural sector and the Muslim population to extoll its merits in order to prove that it had readers in these sectors. The newspaper wished to show that it served the whole nation and that even the uneducated (for example, truck drivers) could understand it. This implies a certain criticism of *al-Difa'*, which employed a large group of intellectuals who usually wrote in a figurative style, difficult for the less well-educated to understand. It must be stated that during the events of 1936–39 the newspapers tended in general to use more 'popular' words and even colloquial expressions. This was true of *Filastin*, *al-Difa'*, and even *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, whose editor, Sheikh al-Farouqi, was renowned for his figurative literary style. Even al-Farouqi endeavoured to use colloquial expressions and sayings in order to appeal to the working class. In an article on the conscience as being European politicians, al-Farouqi described this conscience is made of rubber. He explained the nature of rubber to his

readers, saying: 'Rubber is a material that does not break and can withstand pressure and blows, but when the pressure rises it tears and cannot be mended whether it be hot or cold'.<sup>26</sup> Elsewhere the editor employed a saying used by peasants, when he spoke of the British laws restricting Jewish immigration as a rope made of grass (*babl min bashish*),<sup>27</sup> a soft rope that is unable to restrain even the lightest object.<sup>28</sup> *Al-Difa'*, whose reporters previously used a traditional and figurative style, also switched to more colloquial popular expressions.<sup>29</sup> The newspaper *al-Zumur*, published in Acre, used the poetic style and colloquial language to express harsh social and political criticism.<sup>30</sup>

The tendency to write in a popular style and in simple colloquial language intensified during 1935-36 and reached its zenith on the eve of the Second World War. This probably stemmed from the wish of the press to win over a large percentage of the readers, especially among the popular classes, for whom figurative literary language was 'too difficult'. In addition, the intelligentsia, who were at first the only potential readers of the various newspapers, displayed ideological stability. These people were by now used to reading certain newspapers (according to their political, factional and even religious affiliation) and would not willingly change their habits. Subscribers of the newspaper *al-Liwa*, journal of the Husaynis and their party, were primarily party members and members of the urban intelligentsia and the social elite. For example, the newspaper sold approximately 200 copies in Jerusalem in early December 1935. This number had dropped by late January 1936 to 150 copies.<sup>31</sup> In late December 1935 the newspaper sold 206 issues in Haifa, but a month later (in late January 1936) its sales were almost nonexistent.<sup>32</sup> This newspaper was perceived as the newspaper of the social elite (*efendiyya*) and it was mostly distributed in the large cities, while in the rural centres few copies were sold (seven in Qalqilya, five in Safed in December 1935).<sup>33</sup> In its first week 1,147 copies were sold and in its fourth week 1,272. However sales had dropped to 643 by the eighth week.<sup>34</sup> The newspaper's agent in Haifa said in a letter to Jamal al-Husayni, the owner, that in his opinion the drop in sales stemmed from the newspaper's difficult language and its seemingly indifference towards matters concerning the common people.<sup>35</sup>

A look at the newspaper's subscribers in Haifa shows that this was indeed a newspaper for the '*efendiyya*'. The sixty subscribers in this city<sup>36</sup> included senior clerics, such as Sheikh Yunis al-Khatib<sup>37</sup> and Sheikh Subhi Khayzaran, attorneys such as Mahmoud al-Madi,<sup>38</sup> writers and journalists such as Ahmad al-Imam<sup>39</sup> and business and property owners such as Imil Butaji and Tahir Qaraman.

The readiness of the press to use more popular language was apparently also related to the rising power of the peasants during the revolt and in particular after the senior urban leadership was exiled in October 1937. Newspaper editors, aware of the power of the new masters and knowing that they had, for the most part, received only a low standard of education, tried to write in a language that would be understood by leaders of the armed bands. The editor of *al-Karmil* discussed the mutual relations between the press and the people and said in November 1939:

On the one hand we are aware of the influence of the press on the popular classes, who have started to express an interest in newspapers, after previously scorning them and their facilities. However this influence is not expressed by appreciation of the journalists and their efforts to produce newspapers. They try to obtain newspapers from their friends or to read them in the cafes, and thus cheat the newspaper owners out of their meager profits that do not reach half the money a person pays, for example, for shining his shoes.<sup>40</sup>

Nassar added and said that 'the Palestinian journalist would prefer to be a beggar in Italy and Switzerland than a journalist in his own country'.<sup>41</sup> This can be understood to mean that although the public began expressing considerable interest in the press they did not appreciate the work and efforts of the journalists on their behalf. At the time that Nassar wrote this his newspaper was in a bad financial situation, causing him to lay off all employees and employ members of his family in their stead. These hardships can be felt in Nassar's agitated appeal to overdue subscribers, saying that he can no longer pay the rent nor even feed his sons.<sup>42</sup> However, Nassar obviously chose to ignore the current economic difficulties – the public did indeed prefer to buy bread rather than a newspaper. It was also possible, as Nassar pointed out, to get the newspaper from friends or to read it in cafes which usually had copies of the various newspapers. Newspapers were even read out loud in the cafes for the benefit of the illiterate.

Another problem encountered by Nassar and the editors of other weeklies was the inability to compete with the large daily newspapers (in particular *Filastin* and *al-Difa'*). The daily newspapers provided the readers with up-to-date news, while the weeklies had to search for special topics that would attract the readers. They also competed with weeklies from neighbouring Arab countries, such as the Egyptian

*al-Hilal* and *al-Musawwar* which were of much better quality than the local weeklies.

*Al-Karmil*, similar to other weeklies, often declared that it would soon begin appearing daily. In February 1937 *al-Karmil* told its readers that it would soon be published daily, once the editor would complete some technical and professional arrangements pertaining to printing the newspaper and paying the editors.<sup>41</sup> It explained the need to appear daily and said:

Had we wished to make commercial profits from our newspaper, we would have turned it into a daily newspaper long ago. However, the homeland and our principles are more precious than money, profits, influence and well-being. We would never have thought of turning the newspaper into a daily if it we had not been implored to do so by some dear friends, and if we did not know, from our extensive experience, that people tend to read news more than they tend to read about principles and ideals. Due to these two factors we are compelled to overcome all the difficulties and make every effort to obtain the daily news while maintaining our national principles.<sup>42</sup>

The newspaper never did appear as a daily and in 1942 it was overcome by financial hardships and forced to close. *Al-Karmil* was not the only weekly that tried to compete with the daily newspapers, but it could not withstand the competition and was finally compelled to close down. It was preceded by the newspaper *al-'Arab*, voice of the al-Istiqlal party, that opened with a bang and closed with a wimper.

Monthly journals were almost insignificant. Most were Christian religious journals or school and college journals that appeared irregularly, and the topics they discussed had little or nothing to do with the critical issues on the Palestinian public agenda.

## SYMBOLS AND SLOGANS IN THE PRESS

The names chosen by the newspaper owners for their newspapers and the symbols and slogans printed on their title-pages were aimed at stressing certain ideological trends or political or social views, which were anchored in the historical context of each newspaper's establishment.

The names of newspapers established towards the end of the

Ottoman period usually expressed the emphasis given by the owners and editors (mostly Orthodox Christians) to local national sentiments. The names *Filastin* and *al-Karmil*, given in this period, are unique Palestinian names.

After the First World War and at the beginning of the British Mandate the names given to the newspapers expressed political views prevalent among Palestinian society. On the one hand, the newspaper *Surya al-Janubiyya* (*Southern Syria*) expressed the ideal of Greater Syria, of which Palestine forms the southern part. On the other hand, the newspaper *Mir'at al-Sharq* (*Mirror of the West*) expressed the idea of pan-Eastern unity.

In 1924 the pan-Islam-inclined newspaper *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim* (*The Straight Path*) was founded, and in 1927 the pan-Arab inclined newspaper *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* (*Arab Unity*) was founded, followed by the pan-Islam-inclined *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* (*Islamic Unity*), in 1932.

The names of the newspapers were also derived from Islamic tradition, although they were not necessarily Islamically inclined. For example *al-Yarmuk* (after the Yarmuch river, site of the decisive battle in 638 between Muslims and Byzantines) or *al-Zumur* (named after a sura in the Koran). Some newspapers were named after famous newspapers in other Arab countries, such as the newspaper *al-Liwa* (*The Flag*) after the newspaper founded by Mustafa Kamil in Egypt in the early twentieth century.

In terms of symbols and slogans, it is very interesting to mention the characterizations noted below the name of each newspaper. *Mir'at al-Sharq*, for example, defined itself as a newspaper dealing with political, social, economic and educational matters.<sup>45</sup> The newspaper *al-'Arab* defined its fields of interest as political, educational, historical and cultural.<sup>46</sup> The newspaper *al-Khamis*, published in Jaffa in 1935, outdid itself by defining seven fields of interest: political, critical, comic, literary, social, artistic and cartoons.<sup>47</sup> Other newspapers sought to emphasize their uniqueness through these titles. *Al-'Arab*, for example, expressed its pan-Arab tendencies by defining itself as a 'newspaper that discusses matters of the Arab and Islamic world'.<sup>48</sup> The background for the title was a map of the Arab world, including the countries of the Fertile Crescent, the Arabian Peninsula, Egypt and North Africa.<sup>49</sup> *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* also chose a map of the Arab world as the background for its name, which was coloured a vivid red.<sup>50</sup> The following slogan was written below this backdrop: 'If the Arabs are humiliated Islam will be humiliated.'<sup>51</sup> *Al-Difa'* chose to highlight on its title page a verse by the Syrian poet Khayr al-Din al-Zirakli, one of its owners,

which stated: 'If you can't mount a crushing attack, you had better maintain a preventive policy of defence.'<sup>52</sup> The name of the newspaper *al-Difa'* (*The Defence*) was derived from this verse. However, some researchers mistakenly connected this newspaper to the Nashashibi party of the same name, incorrectly believing that the newspaper received its name because it served as the voice of the political party.<sup>53</sup>

Most of the newspapers felt that their work was intended, first and foremost, for the benefit of the homeland and its interests. The words homeland (*watan*) and nationalism (*wataniyya*) were commonly found in slogans coined by the newspapers for their title pages or in their editorials. Almost all the newspapers defined their appearance as the most important event of Arab or Palestinian nationalism. *Al-'Arab* defined itself, saying: 'The newspaper *al-'Arab* is the postman, the messenger, the mouth and the platform of every Arab in the Arab homeland.'<sup>54</sup> *Al-Shabab* defined itself as a newspaper serving the young and edited by a group of 'liberty people bearing the flag of the national ideal'.<sup>55</sup> The title-page of the newspaper *al-Lahab* carried the slogan: 'One homeland, one people and one leader'.<sup>56</sup> It expressed the newspaper's support of Haj Amin al-Husayni, in face of the British refusal to acknowledge him as the representative of Palestinian Arabs at a convention they were planning to hold in London in early 1939. The editorial published in its first issue said:

In the name of God and in the name of the homeland, we hereby open the first issue of this newspaper. Its publication is intended to serve this country and to fight for its interests in a special way. We support the general interests and we are aware of all the plots aimed at the Arab homeland in these dark times.<sup>57</sup>

The one leader mentioned by the newspaper together with the homeland and the people was the mufti, who after his exile in 1937 became a symbol over whom the newspapers competed at praising and extolling. This was even true of newspapers known for their extreme hostility towards the Mufti, such as *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* and *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim*.

#### THE JOURNALISTS: A PROFILE

During this period approximately 253 journalists were employed in Palestine, amongst them 233 Palestinians, 8 Syrians, 5 Lebanese, 4 Egyptians and one Indian journalist – in terms of sects there were 187



Muslims (including four Druze)<sup>58</sup> and 65 Christians.<sup>59</sup>

In terms of geographical distribution, most of the journalists came from urban families or were sons of rural families who had migrated to the cities. They originated mainly from the three major Palestinian cities: Jerusalem, Jaffa and Haifa. In the early 1930s journalists from less central cities, such as Nablus, Gaza, Ramle, Acre and Bethlehem, also began to appear on the journalistic stage, even from provincial towns such as Tul Karim, Qalqilya and Majdal. The distribution of Palestinian journalists by city of origin<sup>60</sup> is in the table below:

City	No. of journalists from this city
Jaffa	85
Jerusalem	75
Haifa	30
Nablus	10
Gaza	6
Acre	4
Ramle	4
Bethlehem	3
Ramallah	3
Tul Karim	3
Qalqilya	3
Nazareth	4
Majdal	1
Safed	1
Jenin	1
Total	233

This table indicates that journalistic activity took place mainly in Jerusalem, Jaffa and Haifa, although the dominance of these cities in the 1920s gradually declined in the 1930s and 1940's. Another fact worthy of mention is that during these years Jaffa replaced Jerusalem as the major location of journalists and newspapers.

### *Formal Education*

Until the early 1930s the newspaper owners, editors and journalists, had received only an elementary, or at most a secondary education, few completed their higher education, for example, 'Issa al-'Issa studied at the American University of Beirut,<sup>61</sup> and Boulous Shihada graduated from the English College of Jerusalem.<sup>62</sup> Some journalists graduated from religious colleges such as the al-Azhar College, where Sheikh 'Abdullah al-Qalqili<sup>63</sup> and Sheikh Sulayman al-Taji al-Farouqi<sup>64</sup> both studied.

In the early 1930s a group of young university graduates began

working as journalists. Some of them were sons of elite families, though not necessarily from the large cities, and some were sons of wealthy rural families who migrated to the larger cities but maintained their property, lands and relationships in their original villages. The former included Akram Zu'aitir, son of 'Omar Zu'aitir, Mayor of Nablus at the turn of the twentieth century. He began his studies at the American University of Beirut, but was compelled to interrupt them and return to Palestine, due to his political activities, which led to his being wanted by the French authorities. In Palestine he was appointed a teacher of Arabic in Nablus and Acre, studied law in Jerusalem and was certified as an attorney.<sup>66</sup> Ibrahim al-Shanti belonged to the second group. He completed his studies at the American University of Beirut and earned a BA in economics and political science. His family was a wealthy rural family from Qalqilya, some of whose sons moved to Jaffa where their business dealings involved, among other things, books, newspapers and printing houses.<sup>66</sup>

In the mid-1930s the field of journalism was augmented by young people who had studied journalism in Western universities. The two most significant figures in this category were Emil al-Ghouri, who completed his studies in 1933 at the University of Cincinnati in the United States and upon his return to Palestine worked for newspapers that supported the Husayni camp,<sup>67</sup> and fo'ad Saba, who completed his BA at the American University of Beirut and his MA in Britain.<sup>68</sup>

Most of the young academics working as journalists worked for the larger newspapers – *Filastin*, *al-Difa'* and *al-Liwa* – which had financial support and could therefore pay salaries. Editors of other newspapers were not paid or were only reimbursed for their expenses. The best example is Akram Zu'aitir; when working as editor of the newspaper *Mir'at al-Sharq* he was aware of the newspaper's difficult situation and did not dare ask its owner, Boulous Shihada, for payment in return for editing the newspaper. He said: 'I began working for the newspaper and I didn't want to discuss financial matters with the owner. I knew from my predecessor, Ahmad al-Shuqayri, that he would not pay me a thing for my work. It was sufficient that the newspaper served as a platform from which I could serve my nation'.<sup>69</sup>

However, not all journalists were as ideological as Zu'aitir, in particular those whose journalistic work was their only source of support. This group included the journalists from neighbouring Arab countries who came to Palestine as political refugees or as professional journalists and sought to support themselves through journalism their. Most of them were very experienced journalists, and some of them, such as

Khayr al-Din al-Zirakli and Sami al-Sarraj (of Syrian descent) and 'Ajaj Nuwayhid (of Lebanese descent) were renowned journalists and first-rate authors in their home countries. Al-Zirakli and al-Sarraj worked for *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* and later took part in the establishment of the newspaper *al-Difa'*, one of the two most important Arabic newspapers in Palestine during the Mandate period. In addition, the Egyptians also Yusuf Hanna and 'Ali Mansour, and the Syrians, Kamal 'Abbas and Mahmoud Chirqas, worked in Palestine for lengthy periods. Yusuf Hanna worked as editor of *Filastin* from the mid-1920s until 1948 and the other three worked for almost all the major Arabic newspapers in Palestine at one time or another.

### *Political Involvement*

Almost all the newspaper owners in the 1920s were politically active in the Palestinian National Movement. Some of them ('Issa al-'Issa, Boulous Shihada and Sheikh al-Farouqi) were members of the Arab Executive Committee. Sheikh al-Farouqi, 'Omar al-Barghothi and Najib Nassar were also active at the beginning of the Mandate in establishing the Arab political parties under the inspiration of the British authorities.<sup>70</sup>

Through their support of the British, these journalists hoped to reduce the power and the influence of the two main blocs in the Palestinian National Movement (the *Majlisiyyun* and the *Mu'aridun*), who had their own newspaper owners to voice their concerns and protect their views. However, when the large blocs in the Palestinian Movement won the sympathy of the Palestinian public through displays of hostility towards the British, those who had supported the British, headed by al-Farouqi and Nassar, became very critical of, and sometimes even hostile towards the Mandate authorities. Their newspapers, *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* and *al-Karmil*, led the criticism against the progressing relationship between the British authorities and the Jewish Settlement.

The frequent shifts in the political views of the newspapers were also evident among the journalists. It is possible to indicate three political groups active amongst the journalists, although there were frequent and sometimes sharp transitions between the various groups:

1. Journalists who supported the Palestinian representative institutions (the Executive Committee, the High Muslim Council and the Arab Higher Committee). For example Munif al-Husayni, Jamal al-

- Husayni and Emil al-Ghuri. These three journalists were involved in the publication and editing of all the newspapers known for their support of the Husaynis.
2. Journalists who objected to the representative institutions and to the Husaynis during this period and were affiliated with the Nashashibi camp. For example Hasan Sidki al-Dajani, 'Abdullah al-Qalqili, and As'ad al-Shuqayri. These journalists wrote for newspapers that identified with the Nashashibis.
  3. Journalists who vacillated between the camps, usually according to their interests and to the circumstances. This was the largest group. It included senior newspaper editors 'Issa al-'Issa, Najib Nassar and Boulous Shihada, and supporters of the Istiqlal Party and the pan-Arab ideology, such as Ibrahim al-Shanti, Akram Zu'aitir, and 'Ajjaj Nuwayhid.

The first two groups were very well-defined during this period and there were almost no desertions or transitions from one to the other. This may have been a result of the support received from the organizations with which they were affiliated (the Executive Committee and the Muslim Council for the Husaynis and the local municipalities for the Nashashibis).

The frequent transitions of members of the third group to the first or second group stemmed from two main reasons. The first reason was based on self-interest – as long as they received financial support from the Husayni institutions they supported the Husaynis and when they received more support from the Nashashibs they did not hesitate to support them. The second reason was based on ideology and the positions stated by the leaders of the two camps. These journalists were mostly supporters of al-Istiqlal, the organization that supposedly displayed a neutral attitude towards the Husayni–Nashashibi struggle. Their support of either camp depended on the affinity of this camp with their ideological views, in particular with regard to the pan-Arab ideal.<sup>71</sup>

News of possible desertions from the two first groups was often mentioned in the 'Arab Office News' documents of the Jewish Agency. Eliyahu Sasson reported in May 1935 that Emil al-Ghuri, who was one of the most active journalists in the Husayni camp, approached Fakhri al-Nashashibi and informed him that he had had enough of politics and if he had 500 Palestinian pounds he would leave for America. He asked Fahri for this sum but Fakhri requested that he publish a statement describing 'the deeds of the Mufti' before he left. Eventually

the deal did not materialize as Emil did not reply to Fakhri and in any case Fakhri was unwilling to pay him more than 50 Palestinian pounds.<sup>72</sup> Al-Ghouri's appeal to the Nashashibis must have reflected his difficult financial situation. One month after the failed deal with Fahri Nashashibi, he sold a significant part of his printing house to the owners of the newspaper *al-Difa'*.<sup>73</sup>

Of the 233 acting Palestinian journalists of the time, 187 were politically active.<sup>74</sup> The proportion of journalists among contemporary political activists is presented in the table below:<sup>75</sup>

Political Party or Organization	Proportion of Journalists among the Political Activists %
The Christian Islamic Societies	5
The Youth Congress	18.5
The al-Istiqlal Party	36.5
The Defense Party (Nashashibi)	31
The Arab Party (Husayni)	7
The Reform Party	29
The Popular Committees	19

These findings clearly indicate that the activists of the al-Istiqlal party were the most active in the field of journalism, as this was a party of the intelligentsia that objected to the traditional clan division and most of their activity was expressed through articles in newspapers or speeches made at demonstrations. This party had almost no popular foundation, unlike the other parties, and particularly the Husayni Arab party, whose leaders (aside from Jamal and Munif al-Husayni) devoted themselves to organizational political issues and delegated the journalistic work to hired journalists (particularly from neighbouring Arab countries). In contrast, a significant proportion of the Nashashibi opposition journalists were themselves political activists and expressed their own views, not due to the scarcity of financial resources necessary to employ professional journalists but rather because the latter were concerned for their lives, property and families, which they threatened by supporters of the Mufti.

### *Readership and Circulation*

A list of the circulation of the newspapers during 1929–39 – by number of copies:<sup>76</sup>

	1929-1932	1935-1936	1937-1939
<i>Filastin</i>	2,500-3,000	4,000-6,000*	2,000-4,000
<i>al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya</i>	1,500-2,000	2,000	
<i>al-Hayat</i>	1,500	-	-
<i>al-Karmil</i>	1,000-1,500	1,500-2,000	1,000
<i>Sawt al-Sba'b</i>	1,000	up to 1,000	up to 1,000
<i>Mir'at al-Sbarq</i>	1,000	up to 1,000	up to 1,000
<i>al-Iqdam</i>	800	-	-
<i>al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya</i>	-	1,200-2,000	1,000
<i>al-Difa'</i>	-	4,000-6,000**	2,000-4,000
<i>al-Liwa</i>	-	3,000-4,000	2,000-3,000

\* During the strike and when *al-Difa'* did not appear its circulation reached 8,000 copies.

\*\* During the strike and when *Filastin* did not appear its circulation reached 8,000-10,000 copies.

The circulation data mentioned in the table do not necessarily indicate the actual number of readers. They also do not indicate the distribution of readers according to age, sex, geographical area, religious group or social group.

It can be assumed that the actual and exact number of readers was significantly higher than the number of copies printed. Each copy served entire families and even villages. Thus the content of the newspapers reached the illiterate through the custom of reading the newspaper in groups at home, in cafes, in the village *madafas* and in those factories which allowed 'newspaper breaks'.<sup>77</sup>

For example, the newspaper (usually *al-Difa'*) would reach distant villages once a week. It was delivered to the house of the mukhtar, who would invite the few literate people in the village, and sometimes from neighbouring villages, to read the newspaper to the people in his madafa.<sup>78</sup> For this reason the literate were considered influential people, and in the long winter nights or during the nights in the month of Ramdan they took on the important role of storyteller (*al-bakarwati*).<sup>79</sup>

The villagers who travelled to town would return with the newspapers, especially in periods of tension and conflict when newspapers were considered an important and necessary commodity even in the villages.<sup>80</sup>

The villages near the main roads (especially the Jaffa-Haifa road which originally passed through Tul Karim and Jenin) received newspapers from the vehicle that transferred them from Jaffa to Haifa and vice versa; it stopped near the villages and distributed a few issues. This led to a larger circulation of the newspapers and to greater involvement of the rural population in journalistic activities and in political activities in general.<sup>81</sup>

In the villages there were people who specialized in reading and went from place to place telling people the recent news. In Nablus, for example, as related by historian Ihsan al-Nimr, there were two such people: one was Raghīb Shahīn, nicknamed 'Reuter' (after the famous news agency) and the second was Salīh Bīshara, nicknamed 'Hawwasa'. These two men went from place to place, from shop to shop and from meeting to meeting collecting news for circulation, while also relating the news that they had read in the various newspapers.<sup>82</sup>

### *Distribution of Readers by Sex, Age and Community*

In the 1930s there were many more literate men than women,<sup>83</sup> and it would appear that the men were also more interested in the contents of the newspapers (which were mostly political).<sup>84</sup> However, it is reasonable to assume that Palestinian women, especially in the cities and among the upper classes, read Palestinian newspapers and newspapers from other Arab countries. This assumption is strengthened by letters written by women to the editorial offices of the newspapers and their participation in the journalistic discourse on matters of women's status and women's contribution to society.<sup>85</sup> Women also actively participated in journalistic fundraising campaigns held by the newspapers in support of Palestinian national activities.<sup>86</sup>

This assumption is further reinforced by commercial advertisers who addressed the female public by advertising women's products (perfumes, hygiene products, jewelery, hats, etc.).<sup>87</sup> Towards the end of this period, special sections for women began appearing in the newspapers. Most of the material was copied from the Egyptian press, mainly the newspaper *al-Musawwar*, or translated from the Western press.<sup>88</sup>

With regard to the readers' ages, it may be assumed that the majority of the literate people were members of the younger generation who studied in the educational system established in Palestine by the British Mandate authorities. The proportion of schoolchildren among the readers was very high. Although the British authorities did not permit unrestricted newspaper reading in times of tension, as Akram Zu'aitir relates, this did not prevent children and youth from being exposed to the journalistic material and its messages.<sup>89</sup> Many teachers conveyed the newspapers' messages to their pupils, recommended certain newspapers and even read important articles to their classes.<sup>90</sup>

The journalistic activities during this period served as an influential and important factor in the process of shaping political, social and cul-

tural changes, and they reflected the process in which Palestinian society was formed during the Mandate period. The major contribution of journalistic discourse was the creation of a cultural discourse among a new generation of intelligentsia. The press contributed significantly to enriching the cultural life of this generation by advertising plays, films and other cultural activities. It served as a window to the outer world and as a powerful instrument for spreading human culture and increasing awareness.

## NOTES

1. For example see: *al-Karmil*, 12 August 1933.
2. Ahmad al-Shanti, interview.
3. About the increasing power of the workers' unions in the early 1930s, Boulous Farah, interview.
4. *Filastin*, 17 June 1933.
5. *Al-Karmil*, 19 August 1933.
6. For example Boulous Shihada, editor of the Jerusalem newspaper *Mir'at al-Sbarq*. For more information see: CZA, S25/3303.
7. Interview with Ahmad al-Shanti.
8. On the activities of some of the members of this family see: CZA, S25/2798.
9. On meetings of this journalist with representatives of the Jewish Agency see: CZA, S25/3303.
10. About British suppression of the Arab Revolt and reactions of the armed bands to the British measures see: Eyal.
11. The statistical data mentioned in this chapter with regard to the newspapers, their numbers, editors and dates of publication, is derived mainly from these sources: *al-Mawsu'a al-Filastiniyya*, Part II, pp. 438-43; Khouri, pp. 53-108; al-'Aqqad, pp. 90-215; Yehoshuwa, pp. 7-50.
12. There were a number of attempts to publish daily newspapers before 1929, but all these attempts were short-lived, due to the difficulties involved.
13. Khouri, p. 14.
14. Shimoni, p. 406.
15. Interview with Fawzi al-Shanti.
16. *Filastin*, 9 October 1936.
17. *Ibid.*, 12 October 1936.
18. *Ibid.*, 17 February 1937.
19. *Ibid.*
20. In *al-Karmil* the owners and editor of the newspaper did not write under the title of 'editorial', but they usually addressed the public on the first page or gave advice to the Mandate government and Arab countries on the preferred manner of action with regard to the Palestinian issue.
21. See for example: *al-Difa'*, 4 May 1934.
22. *Ibid.*, 19 August 1934.
23. *Ibid.*, 4 May 1934.
24. *Filastin*, 7 January 1937.
25. *Ibid.*, 7 May 1937.
26. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, 25 June 1939.
27. A grass rope is used by peasants to tie sheaves of wheat when gathering them from the field. They use a soft rope of grass which can be easily removed when necessary.
28. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, 28 July 1939.
29. *Al-Difa'*, 23 April 1934.
30. See, for example, *al-Zumur*, 12 May 1932.
31. DEC, P/350/167.



32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
36. This list is among the documents of Yosef Vashitz at the Yad Ya'ari Archives in Givat Haviva, 4.35-95(5).
37. Yunis al-Khatib represented Haifa on the High Muslim Council and was one of the city's senior clerics. He was considered affiliated with the *Majlisiyyun*.
38. Mahmud al-Madi came from the village of Ijzim in the Haifa District. His family was the dominant family in the village and it was even influential in neighbouring villages. He engaged in advocacy in addition to agriculture. Politically he belonged to the *Mu'aridun* camp, despite the inclination of the family's more senior leader (*Mu'in al-Madi*) towards the *Majlisiyyun* camp (on this see: Vashitz documents, Yad Ya'ari Archives at Givat Haviva, 14.35-95 (3)).
39. Ahmad al-Imam was active within the Muslim community of Haifa. He was secretary of the Muslim Society in the city for many years, and even represented Haifa on the Arab Executive Committee. He was an official of the High Muslim Council and naturally represented the mufti in Haifa and the North. He was involved in the establishment of the newspaper *al-Yarmuk* and often wrote for it. During the events of 1936–39 he was in touch with members of the armed bands and in particular with Yusuf Abu Durra. When the senior leadership was exiled (1937) he became one of the most prominent second-level leaders (for more details see: CZA, S25/3045).
40. *Al-Karmil*, 11 November 1939.
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid., 30 September 1939.
43. Ibid., 13 February 1937.
44. Ibid.
45. *Al-Waqa'i' al-Filastiniyya*, 361, 5 November 1933, p. 692.
46. Ibid., pp. 692–3.
47. Ibid., 546, Appendix 2, 24 October 1935, p. 1409.
48. *Al-'Arab*, 27 August 1932.
49. Ibid.
50. See, for example, the issue from 14 January 1933.
51. Ibid.
52. *Al-Difa'*, 20 April 1934.
53. There is of course no connection between the Nashashibi Defence party and the newspaper *al-Difa'*, which was the voice of the al-Istiqlal Party. However some researchers mistakenly connected the two. For example see: al-'Abbasi, p. 74.
54. *Al-'Arab*, 27 August 1932.
55. *Al-Sbabab*, 11 June 1934.
56. *Al-Labab*, 12 February 1938.
57. Ibid.
58. The four Druze are included in the Muslim category, because they perceived themselves as Muslim and were even members of representative Muslim organizations, such as 'Ajaj Nuwayhid, who was a member and an official of the High Muslim Council, and Hani Abi Muslih, who was vice chairman of the Muslim Youth Society in Haifa.
59. This data is derived mainly from the following sources: Al-'Aqqad, Tarikh; al-Hout; Khouri; Zu'aitir, 1980a, Zu'aitir, 1994; Yehoshuwa; Shimoni; al-Waqa'i' al-Filastiniyya, years 1931–40; Al-'Udat, 1992, Abu Hamad.
60. This distribution includes towns on the outskirts of these cities or included in their jurisdiction.
61. Al-'Udat, 1992, p. 477.
62. Ibid., pp. 302–3.
63. Yehoshuwa, p. 103.
64. Al-'Udat, 1992, pp. 501–3.
65. On Akram Zu'aitir's studies see: Zu'aitir, 1994, pp. 8–10.
66. The al-Shanti family included five senior journalists, of whom two (Ibrahim and Muhammad Farid) were also newspaper editors. This family served as a counterbalance to the Christian al-'Issa family that published the newspaper *Filastin*. Interview with Fawzi al-Shanti.

67. Yehoshuwa, p. 33.
68. Al-'Udat, 1992, pp. 254–5.
69. Zu'aitir, 1994, p. 104.
70. For more information see: Khalla, pp. 125–8.
71. For more information see: Zu'aitir, 1994, pp. 412–5.
72. Arab Office News, 23 May 1935, CZA, S25/22224.
73. Ibid., 25 June 1935.
74. Al-Hout, p. 686.
75. Ibid., p. 688.
76. Ayalon, 148–51; CO733/207 and Documents of the Palestinian Executive Committee, DEC P/986/03093.
77. Interviews with Boulous Farah and 'Ali 'Ashour.
78. This was related by Muhammad Hijaz (an educated man of the period from the village of 'Inibta near Tul Karim) in his memoirs maintained in a private collection.
79. Ibid.
80. Ibid.
81. Interview with 'Atiyya Nayif Ghazala, the *mukhtar* of the village of Kufur Labad, who as a boy would bring the newspaper from the main road to the house of his father the *mukhtar*.
82. Al-Nimr, 1975, 4, p. 19.
83. Ibid.
84. Interview with Salma al-Husayni (an educated woman of the period who had a women's parlour).
85. See, for example, Sawt al- Sha'b, November–December 1939.
86. See, for example, the newspapers *Filastin* and *al-Difa'* during the Great Strike, April–October 1936.
87. Ibid.
88. Al-Karmil, 9 July 1939.
89. Akram Zu'aitir was himself a high school teacher in Acre in 1929, at the same time volunteering as a journalist for the Haifa newspaper *al-Yarmuk*. He was dismissed from his government position as a result of his articles in that newspaper.
90. This was related by Muhammad Hijaz, who was also a teacher in different schools. Despite the restrictions imposed by the authorities, he continued to inform his pupils of messages transmitted in the press.

## *Reactions of the Palestinian Press: From the Development of Representational Organizations to the Establishment of Political Parties in 1932*

Most of the writers dealing with the history of the Palestinian press perceive the year 1929, or to be precise August–September of that year, as a turning point in the history of the Palestinian Arabic press during the British Mandate period. These months ushered in a new era: the era of the daily newspaper, which until the establishment of the local radio station (on 31 March 1936) was the only medium providing current news to the people. Readers were specifically interested in details of the conflict between the Zionist movement and the Palestinian National movement concerning the country, a conflict that intensified after the events at the Western Wall in August 1929.

### THE PRESS OF THE PERIOD: AN OVERVIEW<sup>1</sup>

In the period 1929–32 twelve new newspapers appeared, in addition to those already in circulations, although most of them appeared only briefly. The most prominent were:

*Filastin*: Related to the renowned Jaffa newspaper, *Filastin*, owned by 'Issa al-'Issa; the newspaper tried to maintain its independence but tended towards the *Mu'arada* camp. It was published in Jaffa, edited by 'Azmi al-Nashashibi and Rushan Akhtar.

*Al-Hayat*: First published on 24 June 1930, in Jerusalem, as a daily newspaper, edited by 'Adil Jabr<sup>2</sup> and later by Khayr al-Din al-Zerakli and Akram Zu'aitir.<sup>3</sup> The newspaper proclaimed its neutrality (in the traditional struggle between the Husayni and Nashashibi camps) and had a clear pan-Arab and uncompromising anti-British orientation. It appeared for only two years.

*Al-Nabda*: First published as a weekly newspaper in May 1929, edited

by Wadi' Sunbur. Its owners were Jad Swidan and Qaysar Abyad. It ceased to appear the same year. *Al-Nabda* had a literary and sometimes religious-ethnic character.

*Al-Akblaq*: A social literary monthly (according to its title page). Its owner and editor was Dawoud al-Kurdi and its first issue was published in Jerusalem in December 1931. The newspaper appeared irregularly and continued intermittently for a number of years. It was closed by the authorities in June 1936.

*Al-'Arab*: Voice of the Al-Istiqlal party. It began appearing as a weekly newspaper in Jerusalem on 27 August 1932. Its main editor and owner of the franchise was 'Ajaj Nuwayhid,<sup>4</sup> and its columnists were party leaders such as 'Awni 'Abdul al Hadi, Mu'in al-Madi, 'Izzat Darwaza' and Akram Zu'aitir. The newspaper ceased to be published in 1934.

Of these newspapers which already existed, the most prominent were:

*Filastin*: First published in Jaffa as a weekly newspaper in 1911, under the ownership of 'Issa al-'Issa, *Filastin* became a daily newspaper in September 1929. From then until 1931 it was edited by Na'im al-'Issa, cousin of the owner. In 1931 the editor, Yusuf Hanna<sup>5</sup> joined the paper. The newspaper proclaimed its neutrality in the internal struggle occupying the Palestinian National movement, but since its owner was one of the activists of the *Mu'arada* camp<sup>7</sup> many researchers saw *Filastin* as the voice of the opposition.<sup>8</sup>

*Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*: journal of the High Muslim Council and of the Husayni camp and the Arab Executive Committee. It was first published on 20 January 1927, as a weekly newspaper. Later on it appeared twice a week and in 1933 it became a daily newspaper. It ceased publication in 1935. Its orientation was pan-Arab and pan-Islam (this may be inferred from the slogan on its title page: 'Disrespect of Arabism is a disgrace to Islam').<sup>9</sup> The main editor of the newspaper was Munif al-Husayni, nephew of the mufti of Jerusalem.<sup>10</sup>

*Al-Sirat al-Mustaqim*: First published in Jaffa as a weekly newspaper on 12 September 1924; after a while it began appearing twice a week. In 1929 the newspaper appeared daily, and later on reverted to appearing twice a weekly. In 1943 it was acquired by the newspaper *al-Difa'* and appeared as its evening supplement. The owner and editor of the newspaper was Sheikh 'Abdullah al-Qalqili,<sup>11</sup> a graduate of al-Azhar, who held distinct pan-Muslim ideas. On the internal scene he was regarded as part of the opposition to the mufti and tended to support the views of the Nashashibis.

*Al-Karmil*: One of the oldest and most enduring newspapers. It was first published in Haifa in 1908 as a weekly newspaper. It ceased appearing in 1913, following conflicts between its owners and the Ottoman authorities. When the British began their rule of Palestine, Najib Nassar<sup>12</sup> renewed publication of his newspaper. At first he sympathized with the British Mandate rule and hoped that it would benefit the Arab population, but when his hopes were dashed he proved to be decidedly anti-British, and mainly anti-Zionist. In the internal sphere he voiced neutral views, but was very critical of the influential factors in the Palestinian National movement.

*Al-Nafir*: First published in Alexandria in 1902.<sup>13</sup> In 1908 the newspaper moved to Jerusalem and in 1913 established itself in Haifa. It ceased publication on the eve of the First World War and resumed in September 1919. *Al-Nafir* appeared as a weekly newspaper until 1945. The newspaper voiced sympathetic views towards Britain and towards the Zionist movement, but its views fluctuated frequently. During the 1930s it supported the Husaynis, after receiving the assistance of the High Muslim Council. The well-known leader of the workers, Boulous Farah, who worked for the newspaper as a print worker and reporter, said that Ilya Zakka<sup>14</sup>

managed the newspaper as a commercial business and anything could be bought for the right price. For example, the newspaper's printing house printed bulletins for the underground Communist Movement and also for various rival factions of the Palestinian National Movement. They even printed Arabic material that was distributed by various Zionist organizations among the Arab population.<sup>15</sup>

*Mir'at al-Sharq*: First published in Jerusalem on 17 September 1919, as a bi-weekly. Its editor and owner was the political activist, Boulous Shihada,<sup>16</sup> one of the prominent activists in the Nashashibi *Mu'arada* camp. Consequently, the newspaper became one of the primary journals of the opposition to the mufti and the High Muslim Council. However, it must be stated that it did not persist, as described by some researchers. Ayalon, for example, in his book on the Arabic press, presents the newspaper as the main voice of the *Mu'arada* during the 1920s.<sup>17</sup> In the early 1930s the newspaper was sympathetic towards the British authorities and even called for cooperation, advocating to the principle of 'give and take'. Sometimes it described the Zionist enterprise in a positive light or at least suggested utilizing the Jewish

Immigration for the good of the country. The newspaper often did not hesitate to publish anti-Zionist reports. During 1929-30, Ahmad al-Shuqayri<sup>18</sup> (who founded the PLO in 1964) and Akram Zu'aitir were among the editors of the newspaper.

*Al-Yarmuk*: First published in Haifa on 30 September 1924, five times a week. The franchise belonged to the prominent Haifa leader, Rashid al-Haj Ibrahim and the editor was Kamal 'Abbas and later on the expatriate Lebanese journalist, Hani Abi Muslih. The newspaper was close to those affiliated with the High Muslim Council and served as its main voice, until the appearance of *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* in 1927. 'Abd al-Ghani al-Karmi and Ahmad al-Imam were the paper's journalists. It ceased publication in 1931.

*Al-Iqdam*: Its first issue was published in Haifa on 1 August 1926. In 1931 it moved to Jaffa and was published there until 1948. *Al-Iqdam* changed ownership a number of times. Initially, it was owned by Salim Hiliw and Yusuf Sallom and then by the Lebanese journalist, Gourg 'Aazar. Tanyus Nasir edited the newspaper during most of its years and even became its owner in 1935.

*Sawt al-Sba'b*: First published on 11 May 1922, in Bethlehem, as a daily newspaper. Later on appeared twice a week and finally became a weekly. Its owner and editor was 'Issa al-Bandak,<sup>19</sup> who was close to the central group of the Palestinian National movement and active in its various institutions.

*Al-Zumur*: Published in Acre as a weekly in 1927. Its owner and editor was Khalil Zaqqout al-Majdali<sup>20</sup>, who published the newspaper *al-Himara al-Qahira* in 1911 together with Najib Jana. *Al-Zumur* was a critical newspaper specializing in pointed social criticism presented satirically and ironically. On the internal Palestinian scene it was defined as independent.

*Al-Zubour*: First published in Haifa on 12 January 1921; in 1927 it began to appear on a twice-weekly basis. Its owner and editor was Jamil al-Bahri,<sup>21</sup> who was succeeded by his son, Hanna al-Bahri. The owner of the newspaper was suspected of having links with the Zionist Movement. He was killed in Haifa in 1930.

*Jaridat Hukumat Filastin al-Rasmiyya*: The Arab version of the formal newspaper of the British Mandate rule, which was also published in English and Hebrew once a month. The first issue was published on 1 January 1921, and from 1 January 1931, it was published under the new name of *al-Waqa'i' al-Filastiniyya*.

## CIRCULATION

The events of August 1929 also served as a turning point with regard to circulation of the newspapers and expansion of the readership. These events aroused much interest among the readers. They saw the press as their sole source of information, providing them with updates on recent developments, analyzing them, shaping their views, and in certain cases, dictating their steps.

In terms of geographic circulation, after the events the press expanded its access to the rural sector, following increasing literacy rates and the development of the educational system. This does not necessarily indicate a massive attraction to the press, although the level of interest definitely increased, even among the illiterate, who received updates of current events in the cafes and at the homes of the literate. In addition, reading the newspaper or even carrying it on the street was a sign of social status, bestowing prestige and respect upon the reader.<sup>22</sup> The constant increase in the number of literate people and the growing interest in the press was not reflected in the number of copies printed by those newspapers that had already been appearing before the events of 1929. The number of copies printed by these newspapers indeed rose, but they were hard hit by the appearance of new newspapers, competing for the same readership.

If we assume that the readers were divided according to the camps within Palestinian society, and each camp had newspapers that supported it or were affiliated with it, it seems that when a camp was supported by more than one newspaper this was at the expense of the older newspapers whose circulation did not increase. The records kept by contemporary newspaper vendors<sup>23</sup> give the impression that in the urban sector newspapers were sold mainly by distribution to the homes of subscribers, while in the villages and in remote locations the sales were a consequence of events on the Palestinian scene; i.e., in times of tension sales increased tenfold and sometimes as much as fifty-fold.<sup>24</sup> During periods of calm, sales dropped, as one or two copies could fulfill the needs of a whole village. The custom of an educated person reading the newspaper out loud in public at the café or the house of the mukhtar was supplemented by groups of workers who worked in the cities and returned home to their village at sundown; they would meet newspaper readers during the day, see the events discussed (gatherings, demonstrations and speeches), and furthermore, during rest intervals they would enjoy the experience of hearing one of their literate colleagues read the paper to them out loud.<sup>25</sup>

An interesting development of the time was the movement of the main vital centre of the press from Jerusalem to Jaffa. In Haifa (the third centre of Palestinian press during the Mandate period) the press also enjoyed a certain increase and stimulation. Continuous newspapers were also published in the peripheral cities, such as the newspaper *al-Zumur* in Acre and *Sawt al-Sha'b* in Bethlehem, both of which established their own readership.

As to the division between religious groups, during this period (1929-32) the dominance of the Orthodox Christians in the journalistic field was slowly undermined with the growth of a new generation of Muslim intelligentsia who began to occupy senior positions in the press. These people were mainly sons of prominent Jerusalem, Jaffa and Haifa families. However, there were also rural people who saw journalistic activity as an opportunity to improve their social status and increase their political influence. This group included 'Abdullah al-Qalqili, Ibrahim al-Shanti, among others. The newspaper *Filastin*, the most continuous newspaper with the largest circulation, was considered a Christian newspaper, in spite of its efforts to embrace Muslim symbols and celebrate Muslim festivals,<sup>26</sup> with the aim of forming a more comprehensive orientation. It was read in the large cities and in the provincial towns, mainly by educated Christians. The Muslims made numerous attempts to found a Muslim-owned newspaper that could compete with *Filastin*, beginning with *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim* by Sheikh al-Qalqili, *al-Yarmuk* by Rashid al Haj Ibrahim, and culminating with *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* by Munif al-Husayni, which enjoyed the support of the Husayni camp and the High Muslim Council. None of these attempts was particularly successful, owing partly to *Filastin's* stability and experience, but mainly because the majority of the educated people and readers in the 1920s belonged to the Christian groups. The first Muslim-owned newspaper that succeeded in reaching and even exceeding the circulation and readership of *Filastin* was the newspaper *al-Difa'*, founded in 1934 by Ibrahim al-Shanti.<sup>27</sup> This became possible following the many changes in the number of literate and educated people and their distribution among religious groups, classes and geographical areas. As a result of these changes, Muslims and villagers (who were mostly Muslims) formed a more significant part of the educated and literate, expressing interest in the written word and particularly newspapers, thus leading to a great increase in circulation among the rural population.<sup>28</sup> This definitely contradicts Ya'qov Shimoni's opinion of the young Palestinian generation of the time, 'some of whom learned to read and write, but the impression is that they do not



use this knowledge'.<sup>29</sup> He writes that this stems 'not only from lack of opportunity, but also from lack of mental inclination and thirst for the written word'.<sup>30</sup> This disregards the role of the written word and especially the press in the social development of the new class of intelligentsia, whose status increased as a result of the education they acquired. The trademark of this new class was their bond with the written word, a bond that enabled the newly educated to ascend and establish their status as a respected social class. Thus it is possible to argue with Shimoni that the young people of the new, educated generation were not only thirsty for the written word, but rather that this thirst was accompanied by a passion to secure the social and political status acquired through their new knowledge, in the hope of attempting to change the situation of the Palestinian people. In the opinion of the new, educated generation, the precarious situation of the Palestinian Arabs was a result of the accumulated effects of three factors occurring concurrently (albeit uncoordinated). These factors were: Britain, with its Mandate rule of Palestine, the Zionist movement, striving to realize its vision of settling the land, and the traditional leadership of the Palestinian National movement, striving mostly to establish its status at the expense of the population.

Based on this premise, it is possible to understand the central role of the younger generation in the events of the mid-1930s, especially in organizing the Great Strike (April-October 1936). During that period<sup>31</sup> the younger generation dictated the moves of the traditional leadership through the press. Relatively critical articles forced the traditional leadership to bear in mind the opinions of the public whom they supposedly represented in the popular committees which were the life and soul of the political action of Palestinian Arabs. Finally, they also succeeded in bringing about an overt collision between the traditional leadership and Britain, a collision which the traditional leadership, headed by the mufti of Jerusalem, worked hard to prevent. It must be stated that not all the newspapers operated in this spirit or published criticism of the acts of the traditional leadership, although even those that supported this leadership (for example, *al-Jami'a al-Arabiyya*) could not afford to lag behind the critical newspapers (for instance, *Filastin* and *al-Karmil*).

During the period under discussion, *Filastin* was the newspaper with the widest circulation, and in 1931 it printed 2,500-3,000 copies, *al-Jami'a al-Arabiyya* printed 1,500-2,000, *al-Hayat* printed 1,500, *al-Karmil* 1,000-1,500, *al-Nafir* 1,500, *Sawt al-Sha'b* 1,000, *Mir'at al-Sharq* 1,000 and *al-Iqdam* 800.<sup>32</sup>

## THE BEGINNING OF THE DAILY NEWSPAPER ERA

Although it was not the first time an attempt had been made to publish a daily newspaper, 1929 was the year that marked the beginning of the era of the Palestinian daily newspaper. The first attempt, which was to prove unsuccessful, occurred in 1921, when the newspaper *Lisan al-'Arab*, owned and edited by Ibrahim Salim Najjar, was published in Jerusalem.

The second attempt was made in Jaffa, with the newspaper *al-Jazira*,<sup>33</sup> owned and edited by Hasan Fahmi al-Dajani and Muhammad Kamil al-Dajani. This newspaper was briefly published as a daily, and when Muhammad Kamil al-Dajani left the newspaper Hasan Fahmi al-Dajani continued to publish it, but as a weekly. The first issue was published on 31 January 1924<sup>34</sup> and had a pan-Arab orientation.<sup>35</sup> Another newspaper that appeared at first as a daily newspaper, but after a short period was compelled to become a bi-weekly was *Sawt al-Haq* published in Jaffa on 6 October 1927, owned by Fahmi al-Husayni<sup>36</sup> and edited by Hamdi al-Husayni, Fawzi al-Dajani and Sa'id al-Khalil. The newspaper continued to appear until early in 1929.<sup>37</sup> The newspaper *al-Iqdam*, owned and edited by Gourg 'Aazar appeared at first as a weekly in Haifa. For a certain period of time (in 1927) it was published five times a week and when it moved to Jaffa in 1931 reverted to appearing weekly until 1948.<sup>38</sup> Some researchers mistakenly stated that *al-Iqdam* appeared as a weekly and was also the first daily newspaper to be published in Palestine.<sup>39</sup>

All this begs the question: What are the reasons for the rapid failure of these attempts to publish a daily newspaper? The main cause was the lack of financial resources necessary to maintain a newspaper, especially in its initial stages. None of these newspaper owners had the necessary financial resources, considering that most were expatriates of other Arab countries (Gourg 'Aazar, Ibrahim Najjar and others). They had vast journalistic experience, reflected positively in the Palestinian press, but most of them had neither the necessary business experience nor financial capabilities to produce a daily newspaper, a highly expensive endeavour, with expenses that were often inflated owing to the lack of printing presses and sometimes lack of paper and even skilled technical manpower.

The newspaper *Filastin* was the first of the large and well-established newspapers to appear as a daily newspaper in September 1929 (it appeared six days a week, Tuesday through to Sunday). The next daily newspaper to appear in 1929 was *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim*, which after

a short period began to appear twice a week until 1936, when it was published once more as a daily newspaper. The newspaper *al-Hayat* was published as a daily newspaper in June 1930 and continued as such until it ceased publication in 1931.<sup>40</sup>

The establishment of *Filastin* (and later *al-Difa'* in 1934) as a daily newspaper, despite the difficulties, may have resulted in part from the sound financial basis of its owners and from its long tradition; to this can be added the fact that it was the first newspaper to succeed in establishing a secure readership (3,000-4,000), resulting in sales that covered a significant amount of the production costs. *Filastin* as a daily newspaper was built gradually and slowly, as the process of its formation was described by one of its directors, 'Issa al-'Issa, in an article written for the Jerusalem newspaper *al-Wibda* in June 1945.<sup>41</sup>

However, the events of August 1929 played a significant part in hastening the transition of some of the Arabic newspapers to daily newspapers, despite the difficulties. This process was the product of a number of factors. The first was the escalation of the struggle against the Zionist Movement. The Zionist Movement had very substantial propaganda tools, and its press was more professional and enjoyed better circulation than the Arabic press (the newspaper *Doar Hayom*, for example, printed 7,000 copies a day<sup>42</sup> and the newspaper *Davar* printed approximately 30,000 copies<sup>43</sup>). The Arabic journalists were probably aware of these differences and did their best to reduce them. This was done, among other things, by attempting to publish daily newspapers that could compete with the Hebrew press, which was, by this time, well established as a daily press.

Another factor that had considerable impact on the considerations in favour of founding daily newspapers was the arrival of Arabic journalists from neighbouring countries and their contribution to the Palestinian press. Most of these journalists had a great deal of experience as journalists and newspaper editors (Khayr al-Din al-Zerakli, Sami al-Sarraj, Salim Najjar and Tanyus Nasr, for example), and they made the first attempts at publishing daily newspapers. These attempts were mostly unsuccessful, but they paved the way for the establishment of the large daily newspapers. They also worked at these newspapers and their experience contributed to the development of the daily press and its establishment.

A third significant factor was the increase in literacy and a subsequent increase in demand for fresh printed journalistic material.

## INTERNAL STRUGGLES WITHIN THE PALESTINIAN NATIONAL MOVEMENT AND THEIR REFLECTION IN THE PRESS

The bitter struggle in the Palestinian National Movement between the Husayni camp (*Majlisiyyun*) and the Nashashibi camp (*Mu'aridun*) had a significant impact on the history of the Palestinian People in modern times and especially during the British Mandate period.<sup>44</sup> The roots of this bitter struggle, which divided Palestinian society into two fighting and hostile camps, probably stem from the British policy at the beginning of their occupation of Palestine. The British policy was founded on the principal of retaining the affluent families as dominant powerful elements in Palestinian society by bestowing on them influential positions in the new government. Through a policy of 'divide and rule' the government sought to maintain a balance between the two dominant urban families—al-Husayni and al-Nashashibi. When the British arrived, the al-Husayni family controlled the two primary bastions of Jerusalem and Palestine in general. The mayor of Jerusalem was Mousa Kathim al-Husayni and the mufti was Kamil al-Husayni. After the events of 1920, the British dismissed Mousa Kathim as mayor and replaced him with Raghib al-Nashashibi, head of the rival family. This appointment enraged the Husaynis, and their anger reached a climax after the death of mufti Kamil al-Husayni, when their candidate (step-brother of the previous mufti) did not succeed in entering the final list in the run-ups to the elections. The British anticipated the difficulties that would ensue if the Husayni candidate were not elected, and thus persuaded one of the final candidates (Sheikh Husam al-Din Jar Allah, whose family belonged to the *Mu'arada* camp) to relinquish his place in favour of the Husayni candidate, who was elected to the post in April 1921.<sup>45</sup> Then the British awarded the mufti and the Husayni camp control of the High Muslim Council, which was supposed to represent the interests of the Muslims (at the time the majority of the population) versus the British Mandate authorities.<sup>46</sup> The British even tried to appease Kathim al-Husayni, who was dismissed as Major of Jerusalem, by awarding a measure of recognition to the Arab Palestinian Executive Committee, which he headed. This committee represented the Palestinian Arabs from its establishment in 1921 until its disappearance in 1934.

These nominations achieved the desired balance in the eyes of the British, but aggravated the internal rifts among Palestinian society, and even within the Husayni camp, which promoted Amin al-Husayni at the expense of the senior leader of the family, Mousa Kathim. The

rapid ascent of Haj Amin pushed aside the old leader, and in his last days he demonstrated leanings towards the opponents of Amin al-Husayni. The vibrant and unrestrained younger man became recognized as the exclusive leader of the Palestinian Arabs following his part in the events of August 1929.<sup>47</sup>

During the 1920s the press renounced the divisions within Palestinian society and the various newspapers did their best to appear neutral and independent, a unifying factor that does not distinguish between camps or religious affiliations. This attempt was made despite the fact that most of the owners and editors of the newspapers belonged to these camps. Boulous Shihada and 'Issa al-'Issa, for example, represented the opposition in the Palestinian Executive Committee, and Sheikh al-Farouqi was leader of the short-lived National party,<sup>48</sup> which the opposition tried to establish as a counterbalance to the Palestinian Executive Committee and the High Muslim Council, controlled by the Husaynis. The newspaper *Filastin*, for example, described the divisions among the Palestinian people by saying:

The sectarian spirit has penetrated most levels of society, it can be seen amongst journalists, students and the working class. And if you ask someone who he supports he will answer proudly: Husayni or Nashashibi or... and then begin pouring out his anger with words of intense aversion to the rival camp.<sup>49</sup>

The third group implied by *Filastin* was the neutral group, if such they may be called, as in the existing situation most of those who identified themselves as neutral were eventually forced to express an opinion and take a stand if they wished to have an impact on the Palestinian National movement. Most of the members of the neutral group were Christians. Some of them clearly indicated that the struggle between the Husaynis and the Nashashibis was an internal Muslim matter, evident mainly in Jerusalem. This was adequately described by the intellectual and educator, Khalil al-Sakakini,<sup>50</sup> who said:

The Muslims in this country, and particularly in Jerusalem, still live according to old traditions. Every Muslim family in Jerusalem has traditions inherited from their forefathers, a word is not said and a step is not taken if they do not concur, first and foremost, with tradition. The interests of the family receive precedence, and the influence of the family is of the top priority.

If you were to ask one of the sons of these families to elect a member of the Local Council or of the Ministry of Education or of a national association, he would certainly elect the senior member of his family without thinking whether this person is suitable for the position. And if you were to ask him which person is the most devoted to his country, or has the most moral or the best scientific qualities, he would certainly mention his father or his brother or his cousin. And every association, institution, or party, that does not include a member of that family will be the primary enemy of the family and the family will attack it even if some of the sons think that it may have good qualities ... For example the Muslim-Christian Association. The Muslim members of the association are split and divided, each representing his family and not his homeland, and their primary goal is to preserve the traditions of their families.<sup>31</sup>

In these words Sakakini expressed his aversion to the existing disputes. He did not see himself as party to these disputes, but as a Palestinian he was certainly affected by them. This was exacerbated by pressure applied by both sides on those who tried to remain neutral. Each of the rival camps tried to win the sympathy of the neutrals, especially the educated Christians, who eventually gave in to the pressure and became part of the game, one of the rules being that each of the rival parties had its own 'Christians'. Al-Sakakini was long considered to be affiliated with the Husayni camp.<sup>32</sup> He explained his involvement in spite of his reservations by saying 'I decided to distance myself from people and not to cooperate with anyone, but the existing situation forced me to abandon my separatism.'<sup>33</sup> Later he added, half ironically, that all he remembers from his period of estrangement is that he almost became leader of the National movement,<sup>34</sup> due to the large number of people who visited him and asked him to become involved, i.e., to take a stand on the issue of the struggle between the two camps. It is interesting that the newspaper owners, although serving as active members of the camps, continued in their efforts to reach national reconciliation. For this purpose they held a press convention in Haifa, on 8 June 1924, which they called 'The Reconciliation Convention'. The convention was attended by: 'Issa al-'Issa, from the *Filastin* newspaper, Boulous Shihada, from *Mir'at al-Sharq*, Ilya Zakka, from *al-Nafir*, Hasan Fahmi al-Dajani, from *al-Jazira*, 'Issa al-Bandak, from *Sawt al-Sha'b*, Khalil Zaqqout, from *al-Zumur*, and Najib Nassar, owner and editor of *al-Karmil*, who hosted the convention.<sup>35</sup> The main decisions of the convention were:

1. The participants reached an agreement concerning the nature of their work and preventing personal criticism in the press.
2. The press must focus on financial issues in order to facilitate an increase in the level of production and an expansion of trade.
3. Objection to the Fallahin Party<sup>56</sup> due to its opposition to the national consensus of refusing to accept the British Mandate and the Balfour Declaration.
4. Objection to sectarian tensions and condemnation of their generators.<sup>57</sup>

The newspaper *al-Karmil* was the first to violate the first article of the agreement by launching an unprecedented attack on the traditional leadership and accusing each camp of 'striving to destroy the other so that it can assume exclusive control of the leadership of Palestine, while oppressing the people, humiliating them and dominating their lives'. The newspaper suggested 'a solution to the dilemma of the Palestinian people by putting an end to the two camps and forming a real party that embodies the real spirit of the nation, also suggesting to the two large families to educate their perverse and negative members'.<sup>58</sup>

Najib Nassar and Boulous Shihada did not slacken their efforts at mediation. They sought to take advantage of the presence of the Tunisian Muslim leader 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Tha'alibi in Jerusalem and asked him to support their mediation efforts. They also received the assistance of Khalil al-Sakakini in preparing lists of people to be invited to a reconciliation convention held on the initiative of Tha'alibi. This initiative also failed due to the absence of most of the representatives of the opposition who were invited to the convention.<sup>59</sup> Later the newspapers served as the main battlefield for the supporters of the Executive Committee and their rivals, particularly during the elections to the High Muslim Council in 1926 and the municipal elections of 1927. The opposition often declared the establishment of parties and institutions intended to compete with the Husayni camp and their institutions, the Palestinian Executive Committee and the High Muslim Council.

The press did not present itself as neutral in this struggle and it denounced the appearance of splinter parties which disappeared as quickly as they were founded. *Filastin* and *al-Karmil* continued their critical line, but also persisted in their efforts at reconciliation. For this purpose, 'Issa al-'Issa, owner of *Filastin*, recruited intellectuals and politicians from Arab countries, such as the Lebanese writer Amin al-Rayhani and the Egyptian politician Ahmad Zaki Pasha. The newspaper *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, voice of the High Muslim Council, retaliated

against these efforts and said: 'This dispute is not a dispute between opinions or approaches concerning a certain course and is not a dispute concerning the leadership and how it may be shared. It is a dispute between good and evil, between devotion to the national interest and betrayal of it, between right and left.'<sup>60</sup> The editor of the newspaper, Munif al-Husayni, claimed that the Executive Committee should be the one to arrive at a solution, and took advantage of the opportunity to call on the various newspapers to serve as a platform for ideological dialogue between the various groups.<sup>61</sup>

The owners and editors of the newspapers heeded Munif al-Husayni's call and convened a journalists' meeting in Jaffa on 12-14 November 1927. This meeting was attended by representatives of the newspapers *Filastin*, *al-Karmil*, *al-Zubour*, *al-Yarmuk*, *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, *Sawt al-Haq*, *Sawt al-Sba'b* and *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim*. In the concluding announcement the journalists were called upon to promote a general convention that would truly represent the will of the nation in its central political issue, aimed at protecting their national interests against the government. They were also called upon to respect the various opinions among them and to protect journalistic ethics, while resisting any attempt to revive sectarian tensions.<sup>62</sup>

It must be emphasized that the vibrant journalistic activities and the journalists' denouncement of any act that deepened or aggravated the conflict between the two camps contributed much to the dissipation of tension, created a positive atmosphere of reconciliation, and finally brought about the convening of the Seventh Palestinian Congress in June 1928.

#### RIVALRY BETWEEN THE RURAL AND THE URBAN SECTOR

The press also dealt with the traditional rivalry within Palestinian society between city-dwellers and villagers. The roots of this rivalry stemmed from the Ottoman period, in particular after the formation of the social strata of the urban elite. This level of society was called the *A'yan* and became the elite who presented Palestinian matters to the authorities. However, the essence of the relations between the two sides was significantly defined by the exploitation of the *fallabin* who worked the lands as sharecroppers at the hands of some of the rich urban landowner families. In many cases the lands were sold to new owners (some of them Jews) without informing the *fallabin*, who consequently lost a significant source of livelihood.<sup>63</sup> As a result, the villagers har-



boured strong feelings of animosity towards the urban landowners. This was exacerbated by the arrogance of the landowners towards the rural peasants. The influential *fallabin* families, such as the Abu Gosh family from the Jerusalem area, the 'Abd al-Hadi family in the area of Jenin and the Abu Hantash family in the area of Tul Karim, exacerbated these bad relationships. These families exploited the *fallabin*, became rich and acquired much influence in the rural sector, and sought to take advantage of this influence to undermine the dominance and control of the urban landowners. The first political act of the representatives of these families was the establishment of the 'Rural Party', announced in the village of al-Dawaymeh in the Hebron area. This party was later named the Fallahin party (*Hizb al-Fallab*) and it was joined by semi-urban families (of rural origin or owners of rural estates), such as the al-Shawwa family of Gaza and the al-Fahum family of Nazareth.<sup>64</sup>

This party combined with Sheikh al-Farouqi's National party and fought against the Husayni leadership of the Executive Committee. Branches of the parties were established in the various regions. In the village of Ijzem (near Haifa) the al-Madi family announced the establishment of the 'Rural Society for Cooperation'. The founders of the society included two newspaper editors, Najib Nassar, editor of *al-Karmil* and Ibrahim Salim Najjar, editor of *Lisan al-'Arab*,<sup>65</sup> but they both left the society shortly after its establishment due to its hostile attitude towards the Executive Committee.

It should be stressed that all elements of the press supported the Executive Committee in its struggle against the rural organizations. This may be because the large majority of those engaged in journalism at the time were of urban origin. However, they emphasized the self-serving approach of these organizations, whose people did not baulk at cooperating with the British and the Jews in order to realize their personal ambitions.<sup>66</sup> The newspaper *Filastin* even claimed that the organizations were Zionist organizations founded and funded by Zionist sources, through which the Zionists wish to defeat the unity of the nation and attack its leaders and institutions, which act to suppress the Zionist enterprise.<sup>67</sup> The press began attacking the rural organizations and preaching against the landowners and owners of rural estates, who exploited the *fallabin* and imposed high interest rates.<sup>68</sup>

The Executive Committee was aware of the powerful influence of the press and its ability to restrain and block the rural organizations. Jamal al-Husayni, secretary of the committee, approached the newspaper owners and editors with a suggestion to convene a meeting in early November 1929 in order to discuss the issue. At this meeting a decision

was reached that the Executive Committee would initiate a rural convention as a counterbalance to these organizations, and the press was asked to support the convention among the *fallabin*.<sup>69</sup> Muhammad 'Izzat Darwaza, member of the Executive Committee (and a journalist himself) told the journalists that the only power that could stop the *fallabin* organizations in the north was the power of the press.<sup>70</sup>

The rural convention initiated by the Executive Committee took place on 5–6 November 1929, in Jaffa. Its decisions included a declaration of the participants' full support of the representative institutions of the Palestinian National movement: the Executive Committee, the Muslim Council and the Muslim–Christian Associations. A decision was also made to ask the government to exempt from taxes those *fallabin* whose income did not exceed 60 Israeli lira, to import agricultural machinery and equipment, and to sell them to the *fallabin* at subsidized prices and in installments. They also sought to establish an agricultural bank that could lend the *fallabin* money at reasonable interest rates.<sup>71</sup>

The opposition of the press to the rural organizations was efficient and influential but not perfect. Although these organizations were short-lived, they did not die out completely. They reappeared later and even organized a convention in 1933, which they called 'The Convention of the Fallahin and the Farmers' at the village of Beit Dajan in the Jaffa region. This convention was also not very successful. Nevertheless it may be stated that the activities of these organizations, despite their lack of success, undermined to a certain degree the city-dwellers' absolute control of the leadership of the Palestinian National Movement. They helped develop a new generation of rural leaders who challenged the traditional leadership (rural as well as urban) and succeeded in reaching relatively influential positions. This generation of young leaders sowed the first seeds of challenge against absolute urban control. These seeds were apparent during the Revolt of 1936–39, when the villagers took over the leadership of the armed bands, declaring order in the cities as well as the villages, and thus defining the revolt as a rural act.<sup>72</sup>

#### SECTARIAN-RELIGIOUS TENSIONS AND THEIR REFLECTION IN THE PRESS

The unity and solidarity between the two components of the Palestinian people (Muslims and Christians) was and still is one of the most prominent concepts in the Palestinian political arena. The need to preserve and strengthen the unity of the two religious groups and fight

those who would generate tensions between them was emphasized in almost every gathering or convention or important national event. Many Palestinian researchers stressed that both Britain and the Zionist movement operated constantly to inflame sectarian disputes and conflicts within Palestinian society.<sup>73</sup> The Palestinian press was the first to oppose sectarianism. It sharply attacked the establishment of the 'Muslim National Association' in Haifa in July 1921, headed by Yunis al-Khatib. The newspaper *Filastin* claimed that this association was actually established by the Zionist Movement, in an effort to create a rift between the two components of the Arab people: the Christians and the Muslims.<sup>74</sup> The writer, 'Arif al-'Azuni, joined *Filastin* in its attacks against this association.<sup>75</sup> He claimed that the Zionist leader Kalversky initiated establishment of the association, and suggested calling these associations 'The Kalversky Associations',<sup>76</sup> but among the population they were known as the 'Zionist Clubs' and were consequently shunned.<sup>77</sup> *Filastin* also attacked the YMCA association, established by Christians, claiming that it too strived to create conflicts between Christians and Muslims, supported by the British Mandatory government, based on the fact that the General Secretary of the Mandate government was the Chairman of the Directorate of YMCA.<sup>78</sup>

*Al-Karmil* defined this sectarianism as 'a chronic Eastern disease and a malicious sentiment that strikes the human soul as worms strike a tree. This sentiment leads to radicalization, mutual hatred, and loss of rights and respect.'<sup>79</sup> The editor of *al-Karmil*, Najib Nassar, was a prominent proponent of Christian–Muslim unity under the Arab flag. However he claimed that the Muslim demand for exclusiveness on the Arab issue contributed to a great degree to feelings of isolationism among the Christians and even to a certain aversion to the pan-Arab idea.<sup>80</sup> For this reason he attempted to pacify them with assurances that pan-Arab preaching would not limit freedom of religion or the independence of the individual.<sup>81</sup>

The establishment of Muslim–Christian Associations served as a response to those who encouraged sectarianism and its purpose was to form a state of unity.<sup>82</sup> But this did not put an end to the feelings of bitterness amongst Muslim intelligentsia towards the Mandate government, which appointed Christians to most of the vacant government positions. This bitterness was expressed mainly in the Muslim-owned press, and particularly in the newspapers *al-Jami'a al-Arabiyya* and *al-Yarmuk*, the main voice of the High Muslim Council. The newspaper *Filastin* was displeased with the tumult aroused by these two newspapers and even

expressed sorrow at their words, which could only indicate the total helplessness of the Arabs and their inability to endure the thieving foreigner, causing them to revert once more to their old ways – the loathsome sectarian ways.<sup>83</sup> The Muslim community was especially disturbed by the missionary conventions held in Jerusalem on 1 April 1924, and 2 April 1928. These conventions concluded with a call to recognize the weak religious spirit of the Muslims, who do not object to the Christian message, some even gladly accepting it, as evidenced by Muslim children sent to Christian Mission schools.<sup>84</sup>

Another decision made at the conventions was that the Christian Mission must act to convert Muslims by disseminating the Christian religion in their midst, especially among young children who study at the Mission schools, and through welfare activities and medical assistance.<sup>85</sup> The newspaper that published news of these conventions and denounced them was *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*. One of the editorials written by the editor, Munif al-Husayni, said:

These conventions are only one of the forms in which colonial Western countries are taking over the East. Their goal is not only to attack Islam, rather to disseminate missionary activities and to ignite sectarian hatred in Palestine between Muslims and Christians, thus putting an end to their common national interest, founded on Muslim–Christian brotherhood, and paving the way for foreign takeover of the land.<sup>86</sup>

*Filastin* also attacked these conventions, which caused conflict not only between Muslims and Christians in Palestine but also between Christian groups.<sup>87</sup> *Al-Karmil* wrote about the commotion resulting from missionary activities, especially in Gaza, following abundant rumours of Muslim youth who had converted to Christianity under the influence of the head of the missionary delegation there, who took advantage of their financial difficulties and awarded monetary grants in return for their conversion.<sup>88</sup> The editor said that the incident was normal and insignificant, and that the commotion was due to almost insane fanaticism on the part of the delegation head and the concern that the Muslim working class would be affected and would attempt to harm the peaceful Christians who had lived among them quietly for many generations. These attacks might lead one to think that the Muslims are a fanatical religious group, although this is untrue, as Muslims are more tolerant than other religious groups, as proven by the children sent to study at Christian schools.<sup>89</sup>

Najib Nassar's words seemingly indicated his hypocrisy and his wish to ingratiate himself with the Muslim majority in Palestine, but this is not so. Nasir belonged to the main group of Christians, who preached the pan-Arab idea that aimed to integrate the two religious groups while maintaining their religious and ritual autonomy. In addition to this group, there were two secondary Christian groups. One complained about the lack of equality between the two sects regarding the leadership of Palestine and demanded more rights and positions of power. The people belonging to this group held a convention in Haifa, in June 1928, headed by Patriarch Hajjar,<sup>90</sup> and threatened to refrain from participating in the Seventh Palestinian National Convention unless Christian representation was increased. They also sought to elect a new Executive Committee conforming to the measures determined by new Christian-Muslim committees rather than those of the *Majlisiyyun* camp.<sup>91</sup> *Al-Karmil* renounced this gathering and saw it as a dangerous deviation from national conventions.<sup>92</sup>

The other group was a minority that believed that Christians cannot become real Arabs unless they convert to Islam. In their opinion, Arab Christians suffered more than Muslims at the hands of Western-Christian colonialism, especially with regard to positions in the Church hierarchy. One of the representatives of this group, Khalil Iskandar al-Qubrusi, openly called for Christians to convert to Islam.<sup>93</sup> His people belonged mainly to the Arab Orthodox community that struggled against the Greek clergy's control of the Orthodox Church. This struggle began during the Ottoman period, when the Hatt-i Hümayun declared by the Ottoman Sultan in February 1856 decided that religious matters of Christian and other non-Muslim groups would be managed by councils whose members would be elected from among the clergy and members of the communities.<sup>94</sup>

All non-Muslim communities elected their councils as directed, apart from the Orthodox community, whose members asked the Ottoman authorities to be exempted from electing a council, due to the lack of appropriate candidates. They authorized the group of Greek Patriarchs, called 'The Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre', to manage the interests of the community. During the British Mandate period, the Arab members of the community, and especially the members of the National Palestinian Congress, tried to change this situation and nominate Arab leaders to the Greek Orthodox Church. For this purpose 'The First Arab Orthodox Convention' was held in July 1923, and its decisions tended to declare the autonomy of the Orthodox community and extract it from the control of the Greek Patriarch.<sup>95</sup>

The Mandatory government was aware of the tensions within the Orthodox community, and therefore nominated a committee headed by Sir Anton Bertram. The committee recommended that the request of the community be granted and that their members be eligible for 'The Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre', from whose midst Church positions were filled. The committee also recommended forming a council to include members of the community from Palestine and Transjordan, which would receive a third of the Church's income.<sup>96</sup> The Greek Patriarch did not accept the committee's recommendations, thus hastening the protest actions of the Orthodox community and its educated members. They often mentioned their struggle in the press, presenting it as an Arab national struggle. In their correspondence with the Secretary of the Executive Committee, Jamal al-Husayni, they asked that the Executive Committee pay special attention to their struggle, as it was part of the Palestinian Arab struggle against Western colonialism.<sup>97</sup>

In 1931, following the death of the Greek Patriarch Damianos, a gathering was held in Jerusalem, in which a decision was made to boycott the election of a new Patriarch, pending acceptance of the recommendations of the Bertram Committee. In addition, the Church was asked to recognize that its assets were the property of the local community and not of the Greek People.<sup>98</sup> These decisions were conveyed, among others, to the Mandate government, which answered them in a letter sent to the head of the Orthodox Committee. The letter stated that the Mandate government would not intervene in favour of changing the Ottoman Basic Law for selecting the Patriarch until the election of a new Patriarch.<sup>99</sup> Accordingly, the committee activists held another gathering on 28-29 November 1931, attended by eighty-five representatives from Palestine and Transjordan. The decisions of this committee reiterated and stressed previous decisions, strongly emphasizing the need to elect an Arab Patriarch and renouncing the intervention of the Greek Consulate in Palestine in matters of the Orthodox community.<sup>100</sup>

At the time, sectarian tensions between Christians and Muslims had been greatly reduced. The Orthodox Christians (including, of course, owners of the prominent newspapers) had approached the Muslims and all the representative institutions of the Palestinian Arabs, requesting their support in the struggle against the Greek higher clergy. The newspaper *Filastin*, and to a lesser degree *al-Karmil*, were the main propaganda tools at their disposal. The newspaper was the platform from which they managed their struggle, explained their demands and

rights, enlisted supporters for their struggle from amongst the Arabs of Palestine and other Arab countries, and even denounced and slandered those who supported the Greek clergy against them.

The Orthodox activist Shihada al-Khourri wrote an article in *Filastin* and tried to emphasize the Arab foundations of the Orthodox community, as a continuation of the Christian-Arab kingdom (Ghassan) that served as a sort of buffer state to the Byzantine Empire in the East. He sharply attacked the Greek claim that the members of this community were originally Greek and that they became Arab upon the Arab occupation. The writer said that the members of the Orthodox community are Arab and as such are eligible for all the rights awarded following the Arab occupation (*Fath*)<sup>101</sup> of Palestine. At the end of the article he asked all Arabs to identify with the Orthodox issue and to provide their support in order to enable the Orthodox to receive their legitimate rights.<sup>102</sup> This application to all Palestinian Arabs to take part in the struggle of the Orthodox against the Greeks expressed the feelings of the Orthodox that the Greeks were cooperating with the Mandate government in their opposition to the Arab Orthodox issue. Since Britain was the country against which all other Palestinian Arabs were struggling in order to achieve their national goals, the leaders of the Orthodox community wished to integrate the two struggles and to turn their struggle into part of the Palestinian Arab struggle for independence.

It must be stated that the actions taken by the Mandate government in this affair indicated Britain's hostile position towards the struggle of the Orthodox community. It was seen as part of the pan-Arab struggle, as most of those involved were major activists in the Palestinian national struggle. It is sufficient to mention Ya'qoub Farraj, vice-president of the Executive Council under the presidency of Mousa Kathim al-Husayni, who was also president of the General Orthodox Congress, and 'Issa al-'Issa, owner of the newspaper *Filastin* and vice-president of the Orthodox Congress, and the journalists Najib Nassar and 'Issa al-Sifri.<sup>103</sup> The Executive Committee, influenced by Farraj, acted among the authorities through letters and protests in favour of the Orthodox issue. The matter was also on its agenda at its Sixth and Seventh Conventions, defined as an issue of Palestinian national interest. However, these steps apparently did not satisfy the activists, who demanded greater attention from the institutions representing them. The Muslim-owned press hardly discussed the issue, aside from short references to new developments with no attempt to analyze or discuss the matter. However the Orthodox community was most disappointed

by the position of the British authorities, who in early 1932, despite all their memos and protests, decided that the Patriarch would be elected according to Ottoman basic law, i.e. in accordance with the status quo – the Greek higher clergy would continue its hold on the Orthodox Church. The journalist 'Issa al-Sifri called the British announcement 'the black announcement', crushing the Arab Orthodox community once and for all and putting an end to its hopes. He added:

This act has taught us a harsh lesson: that we can count only on ourselves. We had thought that our only rival was the Greek clergy, but now we understand that we have another rival, the government, which took part in planning the plot against the Orthodox community.<sup>104</sup>

Not until 1941 did the government take steps to help the members of the community. The High Commissioner announced a new law in which he tried to organize their interests by providing additional rights, improving the situation of the community members in Palestine and Transjordan. The interests of the community were managed according to this law until the culmination of the Mandate period.<sup>105</sup>

#### THE EVENTS OF 1929 AS A UNIFYING FACTOR

The events of August 1929 were, among other things, a meeting and reconciliation point for the various components of the Palestinian National movement. All factions uniformly objected to changes in the status quo regarding access to and worship at the holy places. They were also unified in their denouncement of the British authorities' conduct at the time of the events, which was perceived by the Arabs as unfair and subjective and as identifying with Jewish demands and claims. This was reflected to a great degree in the Palestinian press, which was accused by the authorities of inciting disturbances. When the events began, publication of all Arabic newspapers was suspended for two weeks by order of the High Commissioner. This British act intensified feelings of internal solidarity and temporarily suspended rivalries and conflicts between the Palestinians. The statement made by the High Commissioner on 1 September 1929, describing the conduct of the Arab masses during the events as 'barbaric behaviour', angered the Palestinian public. The Arabic newspapers took advantage of their first appearance after the interruption to attack the commissioner's statement.



The newspaper *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* complained about the strict policy of the authorities towards the press. In its first issue after the suspension it published a letter by Keith-Roach, governor of the Jerusalem region. In his letter, Keith-Roach warned the newspaper about engaging in a policy of incitement, as this might lead to a longer suspension.<sup>106</sup> The newspaper analyzed the British governor's letter and stated:

The criterion by which the English government in Palestine evaluates journalistic material as being such that may cause a disruption of public order is determined according to certain government factors. The evaluation that is based on these factors does not necessarily reflect justice, as was particularly evident in the expressions used in early September... We will make every effort to provide the public with as true a picture as possible, or as will be permitted by the English government and the Balfour-Zionist policy.<sup>107</sup>

The press praised the actions of the Arabs during these events and held a national campaign to collect donations for those injured in the events or to act towards cancelling the sanctions imposed on the people by the authorities. At first the newspapers used the term 'riots' (*itterabat*) to describe the events, as defined by the Mandate authorities, but it was rapidly dropped in favour of more positive terms. The newspaper *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* was the first to coin the term 'the blessed revival' (*al-nabda al-mubaraka*),<sup>108</sup> and later 'the revolution' (*tbawra*),<sup>109</sup> the term subsequently used by most Arabic newspapers in Palestine.

During this period the press was unequivocally supportive of the representative institutions, especially the Arab Executive Committee. The newspapers published the committee's manifestos, provided detailed descriptions of its actions and presented the leaders' statements. However, they also urged the committee to abandon its traditional modus operandi (protests, denouncements and statements), to embrace more efficient methods based on a reorganization of Palestinian society and to encourage the establishment of popular organizations and institutions reflecting public will, rather than serving only the interests of the upper classes, comprised of the large clans. This course taken by the newspapers (mainly those that had declared their independence, such as *al-Karmil* and *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim*), produced the first cracks in the extensive wall of national solidarity formed after the events of August 1929. It was finally breached following the pervasive debate about send-

ing a Palestinian delegation to London to negotiate with Britain on the future of Palestine.<sup>110</sup> The press served as one of the platforms for this debate, and it too was divided on the issue, as will be seen below.

### THE POSITION OF THE PRESS VIS-À-VIS THE ARAB EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Palestinian Arab Executive Committee was the national organization that represented the Palestinian Arabs during the 1920s and early 1930s. It was formed as a consequence of the Third Palestinian National Congress held in 1920. At the time of the events the committee was comprised of forty members, representing the various regions and sects in Palestine according to their percentage in the population.<sup>111</sup> The chairman of the Executive Committee was Mousa Kathim al-Husayni, and he was assisted by a board of trustees including two deputies (a Muslim and a Christian), a secretary and an office manager.

The members of the Executive Committee included renowned journalists (Muhammad 'Izzat Darwaza, Jamal al-Husayni, 'Omar Salih al-Barghuthi and Subhi al-Khadra) and notable newspaper owners (Boulos Shihada and 'Issa al-'Issa). Jamal al-Husayni, secretary of the Executive Committee, was in charge of press issues. He would send the committee's statements, memoranda and announcements to the newspapers. At times he also sent statements and warnings to newspapers that he perceived as criticizing the committee and deviating from the rules.<sup>112</sup> The Executive Committee aimed to represent the wishes and demands of all Palestinian Arabs with regard to the Mandate authorities, while the High Muslim Council represented only the Muslims. The press, similar to other national and popular organizations, accepted the authority of the Executive Committee for a certain period of time. However, when the committee expressed uncertainty and its actions were limited to the writing of memoranda and protests, people began criticizing its practices and objecting to its traditional hesitant *modus operandi*. The primary critic was Sheikh As'ad al-Shuqayri<sup>113</sup> of Acre. He wrote a critical article in the newspaper *al-Karmil* in which he said:

Since the start of British occupation until the present day I have not been aware of the existence of a real National Movement [*Haraka wataniyya haqiqiyya*] in Palestine. The prominent and less prominent members of the National Movement, Muslim,

Christian and Druze, welcomed the British occupation, although their leaders were clearly aware that this occupation carried the attendant 'gift' of a national home for the Jews in Palestine. The British military and administrative staff began their occupation with the act of every wise conqueror, by granting positions to the sons of prominent families who were infatuated with them, in order to win their sympathy, support and various services.<sup>114</sup>

Later Shuqayri tried to analyze the establishment of the group who called themselves 'National' (*wataniyyoun*). He believed that this process was motivated by personal reasons and interests. The nucleus included those who had despaired of British rule, who did not receive the positions that they had hoped for, and the Mandate authorities could obviously not satisfy everyone. Shuqayri added that the Muslim-Christian Associations were formed from among this nucleus, and it was they who sent the delegations to London in order to negotiate with the authorities.<sup>115</sup> Later Shuqayri expressed his doubts as to the ability of these delegates, consisting of a minority of actual nationalists and a majority of those who did not receive positions and jobs, to negotiate efficiently with people such as Churchill and Lloyd George. He claimed that in these delegations,

There was not one expert on the Zionist issue, and not one expert in the fields of political science, economy or law, and not one expert on the Arab countries and their geography. The members of these delegations did not include a single person who could be seen as an expert on British policy or the thought of British politicians; moreover, none of the delegates was proficient in the English language aside from two people whose knowledge of English was sufficient only to accompany tourists and converse with them on the landscapes and antiquities of Palestine.<sup>116</sup>

The Seventh Congress, held in Jerusalem on 20–27 June 1928, did not voice more demands to cancel the mandate and achieve independence immediately, but rather a request to establish a representative national government.<sup>117</sup> This demand aroused the anger of the intelligentsia and minor political activists. In an article entitled 'To live in honour or to die', Najib Nassar said that 'the decline of the Palestinian National Movement stems from the leadership who deceived the people and knew how to take advantage of popular forces to win seats and positions'.<sup>118</sup> Nassar also blamed the leaders for trading in nationalism and

accumulating money and riches at the expense of the people they represent.<sup>119</sup> In another article, Nassar called the policy of the Executive Committee towards the British and the Jews, 'an incorrect and destructive policy, a blind and interest-led policy that holds no benefits for the homeland and the people'.<sup>120</sup>

*Filastin*, in contrast, saw the Executive Committee as a dead organization with no powers. As proof it offered Britain's total lack of consideration for the Arabs and their representatives and its unreserved support of the Zionist enterprise. If the British had been faced with a strong and thriving Arab leadership, they would not have dared to treat the Arabs in this manner, whilst taking advantage of the divisions within Palestinian society.<sup>121</sup>

*Al-Sirat al-Mustaqim* also joined the critics of the Executive Committee and its *modus operandi*, stating that,

The Palestinian leadership is not worthy of its position. This leadership does not act in support of the national interest and does not let others act ... Our simpler folk naively think that the nation can realize its aspirations through this leadership. But they do not know that our situation is gradually declining precisely due to this leadership. It is similar to the condition of a very sick person ill-fated to be treated by an ignorant doctor. The doctor cuts into the flesh of the patient unnecessarily and futilely. It would be preferable if the doctor would let the patient die or entrust his care to an expert doctor who might save him. Thus it is with our leadership – it would be preferable if they would let us die or entrust us to the care of a more responsible leadership that can lead us to safety.<sup>122</sup>

Examination of this criticism and its implications indicates that it was directed at the Palestinian leadership of the Executive Committee in general without actually mentioning Chairman Mousa Kathim al-Husayni or his deputies, with the knowledge that the Executive Committee included representatives of all groups, camps and sects. Mousa Kathim was indeed of the al-Husayni family, but the press usually did not recognize him being party to the disputes between the Husaynis and their rivals.

Mousa Kathim's deputies – Ya'qoub Farraj, 'Omar al-Salih al-Barghuthi – or the general secretary of the committee, Jamal al-Husayni, a relative of Mousa Kathim, were those who responded on behalf of the Executive Committee to the criticism of the press. The

reactions varied. Sometimes they were violent and firm, for example towards the newspaper *al-Iqdam*, published in Jaffa, which severely criticized the work of the Executive Committee and the Muslim-Christian Associations in Jaffa. The members of these associations physically prevented distribution of the newspaper, leading to an exchange of correspondence between the management of the newspaper and the office of the Executive Committee in Jerusalem. In one of the letters sent to the office of the Executive Committee and to the Muslim-Christian Associations in Jaffa, Gourg 'Aazar and Yusuf Sallom, the owners of the paper, threatened to embark in an unprecedented campaign against the Executive Committee that would include many revelations harmful to its image. They said that the nation and public opinion would judge between the newspaper and the Muslim-Christian Associations of Jaffa.<sup>123</sup> This struggle was apparently concluded when Jamal al-Husayni instructed the people of the Executive Committee to cease conspiring against *al-Iqdam*. In another case, the office of the Executive Committee wrote to the newspapers *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim* and *Filastin* as follows:

We have noticed a change in your attitude towards the delegation and the Executive Committee. This recent change, compared to two or three weeks ago, is incomprehensible to us. The office of the Executive Committee requests that you abandon this conduct, for the good of the homeland. Our homeland requires the union of all forces, and the national zealotry of your newspaper must inspire confidence among the public and those who serve them. The campaign against the delegation and the undermining of our national institutions are a breach of the national duty of each and every one of us who feels for his homeland and its honour, particularly journalists. However, it must be stated that the office of the committee is willing to accept any comment or advice, if it is properly submitted. We hope that these words will suffice to motivate you to act in favour of unity and solidarity.<sup>124</sup>

In another case, *Filastin* and *al-Karmil* wrote that the Executive Committee charged the city of Safed and the region with financing the expenses of the attorneys representing those accused of the 1929 events. This was brought to the attention of the secretary of the Executive Committee, Jamal al-Husayni, who wrote to the directors of the two newspapers, asking them to correct this false item, which they did.<sup>125</sup> There were also cases in which disagreements between the

Executive Committee and the press reached the courts. Such a case involved the newspaper *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, which actually functioned as the voice of the *Majlisiyyun* camp. In addition, its owner and editor, Munif al-Husayni, was related to the chairman of the Executive Committee, Mousa Kathim, and to his secretary, Jamal al-Husayni. Nevertheless, a libel suit was filed against the owner and editor of *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*. The plaintiff was Subhi al-Khadra, manager of the office of the Executive Committee in Jerusalem. The complaint alleged that in the issue published on 13 December 1929, the newspaper stated that the *Palestine Bulletin* reported that Jamal al-Husayni sent a telegram from London to the Executive Committee requesting power of attorney to negotiate with the British. This report did not reach any Arabic newspaper. *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* rationalized that, 'there are two possibilities: either the report was provided by one of the post and telegraph clerks or there is a traitor on the Executive Committee, providing reports to foreigners, and if this is true he must be found and punished by the Executive Committee.'<sup>126</sup> Subhi al-Khadra felt that this report was an affront to the Executive Committee and its officers, and as these people perform a national service by representing the Palestinians, he sought to investigate those responsible at the newspaper and punish them severely.<sup>127</sup>

The newspapers' criticism of the Executive Committee no doubt drove it to more energetic activity and to adopt a firmer stance against the Mandate authorities. The members of the committee were very much aware of the influence of the press on public opinion, and in certain cases they approached newspaper editors for their help in spreading announcements or presenting a certain idea. For example, when the issue of sending a national delegation to London in order to negotiate with the British about the future of Palestine aroused objections, the Executive Committee invited all owners and editors of Arabic newspapers in Palestine to a gathering 'to discuss with our brothers the Arabic journalists the political and economic matters of Palestine and to discuss the plan embraced by the nation in the matter of the delegation'.<sup>128</sup> The gathering was held on 14 February 1930, at the offices of the Executive Committee, and it was attended by the members of the Executive Committee and the representatives of twelve newspapers appearing at the time: *Filastin*, *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim*, *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, *al-Zumour*, *Sawt al-Sha'b*, *al-Iqdam*, *al-Karmil*, *al-Nafir*, *Mir'at al-Sbarq*, *al-Yarmuk*, *al-Zubour*, *al-Nabda*. Prominent journalists such as Akram Zu'aitir, 'Azmi al-Nashashibi and 'Adel Jabr, were also invited.<sup>129</sup>

At this gathering the issue of the newspapers' freedom of expression

and their degree of influence on national matters was discussed – what they should or should not publish. In addition, the participants examined ways of convincing the public to support the dispatching of a delegation to Britain. ‘Omar al-Barghuthi, Deputy Chairman of the Executive Committee, opened the discussion and said that the right of the press to freedom of expression is sacred, however for the good of the homeland and the Arab idea, critical journalists must perform their job suitably and in a controlled manner, refraining from voicing unrestrained criticism. They must choose their words carefully and avoid harming national interests. Al-Barghuthi ended by asking those who called for a youth congress to alter their focus in order to enable confirmation of the delegation.<sup>110</sup> In contrast, ‘Issa al-‘Issa, editor of *Filastin* (and also a member of the Executive Committee), made a proposal to outline a national policy that would be acceptable to both the Executive Committee and the press. This outline would be presented by the Executive Committee to the newspapers, and it should guide their actions. Akram Zu‘aitir stated that the press was not sufficiently utilized. In his opinion, the Executive Committee needed to take advantage of the momentum of events in order to encourage the press to disseminate its national policy and to impart it to the public.<sup>111</sup> The editor of *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim*, Sheikh Abdullah al-Qalqili, claimed that the disagreements between the Executive Committee and the newspapers usually stem from mistrust. In many cases, when journalists wrote in opposition to the committee, the committee accused them of showing a lack of commitment to national interests. The journalists, wishing to protect their honour, would retaliate, thus exacerbating the disagreement. Al-Qalqili ended by asking the leaders of the Executive Committee to show more trust in the press and in the journalists, and to accept the fact that the committee is sometimes wrong regarding its relationship with the press and does not always correct its erring ways.<sup>112</sup>

With regard to the delegation, Gourg ‘Aazar, editor of *al-Iqdam*, tried to explain his dissent with the Executive Committee and explained his understanding of the situation. He said that the nation was interested in a delegation for purposes of propaganda, to further the Arab ideal, and not in a delegation for negotiating with Britain. ‘Issa al-‘Issa, editor of *Filastin*, claimed that unnecessary arguments were detrimental to the issue and to national interests, and that if a majority of the public were to support the delegation, this had to be respected and accepted.<sup>113</sup> In concluding the gathering a decision was arrived at to support the delegation, members of the Executive Committee promised to be considerate of constructive criticism, and journalists promised to adhere to

directives from the office of the Executive Committee on issues relating to national interests, so that these would not be undermined by the press. Two days later the Executive Committee, true to its word, sent directives to all participating newspapers regarding the establishment of workers' societies objecting to the rural commission affiliated with the Executive Committee. The directives stated:

These societies were established with the aim of serving anti-national causes, and thus the Executive Committee calls upon those who supported their establishment to cease their actions in the current conditions ... The office of the Executive Committee calls upon the Arabic press to clarify the objectives of these people, and declares that they have no connection to the Executive Committee. The situation requires decisiveness and any matter relating to national interests should not be underestimated.<sup>134</sup>

A study of these directives indicates that the members of the Executive Committee indeed intended to prove to the members of the press that they had the ability to promote national interests in an efficient and wise manner. However, in their conclusion it is possible to discern the impact of the criticism voiced by journalists at the gathering and prior to it. In particular, the Executive Committee was asked to be decisive in its dealings with the British, since the common opinion was that while it demonstrated sycophancy and flattery towards the British, the latter spared no effort in humiliating both the Executive Committee and the Palestinian people in general. It must be stated, that after each critical campaign within the newspapers, the Executive Committee would display a firmer attitude towards the British and its representatives would initiate and even lead popular activity. The press would express satisfaction with these actions and voice its support. However, when the members of the Executive Committee felt that the criticism had waned they would return to their former hesitant ways and arouse the press once more. Thus, the understandings achieved at the gathering were effective only for a few months. Indeed, the understandings between the press and the Executive Committee were breached by two unexpected sources – the newspaper *Mir'at al-Sharq* and the newspaper *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*.

*Mir'at al-Sharq* was known for its support of the understandings with the British. Its owner, Boulous Shihada, was a member of the Executive Committee. He constantly urged a more lenient attitude towards the Mandate authorities and encouraged understanding.



However, in early 1930 he appointed Akram Zu'aitir (who had recently resigned his position as high school teacher in Acre) as editor of the newspaper. Zu'aitir stipulated that he would accept the position only if he was promised full authority to determine the newspaper's policy and content. Boulous Shihada asked that the newspaper refrain from sharply criticizing a number of his friends who were active on the political stage: Raghīb al-Nashashibi, As'ad al-Shuqayri, Sulayman Tuqan, 'Omar Barghuthi and Ahmad Samih al-Khalidi. When Zu'aitir told Shihada that he would not hesitate to criticize them should their actions seem harmful to national interests, Shihada replied that Zu'aitir was required to consult with him before writing anything about his acquaintances.<sup>135</sup>

Examination of the list of people whom Shihada asked Zu'aitir to refrain from attacking, shows that they all belonged to the *Mu'arada* camp. Thus the press, despite its efforts to be seen as a neutral third party, was often unsuccessful in refraining from affiliation with one of the rival camps in Palestinian society. Only Akram Zu'aitir, one of the young and fervent leaders with Istiqlal views, remained unaffiliated. Zu'aitir's criticism did not spare any of the leaders. His entrance to the field of journalism, first as a writer for *al-Yarmuk* and as an editor for *Mir'at al-Sharq* and *al-Hayat*, and then as a columnist for *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* and *al-Difa'*, marked the beginning of a new stage in the relationship between the press and the traditional leadership.

*Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* was regarded as the voice of the Husayni camp. Its views of the Executive Committee and its president, Mousa Kathim al-Husayni, were usually sympathetic. However, with the rising influence of the mufti and his unflinching attempts to take over the main positions in the Palestinian National movement, these ambitions clashed with the prominence of his elderly relative. This struggle was staged, among others, on the pages of the newspaper *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*. Its editor, Munif al-Husayni, was forced to state his position on the leadership struggle within the Husayni camp. He decided to bet on the younger leader, who was also his (maternal) uncle. In the newspaper's review of the testimony of the Palestinian leaders before the British committee investigating the 1929 events, he presented the events factually; but when it came to the testimony of Haj Amin, the newspaper added its interpretation, stressing major points and their benefit to the Arab ideal.<sup>136</sup> Munif al-Husayni described the feelings of the public towards the testimony of the mufti in the following words:

The public was pleased by the significant position expressed by

the honourable head of the High Muslim Council, and the magnificent service that he did the people, adding to his previous eternal actions. The whole nation speaks his praise and glorifies his deeds. There is a great joy among the people at all levels, and they all hope that he will succeed in his position.<sup>137</sup>

*Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* attacked the London *Daily Mail* for criticizing the decision of the investigating committee to hear the mufti's testimony at his office in the High Muslim Council and not at the seat of the committee. The newspaper expressed its amazement at the strange position of the British reporter in Palestine, since the Mufti's testimony was heard according to accepted rules, Haj Amin being the most supreme religious leader of the largest religious group in Palestine.<sup>138</sup>

The rivalry between Haj Amin and Mousa Kathim reached its climax over the composition of the delegation that the Executive Committee intended to send to London. The first meeting of the Executive Committee on the matter took place on 10 January 1930. The composition of the delegation was determined by secret ballot, and Haj Amin was chosen to head it. Publication of this result might have led to the definite expulsion of Mousa Kathim from the leadership by his young and ambitious relative. Mousa Kathim did not hide his disappointment and annoyance, and the participants decided to delay the decision until their next meeting. At the second meeting the mufti announced his resignation as president of the delegation, facilitating the election of Mousa Kathim. The crisis was settled, but it left behind considerable ill-feeling between the two men. The editor of *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* was quick to react, and the newspaper became one of the active foci of criticism towards the Executive Committee and the traditional leadership. Zu'aitir noted in his memoirs that he greatly appreciated Munif al-Husayni's readiness to publish scathing articles criticizing the Executive Committee despite his family ties with the president of the committee.<sup>139</sup>

However, all those who were amazed and astonished at the events failed to evaluate correctly hidden struggle taking place between the mufti and the president of the Executive Committee. The attacks on the Executive Committee were inspired by Haj Amin and probably also received his blessing. The newspaper began publishing statements objecting to the dispatching of the delegation and to its composition. A joint statement issued by Hamdi al-Husayni, Shukri Qutayna and Rafi' al-Fahum, said:

The independence of all Palestine will not be realized by political negotiations between two unequal parties or by a delegation that does not represent the Palestinian people; the members of this delegation were elected by the Executive Committee which represents submissive people with personal interests.<sup>140</sup>

Hamdi al-Husayni explained his objection to dispatching the Palestinian delegation to London as follows: 'The purpose of our objection is to make the nation understand that it has full control of its matters and is able to make decisions regarding its fate. And when it understands this, it will be able to drive its leaders and its fighting sons towards liberty and independence'.<sup>141</sup> Another stalwart objector to the delegation was Sheikh Abdullah al-Qalqili, editor of *'al-Sirat al-Mustaqim*. In an ironic article entitled 'We are traitors' al-Qalqili said:

We are seen as traitors by those who do things in this country because we thought that there was no need at all for a delegation or because we called for a reconnaissance delegation to be sent to Britain in order to examine British readiness and to act against Zionist propaganda. And when one of us said that the delegation travelling to London uninvited is no more than a delegation of beggars, we were accused of treachery ... We are traitors because we said that if it is imperative to send a delegation, the delegation must be chosen by a general assembly including all parts of the nation. And we were once again accused of treachery and our suggestion was perceived as treacherous. The influence of sectarianism has risen once more. If the delegation had been elected according to the delegates' skills and not according to the known criterion of affiliation with notable families, it would have encroached on the sons of the two families that comprise the homeland. And then anyone who had chosen the delegates on basis of their skills would have been branded a traitor.<sup>142</sup>

Al-Qalqili did not object only to the Executive Committee, rather he was a known opponent of the Husaynis and mainly of the High Muslim Council and its president, Haj Amin. He was infuriated when the mufti appeared before the committee investigating the matter of the events at the Western Wall, as this was could be detrimental to exclusive Muslim control of the Holy Places, not a matter for discussion or negotiation.<sup>143</sup>

When Akram Zu'aitir began editing *Mir'at al-Sharq*, he supported

the actions of the Executive Committee and would even participate in its meetings as an observer or standing in for 'Izzat Darwaza, representative of Nablus.'<sup>144</sup> After the final composition of the delegation was determined, Zu'aitir wrote an article entitled 'Unity and action after composition of the delegation' in which he said:

Whether the results of the delegation's assembly are to our liking or not, we must now provide this delegation with the support it needs. We must see it as our envoy and as the symbol of our aspirations. The delegation cannot act efficiently in London if the Executive Committee does not act in Palestine in support of its mission. But the Executive Committee cannot act if we in Palestine are not unified under its leadership. We must know that the success of the delegation depends on the strength of the National Movement in Palestine.<sup>145</sup>

The enthusiasm expressed by Zu'aitir in regard to the role of the Executive Committee in navigating the course of the National movement in Palestine quickly dissipated following a meeting of the Executive Committee that he attended on 1 February 1930. At this meeting a decision was made to appeal to the Palestinian prisoners held in Acre, headed by 'Abd al-Qader al-Muthaffar,<sup>146</sup> and to suggest that they accept the conditions of the authorities for their release on bail. Zu'aitir wrote in his memoirs that he was very angry at the Executive Committee for leading the freedom fighters to humiliation and calling upon them to surrender instead of supporting their actions. The most insufferable act was when Mousa Kathim, head of the committee, actually travelled to Jaffa to persuade the families of the detainees to pay the bail.<sup>147</sup>

This event gave Zu'aitir an excuse to attack the Executive Committee and its leaders. In an article entitled 'Weak willpower and repulsive cowardice', Zu'aitir wrote

the Executive Committee, in calling upon the prisoners to accept the dictates of the authorities, has proven that it has not yet understood the sacrifice that is the foundation of the liberation of nations, and that detention is the minimal service that a man can give his homeland ... it is time the leaders know that this land will not achieve any of its rights through weak willpower and repulsive cowardice'.<sup>148</sup>

the time Zu'aitir was accustomed to writing the editorial and a small column entitled 'The anger of a rebel'. In this column he would

address his anger at all the Arab representative institutions in Palestine, for not acting to save the land from the Jews.<sup>149</sup> Zu'aitir continued to attack the Executive Committee for its hesitancy and lenient policy toward the Mandate authorities, and at the same time sharply attacked the authorities, eventually leading to his arrest and arraignment on charges of incitement. The court decided to expel Zu'aitir from Jerusalem and hold him under house arrest in Nablus for a year.<sup>150</sup> The immediate meaning of this decision was the interruption of Zu'aitir's journalistic activity and his work at the *Mir'at al-Sharq* newspaper.

Zu'aitir's arrest and expulsion from Jerusalem aroused fury within the Arabic press, which construed this step as a direct attack on its freedom of speech. The Executive Committee did not respond, other than to express its sorrow. Some newspapers implicitly criticized the position of the Executive Committee, and others criticized its modus operandi but tried to rationalize it. For example Najib Nassar, editor of *al-Karmil*, wrote an article entitled 'Akram Zu'aitir and the bail', in which he said that if the Arab world would support the Executive Committee in Palestine as the Jewish world supports the Zionist Committee, the Executive Committee would take a stronger and firmer position towards the Mandate authorities.<sup>151</sup> Zu'aitir responded to Nassar's article in a letter signed using the pseudonym 'Free Boy'.<sup>152</sup> The editor of *al-Karmil* published the letter with a note concerning the writer's wish to remain anonymous. In the letter, Zu'aitir asked Nassar what deeds and actions the Executive Committee had performed for the homeland and the Arab people which rendered it worthy of the support of the Arab world. He himself answered the question and said:

The Executive Committee is not worthy of the gratuitous support of the Arab world, it has not proven itself worthy of the public's support or trust. This committee is a government committee and the delegation chosen by it is to a certain degree a government delegation. Nevertheless, what has the committee accomplished? It thanked a land speculator for contributing 20 liras, it called the people to put their trust in a certain person because he visited the offices of the Executive Committee. The committee mourned the dead and took advantage of their death even though when they were still alive they opposed it and did not accept its leadership.<sup>153</sup>

These words reflected the new views embraced by Zu'aitir and those he represented. In his words, Zu'aitir almost totally withdrew his support of the Executive Committee and the efforts of its delegation in London.

His description of the Executive Committee's actions is borne of close observation and a thorough knowledge of the Executive Committee institutions. He accuses the Executive Committee of being governmental, a common and partly justified accusation in those days, as many members of the Executive Committee held government positions alongside their work in the community (Zu'aitir himself also held a position in state education and worked as a teacher at an Acre high school, but preferred his journalistic activity to the governmental position and resigned in December 1929).<sup>154</sup> At the time, Zu'aitir was very close to the circles of the Executive Committee and from January to April 1930 (during which time he was editor of *Mir'at al-Sharq*) he was present at almost all meetings of the Executive Committee. He was probably closely acquainted with the leaders and familiar with their weaknesses. In the same letter to Najib Nassar, Zu'aitir criticized the leadership's lack of readiness to make even a small sacrifice for the homeland, and the leaders' devotion to their chairs and positions. In order to demonstrate this, he cited examples from two meetings of the Executive Committee. A meeting discussing the three youngsters who were sentenced to death after the events of 1929, land sales and Jewish immigration, was attended by 18 of the 40 members, while another meeting, discussing the election of a new member in place of Mousa Kathim, was attended by 37 members.<sup>155</sup>

The day Zu'aitir's letter was published in *al-Karmil*, *Mir'at al-Sharq* published a statement signed by 'the Youth of Nablus', denouncing the mild and indifferent reaction of the Executive Committee to the arrest and arraignment of Akram Zu'aitir. They saw this reaction as additional proof of its impotence and inability to contribute to national interests, thus encouraging the Mandate authorities to disregard the Palestinian people and their national institutions.<sup>156</sup>

The arrest of Zu'aitir and the indifference demonstrated by the Executive Committee were the beginning of a fierce power struggle between almost all factions of the press and the Executive Committee, a struggle that continued until the disappearance of the Executive Committee from the Palestinian political stage in early 1934. This struggle played an important and decisive role in the process of the Executive Committee's waning and the decline of its influence on the Palestinian street a considerable time before its dissolution following the death of Mousa Kathim. An additional bone of contention after the Zu'aitir affair concerned the refusal of the Mandate authorities to allow a memorial service forty days after the hanging of the three youths accused of organizing the events in Hebron and Safed in August 1929.

The press, the scouts, and the Muslim–Christian Associations, asked the Executive Committee to express a clear and decisive position towards the authorities and concerning the prohibition of the memorial service. *Al-Karmil* asked about the reasons that prompted the authorities to prohibit the service:

Are the political speeches that will most probably characterize this function the reason for the prohibition? Or maybe its purpose is to spare some of the officials who are national leaders, who find it difficult to be present as government officials and difficult not to be present as national leaders?<sup>157</sup>

Later Nassar, the newspaper's editor, asked whether this was the independence for which the delegation travelled to London and whether this was the achievement reached there, an achievement that satisfied the delegates who had now come to sell it to the Palestinians in order to disturb their efforts for the pan-Arab ideal and economic development? And finally the writer said: 'The nation must create leaders. Otherwise it would be better off dead.'<sup>158</sup> We see that *Al-Karmil* accused the Executive Committee of supporting the British restrictions, and asked how it opposes or denounces an act that it itself caused? The newspaper also reconsidered its support for the delegation and scorned its imaginary achievements, while expressing doubts as to Britain's readiness to grant anything at all to the Arabs. These words reflect an actual change in the views of Najib Nassar and his newspaper, who had been enthusiastic supporters of the British at the beginning of their rule of Palestine.

*Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* similarly continued its attack on the Executive Committee and its actions, which it perceived as patchwork solutions. The newspaper called for redemption of the land from the policy of its leaders, which had led to disasters and shame and caused a serious decline in Palestinian interests. The newspaper tried to explain this state of affairs as resulting from the lack of harmony between the members of the Executive Committee, the committee's total detachment from the majority of the people, and its inability to fulfill its national responsibility towards the people and the land.<sup>159</sup> In an editorial entitled 'The weak point of our National Movement', the editor wrote:

We are not divulging any secrets or committing a crime when we say that which all intelligent people in this land are saying. The main reason for the political decline and failure of the Palestinian

National Movement stems from our leadership, which in controlling our interests has done so in a sickly and negligent manner.<sup>160</sup>

Akram Zu'aitir, who returned to Jerusalem after completing his period of exclusion and who now continued his journalistic work as one of the editors of *al-Hayat*, joined in the press attacks on the leaders of the Executive Committee. In August 1931 he wrote one of the most scathing articles written against the leaders of the Executive Committee. In an article entitled 'Tea and blood' he said:

At a time when the authorities are completely ignoring the honour of our nation and when tens and even hundreds of the nation's youth are being led, en masse, to detainment, and being judged without the privilege of legal defence; and at a time when British bullets cut down innocent elderly people, women and children; and precisely at a time when all Palestinians should unite against the British oppressor, Palestinian leaders and notables rush to the tea parties held in various cities in honour of the departure of the High Commissioner. Do they not feel, when drinking the tea of the authorities, that these same authorities are forcing their brothers to drink the cup of bitterness. The authorities say to them 'You are barbarians, drinkers of blood', and they say 'Yes, yes'. Oh notables, servants of the government! Drink the tea and know that it is mixed with blood. Oh nation! Know that these notables are your primary enemies.<sup>161</sup>

It is interesting that during this period conspicuous leaders of the Executive Committee also began criticizing its work. The most conspicuous was Muhammad 'Izzat Darwaza, who also held a senior position on the High Muslim Council and apparently also embraced the views of Munif al-Husayni, editor of *Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, who supported Haj Amin, the young president of the High Muslim Council. Darwaza indicated the weakness of the national activities, of which the most prominent were the self-serving interests of the leaders, who were more interested in a life of comfort and material interests than in the good of the land and its national interests.<sup>162</sup>

Jamal al-Husayni, secretary of the Executive Committee, attempted to reply to these accusations in an article published in the newspaper *Filastin* under the title 'Let us be judged by the people, who are the best judges':



Oh people! You desire independence, elections and sovereignty, but when you are asked to make a sacrifice you say we can't do that; or when you are asked to contribute money, assets or anything dear to you, your answer is, we cannot. And the question is what can you pay as the price of your independence, your liberty and your sovereignty? The peoples of the nations before you paid with the blood of their sons, but you did not do this, you did not invest your money or your time and when we come and say to you don't eat chocolate, eat the fruit of your land, you laugh at us and say, you are mistaken.<sup>163</sup>

The helplessness of the Executive Committee can be discerned in the defence presented by Jamal al-Husayni, but this helplessness stemmed, in his opinion, from the people themselves, who showed no willingness to cooperate with their leaders' initiatives. His tone reminds us of Khalif 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, the fourth khalif, in his speech against his supporters after he had despaired of them. When he asked them to go to war in the winter they refused and complained that they could not fight in the cold and asked him to wait until summer, but when summer came they complained of the heat, etc. Al-Husayni himself was torn between his loyalty to the old order of the Executive Committee, on which he had served as secretary from the outset, and the call for changes in the Palestinian National movement in general and in the Husayni camp in particular. Finally he became involved in a faction that called for change in both, through the cry to establish modern political parties that would unite the various ideological factions of the Palestinian National Movement.

#### SEEKING NEW POLITICAL ORDER – THE CALL TO ESTABLISH POLITICAL PARTIES

The severe criticism of the Executive Committee and the opposition that developed as a result towards the methods of its president and his administration of the Palestinian National movement, led to calls for a new political order in the Palestinian National movement. The first of these calls appeared among the youth societies and in the press, which announced its neutrality, led by the newspaper *al-Karmil*. In its editorial from 11 January 1930, the newspaper wrote:

It has been twelve years since the Christian–Muslim Associations

were founded and we began operating in support of our national interests. What have we done during this time?

1. We held seven congresses.
2. We sent three delegations to England, one delegation to Hijaz and another to Iraq.
3. We sent thousands of protests to various places.
4. We held scores of memorial services and celebrations.
5. The High Muslim Council renovated the al-Aqsa mosque.
6. The Muslim Council bought an agricultural farm covering an area of 300 hectares for the price of 6,000 liras.
7. The Muslim Council built a large hotel and rented it to Jews in order to compete with the small national hotels ...

What must we do? We must change our major plans. There is no longer any need to base our activity on protests and from now on we should be ashamed of holding parties.<sup>164</sup>

It seems that the newspaper's criticism was directed not only at the Executive Committee, but also at the High Muslim Council. In other words, opposition to the Husaynis in the two most senior Arab positions in Palestine, i.e., Najib Nassar was not actually neutral in the struggle between the Husaynis and the Nashashibis, even though he endeavoured to appear so. A tone of sectarian criticism may be discerned in his words, as for instance when reviewing the activities of the High Muslim Council he mentioned the renovations of the al-Aqsa mosque (of which the Jerusalem mufti was so proud) and the purchase of an agricultural farm or a hotel rented to Jews (which was never proven) as one project. If he intended to indicate the insignificance of these deeds, 'impotent deeds' as he defined them at the end of his editorial, how is it possible to compare the renovation of the holy mosques of Jerusalem, an act that attracted much attention all over the Arab and Muslim world, to purchasing a hotel or holding a party or writing a protest?

Another step in the alignment against the old order was the movement for establishing political parties according to modern standards, parties that would serve as an alternative to the Executive Committee. However, the idea of establishing parties was not innovative. During the British occupation, many parties appeared and disappeared, such as Sheikh al-Farouqi and 'Abdullah Mukhlis,<sup>165</sup> the al-Ahali party of 'Abdullah Salih and 'Adil Zu'aitir of Nablus' National party,<sup>166</sup> and the

al-A'yan party of Yunis al-Khatib of Haifa.<sup>167</sup> There were also many other parties whose existence was announced, although details of their activities are unknown. The reason for this rapid appearance and disappearance of political parties most probably stemmed from the lack of an alternative ideological basis for the existing powers. This was augmented by the fact that the parties were private or limited public initiatives, and the majority of them were aimed at serving the ambitions of their founders, who sought to establish a place for themselves on the Palestinian political stage. The phenomenon was well described by the newspaper *al-Karmil*: 'Know, my friend the reader, that the skies are showering parties upon us, and the earth is bearing societies. May God preserve the nation from the inevitable deluge, each of the parties is trying to attract supporters.'<sup>168</sup> At the end of the article, the newspaper called upon the founders of the parties to declare that they did not request and would not agree to accept any position in the government or other institutions. This would prove whether they intend to serve the land or their own interests.<sup>169</sup>

The critical view of the press and its support of the existing order caused the failure of all attempts to establish parties. Those who tried to do so were accused of treachery and in some cases were even attacked. In summer 1927 there was an additional attempt to establish a new party, 'The Free Palestinian Party' (*al-Hizb al-Filastini al-Hur*), centred in Jaffa. This time two of the party founders were Jaffa newspaper editors - 'Issa al-'Issa, editor of *Filastin*, and 'Abdullah al-Qalqili, editor of *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim*. However, although its most prominent members were senior activists in the National movement, this party too was denounced and accused of doing Britain's will. The newspaper *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* led the campaign against this party, describing it as belonging to the Mandate government, driven by foreigners, with its contribution to Palestine apt to be more disputes and dissension.<sup>170</sup> This criticism led most of the party activists to retire and become reintegrated in the institutions of the Executive Committee, which continued to lead the Palestinian National Movement after receiving the authorization of the Seventh National Congress.

But when the idea of establishing political parties arose once again in the second half of 1930 and early 1931, the alliance between the newspapers and the Executive Committee was no longer in existence. The newspaper *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, formerly the main protector of the Executive Committee from the 'secessionist' efforts of party founders, now became the main stage for criticism against the Executive Committee and for the establishment of a new political

order. Moreover, the earlier and most serious attempts were initiated by central personnel of the Executive Committee, for example, 'Omar al-Salih al-Barghuthi, deputy chairman of the committee, who announced the establishment of the first nucleus of the 'al-Istiqlal' party,<sup>171</sup> despite the declaration of the Executive Committee a week earlier that the establishment of parties and societies at that time would be detrimental to national interests. The president of the Executive Committee later published a decree to all those involved in founding parties, to delay their efforts until the return of the delegation from London, in order to maintain unity within the nation.<sup>172</sup> 'Omar al-Salih obeyed Mousa Kathim's call and ceased his efforts to found the party. These efforts were to be renewed in 1932 and finally led to the establishment of the al-Istiqlal party as it is now known, as an extra-familial party with pan-Arab ideology. The establishment of this party accelerated the process of founding political parties representing the traditional camps, following the total disappearance of the Executive Committee in 1934.

## NOTES

1. The details are from the following sources: Khouri, pp. 53-6; *al-Mawsou'a al-Filastiniyya*, pp. 437-40; al-'Aqqad, pp. 182-8; Yehoshuwa, pp. 34-5.
2. 'Adil Jabr (1885-1953) was born in Jaffa and studied at the al-Rashidia High School. He commenced his academic studies in Istanbul and completed them in Geneva, where he received his degree in social studies and economics. Upon his return to Palestine, he was appointed Assistant General Director of Education under British rule from 1918-21 and Director of the Islamic Museum in 1923. In 1930 he founded the newspaper *al-Hayat*, but it ceased appearing in 1932. In 1951 he was appointed to the Jordanian parliament. He died in Jericho in 1953 (al-'Udat, 1992, pp. 85-7).
3. Akram Zu'aitir (1909-96) was born in Nablus. His father, 'Omar Zu'aitir, was Mayor of Nablus towards the end of the Ottoman period and his brother was the known intellectual and attorney, 'Adil Zu'aitir. Akram completed his secondary studies at the al-Najah School and his academic studies at the American University in Beirut. He was considered an outstanding populist. He wrote for *al-Hayat* and also for *al-'Arab*, *al-Difa'*, *Filastin*, and *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*. After the 1948 war he moved to Jordan, became involved in the government, and served as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, as well as being a member of parliament. He published many books on the Palestinian problem. He died in Amman in 1996.
4. 'Ajaj Nuwayhid (1897-1982), a Lebanese Druze, was born in the village Ras al-Matn. He completed his secondary studies in Beirut. In 1919 he joined Faysal in Damascus, where he published the newspaper *al-Qalam*. When Faysal's rule of Syria was overthrown, he came to Jerusalem and was appointed by the mufti, in 1923, as secretary of the High Muslim Council. In 1932 he resigned his position and worked as an attorney, after graduating from the College of Law in Jerusalem. In the same year he began publishing the newspaper *al-'Arab*, which continued appearing for two years. In 1940 he was appointed supervisor of the Arabic broadcasts on the government radio station. In 1948 he left for Jordan, where he was appointed general director of the Broadcasting Service of Jordan. In 1959 he returned to Mount Lebanon where he lived until his death. He wrote and translated many books, the most significant of which is 'Protocols of the Elders of Zion' (al-'Udat, 1992, pp. 641-5); *al-Mawsou'a al-Filastiniyya*, p. 190.
5. Muhammad 'Izzat Darwaza (1888-1982) was born in Nablus, where he completed his secondary studies. Towards the end of the Ottoman period he worked as a postal clerk. During

- 1922–27 he was the first principal of the al-Najah school and during 1932–37 he was the general director of the Islamic Waqf. He wrote for the newspapers *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, *al-'Arab*, and *al-Difa'*. He wrote major history books about the Palestinian problem and the history of the Arab and Muslim people (approximately twenty-five treatises). In his last years he lived in Damascus, where he died in 1982 (al-'Udat, 1992, pp. 212–15).
6. Yusuf Hanna (1896–1967) was born in Tanta, Egypt, to parents of Syrian descent (and not as mentioned in many sources, in Lathiqliyya, Syria. See: Yehoshuwa, p. 95). He came to Palestine with the British occupation and even worked as an officer under British rule. In 1931 he was appointed editor of *Filastin* until 1948 and he wrote the editorials. After 1948 he moved to Jordan, where he engaged in the translation of books. The most prominent of them is the book by Frank Masonville, *The Realities of America*. For more details see: al-'Udat, 1992, pp. 140–2; Yehoshuwa, p. 95.
  7. 'See 'Introduction' for more information on 'Issa al-'Issa.
  8. See for example: Shimoni.
  9. About slogans and symbols in the press see Chapter 1, pp.00–00..
  10. Munif al-Husayni (1899–1972) was born in Jerusalem. He was the nephew of the mufti, Haj Amin al-Husayni. He studied at the al-Ma'mouniyya High School in Jerusalem and was later employed as a teacher at Rawdat al-Ma'aref. In 1927 he founded *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* together with Tahir al-Fityani. During the strike of 1936 he was imprisoned by the British. In 1937 he escaped with the mufti to Lebanon and from there to Iraq. He took part in the al-Kaylani revolt in 1941 and following its failure escaped to Syria and from there to Saudi Arabia and Egypt. After 1948 he hel 1992 A'lam, pp. 128–32.
  11. 'Abdullah al-Qalqili (1899–1971) was born in Qalqilya to a family of fallahin, He studied at al-Azhar and completed his studies at the Egyptian University of Cairo. He taught Islam religion and Arabic language at high schools in Jaffa and Gaza. In September 1925 he founded the newspaper *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim*, which ceased appearing in 1948. Later on he moved to Damascus and worked as a teacher. In 1955 he was appointed grand mufti of the Hashemite Kingdom in Jordan. For more details see: Abu Hammad, p. 265; al-'Udat, 1992, pp. 517–8.
  12. See 'Introduction' for more information on Najib Nassar.
  13. The year of publication in Alexandria is disputed. Some say 1904 (Tarazi, p. 66) and some say 1902 (al-'Aqqad, p. 172; Muruwwa, p. 261). It may almost certainly be determined (although none of the researchers has attested to seeing the first issues) that the newspaper was first published in Alexandria in 1902. This is indicated by the fact that in the yearbook of *al-Hilal*, published in that period, *al-Nafir* is mentioned as a newspaper that had been appearing for two years. *Al-Hilal*, 13 (1904), p. 64.
  14. See 'Introduction' for more information on Ilya Zakka..
  15. Boulous Farah, interview, 28 December 1992.
  16. See 'Introduction' for more information on Boulous Shihada.
  17. Ayalon, p. 98.
  18. Ahmad al-Shuqayri (1908–80), son of Sheikh As'ad al-Shuqayri of Acre, was born in Tibnin in Southern Lebanon (where his father was exiled) and completed his secondary studies in Jerusalem in 1926. He was certified as an attorney at the Jerusalem College of Law and worked there in the office of 'Awni 'Abd al-Hadi. In 1929 he was appointed one of the editors of *Mir'at al-Sbarq*, and in 1945 he was appointed by Mousa al-'Alami as director of the Arab Information Bureau in Washington. After 1948 he held diplomatic positions in many Arab countries. In 1964 he founded the PLO and was its chairman until 1967. For more details see: *al-Mawsou'a al-Filastiniyya*, pp. 9–100.
  19. 'Issa al-Bandak was born in Bethlehem and completed his secondary studies in Jerusalem. Towards the end of the Ottoman period he worked for the telegraph service of Syria and Transjordan. In 1917–19 he worked as a teacher at the Orthodox High School in Jerusalem. In September 1919 he founded the newspaper *Bays Labm* together with Hanna Dekart, but this newspaper did not last long, and in 1922 al-Bandak published the newspaper *Sawat al-Sba'b*, which appeared until 1957. In 1921 he was chosen to represent Bethlehem on the Executive Committee, in 1934 he was elected Major of Bethlehem. In 1950 he served as the Jordanian emissary to the UN, in 1951 he was appointed Ambassador of Jordan to Spain and in 1954–57 he was the Jordanian Ambassador to Chile (al-'Udat, 1992m, pp. 58–60).
  20. Khalil Zaqqout al-Majdali, born in Acre, studied in a Jerusalem high school and resided in Cairo for a certain period. Upon returning to Jerusalem in 1911 he founded the newspaper *al-Himara al-Qabira*, and in 1927 he founded the newspaper *al-Zumur* in Acre.

21. Jamil al-Bahri (1890–1930) was born in Haifa and was one of its first journalists. He published the newspaper *Zabrat al-Jamil*; in May 1920 it was renamed *al-Zabra* and in 1927–*al-Zubour*. In addition to journalism, he wrote books and engaged in translation (approximately twenty publications). He was stabbed to death on a Haifa street in 1930.
22. Interview with the journalist 'Ali 'Aashour, November 1994.
23. For example the records of Majid al-Qutub of Nablus, sales agent of most of the newspapers in the area of Nablus and Jenin from the mid-1920s until 1948. The information was given to me in an interview with his son, Ma'moun, who continues his father's work to this day.
24. For example, the Abu Jilda Affair. About this affair and its reflection in the press see Chapter 4.
25. This is attested to by Boulous Farah in an interview in June 1992, I held with him on 28 December 1992.
26. See: Yehoshuwa, p. 95; Sasson, p. 306.
27. For more on the newspaper *al-Difa'* see Chapter 3.
28. This is attested to by the records of Majid al-Qutub, mentioned above.
29. Shimoni, p. 391.
30. *Ibid.*
31. On the role of the press at the time of the strike see Chapter 4.
32. Jerusalem, June 1931, CO, 733/207.
33. For more on this newspaper see: Khouri, p. 25; al-'Aqqad, p. 133.
34. Haykal, p. 175. For more details see also: Khouri, p. 31; Tarazi, p. 70.
35. Haykal, p. 175.
36. Fahmi al-Husayni was born in Gaza, studied law in Jerusalem and was certified as an attorney. He opened an office in Jaffa. In 1923 he published a law journal and in 1927 he published the newspaper *Sawt al-Haq* until 1929. Later on he served as Mayor of Gaza. For more details see: Abu Hamad, p. 321.
37. Al-'Aqqad, p. 199.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 95.
39. See for example: Arnon-Ohana, 1981, p. 198.
40. Great Britain, list of principal Arabic newspapers in Palestine, CO, 733/207.
41. Cited by Yehoshuwa, p. 95.
42. Arnon-Ohana, 1981, p. 200.
43. Sasson, p. 56.
44. For more on this see: Porat, 1971; Ohana, 1981, pp. 26–35.
45. On the manner in which al-Husayni was elected to the position of mufti see: Alpeleg, pp. 13–16.
46. Waters, p. 7.
47. For details about the activities of the mufti in the events of 1929, see: Matter.
48. On this party and other attempts of the opposition to establish parties see: Khalla, pp. 237–46.
49. *Filastin*, 22 August 1922.
50. Khalil al-Sakakini (1878–1953) was born in Jerusalem and studied at the English College (CMS). In 1907 he travelled to Great Britain, and from there to the United States. After the Young Turk Revolt he returned to Jerusalem and worked at the *al-Asma'i* newspaper owned by Yusuf Hanna al-'Issa as linguistic editor. In 1909 he founded the 'Constitutional School' and in 1914 he was nominated to the Educational Authority of Jerusalem. In 1917 he was dismissed and incarcerated by the Ottomans, and during the British Mandate rule he worked in the educational system as supervisor of Arab language studies. On the political sphere he was a member of the Executive Committee and Chairman of the First Palestinian Council that gathered in Gaza in 1948 (al-'Udat, 1992, pp. 273–84).
51. Al-Sakakini, p. 166.
52. On the distribution of the intelligentsia between the camps see: Ahmad, pp. 164–5.
53. Al-Sakakini, p. 167.
54. *Al-Karmil*, 14 June 1924.
56. On this party see: Khalla, pp. 241–2.
57. *Al-Karmil*, 14 June 1924.
58. *Ibid.*, 30 August 1924.
59. Mahaftha, p. 229.
60. *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, 25 May 1927.
61. *Ibid.*
62. Khalla, p. 435.

63. See: Porat, 1978, pp. 105–12.
64. On the establishment of the rural organizations see: Hasasyan, p. 83.
65. On this association and its activities see: Khalla, pp. 386–7.
66. *Filastin*, 18 January 1924.
67. *Ibid.*, 2 January 1925.
68. *Al-Karmil*, 19 November 1929.
69. ECD, P/01798/986.
70. *Ibid.*
71. *Al-Karmil*, 19 November 1929.
72. On the rural character of the revolt see: Aron-Ohana, 1982.
73. On this see: Mahaftha, p. 472; Khalla, pp. 19–20.
74. *Filastin*, 16 November 1921.
75. 'Arif al-Azuni (1896–1961) was born in Jaffa to a family of rural origins (from the village 'Azun in Nablus district), completed his secondary studies at 'Ein Tura, Lebanon. In 1912 he was employed as a teacher at the al-Rashidiyya School. During the British Mandatory Period he worked as a journalist and was a reporter for the newspaper *al-Abram* in Palestine. In 1936 he worked for the *al-Fajr* newspaper. After the 1948 war he settled in Nablus and was the reporter of the 'Voice of America' in Jordan (*Al-'Udat*, 1992, pp. 435–6.
76. *Filastin*, 16 May 1922.
77. Mahaftha, pp. 248–9.
78. *Ibid.*
79. *Al-Karmil*, 23 September 1925.
80. *Ibid.*, 22 January 1928.
81. *Ibid.*
82. About the establishment of these associations see: Khalla, pp. 121–5.
83. *Filastin*, 20 January 1928.
84. Mahaftha, pp. 249–50.
85. *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, 5 April 1928.
86. *Ibid.*, 22 March 1928, and also the issue published on 29 March 1929.
87. *Filastin*, 10 April 1928.
88. *Al-Karmil*, 8 July 1931.
89. *Ibid.*
90. Patriarch Hajjar (1875–1940) was born in Jezin, Lebanon, and was brought up as an orphan. He studied theology in Egypt. In 1899 he came to Palestine and was nominated Patriarch of Acre and the north. He remained in this role until his death in a traffic accident in Haifa (*al-'Udat*, 1992, pp. 99–102).
91. *Al-Karmil*, 10 June 1928.
92. *Ibid.*
93. Abu Ghazala, pp. 59–60.
94. Qazaqya, p. 173.
95. *Ibid.*, pp. 252–7.
96. *Filastin*, 16 October 1926.
97. DEC, P/984/16.
98. *Filastin*, 10 October 1931.
99. *Ibid.*, 20 October 1931.
100. *Ibid.*, 1 December 1931.
101. The word '*Fatb*' in Arabic terminology is intended to show the Islamic occupations in a positive light and it describes the Muslims as saviours rather than occupiers. In our context, it is interesting that the writer is a Christian who perceives the Muslim occupations of Palestine as salvation. It is no mere chance that he emphasized that the occupiers were Arabs, so that the Christians would feel part of these occupations and identify with them.
102. *Filastin*, 1 January 1932.
103. 'Issa al-Sifri was born in Ramle and completed his secondary studies in Jaffa, where he continued to work as a teacher. Due to his journalistic activities and the critical articles he wrote he was dismissed by the authorities. He continued his journalistic work at the *Filastin* as assistant editor and at the same time opened a book shop and a printing house. The book shop functioned as a sort of literary fair attended by many writers and journalists. During the strike he was arrested and imprisoned in Acre. In 1948 he moved with the newspaper *Filastin* to Jordan, and in March 1949 he died a sudden death. He wrote an important treatise

tise on the history of the Palestinian National Movement: *Filastin al-'Arabiyya bayna al-Intidab wal-Subjouniyya*, Jaffa 1937 (al-'Udat, 1992, pp. 272-3).

104. *Filastin*, 9 January 1932.
105. Mahaftha, pp. 201-3.
106. *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, 5 September 1929.
107. Ibid.
108. Ibid., 13 October 1929.
109. Ibid., 23 October 1929.
110. For more details about the dispute concerning the constitution of the delegation, see: Zu'aitir, 1994, pp. 110-11.
111. For more on the establishment of the Executive Committee and its actions see: Khalla, pp. 154-80.
112. See: DEC, P/986/01798.
113. As'ad al-Shuqayri (1860-1940) was born in Acre, a graduate of al-Azhar. In 1904 he was appointed as judge at the Shari'a court in Lathiqiyya, Syria, and in 1905 he moved to the Ottoman capital and served as Secretary for Sultan Abd al-Hamid. As a result of his connections with the Unity and Progress people he was exiled to Tabnin, Lebanon. After the 1908 coup he returned to Istanbul as representative of Acre in the Ottoman Parliament. In 1914 he was appointed mufti of the Ottoman army. Upon the British occupation of Palestine he was arrested and jailed in Egypt. In 1921 he was released and returned to Palestine. He was one of the leaders of the opposition and one of the greatest opponents of the Mufti (al-'Udat, 1992, pp. 318-19).
114. *Al-Karmil*, 14 February 1926.
115. Ibid.
116. Ibid.
117. Al-Kayyali, 1968, pp. 128-32.
118. *Al-Karmil*, 4 October 1928.
119. Ibid.
120. Ibid., 17 July 1929.
121. *Filastin*, 18 April 1928.
122. *Al-Sirat al-Mustaqim*, 13 April 1930.
123. Letter from the editorial board of *al-Iqdam* to the Executive Committee, 28 December 1929. DEC, P/986/01798.
124. Letter from Ya'qoub Farraj, Deputy Chairman of the Executive Committee, to the editors of the newspapers *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim* and *al-Iqdam*, 5 February 1930, DEC, P/986/01798.
125. Letter from Jamal al-Husayni to the directors of *Filastin* and *al-Karmil*, 16 February 1930. DEC, P/986/01798.
126. *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, 13 December 1929.
127. Letter of claim sent by Subhi al-Khadra to the Central Court in Jerusalem on 14 December 1929. DEC, P/985-54.
128. From an invitation sent by the Executive Committee to the Arabic journalists for a gathering held on 14 February 1930. DEC, P/985-54.
129. The protocol of this meeting is in DEC, P/986/01798.
130. Ibid., pp. 1-2.
131. Ibid., p. 3.
132. Ibid., pp. 4-5.
133. Ibid., p. 6.
134. Instructions from the office of the Executive Committee to the press, 16 February 1930. DEC, P/986/01798.
135. Zu'aitir, 1994, p. 104.
136. *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, 13 October 1929.
137. Ibid.
138. Ibid., 5 November 1929.
139. Zu'aitir, 1994, pp. 111-13.
140. *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, 17 February 1930.
141. Ibid., 21 February 1930.
142. *Al-Sirat al-Mustaqim*, 5 February 1930.
143. Ibid., 9 December 1929.
144. Zu'aitir, 1994, pp. 111-13.



145. *Mir'at al-Sbarq*, 16 January 1930.
146. 'Abd al-Qader al-Muthaffar (1880–1949) was born in Jerusalem. During the Ottoman period he was a member of the Unity and Progress Society. He served as mufti of the Ottoman army in Syria. During Faysal's reign in Syria he served as President of the Arab Club. In 1921 was elected to the High Muslim Council and was affiliated with the mufti. After 1948 he moved to Amman, where he died an expatriate.
147. *Zu'aitir*, 1994, p. 113.
148. *Mir'at al-Sbarq*, 5 February 1930.
149. *Ibid.*, 12 March 1930.
150. *Zu'aitir*, 1994, pp. 148–50.
151. *Al-Karmil*, 22 April 1930.
152. *Zu'aitir* states in his memoirs (1994, p. 151) that he wrote this letter.
153. *Al-Karmil*, 25 April 1930.
154. About his dilemma whether to prefer his work in the educational system or his journalistic activities, see: *Zu'aitir*, 1994, pp. 64–5.
155. *Al-Karmil*, 25 April 1930.
156. *Mir'at al-Sbarq*, 25 April 1930.
157. *Al-Karmil*, 23 July 1930.
158. *Ibid.*
159. *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, 28 September 1930.
160. *Ibid.*, 2 September 1931.
161. *Al-Hayat*, 27 August 1931.
162. *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, 14 September 1931.
163. *Filastin*, 1 October 1931.
164. *Al-Karmil*, 11 January 1930.
165. On this party see: *Khalla*, pp. 392–94.
166. For more on the establishment of this party see: *Filastin*, 9 June 1925.
167. For more on party see: *Mahaftha*, p. 233.
168. *Al-Karmil*, 9 May 1925.
169. *Ibid.*
170. *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, 21 October 1927.
171. *Ibid.*, 13 March 1930.
172. *Filastin*, 13 March 1930.

## *The Palestinian Press from the Establishment of Political Parties to the Great Strike, 1932–36: Characteristics and Modes of Action*

With the establishment of the 'al-Istiqlal Party' (*Hizb al-Istiqlal*) in July 1932,<sup>1</sup> and the appearance of the newspaper *al-Arab* as the voice of this Party, a new stage in the history of the National movement and the Palestinian press had begun. The newspaper *al-Arab*, edited by 'Ajaj Nuwayhid, appeared irregularly at first, and was published from August 1932 as a weekly, serving as the main voice of the party. The party leaders and intellectual members served as some of the newspaper's writers, for example Akram Zu'aitir, Subhi al-Khadra, Mu'in al-Madhi and 'Awni 'Abd al-Hadi. The party had no popular organizational foundation, so the newspaper was a most important tool disseminating its ideas and extending its reach. Members of al-Istiqlal also wrote for *al-Difa'*, established in 1934, and sometimes also in *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, established in 1933, *Filastin* and *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*.

In addition to *al-Arab*, there were two other distinctly political newspapers in this period, *al-Liwa*, affiliated with the Husayni party and *al-Kifab*, affiliated with the Youth Congress. In addition, there were three semi-political newspapers, all oriented towards the Nashashibi opposition, *Filastin*, *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* and *Mir'at al-Sharq*. In contrast, the newspaper *al-Karmil* (called *al-Karmil al-Jedid* from April 1935) was an independent newspaper with a certain inclination towards the platform of the al-Istiqlal party, although its editor did not hesitate to attack the leaders of the party and its activists on numerous occasions. The rest of the newspapers, which were less significant and influential, displayed conspicuous inconsistencies, passing from one side to the other, probably in accordance with their current source of financial support.

## THE PRESS OF THE PERIOD

In 1933 the Mandate government published the Press Ordinance, based on a report by press officer Furness,<sup>2</sup> which determined procedures for renewing publication concessions and newspaper criteria. The owner of the concession, the senior editor and the acting editor, were responsible to the authorities for the content of their newspaper.<sup>3</sup> In 1932 only two additional newspapers were published: *al-Waqa'i'* *al-Filastiniyya* (the formal newspaper of the Mandate government in its new format) and *al-'Arab*, edited by 'Ajaj Nuwayhid and affiliated to the al-Istiqlal party.<sup>4</sup>

In 1933 the Mandate government cancelled the licences of all existing newspapers and any newspaper wishing to continue appearing was obliged to request a new licence. Twenty-six newspapers asked to renew their licences,<sup>5</sup> the most significant being: *al-Karmil al-Jedid* (received its license on 12 April 1933), *al-Zumur* (13 April 1933), *Mir'at al-Sharq* (16 April 1933), *Filastin* (18 May 1933), *al-Iqdam* (6 July 1933), *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim* (6 July 1933).<sup>6</sup>

The most significant of the new newspapers founded in 1933 were: *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, which was founded in Jaffa. Its owner, Sheikh Sulayman al-Taji al-Farouqi, had been a political activist since the beginning of the British mandate of Palestine. His views of the British and of the two political camps of Palestinian Arabs were inconsistent, but in two areas he was consistent in his views, these being his pan-Islam orientation and his vigorous objection to the Zionist Movement and the Jewish Settlement.<sup>7</sup> Sheikh al-Farouqi was the editor of the newspaper and he wrote the editorials. When the newspaper first appeared, it employed the services of young educated Palestinian editors, such as Ibrahim al-Shanti<sup>8</sup> and 'Abd al-Qader al-Husayni,<sup>9</sup> and Arab expatriates, such as Sami al-Sarraj and Khayr al-Din al-Zerakli from Syria. However, these journalists left the newspaper in 1934 to found *al-Difa'*. *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya's* sharp criticism of the mufti and the High Muslim Council that he headed led some researchers to claim that it was affiliated with the *Mu'arada*. This was certainly true for a time, but during other (shorter) periods it demonstrated a more positive attitude towards the mufti and the High Muslim Council, probably due to the financial support provided by the council to its owner and editor.

Scholars who have researched this newspaper disagree about its attitude towards Fascism and Nazism. Yehoshuwa<sup>10</sup> and Shimoni<sup>11</sup> are incorrect in mentioning the newspaper's favourable treatment of Italy

and Fascist ideology. Reviews of the issues published, particularly during this period, show scathing attacks against Italy and its conduct in Libya, attacks aimed specifically at those Arabs who collaborated with Italy and developed high expectations of this country.<sup>12</sup> However, the articles expressed a certain affinity, mainly expressing admiration towards Nazi operations in Germany, which the Arabs were called upon to emulate.

Emil al-Ghuri's<sup>13</sup> *al-Wihda al-'Arabiyya* had pan-Arab inclinations and supported the Mufti. It was founded in Jerusalem as a daily newspaper, appearing from 4 December 1933, in two languages: English and Arabic, however, it was short-lived. Its publication was interrupted again after a few months. It reappeared in late 1935 but was interrupted after a month<sup>14</sup> by the British authorities on charges of incitement.<sup>15</sup> The newspaper mainly served as an alternative for newspapers of the Husayni camp (*al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* and *al-Liwa*) when these were closed at times by the authorities. The Husaynis would convey their messages through these minor newspapers until such time as the major newspapers reappeared.

*Al-Liwa*: Its owner and editor was Jamal al-Husayni, Secretary of the Executive Committee and later head of the Palestinian Arab party (the Husayni party). This newspaper was intended to be the main voice of the Husaynis once *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* began criticizing the leadership, and particularly Mousa Kathim al-Husayni, head of the Executive Committee. Jamal al-Husayni served as the right hand of Mousa Kathim, and when a covert rivalry began between the old leader and the mufti, Jamal sided with Kathim. However, with the weakening of Kathim's position, and in particular after his death in 1934, Jamal al-Husayni became a supporter of the Jerusalem mufti and one of his closest advisors. When the Palestinian Arab party was established, to counter the Defence Party of the Nashashibis, it was headed by Jamal al-Husayni, and his newspaper, *al-Liwa*, became the voice of this party, the latter also financing its expenses.<sup>16</sup> The newspaper was founded in Jerusalem as a daily newspaper and first appeared on 4 February 1933, sometimes including an English appendix. Other editors working with Jamal al-Husayni were Emil al-Ghuri, 'Ali al-Husayni and 'Uthman Qasim.<sup>17</sup> The newspaper was characterized by Jamal al-Husayni's florid style and it suffered much from the heavy hand of the British censor, who frequently suspended its publication. The Arab party's support of the newspaper ensured its financial security, and for this reason it attracted many journalists who hoped to make a living from journalism.<sup>18</sup>

In 1934 seven new Arabic newspapers were published:

*Sada al-Nasira*, was owned and edited by Father Cempert. This newspaper was published as a monthly in Nazareth. It received its licence on 16 May 1934, and was of a distinctly religious, Christian nature.<sup>19</sup>

*Al-Shabab*: its owner and editor was Emil al-Ghouri, and it was published in Jerusalem twice a week. It received its licence on 29 May 1934.<sup>20</sup> Its title page stated that it discussed political, economic, social and religious issues.<sup>21</sup>

*Al-Kashaf*: was published in Bethlehem, at first as a monthly, and from October 1935 twice a week.<sup>22</sup> Received its licence on 6 September 1934, and its title page stated that it discussed matters pertaining to the scouts, education and ethics. It was owned by Father Rishani and its editors were Ayyub Musallam and Niqula Qattan.<sup>23</sup>

*Al-Busbra*: A religious newspaper published by the Ahmedian Sect in Haifa. At first it was published as a quarterly, and from February 1935 it was published as a monthly.<sup>24</sup> It received its licence on 10 October 1934. Its owner and editor was 'Atallah al-Jalandahri and later Muhammad Salim al-Ahmedi. Its title page stated that it discussed religious and scientific issues.<sup>25</sup>

*Majallat al-Iqtisadiyyat al-'Arabiyya*: A journal specializing in economic matters. Founded in Jerusalem in November 1934, at first as a monthly and from March 1934 as a weekly.<sup>26</sup> Its owner was Fu'ad Saba<sup>27</sup>, and he edited it together with 'Adel Jabar.

*Al-Fajr*: Appeared in Jaffa twice a week; received its licence on 7 November 1934. Its owner and editor was Dr Iskandar Halabi, and from 1938 Mahmoud Sayf al-Din al-Irani edited the newspaper.<sup>28</sup> The title-page of the newspaper stated that it specialized in culture, art and ethics.<sup>29</sup>

*Al-Difa'*: The most important Arabic newspaper published in Palestine during the 1930s. It was founded by Ibrahim al-Shanti and the Syrian journalist Sami al-Sarraj, who left Sheikh al-Farouqi's newspaper, *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*. They were joined by the renowned Syrian journalist Khayr al-Din al-Zerkali, who also served at the time as the Saudi envoy to Palestine, Syria and Egypt.<sup>30</sup> These three people were also active in the al-Istiqlal party. Ibrahim al-Shanti was the representative for Jaffa in the national administration of the party.<sup>31</sup> In addition to the three founders, other pan-Arab writers also wrote for this newspaper, for example As'ad Dagher and Akram Zu'aitir. In a very short time the newspaper became the main rival of *Filastin*, which, until the establishment of *al-Difa'* was the most widely circulated Arabic newspaper in Palestine. The success of *al-Difa'* compared to

*Filastin* stemmed mostly from its Muslim owners and editors, unlike *Filastin*, which was Christian-owned. Thus *al-Difa'* was the most prevalent newspaper among Muslims, who were the largest religious group. The rural origins of Ibrahim al-Shanti also facilitated the newspaper's wide circulation in rural areas, which had a significant readership potential in the 1930s. The cooperation between al-Shanti and the two Syrian journalists did not last long. Al-Zerakli was the first to leave when he moved to Egypt, and Sami al-Sarraj left a year later when al-Shanti appointed Shawkat Hammad of Nablus as manager of the newspaper without informing to him.<sup>32</sup>

The rivalry between *al-Difa'* and *Filastin* led to the introduction of many innovations in the journalistic work and reporting of both newspapers, which resulted in a rise in the standard of other newspapers that also recognized the need for renewal. Due to the level of innovations and pictures introduced by *al-Difa'*, some researchers, headed by Yehoshuwa,<sup>33</sup> claimed that al-Shanti received the pictures and other financial aid from the German Consulate in Palestine, in return for publishing supportive propaganda. The continued existence of the newspaper was occasionally in danger due to financial difficulties. This may indicate that the German aid, if there were any, was not particularly generous. However, Ibrahim al-Shanti succeeded in saving his newspaper, once through a substantial investment by the Ramle businessman, Shukri al-Taji, who bought half the newspaper's shares,<sup>34</sup> and another time with the support of credit received from the National Bank, of which al-Shanti himself was one of the directors.<sup>35</sup> Thus the newspaper continued to be printed in Jaffa until 1948, when it moved to Cairo for a time, returning later to Jerusalem, and in 1967 moving to Jordan until it was closed by the authorities in 1971.

The first edition of *al-Difa'* was published in Jaffa on 20 April 1934, and the title-page presented a verse from a poem written by Khayr al-Din al-Zerakli that interpreted the newspaper's name and said: 'If you can't attack successfully and deal a crushing blow, you must first defend your existence.'<sup>36</sup>

In 1935 six additional Arabic newspapers were founded in Palestine:

*Al-Awqaf al-Islamiyya*: Its owner and editor was 'Ali al-Husayni. It was published in February 1935 as a bi-weekly and became a daily newspaper in April 1935.<sup>37</sup> Its title page stated that it deals in political and social matters.<sup>38</sup>

*Al-Jil*: Its owner and editor was Ibrahim al-Shanti, editor of *al-Difa'*. It was published in Jaffa as a weekly beginning from early

February 1935. Its title page stated that it discussed political and educational matters. It was closed by the authorities a short time after the beginning of the Great Strike of 1936.<sup>39</sup>

*Al-Sa'iqa*: Founded in Jaffa as a weekly in March 1935. Its owner was 'Abd al-Ghani al-Karmi and its editor was Farid al-Shanti. The title page stated that the newspaper dealt with political and critical issues.<sup>40</sup> This newspaper was also closed by order of the British authorities in June 1936.<sup>41</sup>

*Al-Miyah al-Hayya*: Appeared in Jerusalem as a monthly from April 1935. Its owner and editor was Father Khalil As'ad Jibra'il, and its title-page stated that it discusses religious matters.<sup>42</sup>

*Al-Khamis*: Appeared in Jaffa as a weekly in October 1935. Its owner and editor was Muhammad Farid al-Shanti. Its title page stated that it discussed political, critical, literary, social and existential matters.<sup>43</sup> In February 1937 its name was changed to *al-Sarkha*, and in November of that year it was closed by the authorities.<sup>44</sup>

*Al-Kifab*: Its owner and editor was Attorney Mustafa Arshid, whose family originated from the Jenin area. The newspaper was considered the voice of the Arab Youth Congress, which may have caused Khalil al-'Aqqad to mention in his book on the Palestinian press that the owner of the paper was Ya'qoub al-Ghusayn, leader of the Youth Congress.<sup>45</sup> It was founded in Jaffa as a weekly, began appearing in early December 1935, and was closed by the authorities in June 1936.<sup>46</sup> Its title page stated that it dealt with political, social, economic, scientific, commercial, artistic and agricultural issues.<sup>47</sup> In 1937 an attempt was made to renew publication of this newspaper, but it apparently did not appear in its new format, apart from the one issue in which it announced its reappearance.<sup>48</sup>

#### CIRCULATION DURING THIS PERIOD

The two most widely circulated newspapers during this period were *Filastin* and *al-ifa'*. *Filastin* was the veteran newspaper and it existed mainly on subscriptions by urban intelligentsia, mostly Christian. The constant rise in the circulation of *al-Difa'* indicates the emergence of a new strata of readers. Most of these readers were Muslims from the rural sector who did not tend to read *Filastin*, due to its Christian ownership, nor the Jerusalem newspapers, which they perceived as belonging to the high *effendi* strata, sons of the notable urban families. The rural origins of Ibrahim al-Shanti, editor of *al-Difa'*, and the newspa-

per's inclination towards the al-Istiqlal party, which challenged the traditional leadership of the two large clans (the Husaynis and the Nashashibis), greatly increased its circulation in the rural or semi-urban sectors.<sup>49</sup>

On regular days, the circulation of *Filastin* during this period was estimated at 3,000-3,500 copies,<sup>50</sup> while in times of crisis and political tension or on Saturdays (on which *al-Difa'* was not printed) circulation reached 5,000-6,000 copies.<sup>51</sup>

There are various estimates for the circulation of *al-Difa'*. According to Shimoni, its circulation was 5,000-6000 copies on regular days and 10,000 copies on Mondays (on which *Filastin* was not printed),<sup>52</sup> while according to Yuval Arnon-Ohana, its circulation in 1935 was approximately 3,500 copies.<sup>53</sup> Fawzi al-Shanti, who served as secretary of the newspaper during the late 1930s and 1940s, said in an interview that the average circulation of the newspaper was 9,000-10,000 copies on normal days, reaching 14,000 copies on special days.<sup>54</sup>

The circulation of the other newspapers was much lower than that of the two larger publications. *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* printed an average of 2,000 copies in 1935, *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* printed 1,200 copies,<sup>55</sup> *al-Karmil* printed 1,000 copies, and the other newspapers printed less than 1,000 copies, most of which were mailed to their subscribers.<sup>56</sup>

#### THE CALL FOR DISSOLUTION OF THE TRADITIONAL POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW INSTITUTIONS

In the late 1920 and early 1930s, a new generation of Palestinian political activists emerged. These were energetic and discerning young people, who perceived the traditional leadership, formed mainly by the split into two camps representing the two large clans, as incapable of leading the Palestinian Arabs to a realization of their national goals. This group was unique, as its members did not belong to the large clans that formed the opposing camps. Some of them came from rural families and their actions were dictated by status motives. Another conspicuous characteristic of the members of this group was their ideological orientation, mainly towards the pan-Arab ideal.<sup>57</sup> First and foremost, they fiercely objected to Britain, in their view the source of all the calamities to befall the Palestinian people.<sup>58</sup> They were graduates of universities and colleges considered 'hotbeds' of various types



of nationalism, such as the American University of Beirut (where Akram Zu'aitir, Ibrahim al-Shanti and other Palestinian intellectuals studied). A large majority of the newspapers supported the criticism of the young intelligentsia in various ways. They provided these young groups with a proper platform for expressing their criticism, although many newspapers were related to (and even financed by) influential factors in the national movement and its traditional leadership, and the editors of many newspapers were founding members of the traditional institutions that served as the target of this criticism.

The members of the Executive Committee, in particular its secretary, Jamal al-Husayni, were aware of these developments, and urged the leader of the Executive Committee to take practical steps deviating from the traditional manners of protest. These steps reached their climax in the support given by the Executive Committee to the Armament Convention held by the youth groups in Nablus in May 1931,<sup>59</sup> and in embracing a policy of non-cooperation with the Mandate authorities. Even the leader of the Executive Committee, Mousa Kathim al-Husayni, demonstrated in the streets of Jaffa, despite his advanced age, in order to prove to the youth groups that the *modus operandi* of the Executive Committee had indeed changed. However, despite these steps, the Executive Committee remained the target of attacks by newspaper columnists and editors. Khalil Zaqqout, editor of the newspaper *al-Zumur*, published in Acre, strongly attacked all the institutions of the Palestinian National Movement, in particular the Executive Committee, although popular institutions and the press itself were also criticized.<sup>60</sup> Zaqqout spoke ironically in his article:

Praise be to God for providing us with such a weak leadership, an indifferent national movement, and institutions and parties playing with marginal matters, unaware of the terrible future that encompasses many disasters ... God gave us the Palestinian press and people with no conscience and principles. The land is in a state of crisis and the people are suffering from terrible disaster. Hundreds of acres of land are taken from the Arabs and the sellers spend the money on playhouses and girls ... The people are busy dispatching telegrams and protests, and the National Movement is asleep and makes an appearance only in order to receive the benefits that interest its leaders, who enjoy positions and salaries ... The father of one of the leaders sold lands before his death and his brother is a speculator who sells lands, but he himself is still considered a prominent member of the notables ...

The situation is difficult and the fallah has reached rock bottom. All those who claim to be leaders achieve their goals and serve their own interests and later return to become integrated among the nationals.<sup>61</sup>

'Ajaj Nuwayhid, editor of *al-'Arab*, described the policy of the Executive Committee as a patchwork policy born mute, blind and maimed.<sup>62</sup> When the Executive Committee declared its policy of non-cooperation (*'siasat al-lata'awun'*), *Filastin* interpreted it as an unsuccessful imitation of Gandhi's actions in India. Gandhi established committees to supervise the extraction of salt from sea water and he himself served as an example by knitting clothes, while Palestinian leaders did not propose alternative routes that might compensate the people for the damages they sustained as a result of the policy of non-cooperation.<sup>63</sup>

The newspapers' criticism was usually aimed at the leadership in general, without mentioning names of specific leaders and without blatantly calling for dissolution of the Executive Committee, probably thanks to Mousa Kathim al-Husayni, who headed the Executive Committee. This man was greatly respected in political circles, by the press, and by all other institutions. He was the only person in the political arena who received such wide sympathy and he had the ability to unite and unify political rivals in one political establishment. Maybe this was the reason that the Executive Committee continued to exist, at least symbolically, long after it lost its prestige as the only entity representing the Palestinians.

After the death of Mousa Kathim al-Husayni in March 1934, the last justification for the existence of the Executive Committee had ceased to exist, and calls were heard for its dissolution and the establishment of a new political framework. The first to speak up was Sami al-Sarraj, in an article written in the newspaper *al-Difa'*, entitled 'For the revival of the weary National Movement and rejuvenation of the leadership'. He said:

It is incumbent upon us, when coming to establish the new bloc or union, to consider that the selection should not be only from one certain party or group ... National activity is the legitimate prerogative of every person; anyone with integrity and good intentions can bear the burden of national activity ... The homeland is always in need of cooperation between its sons and of united action. It also requires a homogeneous leadership. Homogeneity

is a crucial condition and an important factor in the success of activities motivated by a united goal.<sup>64</sup>

Al-Sarraj's words indicate the standards that the new leadership must maintain. Moreover, it is also possible to understand his criticism and objections, and those of the group he represented (the al-Istiqlal party and those connected to it) as pertaining to the work and activities of the Executive Committee. The latter served as the fortress of one group (the Husaynis) despite the efforts of its leader to present himself as above all sectarian and political conflict. Mousa Kathim succeeded in this personal portrayal, but the institution he headed was considered the exclusive legacy of the Husaynis, although it included representatives of most political groups and all tribes and sectors. Thus the criticism was aimed at the executive level of the Executive Committee, notably Jamal al-Husayni, who controlled most of its information systems (including, relations with the press). During the five final years of the Executive Committee's activities, the signature of the chairman was conspicuously absent from its documents, usually replaced by the signature of Jamal al-Husayni.<sup>65</sup>

Al-Sarraj's colleagues in the al-Istiqlal party, who were active in the leadership of the Executive Committee, and especially Subhi al-Khadra and 'Izzat Darwaza, were aware of the considerable influence held by Jamal al-Husayni and his family over the mechanisms of the Executive Committee. They were the among the first to criticize the actions of the Executive Committee, though they served as senior members on the committee and at the time were considered allies of the Husaynis.

'Issa al-Bandak, editor of *Sawt al-Sha'b*, chose to criticize the Executive Committee in an article published in *al-Difa'*, rather than his own newspaper, entitled 'Contemptible disability'. He wrote:

The people, whether from rural or urban origins, are united in the opinion that the leaders of the National Movement are helpless and unworthy of trust, due to their dedication to their personal interests. They take advantage of the good of the people for their own good and in order to realize their own cheap passions.<sup>66</sup>

Al-Bandak is an example of those who criticized the Executive Committee despite belonging to it. He represented the city of Bethlehem on the Executive Committee from its establishment until its dissolution. Al-Bandak's reference to the Executive Committee

expresses the feelings of many other members, who despite their membership ceased to trust it and were absent from its meetings. At the end, the Executive Committee was managed by a handful of people, headed by Jamal al-Husayni, who tried to maintain it after the death of Mousa Kathim. However, his attempts were unsuccessful, and when he saw others striving to establish political parties as part of a new political order, he supported this factionalism. When the opposition established the National Defence party in late 1934 he established the 'Palestinian Arab party' with Mufti Amin al-Husayni (with whom he had coordinated his actions since the final days of Mousa Kathim's office), and even served as its formal president.<sup>67</sup>

The establishment of the National Defence party of the Nashashibis and of the Palestinian Arab party was an unfortunate outcome that had not been anticipated by the generators of change in the early 1930s. At first, the change led to the establishment of a new political order through the founding of two entities with no clan affiliations, entities that had despaired of the old order and the traditional division of Husaynis and Nashashibis. These two entities were the Arab Youth Congress (*Mu'tamar al-Sbab al-'Arabi*), and the Arab Independence Party (*Hizb al-Istiqlal al-'Arabi*).

### *The Arab Youth Congress*

The Arab Youth Congress was established as a result of the successful popular conventions held by youth leaders in various Palestinian cities, especially the Armament Convention in Nablus, which sought ways to arm Palestinian Arabs in respect of the arming of the Jews.<sup>68</sup> These young people realized that they could influence the behaviour of the leaders, who tended to accept some of their demands and even led the demonstration that took place in Jerusalem on 29 August 1931, against the arming of the Jews. The involvement of figures such as Mousa Kathim al-Husayni, Jamal al-Husayni, 'Izzat Darwaza, 'Awni 'Abd al Hadi, among others,<sup>69</sup> suffices to show the extent of the influence of the convention and its many participants on the traditional leaders, especially members of the Executive Committee, whose presence at an anti-British event had never before been so widespread.

The press, for its part, demonstrated significant support for the decisions of the Nablus Convention, and articles written by the organizers of the convention, mainly Akram Zu'aitir and Fahmi al-'Abbushi, filled the newspapers. This certainly angered the British authorities. The Chief Secretary of Palestine under the Mandate government summoned the

editors of the newspapers and their owners and prohibited them to even mention the word 'armament', promising that any journalist or spokesman doing so would be severely punished. The newspaper editors saw this as a blatant violation of their freedom of speech and announced a seven-day strike (from 10-17 August 1931) in protest.<sup>70</sup>

Meanwhile, the young leaders began organizing their own convention to express their disappointment with the actions of the leadership, which sought to authorize itself and prevent the young people from taking control of the masses. For this purpose, the Executive Committee announced a popular convention in Nablus that would take place on 18 September 1931. Jamal al-Husayni, speaking to the participants of this convention, admitted that the Palestinian National movement's plan of action was ineffective. He even called for actions similar to those employed by national movements in Egypt and India, countries he had recently visited. Al-Husayni was impressed with the manner in which Gandhi managed the national movement in his country.<sup>71</sup> This approach was evident in the decisions of this convention as follows:

It is the obligation of the Executive Committee and other national institutions of Palestine to refrain from negotiating with the Mandate government unless for the purpose of demanding full independence as part of an Arab unity... It is necessary to reach this independence through political and economic programmes<sup>2</sup>

The press was represented at this convention by Munif al-Husayni, editor of *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, a member of the founding committee of the convention,<sup>73</sup> and Boulous Shihada, a member of the Executive Committee's delegation that met with the High Commissioner to convey the decisions reached at the convention.<sup>74</sup>

These steps of the Executive Committee were indeed more daring than its former activities, but they apparently did not satisfy the young activists, who strove for a continuous policy that would not hesitate to clash with the Mandate authorities, rather than a one-time action. They were also angry that the decisions and declarations of the convention were conveyed to the High Commissioner in a manner that had been previously customary – by a delegation that met with the Commissioner and handed him the protest. The dissatisfaction of the young people with the work of the Executive Committee was expressed by Akram Zu'aitir, who wrote in his diary:

During the arguments and discussions I kept silent. I supported the decisions, although in my opinion these conventions, which indeed inflame the national spirit, cannot save the homeland... The only viable option is to form a new level of leadership that believes in its principles, which can accept responsibility for rebelling against the Mandate policy and serve as an example of self-sacrifice for the homeland.<sup>75</sup>

The words of Zu'aitir reflected the thoughts of many young leaders. They began planning a convention of the young leadership to generate the desired change in the modus operandi of the Palestinian National Movement. A decision was made to hold the convention in Jaffa in early January 1932. The traditional leadership tried to disrupt preparations for this convention and invited the newspaper owners to an urgent meeting providing instructions for treatment of the youth convention in the press.<sup>76</sup> The meeting was attended by 'Izzat Darwaza, representative of the Executive Committee, and by 'Issa al-'Issa and 'Abdullah al-Qalqili, editors of *Filastin* and *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim*, representatives of the press. 'Izzat Darwaza opened the discussion and said: 'There is a movement of disillusioned people who wish to hold a convention in Jaffa or in the north. We think that this convention will be detrimental, and therefore we call upon the press to act to stop the organizers.'<sup>77</sup> Darwaza claimed that this convention was orchestrated by destructive factors aiming to create an alternative to the Executive Committee and warned that such an act might harm national interests. 'Issa al-'Issa supported Darwaza and even added that these activities were financed by Zionists.<sup>78</sup> 'Abdullah al-Qalqili, editor of *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim*, objected and said that the Executive Committee should not oppose the youth convention or any other convention, as 'if there is need for objection, it will come from the people themselves'.<sup>79</sup>

The discussions at this meeting were not reflected in the press of the period, and the members of the Executive Committee took advantage of this, hoping that they could remain in control. The new approach of the Executive Committee was expressed by Jamal al-Husayni in an article published in the newspaper *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, in which he said:

What do we mean by a Youth Congress? Should we plan a new programme intended exclusively for young people? If so, the land will become enmeshed in insoluble political and ideological chaos. Do we want the young people to organize their ranks to do

what we would do, and must we let them stand at the front? If so, we are replacing one power with another. We want a convention that will reach clear decisions and a clear system that will define what the young of the nation should do, on condition that it will not involve political and sectarian disputes, so that everyone will act for the homeland, in particular with regard to the National Fund.<sup>80</sup>

The discussions and actions of the members of the Executive Committee did not interfere with the preparations for the convention, and it was held on 4 January 1932. It was attended by leaders who did not belong to the young ranks, but rather were representatives of the existing political powers. The image of this convention as unaffiliated with political parties was purely artificial, and the convention certainly did not reflect any essentially new reality with regard to the existing political groups. The only innovation was the presentation of new issues not previously discussed by the National movement: the establishment of a 'national fund' to support economic and agricultural development of the land, and the establishment of Scouts groups to guard the shores and prevent the landing of new Jewish illegal immigrants.<sup>81</sup>

Aside from these issues, the convention's decisions were a mere rehashing of previous discussions, such as the subject of land sale and the slogan that 'All Palestinian lands are holy Arab lands, and anyone acting or helping to sell them will be considered a traitor to the homeland. In addition, anyone who maintains contact with the Zionists in any field, political, social, economic or through the unions, will be considered a traitor.'<sup>82</sup> The convention chose an executive committee, composed of thirty-eight members. The leadership of the committee included five members: Rasim al-Khalidi, Chairman, 'Issa al-Bandak, Deputy Chairman and Fu'ad Saba, Hamdi al-Nabulsi, Yusuf 'Abdu, and Sa'di al-Shawwa, all members.<sup>83</sup> This composition of the leadership, with no representative from the rural sector, since all of its members were from the large cities, greatly annoyed the members of rural origin; they also protested that the large majority of the members of the broader executive committee were from the urban sector (over thirty of the thirty-eight members). The rural representatives withdrew from the convention, claiming that its composition was no different than that of former political institutions.<sup>84</sup> This led to the dismissal of al-Khalidi as head of the Youth Congress Party nearly nine months after his appointment, despite his extensive efforts to establish a 'national fund' and to raise donations for what was known as the Grush

Project ('*Masbrou' al-Qirsb*'). He also acted to establish the 'Young Arab Association' that did a great deal for the organization of popular institutions and held many fundraising events for the benefit of farmers, merchants, labourers and detainees.<sup>85</sup> Ya'qoub al-Ghusayn, who was also a son of one of the rich families from the Ramle area, was chosen to replace Rasim al-Khalidi, and the new leadership that accompanied him had a larger representation of *fallabin*. The replacement of Rasim al-Khalidi with Ya'qoub al-Ghusayn is an indication of the failure of the Youth Congress in its inclination towards independence and neutrality and its renewed orientation to one of the two camps, in this case the Husayni camp.<sup>86</sup>

Rasim al-Khalidi could not retain the position of chairman for two reasons: first, he belonged to a notable urban family (the al-Khalidi family, which was affiliated with the Nashashibi camp until 1934), and so became a target for criticism by those of the rural sector who claimed that they were discriminated against by the city people. Secondly, he was an educated man who truly believed in the ability of young people to generate change by totally disregarding existing traditional divisions. Thus, he was supported neither by the *fallabin* nor by the traditional leadership. His replacement, Ya'qoub al-Ghusayn, was also a son of one of the wealthy families, but this family was not one of the large A'ian families. It was originally a rural family from the village of Wadi Hanin near Ramle. This family supported the Husaynis, legitimizing al-Ghusayn in the eyes of the currently influential group in the Palestinian leadership.

The Youth Congress acquired its reputation from the scouts guards who were placed along the shores of Palestine with the aim of preventing the arrival of Jewish immigrants. The clashes between the scouts and the Jews in 1934 and 1935 were extensively reviewed in the press, and when the political parties announced the establishment of the Higher Arab Committee as responsible for organizing and supervising the Great Strike, the Youth Congress was allowed to send a representative member, as did the other parties.

As far as the press was concerned, the members of the Congress wrote for *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* and *al-'Arab*, which were close to their ideological orientation, especially on the pan-Arab ideal of unity. In time, the members of the Congress understood that they would do well to publish their own newspaper. In late 1935 they founded a newspaper named *al-Kifab*, edited by Attorney Mustafa Irshid and Nasib 'Urayda. This newspaper did not appear for long, and its publication ceased a few months later. In 1938 another attempt at publication was made, but this attempt was also short-lived.



*The Arab al-Istiqlal party*

This party also announced that it was not affiliated to any of the existing political parties and that it believed in the unity of the Arab countries and perceived itself as the Palestinian branch of the Arab Independence party, headed by Faysal I, King of Iraq. The al-Istiqlal party strived for Palestinian independence as the first step towards the unity of independent Arab countries.<sup>87</sup> The majority of the leaders of this party were veteran political activists who took part in Faysal's failed attempt to establish an independent Arab state in Syria.<sup>88</sup> Some took part in the establishment of the Transjordan Emirate in 1921 by Emir Abdullah.<sup>89</sup> This group included 'Awni 'Abd al Hadi (an attorney and son of a notable and landowning family, originally from the village of Arabeh, near Jenin), 'Izzat Darwaza (intellectual, historian and educator from Nablus, son of a middle-class family), Akram Zu'aitir (son of a notable family from Nablus, intellectual, journalist and educator), Mu'in al-Madi (son of a wealthy family from the village of Ijzim near Haifa), and Subhi al-Khadra (intellectual and journalist from Safed). The founders of the al-Istiqlal party also included people from neighbouring Arab countries, mainly Syria and Lebanon, for example, 'Ajaj Nuwayhid of Lebanon and Sami al-Sarraj and Khayr al-Din al-Zerakli from Syria. Shukri al-Quwwatli (subsequently president of Syria) was an Istiqlal activist during his exile in Palestine, when he lived for a certain period in the city of Bisan.<sup>90</sup>

The socioeconomic background of the leaders of al-Istiqlal indicates that most of them were sons of notable families, but not of the senior Jerusalem families. They were second- and third-generation leaders in their families. Most had prior experience with political activism, in particular in the pan-Arab movement. Most were educated, impassioned speakers, and newspaper columnists. Some (such as Zu'aitir and Nuwayhid) were acting editors of prominent newspapers.

Akram Zu'aitir was the exception among the leaders of al-Istiqlal with regard to his age. He was younger than the other members, and in his first years of activity many thought that he would become involved in the activities of the Youth Congress, whose leaders held similar views. However, he became affiliated with the al-Istiqlal party, apparently due to the willingness of the Youth Congress to compromise with the traditional leadership of the Husaynis and the Executive Committee.

Zu'aitir was the only leader of al-Istiqlal who had not been active in existing political institutions, in contrast to the other leaders, who all

held prominent positions ('Izzat Darwaza, for example, was general administrator of the *Waqf* and member of the High Muslim Council and the Arab Executive Committee, Subhi al-Khadra was a member of the High Muslim Council and deputy chairman of the Executive Committee, and so on). Some time before the party was founded, Akram Zu'aitir tried to sketch the portrait of a person who believed in the principles of Istiqlal:<sup>91</sup>

The 'Istiqlali' member is a person who fights the whole world for his independence, though the fight may be solitary, because these principles do not serve those who do not fully embrace them. They faithfully serve those who embrace them honestly and are willing to sacrifice everything for them. A member of al-Istiqlal is a person who objects to degradation and refuses to surrender in face of difficulties and calamities. This person is better than a thousand people who call for independence but do nothing to achieve it ... The Istiqlal principles and the wish for independence should be evident in all our actions: our protests, our work, our parties, our ethics, our dress, our press and even our distinctly personal relations.<sup>92</sup>

Zu'aitir's words insinuate criticism of the political activists of the Palestinian National Party, whose calls for independence and for cancellation of the British Mandate of Palestine were not reflected in their actions and in their daily life, thus precluding them as a model for the people. These words were aimed at convincing the readers that those with Istiqlal beliefs were indeed demanding something different, calling for new conduct from the people and the leaders, a conduct capable of realizing their demands and declarations. The members of al-Istiqlal were obliged to clarify this issue to the masses in order to justify their existence as a unique political entity.

Subhi al-Khadra, in an editorial for the newspaper *al-'Arab*, the voice of the al-Istiqlal party, took upon himself to explain these ideas. Under the title 'Why did we found the al-Istiqlal party?' he said:

In Palestine we transformed the national issue from a struggle against the colonial invader to intermittent agitation aimed at the Zionist Movement. The truth is that when we talk of the national issue in Palestine we are deluding ourselves and making fools of ourselves, because the activities of the national leadership are shameful. This fragmented agitation against the Jews has been detrimental to our cause and has weakened our power and our

position.<sup>93</sup> ... This situation has served as a catalyst for founding the al-Istiqlal Party in Palestine. The founders of the party were convinced that the only way of correcting the course of the national issue in Palestine and reinstating its former course – the struggle against the invader in order to achieve liberty and independence and to promote the Arab Nation – is to assemble a homogeneous group of leaders who will devote all their energy to the National Jihad, change the old modus operandi, and operate for the good of the nation with a clear conscience and honest intentions.<sup>94</sup>

When the Istiqlal views began permeating the Palestinian masses and their gatherings began attracting large numbers of participants, the traditional institutions and their representatives (among others, renowned veteran journalists such as Boulous Shihada, 'Issa al-'Issa and Najib Nassar) voiced strong criticism, saying that the Istiqlalis were capable only of writing, talking and shouting slogans. The an editorial in the newspaper *al-Karmil* criticized their actions, saying:

It seems to me that those who fill this new position are the same people who filled the former positions on the nationalist stage. Once they supported the British and now they call for independence. They act according to their own interests – sometimes as Istiqlal people [*Istiqlaliyyoun*], and at other times as opportunistic exploiters [*Istighblaliyyoun*], sometimes as supporters of the Husaynis [*Majlisiyyun*] and at other times as supporters of the opposition [*Mu'aridun*].<sup>95</sup>

Some of the al-Istiqlal people were accused of belonging to the communists, in particular Hamdi al-Husayni. In order to distance himself from this accusation he felt obliged to write an article in the newspaper *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, entitled: 'I am not a communist, denial of accusation'. In it he wrote:

I am a Muslim Arab, proud of my nationality and of my religion. I do all I can to serve Arab Nationalism and the pan-Islam ideal, and to achieve the independence of the Arab countries, from Marrakesh to Basra, and from the Taurus Mountains to Aden. I fight the colonialism that prevents me from achieving my national goals. Aware that communism opposes the principles of nationalism, I have never believed in communist ideas and I was never a member of any of their organizations.<sup>96</sup>

The newspapers *al-Karmil* and *Filastin*, which voiced criticism against the members of al-Istiqlal, attacked them, apparently due to the absence of a conspicuous Christian representative among the leadership of the party. The newspaper *Filastin* asked them: 'How can you simultaneously attack the phenomenon of factionalism in Palestine and be an active part of it?'

The newspaper mocked the dreamy idealistic approach of the al-Istiqlal members and their presentation of themselves as exceptional people who do no wrong and never err, as damaging to the land and the people.<sup>98</sup> *Filastin* made even fiercer attacks against the members of al-Istiqlal and elsewhere described the operations of this party, saying:

This manner of operation is no different than the path of speeches that enter one ear and leave through the other, or telegrams transmitted along unending radio waves, or voyages through villages and Bedouin encampments that usually end with food-laden tables and no more. We all know that this manner of action has nothing to do with the real national jihad.<sup>99</sup>

*Al-Karmil* doubted the ability of this course of action of the al-Istiqlal party to achieve a unique contribution unlike that by the existing traditional course of action.<sup>100</sup>

'Izzat Darwaza replied to this criticism in an article published in *al-Arab*, in which he pointed an accusing finger at the leaders of the traditional camp, who drew their power and influence from the British authorities and from the proceeds of lands sold to Jews.<sup>101</sup> Darwaza also believed that the change in the modus operandi of the Palestinian National movement had to be facilitated by the leaders of the two large camps and not by those who bore the burden of their failed activities.<sup>102</sup>

The criticism voiced by the press towards the activity of al-Istiqlal to some extent contradicts Zu'aitir's words in his memoirs. Zu'aitir stated that the newspapers, in particular *Filastin* and *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, competed with each other for publication of special issues and supplements in honour of national events called for by the al-Istiqlal party.<sup>103</sup> He also said that these two newspapers competed for the right to publish his articles, and that he decided to write for both of them.<sup>104</sup> Zu'aitir's words about special issues in honour of events held by al-Istiqlal are inaccurate, as all the newspapers published special issues, not only following events initiated by the al-Istiqlal party, rather also in honour of events initiated by other leading political groups, in particular the Executive Committee and the High Muslim

Council, and in some cases also the Youth Congress. As to his words about the competition over publishing his articles, it must be stated that he was indeed a much sought-after journalist. Unlike the other leaders of al-Istiqlal, who wrote for *al-'Arab* or *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, he also wrote for the opposition papers, in particular Sheikh al-Farouqi's *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, aside from a short period of tension between the two as a result of a forged document circulated by the newspaper about the activity of Shakib Arsalan (one of the major ideologues of the al-Istiqlal Party) and his relations with fascist Italy.<sup>105</sup>

The popularity of Zu'aitir among the readership<sup>106</sup> and the general public, and his articles advocating the ideas of al-Istiqlal, were very beneficial for the party and attracted supporters. This was evidenced by the large number of people who participated in gatherings organized by the party. Some newspapers even reported that participants arrived en masse at gatherings featuring Zu'aitir as one of the speakers and demanded that he speak even when he was not on the list of speakers.

The rising status of Akram Zu'aitir within the National movement, particularly among the journalists, angered the more senior journalists, in particular when Zu'aitir criticized those who occasionally changed their loyalties and affiliation, whom he called by the derisive name 'servants' (*mutawi*). Among these was a journalist of Syrian origin, Mahmoud al-Chirqas, reporter for the Palestinian newspaper *Alef Baa*, published in Damascus.<sup>107</sup> Al-Chirqas criticized the moves of the young people against the traditional leadership and their attempt to enforce their decisions on the people at large. Zu'aitir objected to those journalists who supported the views of the Executive Committee and called them 'servants' who perform the will of the traditional leaders in order to earn their bread and salt, while their position did not stem from their beliefs and principles.<sup>108</sup> Chirqas understood that he was one of those targeted by Zu'aitir in his article, and in a letter to Jamal al-Husayni, editor of *al-Liwa*, he said:

It seems to me that Mr Akram Zu'aitir, when writing about a certain subject, intends primarily to expand the subject as much as possible on the one hand, and to provoke a large number of people on the other. I do not know whether this stems from Mr Zu'aitir's selfish inclinations, but I would like to say that I indeed need bread and salt to support my family and I am not ashamed of this, as no one can live without them. However, I reject Zu'aitir's description of myself as belonging to the group he calls servants (*mutawi*), whom he claims write for *al-Liwa* according to

instructions received from the owners, also conveying these messages in other newspapers printed in Arab countries. This is untrue and we do not act as described by Mr Zu'aitir.<sup>109</sup>

Jamal al-Husayni also indulged in polemics with Akram Zu'aitir about his criticism, discussing the foundations of the Palestinian National movement and the course it took in articles published in the newspaper *al-Liwa* under the anonymous name 'reader'. Akram Zu'aitir answered in short articles written for the newspaper *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, which he called 'sparks' (*'wamadat'*). Alongside Akram Zu'aitir, the al-Istiqlal ideas were also advocated in journalistic articles by Ibrahim al-Shanti, secretary of the party's Jaffa branch, and Hashim al-Sabi', secretary of the Scouts' Jaffa branch. In the north, the Party's ideas were circulated by Subhi al-Khadra and Rashid al-Haj Ibrahim, head of the Young Muslim Society in Haifa.

The al-Istiqlal party reached the height of its power during the first half of 1933.<sup>110</sup> However, by the end of this year the organizational infrastructure and branches no longer existed,<sup>111</sup> although the members of the party continued to advocate its principles and it even had a representative on the High Arab Committee established in May 1936. In its heyday, the party succeeded in attracting the youth organizations and the scouts movement and many young educated people who resented the historical dispute between Husaynis and Nashashibis. Its activity was a cause of concern for the traditional leadership, which was at first inclined to reach a compromise and even to embrace a policy of non-cooperation (*'la ta'awun'*) towards the British Mandate authorities, as a protest against the Mandate and the British policy in Palestine.<sup>112</sup>

The Executive Committee initiated a national convention that took place in Jaffa in February 1933. This convention confirmed the memorandum submitted by the al-Istiqlal party concerning non-cooperation in economic, social and political matters. Among other subjects discussed, the memorandum spoke of refraining from participating in parties held by the British authorities, boycotting the work of committees appointed by these authorities, enforcing an embargo on British merchandise and refusing to pay customs and other levies. The boycott also included any contact with Jews. During the convention the opposition attempted to create a conflict between the mufti and the British by circulating a petition calling on all Palestinian Arabs in formal positions (among them mayors and employees of the High Muslim Council) to resign their positions. Some of the *Mu'arada* mayors, headed

by 'Asim al-Sa'id, Mayor of Jaffa, announced their resignation, and even spoke for Raghīb al-Nashashibi, Mayor of Jerusalem, saying that he was willing to resign if the mufti would do so as well.<sup>113</sup> Haj Amin refused to resign, claiming that he was not a British official, and that anyone who wanted to entangle him in this issue must know that it was not easily done<sup>14</sup>

Finally, the convention confirmed the policy of non-cooperation but did not decide on its implementation or enforcement. The main practical result of this convention was a return to the traditional dispute between the rival camps, and minimizing the achievements of al-Istiqlal and the Youth Congress in their endeavours to silence the factional and clan dispute.

It is no surprise that the newspaper *al-'Arab*, the voice of al-Istiqlal, launched a scathing attack against those who aggravated the dispute and led to a serious setback in the nation's progress. In an article published in early April 1933 it said: 'The day on which the convention was held (26 March 1933) is a day of shame and disgrace, proving once more that the people are operating on a certain level, with the unsteady leadership groups on a totally different level'.<sup>115</sup>

After the failure of the non-cooperation policy initiated by the members of al-Istiqlal, the traditional leadership resumed its guidance of the course of events, while the prominent leaders of al-Istiqlal, such as 'Awni 'Abd al Hadi, 'Izzat Darwaza and Mu'īn al-Madi, participated in the activities as part of the traditional leadership and the Executive Committee. This was true of the fierce demonstrations in Jerusalem (13 October 1933) and Jaffa (27 October 1933), which were attended by the leaders of the Executive Committee, some even sustaining injuries (Mousa Kathim and 'Izzat Darwaza).<sup>116</sup> The authorities put the leaders of the demonstrations on trial and in March 1934 many were sentenced to a few months of imprisonment with hard labour.<sup>117</sup>

These demonstrations were led by the traditional leadership, thus proving that the al-Istiqlal initiative to facilitate conflict with the British, as the main enemy of the Palestinian National movement, was accelerated and not halted when the traditional leadership resumed its position at the head of the National movement's activities. The seeds sown by the Istiqlalis in the early 1930s were evident in the general tendency of the Palestinian National movement towards the use of violence, in particular by the 'Iz al-Din al-Qassam band in November 1935 and in the Revolt of 1936-39. The newspaper *al-'Arab* analyzed the results of the demonstrations thus:

This is the first time that Arab blood has been spilt in an event in which the major enemy is clearly the English. The direct clashes between the Arabs and the authorities occurred in Jerusalem, Haifa, Jaffa and other cities, the Jews watching from afar through their binoculars, while formerly it was the English who watched the struggles between Arabs and Jews from afar. We do not want to return to this previous state of affairs, as a return to the struggle against the Jewish fragments while neglecting the struggle against the English will put an end to the Arab issue. This shift of the struggle which is now directed at the English was recognized by the European newspapers, headed by the renowned London *Times*.<sup>118</sup>

*Al-'Arab* and *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* praised the new powers and the new methods, but each for its own reasons. The newspaper *al-'Arab* defined its major goals and said that the Palestinian-British struggle would develop in time into a pan-Arab-British struggle; i.e., it wished the Arab countries would join the Palestinians in their struggle against the British, as a first step towards pan-Arab independence that would lead eventually to unity of all Arab countries.<sup>119</sup> *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* had at the time become the main voice of Haj Amin. Munif al-Husayni, editor of the newspaper and the mufti's nephew, became one of his closest confidantes. His proximity to the mufti and his support of the Youth Congress distanced him from the Executive Committee and from its president, Mousa Kathim al-Husayni, who symbolized more than anyone the old methods of political activity, despite his active participation in demonstrations during his last year. The newspaper stressed the mufti's moves and declarations and concealed those of Mousa Kathim. At the Jaffa convention in March 1933, which announced the policy of 'non-cooperation', the newspaper greatly emphasized the mufti's famous speech, in which he replied to those who tried to involve him in a direct struggle with the British. The newspaper underlined the mufti's declaration of intentions, in which he said that people were wrong to call those active in the National movement 'leaders'. Therefore, everything written in the press and said at conventions must be understood in its correct context.<sup>120</sup> At the end of the speech the mufti told those that he was one of the pioneers of the National movement and that he would remain at its head, undeterred by the dangers, just as he had never been deterred by them in the past.<sup>121</sup>

The newspapers *Filastin* and *al-Karmil* took a surprising stance,



which belittled the appearance of the new powers and doubted their ability to change the old methods of operation, although prior to the appearance of al-Istiqlal and the Youth Congress *al-Karmil* had expressed views that were similar to the spirit of these movements. Najib Nassar was apparently interested in the people and not the ideas, and since most of the people were part of the old system or affiliated to it, he thought that they would be unable to generate the required changes.

Moreover, *Filastin* and *al-Karmil* had reason to refrain from being drawn to the new powers despite their ideological affinity, mainly the distinctly Muslim character of the two new movements: the Youth Congress and al-Istiqlal. If we consider the struggle between the Husaynis and the Nashashibis as a predominantly intra-Islamic struggle, they may have seen the current struggle between those supporting the new groups against the proponents of the old method as continuing that conflict.

In summary, the appearance of these two political parties urged the traditional leadership to a more active course of energetic and the masses to a more violent course of action. However, the consequence was the unanticipated identification of those constituting the old camps with the new political parties that took control, thus perpetuating the previous situation of rival camps.

#### ESTABLISHMENT OF FACTIONAL POLITICAL PARTIES:

The death of Mousa Kathim al-Husayni in March 1934 and the local elections in the autumn of that year accelerated the transition of the traditional rival camps to political parties. Mousa Kathim's death was not unexpected. Five months prior to his death he was injured in a demonstration in Jaffa, and thereafter his political activities dwindled to a minimum. The injury added to his prestige, since he was revered in the National movement, a spiritual father who was not personally criticized despite scathing criticism directed at the entity he headed. He was indeed affiliated with the Husayni camp, but he won the respect of his rivals, and in his later years he held views which were almost identical to those of the Nashashibis concerning Haj Amin al-Husayni and his wish to lead the National Movement. When he died, the Arabic newspapers all published obituaries and eulogies. The newspaper *Filastin* even cited from the Jewish and British press in order to prove that even the enemies of the Palestinians respected

Mousa Kathim. A London newspaper, the *Daily Express*, was cited as praising Mousa Kathim as a leader 'who led the Arab resistance to the British in Palestine in a non-violent manner, through a determined legitimate struggle. He violated this approach only once, when participating in a demonstration in Jerusalem'.<sup>122</sup> *Filastin* also cited the *Palestine Post* 'All citizens, Jewish and Christian, offer their condolences to the Muslims for the loss of an honourable man blessed with superior qualities, primarily the love of the homeland. All his life he was an honourable man and in his death Palestine has lost one of its greatest and most devoted sons.'<sup>123</sup>

The Executive Committee continued its activities after the death of the president for a short period. During this period a number of meetings took place, however, due to poor attendance the participants were unable to elect a new president.<sup>124</sup> At one of these few meetings a decision was made that the Executive Committee would call for the establishment of political parties that would unite the existing political powers. The committee even gave these entities six months to establish political parties, whereupon the Eighth National Congress would be announced.<sup>125</sup>

Nevertheless, the reality of rival camps and their affiliates was reaffirmed in the results of the local elections. These elections were held for the first time in 1927 and should have been held every four years. However, in 1931 the High Commissioner decided to postpone them until 1934 due to current tensions. In the first elections (1927) the Nashashibi opposition and its affiliates won control of almost all major municipalities (Jerusalem, Jaffa, Nablus and Haifa). In 1934 the spotlight centred on the elections for the municipality of Jerusalem. Until 1920 the municipality of Jerusalem had been the stronghold of the Husaynis, and had been under their control since 1864.<sup>126</sup> From 1920 the Mayor of Jerusalem was the opposition leader, Raghīb al-Nashashibi. He was appointed by the British, after dismissing the former Mayor, Mousa Kathim al-Husayni, as a punishment for his participation in the 1920 events protesting against the British occupation.

In 1934 the mufti decided to appoint his own candidate, who had a chance of defeating Raghīb al-Nashashibi. He selected Dr Husayn Fakhri al-Khalidi, who had previously served as Director of the Jerusalem Department of Health. Dr al-Khalidi belonged to a family affiliated with the opposition, and in addition a family feud existed between the al-Husayni and al-Khalidi families.<sup>127</sup> The mufti succeeded in overcoming these obstacles when he consented to the mediation efforts of Mousa al-Alami and Ihsan al-Jabiri. With the support of the

High Commissioner and attended by his representative, a reconciliation meeting was organized between the Husaynis and the Khalidis at the home of Mousa al-'Alami,<sup>128</sup> thus paving the way for nominating Dr al-Khalidi as candidate for mayor of Jerusalem on behalf of the Husaynis and their new allies, the Khalidis. This alliance eventually led to Raghīb al-Nashashibi's defeat at the elections; Dr al-Khalidi won the elections and was instated as the new mayor of Jerusalem.

The press was the main platform for the elections. *Filastin* was the primary platform for the *Mu'arada* and the newspapers *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* and *al-Liwa* defended the *Majlisiyyun* camp. Other newspapers, such as *al-Karmil* and *al-Difa'*, tried to remain neutral and attacked the entire system, without belonging to a specific camp.

When the alliance was forged between the Husaynis and the Khalidis against the Nashashibis, the newspaper *Filastin* reviewed the history of the relations between the al-Husayni and the al-Khalidi families, emphasizing their former points of friction and dispute. It stated that in the past the al-Khalidi family had approached the mufti of Egypt, requesting a religious judgement objecting to the behaviour of the al-Husayni family, in particular Amin al-Husayni. The newspaper also mentioned the attacks of *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, affiliated with the mufti, against the al-Khalidi family and its Lebanese relations, the Salam family, who sold lands in the Hula Valley to Jews.<sup>129</sup> According to *Filastin*, Dr al-Khalidi was nominated as candidate for Mayor of Jerusalem on behalf of the Husaynis only after Jamal al-Husayni was prevented from participating in these elections by order of the court. In return, the al-Khalidi family bestowed on the High Muslim Council lands to be supervised by the mufti as private lands rather than belonging to the *Waqf*.<sup>130</sup>

*Filastin* served as the voice of the Nashashibi Defence Party when it was first established in late 1934. The newspaper attacked other efforts to establish political parties and accused those joining the parties of acting out of personal and familial reasons, unrelated to the homeland or to nationalism. One example was the establishment of the Reform Party in May 1935 by Dr al-Khalidi, based on the rivalry between the al-Khalidi family and the al-Nashashibi family concerning the elections to the municipality of Jerusalem. Another example of turbid relations between two people that caused the one to join the rival party of the other with no ideological basis was when Dr Sa'adallah Qassis left the Nashashibi camp and joined Dr al-Khalidi's party as a result of his personal hostility towards Attorney Mughannam Mughannam, secretary of the Nashashibi Defence Party.<sup>131</sup>

The newspapers *al-Liwa* and *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* spread the ideas of the Husaynis' Arab Palestinian party and presented it as 'a party representing the entire nation, a party of integrity and true nationalism, established in order to serve the public and realize the nation's goals'.<sup>132</sup> The two newspapers described the travels of the party leaders to various areas of Palestine and their declarations, and detailed the warm welcome that they received from the public.<sup>133</sup> *Al-Liwa* was supported by the party in order to compete with *Filastin* and the other newspapers affiliated with the *Mu'arada*. Meetings at the party headquarters and branches included instructions on ways of arousing people's support of the newspaper through donations and subscriptions.<sup>134</sup>

*Al-Difa'* and *al-Karmil*, as mentioned above, chose to refrain from overtly supporting anyone specific despite their ideological proximity to the al-Istiqlal party. However, when they found out that the establishment of new parties by the two large blocs would in essence reaffirm the control of the family camps, they began attacking all institutions and parties indiscriminately. *Al-Difa'*, for example, tried to analyze the formation of the National movement's leadership by saying:

The Palestinian leadership was formed not as a result of its past deeds, not as a result of its sacrifices for the homeland, and not as a result of its devotion to principles and ideals. It was formed on a distinctly sectarian family feudal basis. We have heard many of the leaders say that a certain position was inherited from their forefathers. Thus we have reached a situation whereupon if you wish to be a national leader you must belong to a large family whose members are wealthy and have held many positions.<sup>135</sup>

In another article, the newspaper attacked the notable Jerusalemite families even more severely. It listed four reasons for the destruction and calamities that had befallen Palestinian Arabs: the rivalry of the Jerusalemite families; their leaders' obsessions; the tricks used by these leaders; and the preference accorded personal and familial interests over national interests.<sup>136</sup> In the opinion of the newspaper these four factors led to the strong blow dealt to Arab Palestinians, of which the Jews were quick to take advantage.<sup>137</sup>

*Al-Karmil* appealed to the Arab leaders saying:

Oh leaders of Palestine, adorned by titles empty of content and essence! All your old methods, gatherings, protests and reports, will no longer be of benefit to you and will not help you to fortify

your positions. You brought about the weakening of the Arabs and the Jews are growing stronger at our expense. We must organize our ranks and increase our training, and only then approach the British and ask them to leave the country to its owners. If they refuse, we prefer to die honourably at the hands of the British, defending our homeland, than to die at the hands of the Jews.<sup>138</sup>

Later in the same article *al-Karmil* claimed that the issue was no longer purely nationalist, rather existential, concerning the lives of all Palestinians, whose souls, wives and children were threatened. At the end of the article the author questioned whether the time had not come for the Arabs to open their eyes and begin to take action, and then answered: 'If the leaders evert once more to protests, the people should simply take out a white flag and surrender to the Jews.'<sup>139</sup>

*Al-Karmil's* call to the people to train in order to fight the British so that the latter would leave the land signaled the beginning of a process led by the press. This included a shift to violent means and using power in order to realize national goals. Some researchers<sup>140</sup> have claimed that the pan-Arab groups (the Youth Congress and *al-Istiqlal*) and the newspapers that supported them or were affiliated with them (*al-Difa'*, *al-Karmil*, *al-Kifab*, and to a certain degree *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*) prepared the way for the appearance of the armed groups, especially that of 'Iz al-Din al-Qassam in November 1935. However, public sympathy for armed response to the Mandate authorities was first shown for Mahmoud al-Hamad from the village of Tammun, leader of a band of robbers, also called Abu Jilda. Despite his criminal activities he won the admiration of the Arab Palestinian public for succeeding in upsetting British authorities.

### THE EMERGENCE OF ARMED BANDS

The deep disappointment with the manner in which the political leaders handled the Palestinian struggle and with its results led to the emergence of 'armed bands' (*fasa'il musallaba*) and the use of violence against the authorities. These people probably reacted to the call voiced by the press to take violent steps in order to dissuade Britain from its intentions to implement the Balfour Declaration concerning the Jewish National Home.

The process began with an armed band led by Ahmad Tafish in

Safed, called the 'Green Hand Armed group' (Jama'at al-Kaf al-Akhdar).<sup>141</sup> Its members began shooting at Jewish neighbourhoods. This caused the authorities to begin a campaign aimed at disbanding them. Ahmad Tafish and his deputy, Fu'ad al-Lubnani, escaped the country and most of the band members were arrested and imprisoned. Tafish escaped to Transjordan and the authorities there extradited him to the British in mid-1930.<sup>142</sup> The press reviewed the deeds of Ahmed Tafish and when it became known that Emir Abdullah was behind his extradition the Emir was attacked and denounced. Akram Zu'aitir, then editor of *Mir'at al-Sbarq*, wrote an article in his daily column entitled 'Anger of a rebel': 'Oh Emir Abdullah, your Emirate is built on two foundations: the Arab nation and the British. For how long will you neglect the first and display interest in the second? Are you not concerned of possible transitions in the balance of power?'<sup>143</sup> Zu'aitir called Tafish a 'hero' and a 'freedom fighter',<sup>144</sup> and continued his fierce attacks on Emir Abdullah. This angered the emir, who banned the newspaper from the Emirate. The owner of the newspaper, Boulous Shihada, was also infuriated and asked Zu'aitir to tone down his references to the affair so as not to disrupt Shihada's relations with the emir.<sup>145</sup> Zu'aitir did refine his writing style but continued to support Tafish when the latter returned to Palestine. He asked his brother, Attorney 'Adel Zu'aitir, to defend Tafish. In his memoirs he relates that in one of his visits to the prison in which Ahmad Tafish and his associates were held, Tafish thanked him for his support in the press.<sup>146</sup> Tafish was probably referring to the article written by Zu'aitir for *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, in which he called upon the British authorities to separate criminal detainees from those arrested for national activities, since it is unfair to treat 'a person who has been detained for adhering to his principles and beliefs, in a similar manner as criminals'.<sup>147</sup>

Mahmoud al-Hamad, better known as 'Abu Jilda', was portrayed in society and in the Palestinian press in a different manner than Ahmad Tafish, who was described as a '*tba'ir*', revolutionist, freedom fighter and hero. Abu Jilda and his deputy, Ahmad Mustafa al-'Armit, were known in their vicinity (the area of Nablus and Jenin) as leaders of a band of thieves, most of whose victims were Arabs, until their rise to fame in late 1933. However, when the authorities began searching for them and they succeeded in escaping and even inflicting losses on the British, the band's actions against the authorities were more positively portrayed in the Arabic press. When some newspapers persisted in calling them 'thieves', the members of the armed band called their editorial offices and threatened the owners.<sup>148</sup>

Abu Jilda recognized the power of the press and tried to remain apprised of its contents. *Filastin* described how Abu Jilda would debrief those charged with telling him the news: 'He would approach the man with a loaded gun, stand ten metres away, and ask to hear the news. The person would usually tell him about the movements of the police and their agents and news of the villages and villagers, what people are saying about him and what the press had written about him'.<sup>149</sup> When Abu Jilda found out that *Filastin* had referred to him negatively he and his deputy visited the home of Majid al-Qutub, *Filastin*'s reporter in Nablus, and asked that the newspaper cease its campaign against him. He even asked that the newspaper call him 'The King'.<sup>150</sup> Ma'moun al-Qutub, son of Majid al-Qutub, told this author in an interview that *Filastin* did in fact start referring to Abu Jilda as 'The King' and newspaper sales rose in the Nablus area from 70 to 1,000 copies on regular days to one thousand copies on regular days.<sup>151</sup> *Filastin* was apparently encouraged by the rise in sales following its changed attitude to Abu Jilda, and it even started publishing songs of praise describing his deeds. One of these songs said:

All the roads were closed by Abu Jilda and al-'Armit  
 Abu Jilda does as he likes with his friends and al-'Armit  
 They escape like ghosts from their capturers' hands.  
 Abu Jilda's name is praised by all hands.  
 Just mention his name and the women's voices ring,  
 The people have crowned him and the press calls him 'king'.<sup>152</sup>

*Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* was less enthusiastic about Abu Jilda than *Filastin*. On the day on which Abu Jilda's capture was declared the newspaper stated:

Finally the rebel Abu Jilda and his friend al-'Armit surrendered to the general security forces after seven months of admirably resisting the British authorities, a feat much discussed by the public and the press in Palestine and elsewhere ... We are not far from the truth when we say that most citizens were very sorry to hear about the man's capture. This does not stem from the public's admiration for the two criminals, rather because their resistance to the tyrannical colonial government lifts our spirits in face of its rule of tyranny and oppression ... We hope that the public's reaction to the capture of the two will be a warning to the leaders of the government and the general security forces.<sup>153</sup>

Later *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* sought to minimize the effect of the capture of Abu Jilda on the course of events in the Palestinian National movement. He was described as 'the hero of an episode that has been concluded'.<sup>154</sup> *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* expressed its admiration for Abu Jilda's actions and even asked: 'When his actions are made public, will the Jews of the world not fear that all Palestinian Arabs are similar to Abu Jilda?'<sup>155</sup> The only newspaper to voice any objection to Abu Jilda's feats and to define them as useless acts was *Mir'at al-Sbarq*, which described him as a 'blood-thirsty murderer'.<sup>156</sup> The attitude of the press to the Abu Jilda affair expressed the Palestinian public's inclination to support steps that might embarrass the British authorities, even if they were violent or performed by criminals or thieves. This may indicate the differences between the traditional leadership and its methods of operation and the wishes of the people, who were not satisfied with the leadership's treatment of their hardships. This may explain the public's attraction to descriptions of Abu Jilda's actions in defiance of the authorities. These descriptions made the newspapers more interesting and significantly increased their circulation. For example, on the day that Abu Jilda and his deputy were executed, *al-Difa'* published a special issue with details and pictures of all their exploits.<sup>157</sup> This issue of *al-Difa'* was in great demand.<sup>158</sup>

May 1935 saw the appearance of manifests distributed by a new armed band called 'The Red Hand' (*Jama'at al-Kaf al-Abmar*) which was very active in the vicinity of Tul Karm and Qalqilya and was sometimes known as 'The revolutionary youth' (*al-Shabab al-Thuwwar*). The members of this group were educated, sons of local notables, among them Salim 'Abd al-Rahman, son of the Mayor of Tul Karim; Ahmad al-Sabi', son of the Mayor of Qalqilya; and Tahir Hanun, son of one of the senior notables of Tul Karim.<sup>159</sup>

At the fifth anniversary of the death of the three youths from Safed and Hebron, executed by the British for inciting the events of 1929, this organization issued a manifest detailing its plans:

- (a) To assassinate the leaders of the Palestine government, since they are responsible for hanging the three Arabs.
- (b) To free the country from the traitors, the spies and the English.
- (c) To annually remember the people executed.<sup>160</sup>

This band was not well known in the Palestinian press or among society, but it upset the British and the Zionist Movement. Its manifests



were published in the newspapers' inside pages, with the local news and in a very condensed manner.

The most significant military organization of the period was Sheikh 'Iz al-Din al-Qassam's movement,<sup>161</sup> probably established in the early 1930s, immediately after the events of 1929 and the angling of the three youngsters from Safed and Hebron. Until the death of al-Qassam, killed near Ya'bad in the Jenin Region on 19 November 1935, after a short clash between eight of his men and the British police forces, his involvement in the armed attacks against Jewish and British targets, which began in April 1931, went unnoticed. Among others, there were attacks in Yagur, Nahalal, Balfuria and Kfar Hasidim, and attempts to assassinate British police and Arab collaborators. The trail led to the village of Saffurya and the acts were attributed to an armed band that called itself the 'Black Hand group' (*Jama'at al-Kaf al-Aswad*).<sup>162</sup> The British Police made some arrests, which led to some of the detainees being judged in military courts and one of them being executed.<sup>163</sup>

The activities of Sheikh 'Iz al-Din al-Qassam were not common knowledge. Only intelligence sources in the Jewish Agency mentioned his connections to recruiting young Arabs for underground military associations. A report sent from Haifa to the Arab Office of the Jewish Agency said: 'Sheikh 'Iz al-Din al-Qassam reported in one of the gatherings that over two hundred good young people have registered with him for a clandestine organization.'<sup>164</sup> Another report, written in late January 1935, said: 'Sheikh 'Iz al-Din travelled to Jerusalem for a gathering of religious leaders. When he returned he told his friends that aside from the formal meeting, he also participated in a clandestine meeting, at which he offered many suggestions. Everyone other than the mufti objected to his suggestions.'<sup>165</sup>

After his death, 'Iz al-Din al-Qassam was declared a martyr and all groups and political parties claimed that he had been a member of their organizations or that he had strong relations with their leaders. Emil al-Ghuri, affiliated to the Husayni camp, claimed that al-Qassam was a member of the Arab Husayni party and had even coordinated his actions with the mufti,<sup>166</sup> while 'Izat Darwaza claimed that 'Iz al-Din was a member of the al-Istiqlal party and had close contacts with some of its leaders. Clearly, those claiming certain connections with al-Qassam wished to show that the organizations and groups to which they belonged took part in the process of shaping the 'martyred hero' image of al-Qassam. It seems that al-Ghuri and Darwaza were right, as al-Qassam nurtured relations with influential elements in the

Palestinian National movement, so that when the time came they would not interfere with the realization of his plans.<sup>167</sup>

Al-Qassam was hardly mentioned in the press, prior to his death, presumably due to a lack of awareness of his activities. The few references there were concerned his work as a preacher at the al-Istiqlal mosque or as an activist in the Muslim Youth Association of Haifa. For a certain period al-Qassam was the vice-president of this association, which was headed by Rashid al-Haj Ibrahim.<sup>168</sup> The sermons he gave at the mosque were occasionally a topic of journalistic discourse held mainly on the pages of the Haifa newspaper, *al-Karmil*. In one case the newspaper editor, Najib Nassar, quoted a sermon given by al-Qassam and a letter that he sent to the editorial board, calling upon people to work and be productive and to distance themselves from the life of luxury and pompous ceremonies held in the city by the rich families or the Sufi sect, which held extravagant *thikr* ceremonies.<sup>169</sup>

The day after his death, the press displayed giant headlines describing the shock of the Palestinian public. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* described the clash as 'a vicious battle between the rebels and the police'.<sup>170</sup> *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya's* headlines described it as 'an event that shook all Palestine'.<sup>171</sup> *Filastin* mentioned the last words of Sheikh al-Qassam, who asked his friends to fight to the end, as their acts are a 'jihad for God and the homeland'.<sup>172</sup> Later the press quoted al-Qassam's surviving associates who were arrested by the British. For example, *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* published an interview with Sheikh Nimr al-Sa'di who was injured in battle before being evacuated to the hospital and from there to prison.<sup>173</sup> *Filastin* quoted Hasan al-Bayir's formal testimony before the authorities, in which he said:

I am from the village of Birkin. At first I was a thief and I acted illegally. One day Sheikh al-Qassam came and started convincing me to become religious and even taught me to pray and to act in a way that does not contradict God's commandments. A while ago the late Sheikh al-Qassam took me to one of the hills near the village and gave me a rifle. When I asked him why he gave me the rifle he answered: 'So that you will learn how to use it and take part with your brothers in a jihad for God.'<sup>174</sup>

Najib Nassar, editor of *al-Karmil* and Sheikh al-Qassam's fellow-townsmen, chose to describe his virtues by interviewing his daughter Maymana during a condolence visit to the family. He wrote:

I visited the home of the late honourable Sheikh 'Iz al-Din al-Qassam last Saturday in order to comfort the family and offer my condolences ... I found a traditional Arab house, with Arab principles and values. I found five women, the mother of the deceased, his wife and daughters. I looked at them and felt their grief. His daughter Maymana eulogized him, causing tears to pour from my eyes. She said that her father had suffered four years of sleeplessness and lack of appetite. The dire condition of the Arabs and Muslims pained him greatly. When we told him to care for his family and his soul he would answer that there is no value to the Palestinian Arabs' life of degradation.<sup>175</sup>

Al-Qassam's funeral, from which the senior political leadership was absent, aroused the anger of the public, which was also expressed in the severe criticism of the press. Akram Zu'aitir decided to prepare the public for the possibility that the senior leaders would not attend the funeral in order to refrain from angering the British authorities. In this spirit, he wrote an article for *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* in which he called upon the leaders to attend the funeral ceremony, as the Egyptian leaders, headed by al-Nahhas Pasha, had attended the funerals of those who died in the anti-British demonstrations.<sup>176</sup> It is interesting that Sheikh al-Farouqi, editor of *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, was also worried about angering the authorities, and therefore published Zu'aitir's article next to the formal government announcement of the Ya'bad events, describing al-Qassam and his band as 'a group of hooligans'. Al-Farouqi chose to express his opinion of the two items in the newspaper's inside pages. Regarding Zu'aitir's comments about the political leaders' attendance of the funeral he said that this was a distinctly religious matter and should not involve political considerations. Every Muslim had to perform the laws of his religion and could attend the ceremony as long as he was not prevented from doing so.<sup>177</sup> Regarding the formal government announcement, he said: 'This is the fate of the weak and we cannot oppose God's will; we must hope that God will help us, as no one but God can help the weak and the exploited.'<sup>178</sup>

Sheikh al-Farouqi's careful wording could be seen as an indication of the pressure felt by the leaders and newspaper owners and other prominent people. On the one hand they wanted to express the anger of the masses against the authorities and on the other hand they wanted to maintain balanced relations with these authorities and refrain from burning all their bridges. *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, the main voice of

the mufti at the time, also objected to the description of al-Qassam and his band in the formal British announcement. It stated:

Sheikh 'Iz al-Din al-Qassam, the Haifa cleric whom the Mufti appointed as preacher, was a respected, knowledgeable *'alim*, proficient in the Islamic Shari'a and the Arabic language. He was an imam and he led the believers on the path of righteousness and therefore he is very far from his portrayal by the enemies.<sup>179</sup>

In its praise of al-Qassam, the newspaper also praised his master, Mufti al-Husayni, who appointed al-Qassam. However, the newspaper forgot to specify that al-Qassam's movement was a 'new model' movement, legitimized by the 30,000 people who attended the funeral of Sheikh al-Qassam and his friends. The newspaper concluded that this movement resembled Islam's first *mujahedin*.<sup>180</sup>

As anticipated by Akram Zu'aitir, the absence of senior leaders from the funeral aroused much anger among the public. This anger was expressed in *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* in an article entitled 'Following the fall of al-Qassam'. It asked the leaders: 'Are you enemies or friends of the British? Oh party leaders, leaders and attorneys soon to meet with the High Commissioner, will you mention to him at your meeting the matter of al-Qassam and the conclusions that should be drawn?'<sup>181</sup>

*Al-Karmil* also attacked the leaders' hesitancy, saying: 'We need power to protect our souls, our honor and our homeland. What have you done, oh leaders, on this matter, since receiving the helm of leadership?'<sup>182</sup>

The leadership was apparently not indifferent to these remarks. *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, representing the views of the mufti, suggested starting a collection to help the families of al-Qassam's band, since if these families who sacrificed themselves for the homeland did not receive assistance others would refrain from sacrificing themselves for the national cause.<sup>183</sup>

The most overtly self-critical comment from anyone in a leadership position was written by Jamal al-Husayni, president of the Arab Palestinian party. In an article for the *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* newspaper, he stated his opinion:

Al-Qassam's mutiny was a mutiny against us all, the young and the old. Each of us says: I have faith in my heart and devotion and will in my soul, but I have responsibilities and a large family and I am concerned that if I take part in a rebellion this family will be

doomed to degradation, shame and death. I have nothing to leave them to help with the hardships they will endure. Al-Qassam and his friends objected to this. They went on their mission, but what did they leave behind? They left behind nests with pieces of flesh, like little birds waiting for someone to bring them sustenance ... al-Qassam and his friends left these nests in order to fight for their ideals and in order to realize the nation's rights and promote its status. We see their actions, and we cannot help but feel pangs of conscience and shame. We turn to God to bestow some of their faith upon us.<sup>184</sup>

Jamal al-Husayni intended to soften the anger directed at the leaders by the public and the press. At the time he was corresponding with Akram Zu'aitir in his newspaper, *al-Liwa*. Al-Husayni would write as 'a reader' and Akram Zu'aitir would answer him in *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*. Al-Husayni tried to explain the absence of the leaders from demonstrations against the authorities or any event that might anger the authorities. Zu'aitir wished to prove that the Palestinian leadership is led rather than leading and influenced rather than influential.<sup>185</sup> Zu'aitir states in his memoirs that this dialogue between himself and al-Husayni appealed to the readers, and he received responses and letters from readers and journalists praising his words.<sup>186</sup>

Jamal al-Husayni's article of 7 January is proof of his admission, and that of the other leaders, that the public preferred the views presented by Akram Zu'aitir. The praise for al-Qassam and his band and the self-critical approach of the leadership's conduct indicate a certain change in the leaders' approach. A few months later, this change led to the most significant conflict between the Palestinian National Movement and the British Mandate authorities. It began with the Great Strike and continued in a general revolt that lasted until 1939.

#### THE PRESS CALLS FOR NATIONAL SOLIDARITY AND AN IMPROVEMENT IN SOCIETY'S IMAGE

The emergence of organizations and settings that did not belong to the traditional clans (the Youth Congress and the al-Istiqlal party) increased the feeling of national solidarity to a certain degree. Many efforts were made to encourage individual acts aimed at the good of society and to teach individuals to care for society, with an emphasis on national honour. These activities, which were widely reviewed in the

press, emerged in five main areas: (a) educating teenagers and teaching them national values; (b) caring for the needy, particularly the prisoners and their families; (c) combating moral corruption in society; (d) the struggle against the sale of land and in favour of boycotting foreign businesses; (e) increasing solidarity between Muslims and Christians.

### *Educating and teaching adolescents*

The various political groups became aware of the significance of adolescents and youth, and expressed interest in them, especially after the establishment of the Youth Congress and the various scouts organizations. The founders of these groups endeavoured to impart values derived from the Arab and Islamic heritage, emphasizing national pride and honour. The press was also involved in this, in particular the newspapers *al-Karmil*, *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, *al-Difa'*, and *al-Shabab*, which was intended as a youth journal.<sup>187</sup>

Ibrahim al-Shanti, Akram Zu'aitir, and Najib Nassar, were journalists who expressed a particular interest in educating the younger generation. On the anniversary of the Balfour Declaration, Akram Zu'aitir wrote an article entitled 'Oh Arab youth, remember, know and be', in which he said:

This is a day of treachery, the day on which the colonial invaders committed the greatest crime. This is a black day that shames fate, this day is a curse of time and a disgrace of all days ... On this day remember that once you had honour and you were humiliated. Remember that you are a victim of colonial greed, remember how you could accumulate power and scorn weakness. Remember that your country became a target for any attacker ... Remember all this and know that Britain is exclusively accountable for our condition and know that rights are not given as charity but must be taken by force. Know all this and be strong in all things, courageous, daring, fearful only of God.<sup>188</sup>

The writer's pan-Arab Istiqlal views are evident, particularly in teaching the younger generation to feel hostility towards the real enemy of the Arabs—the British.

Ibrahim al-Shanti added an Islamic slant to the pan-Arab ideal. He chose to impart his advice to the younger generation from an angle entitled 'Conclusions from the Koran'. He began one of his articles with a Koran verse that says: 'Against them make ready your strength

to the utmost of your power, including steeds of war, to threaten the enemies of Allah and your enemies'.<sup>189</sup> Then he turned to the young people and said:

Oh honorable free youth! God created you in order to be free and to be your own masters. Why are you begging and submitting? Do you not believe that you are capable of living in this raging world? Life is the life of jihad, you must search for your place in this world ... The little ant protects itself and the senseless animal fights for its rights. Even water always tries to find a passage through the hard rock. Be ready for struggles, knowing that (make ready your strength to the utmost of your power).<sup>190</sup>

Elsewhere, under the title: 'Oh Palestine, awaken', al-Shanti said: 'Oh Palestine, move your young ones to embrace the good ethics. Teach them that the Arab person is honourable and was born to be independent. The young must pray for these things and repeat them at all times. Give them the spirit of sacrifice, courage and endurance.'<sup>191</sup>

Another matter discussed in the press that concerned the young, was the condition of the educational system. Most of those discussing this subject presented serious claims in regard to the functioning of the educational system, particularly of the British officials and custodians, who strove from the beginning to humiliate the Arab pupils and teach them values of submission and humiliation. Akram Zu'aitir also dealt with this subject repeatedly – he felt an affinity to it due to his former position as high school teacher in Acre and Nablus. In one of his articles entitled 'To whom are we loyal?' he criticized the act legislated by the British education authority, determining that any teacher inciting his pupils to be disloyal to Britain would be dismissed. He said:

School educates children and prepares them for life and for struggles. Its spirit is similar to the spirit of the teachers and its feeling of nationality is similar to that of the teachers. Therefore the colonial authorities will not feel at ease so long as the schools teach children the spirit of nationality and arouse their national pride. For this reason they have tried to silence the teachers, to forbid them to write in the press and to recant their steps ... They want loyalty to the Mandate and to the authorities. However God knows, the angels, the sky, the earth, the demons and human beings, everyone knows that we do not feel loyal to the British. We feel for them only hatred, resentment and loathing.<sup>192</sup>

Zu'aitir's words also have a personal element. When writing this article he remained aware of his role as a teacher. When he wrote in the press or took part in national activities it angered the authorities who issued him with repeated warnings. The time came eventually when he chose to retire from his teaching position in order to be able to express himself freely in the press. However, even as a journalist the authorities showed no leniency towards him and he did not make things easy for the British education officials, frequently criticizing them in an ironic and figurative style.

In October 1932 the British director of education published a circular calling upon the pupils to help clean the schools in order that one janitor would suffice for each school. Zu'aitir wrote an ironic article entitled 'To the brooms, oh pupils! To the brooms'. In his article he inquired about the reasons that led Mr Bowman to publish this circular—Did he want to educate the children and teach them the advantages of labour? Perhaps he wanted to humiliate them, because it would have been preferable to teach them an occupation other than collecting rubbish.<sup>193</sup> In the same article he said to Mr Bowman:

Oh Mrwman, work is honourable, humble though it may be, but self-respect is more important, and when we lose it we lose everything ... I take this opportunity to inform your honour that this policy will not succeed: Headmasters will not dare to demand that their pupils perform janitor work ... The janitor's work is honourable, but are you responsible for educating the world's janitors? ... The clean land will indeed endure and become independent, but only when it is clean of its enemies. Oh children, fetch brooms and behave as did Mustafa Kamal in Turkey! To the brooms, oh pupils! To the brooms!<sup>194</sup>

*Al-Difa'* was very concerned with the young people's attraction to cinemas and places of entertainment. He saw this as a sign of ignorance and called to put an end to this phenomenon, which he called an 'unstoppable flood'.<sup>195</sup> The newspaper editor, Ibrahim al-Shanti, tried to take practical steps to reduce these activities and founded the Jaffa Youth Committee in Jaffa (*Lajnat Shubban Yafa*), which coordinated all the scouts and youth organization activities. The newspaper's offices in Haifa also supported protests and movements founded to help the Arabs of Harthiyya and Zubidat who complained of the confiscation of their lands.<sup>196</sup> Ibrahim al-Shanti called upon all Arab institutions, parties and organizations in Palestine and demanded that Arab youth



be equipped with weapons, as the existing weapons were relics of the World War, mostly unusable.<sup>197</sup> *Filastin*, in contrast, extolled the Arab youth who fell in defence of the homeland and said that 'these casualties were victims of an exploitative and despotic government that drives Arab youth to sacrifice their lives'.<sup>198</sup>

The press supported the various youth movements, especially the scouts organizations, and reported their activities. The festivals held by these organizations were extensively reviewed, in particular those held by the Youth Congress and the scouts organization, 'Jam'iyyat al-Kashshafa al-'Arabiyya al-Filastinuyya', which opened many branches, mainly in the area of Ramle, Lydda, Qalqilya, and Tul Karim.<sup>199</sup> These branches were given names taken from the magnificent Islamic past, such as the Abu 'Ubayda Scouts or the Khalid Ibn al-Walid Scouts. Semi-military organizations were also founded alongside these branches, and they too were given names derived from the world of bravery, such as the Buraq Knights Association (*Jam'iyyat Fursan al-Buraq*). *Al-Difa'* supported these movements more than other newspapers. It explained its support by saying that 'the younger generation has grown weary of the old-fashioned ways of the leadership. Therefore they are searching for ways to arouse national feelings.'<sup>200</sup>

Al-Shanti believed that the activities of the scouts organizations were insufficient, and he called for Arab sports association to be established, similar to 'Hapo'el' and 'Maccabi', the Jewish sports associations. He even suggested holding a games tournament similar to the Maccabiah and calling it the 'Antariah', after the Jahili poet, 'Antara Bin Shaddad al-'Absi'.<sup>201</sup> By using this name, al-Shanti wished to encourage the younger generation to embrace figures from the Arab past, as the Jews used figures from the past, such as the Maccabeans.

The attention paid by the press to the youth organizations contributed a great deal to their increasing prestige within Palestinian society and to the sharp rise in membership. In November 1933 the newspaper *Filastin* estimated the membership of the youth organizations at around 25,000.<sup>202</sup> They succeeded mainly in the central cities (Jaffa, Ramle, Tul Karim and Nablus) and in the northern cities (Haifa and Safed). In Jerusalem and the vicinity (aside from the village Lifta, which had a strong branch of the youth associations) they were insignificant, maybe due to their proximity to the centre and the institutions of the traditional leadership, which saw them as a threat to their status. However, the youth organizations, despite their great prestige, did not succeed in becoming a viable alternative to the traditional leadership, which eventually succeeded in enforcing its authority on the youth leaders.

*Caring for families of the prisoners and the fallen*

One of the activities that the press attempted to organize and constantly called upon people to assist as a sign of national solidarity, was the support of families injured in nationalist activities and whose sons were killed or arrested and imprisoned in clashes with the authorities. Akram Zu'aitir was very active in this field. He used the press to campaign for the establishment of popular committees, called 'prisoner support committees'. During the years 1931 and 1932 dozens of these committees were established in different cities and villages. The committees would organize visits to the detainees, transportation for visitors, and gifts. They would also organize attorneys to defend the detainees in British courts. The centre of these committees was in the city of Nablus, from where Zu'aitir managed the other branches.<sup>203</sup>

These committees were not very successful. Zu'aitir wrote in his diary that the results of his efforts were disappointing. Aside from Nablus, almost no donations were received, and in Nablus itself most of the donations came from school pupils, each of whom appropriated two cents of his allowance, which were given to the committee activists.<sup>204</sup> This disappointment, prompted Zu'aitir to write an article for the newspaper *al-Jami'a al-Arabiyya*, in which he said:

The prisons are full of scores of respectable elderly people whose courage and sacrifice we must praise, and dozens of young people whom the Mandate wishes would remain there until they die or grow old and weary. These people are the secret of the nation's survival and of its spiritual power. How can we erase the shame of neglecting the political detainees? We must care for them, and this will be the greatest sign of the nation's gratitude to its sons who sacrificed their freedom for it ... When I was recently at the Acre prison I asked Ahmad Tafish about his final testament and he said: You must care for my son and my family.<sup>205</sup>

Akram Zu'aitir's words apparently went unheeded, as is attested by the failure of activities initiated by the committee on behalf of the prisoners when it invited the celebrated Egyptian actor Yusuf Wahabi and his group to perform in Nablus, the proceeds to be deposited in the committee's fund for the prisoners. When the organizers counted the money received they found that they had 55 Palestinian pounds, of which 50 were used to pay the theatre group. When Yusuf Wahabi heard this he contributed 5 pounds to the prisoners. Zu'aitir was very

angry and wrote in his diary: 'We disgraced ourselves and sold tickets in the streets for the prisoners of the jihad. All this for the price of only 10 pounds. Woe to the rich who do not perform their national duties.'<sup>206</sup>

Other newspapers also joined those campaigning for the families of the prisoners and the fallen, particularly after the incident with al-Qassam and his band. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* called for the cancellation of the al-Fitr festival celebrations, and for the money intended for the celebrations to be given to the families of the needy.<sup>207</sup> *Filastin* called upon people to support these families, since such support is proof of the sincerity of their national feelings.<sup>208</sup> The same newspaper praised the Rawdat al-Ma'rif school, which took upon itself to educate the children of Sheikh 'Iz al-Din al-Qassam and pay all the expenses of their studies.<sup>209</sup>

Nor was the press campaign particularly successful in raising donations and encouraging the spirit of volunteerism. Some newspapers attributed this to the indifferent attitude of the leaders, who should have served as models. The newspaper *al-Arab* said that the source of the problem was the party leaders and senior officials who lost their self-respect and thus gave foreigners an excuse to harm and slight the Arabs.<sup>210</sup> Then the writer of the article explained the word honour saying:

There are two types of honour; one is national honour, meaning at the very least the individual's anger and sorrow at any harm that befalls his nation, and the other is the individual's self-respect, meaning at the very least his respect for himself and keeping a distance from places of humiliation and begging ... Oh honour, where are you? We look for you but all traces have disappeared.<sup>211</sup>

*Al-Difa'* found another reason for the detachment demonstrated by the masses towards volunteer activities for the homeland – an attempt to find reasons and excuses for those who betrayed the homeland and acted against the national cause. These excuses had increased the greediness of the traitors and deterred those loyal to the homeland.<sup>212</sup> The newspaper added:

It is the bad luck of the Palestinian National movement that most of those who try to find excuses and pretexts for their treachery belong to the educated or the semi-educated, while the illiterate and the villagers do not suffer from this affliction. The uneducated and the villagers recognize the treachery and do not try to find excuses for it; they recognize the land speculators.<sup>213</sup>

Here *al-Difa'* was criticizing the urban leadership of the National movement, from which most of the educated people emerged. Maybe this was a response to those who complained about villagers who sold their lands, since most of the agents and speculators came from the cities and were perceived by the *fallabin* as authorities, owing to their education and urban origins. The writer of the article, Sami al-Sarraj, said that people should not judge the villagers, who were usually uneducated. They should criticize those who were chosen by fate to receive an education but did not take advantage of this education for the good of the people, rather the opposite. In such a situation, the uneducated person follows his instincts much better than the educated person, whose education would not have provided him with the capability to distinguish between good and bad.<sup>214</sup>

To summarize, volunteerism reached certain achievements during this period, with the rise in the early 1930s of the young forces not affiliated with the clans. However, when traditional forces resumed control and Palestinian society was once again polarized following the local elections in 1934, these activities gradually waned. The incident with Sheikh al-Qassam reinstated the issue on the public agenda, especially in light of the young leaders' achievements in organizing protests after al-Qassam and his people were killed. The consequences of these activities were revealed mainly in the organization of the Great Strike, in April–October 1936, which will be discussed in Chapter 4.

### *Combating moral corruption in society*

Another social phenomenon attacked by the press was moral corruption. The two newspapers that frequently dealt with this issue were *al-Karmil* and *al-Difa'*. They protested each moral offence, objecting to its recurrence, but repeatedly blamed either the traditional leadership for not taking adequate action to suppress these deeds, or the Mandate government for encouraging them through their indifference.

For example, *al-Difa'* published a letter from a Haifa reader named Rashid al-Asad, who said: 'The Arab people have been severely corrupted: the Arab land speculator, the Arab land seller, the Arab traitor, the Arab spy. The leadership is weak and does nothing but protest, while the cinemas and entertainment centres are full of our young flowers of hope.'<sup>215</sup>

In the same issue, the editor of *al-Difa'* replied to its reporter in Acre, who complained about the abundance of card games and gambling in the city, unchecked by the authorities. The editor wrote:

We join the denouncers of this phenomenon in the fabulous Arab city, the city of ethics and good qualities, the city of religion and the fear of God, the city that did not surrender to Napoleon, Ibrahim Pasha, and earlier Richard the Lion-Hearted. However we want to say to our reporter in Acre: Which government do you expect to prevent the phenomenon? Are you asking this of a national government composed of local people? Where is this government that can be responsible for our morals, money and good reputation? Give us independence and you will receive an authority that can prevent these occurrences even in the tunnels that run under the city.<sup>216</sup>

The editor of *al-Difa'* was accustomed to writing social criticism under the name 'al-Naqqada'. In most cases he explained the corruption within Arab society by referring to the foreign government, which had no intention of combating this corruption, with its interests even justifying the encouragement of such deeds, in order to destroy the moral foundations of society. *Al-Karmil* often criticized the complacency that had taken hold of society, in particular the younger generation, who ignored the advice of the older generation and even resorted to physical attacks, as in the case of Sheikh Salih al-Muhammad,<sup>217</sup> who was murdered at the door of the Shfaram Mosque after prayers. *Al-Karmil* denounced the incident and said:

In the past the elderly and the notables were respected. The murder of the elderly and prominent leader Salih Effendi al-Muhammad, at the door of the Mosque after morning prayers, indicates changes for the worse in our ethics. These changes have two causes: one is despair, and the other is the loss of the feeling of respect towards dignified and elderly people. Two things have happened to us during the British rule and they prove that the negative impact of the communist manifests circulated among us has begun to emerge. The circulation of bolshevism and despair has led to a feeling of doom and loss of hope and to concern over loss of the homeland and of our rights.<sup>218</sup>

*Al-Difa'* said that all murderers and evil-doers should be expelled from society before blaming others.<sup>219</sup> The editor of *al-Karmil* appealed to the public and said:

Avoid selfishness. Excessive fervour is not beneficial and does not prevent harm ... Our enemies have taken control of our assets,

our money and our lands, and tomorrow they will drive us away, and we cannot take anything with us to our exile aside from our religious and factional conflicts; we will take with us our humiliation, our social arrogance, our corruption and sycophancy.<sup>220</sup>

Amin al-Husayni also tried to preach against corruption and in favour of integrity and national solidarity. For this purpose he founded an association called 'The association for advocating good and denouncing evil' (*Jam'iyyat al-amr bilma'ruf walnaby 'an al-munkar*). The association was composed of clerics, *'alim* and preachers, and it was charged with teaching society good values, i.e., what to do and what not to do.<sup>221</sup> Al-Husayni enlisted the press affiliated with his camp, mainly *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* and *al-Liwa*, to circulate the principles of the association. However this step was also supported by other newspapers, headed by *Filastin*, which welcomed the association, as 'it will engage in acts of charity and inspire peace among Arabs'.<sup>222</sup> The association was not only active in matters of charity; it was mostly engaged in the pursuit of speculators and land sellers and in advocating the preference of Arab over foreign goods. *Al-Liwa* listed these achievements and expressed its hope that the association's activities would increase in the future.<sup>223</sup> The main venue of the association was the religious lessons given in mosques belonging to the High Muslim Council. However, it also tried to harness Christians to its efforts. In March 1936 *al-Liwa* reported that the Nazareth branch of the association had gathered a large number of Christians and Muslims and called upon them to 'prefer Arab goods to foreign goods'.<sup>224</sup>

#### *The struggle against the sale of land and in favour of boycotting foreign businesses*

The subject that greatly concerned Palestinian Arabs was the continued sale of land to Jews despite all the efforts to prevent it. The press was one of the influential platforms for preaching against this phenomenon and denouncing it. Akram Zu'aitir renewed the struggle in 1932, after a certain respite, by appealing to the newspapers to publish the names of speculators, whom he described as 'the materialization of humankind's baseness and shame'.<sup>225</sup> He believed that general speeches and articles denouncing the phenomenon were no longer effective. In his opinion, the initiative

should come from newspapers that are devoted to the homeland. They should prepare a black-list of speculators and all their

actions, so that they will be denounced, scorned and humiliated. In order for this act to succeed, the names of all speculators, both large and small, should be stated, including those of the prominent notables, who on the one hand shout and demonstrate concern for the homeland and on the other serve as speculators for the sale of land.<sup>226</sup>

A few days after Akram Zu'aitir's article was published, *al-Jami'a al-Arabiyya* published the letter of a *fallah* from Kufr Saba, sent to Akram Zu'aitir, which said:

I hear only good things about your real national feelings and read your articles defending the land and the homeland with much pleasure ... You must have already heard that the notable and rich Muhammad Effendi Tahir Salih, of the notables of Nablus, living in Jaffa, sold the Jews 900 dunam of our village's best lands, although he has a sum of 20 thousand Palestinian pounds in the bank, aside from the many orchards inherited from his father... I would like to ask if you can put together a delegation from the young people of Nablus, Tul Karim, Qalqilya and Jaffa, in order to convince him to stop the sale process. We are waiting for action. Words cannot build kingdoms and cannot defend the homeland.<sup>227</sup>

The next day the newspaper published Akram Zu'aitir's response, entitled 'Oh *fallah*, I am at your service', in which he said:

I approached people in Jaffa in order to clarify the details and I promised to visit them the next day in order to convince Muhammad Salih to avoid the 'sin' of selling land. If he will be persuaded we must demand that the public punish those whose acts harm the homeland. Since sincere nationalism obviously does not permit and does not justify selling the land of the wretched poor man, how can we permit a rich man who is not in need of money to act thus?<sup>228</sup>

Zu'aitir stated in his memoirs that he did, in fact, visited this man, who was obstinate at first, but finally conceded and vowed that he would not sell any more land to Jews.<sup>229</sup>

The press campaign against the sale of lands continued in particular in late 1934 and early 1935. During this period social polarization

was exacerbated, following the local elections. Speculators took advantage of the deep rivalries that emerged after the elections and which occupied National movement activists and began increasing their activities and their visits to the villages in order to close deals. On this subject *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* had tis to say:

It is very distressing to see the rise in dangerous speculations and their increase to a point that they danger, concern and threaten the homeland. Members of the National mMovement must do whatever possible to fight this affliction. In the past speculators would act in the dark of night, and today they do their deeds in the daytime. In the past speculators would catch their victims in cafes or distant places and now they have formal offices. They receive a formal licence from the government in return for a certain percentage. The government even publishes their names in the newspaper *al-Waqa'i' al-Filastiniyya*, the official newspaper of the government of Palestine.<sup>230</sup>

The newspapers began publishing people's reactions to news of the speculators and their work, the sellers and the deals signed. Examination of contemporary newspapers reveals many such reports, such as the case of a speculator who was beaten by a crowd, or the speculator who was stabbed by an unknown person. The speculators were not helpless in face of the attacks. In certain cases the newspaper or its reporters in the field were targeted by thugs employed by speculators. For example, the Jerusalem reporter for the newspaper *al-Difa'* was followed by four anonymous individuals who apparently intended to assassinate or, at least scare him.<sup>231</sup>

Rumours of the press campaign against the sale of lands and against the speculators apparently reached the Palestinian diaspora. *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* published a communiqué sent by seventy-five people from the village of Bituniyya who lived in America, asking the notables of their village not to sell their lands.<sup>232</sup>

The journalists did not only write against the sales. They also participated in delegations organized by the mufti and the High Muslim Council, visited the villages and convinced the landowners not to sell their land to Jews. One such delegation, which visited the village of Bayt Jabrin, whose people intended to sell their lands, included newspaper editors, such as Munif al-Husayni and Sami al-Sarraj.<sup>233</sup> The mufti himself took part in some of these delegations. His visits and his statements during the visits were widely echoed in the press, in partic-



ular in the newspaper *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, whose editor, Munif al-Husayni, took part in most of the visits.<sup>234</sup>

However, the mufti not only sent delegations, he also issued Shara'i religious decisions (fatwahs) forbidding Muslims to sell land to Jews, and announcing that any seller would be considered a sinner. An important judgement on this matter was issued by the 'Muslim Clerics' Convention', held in Jerusalem in January 1935. It said that anyone engaging in speculation or selling Arab land to Jews was to be judged a heretic and should be excluded from the nation of believers.<sup>235</sup> Thus the speculators and the sellers must be excommunicated, ostracized, and humiliated, and were not permitted to be buried in Muslim cemeteries. The mufti also published in his newspaper *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* religious decisions by the Shi'ite Mujtahid Muhammad Husayn Kashif al-Ghita' of Iraq, who said in his fatwah: 'Anyone selling land or mediating or helping or facilitating a deal is to be treated as a heretic<sup>236</sup> and Muslims must ostracize him and are forbidden from maintaining marriage or friendship relations with him or even speaking with him'.<sup>237</sup>

The newspaper also published the fatwah of Sunni 'Alim Muhammad Rashid Ridha and the fatwah issued by the central committee of the Indian *'alim*, which emphasized and stressed the decisions of the Mufti and of Kashif al-Ghita'.<sup>238</sup> As balance, and in order that the preaching would not be directed only at Muslims, the newspaper published an appeal by Bishop Elias al-Qanawati, head of the 'Arab Clerics' Convention', to Palestinian Christians, that said:

To all devoted Orthodox Christians: Christian sanctity of the land does not consist only of the holy places, rather includes the whole land. This sanctity will be disturbed if the land belongs to the Jews. Therefore, anyone of the Orthodox Church who sells or mediates the sale of any part of the homeland is to be considered as if he has sold a part of Jesus' birthplace or of his tomb. Thus he will be considered a heretic and all believers must ostracize and excommunicate him. Anyone who sells land to Jews makes it easier for them to enter the Holy Church of the Sepulchre and to defile it.<sup>239</sup>

The heightened activities of Mufti al-Husayni for recruiting clerics to issue religious decisions deterring those engaged in land sales probably stemmed from the attempts of the *Mu'arada* in this field. Sheikh As'ad al-Shuqayri, one of the greatest opponents of the mufti among the 'alim and the Muslim clerics, issued a religious decision against the

sellers and the speculators even before the convention organized by the mufti in January 1935.<sup>240</sup> However, the *Mu'arada* was incapable of persisting in its struggle against the sellers and the speculators as a large percentage of those active in this field were affiliated with it or supported it. Even Sheikh al-Shuqayri was accused by the mufti and his people of taking part in a large deal involving the sale of lands near Acre, his hometown.

This activity of the clerics received much coverage in the press, and apparently slowed the rate of land sales, particularly in areas visited by delegations of the High Muslim Council or members of the 'Advocating Good and Denouncing Evil' Association'. In certain cases, speculators were ridiculed and beaten by the public in the presence of the delegations and at their encouragement, for example in the village of al-Dhahiriyya near Hebron.<sup>241</sup>

In addition to the subject of land sales, the press also advocated an Arab embargo on Jewish goods, products and businesses. Simultaneously, it called for the support of Arab products and businesses. The leading Arab newspaper on this matter was *al-Karmil*, which spoke unceasingly of the formation of a national economy that can compete with the economy of the Jewish Settlement. During that period Ahmad al-'Akki,<sup>242</sup> who was active in economic entrepreneurship in the north, was writing for the newspaper. In August 1933 an article that he wrote was published in *al-Karmil*, calling Arabs to buy only Arab goods from Arab businesses, since the Jews buy only from their own businesses. It said:

Once I stood at the entrance to a Jewish-owned shoe store and I saw an Arab buyer with his wife and children, and they bought almost the whole store. I told myself that those who give money to foreigners and thus prevent one or two days of pay from Arab craftsmen, are the height of our nationalism that uses only words to inflame ... Then I passed a Jew selling cold drinks and I saw some Jews there and I told myself – these are an example of practical nationalism. Then I passed an Arab vendor of cold drinks and I didn't see any Jew coming to buy from him. I thought, this is how they build their homeland while we destroy ours. They do not give us a cent for a cold drink, while we give them large sums of money for their products.<sup>243</sup>

Al-'Akki's words and those of the contemporary press expressed the anxieties and concerns of the Palestinian press, that began to fear for its

existence, faced with the waves of Jewish immigration sweeping the national home. They were very worried that many in their midst were taking part in this construction by buying Jewish products or maintaining commercial relations with Jewish businesses. This meant that it was no longer valid to accuse Britain exclusively for its support and encouragement of the Jewish national home. Such accusations continued, but they were aimed mainly at Arab speculators and agents and anyone with Jewish economic contacts, and also at the leaders for the inadequacy of their involvement.

The newspaper *al-'Arab* expressed these views when it attacked Isma'il al-Husayni for purchasing shares of the 'Kalya' Company and being elected to the management of the plant:

The cooperation of Arabs with Jews in such economic enterprises and in such an overt manner causes the failure of the Arab national struggle and strengthens the Jews at the expense of the Arabs. This is a sharp weapon presented to the English and the Jews in order to break our national resistance. Arabs who take part in such enterprises are burdened with a great historical responsibility. History will mention them amongst those who sacrificed the good of the homeland for false material gain.<sup>244</sup>

The press was particularly concerned with Jewish labour and professionals pervading Arab space. For example, *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* criticized an Arab who intended to build a house and asked a Jewish engineer to draw the plans. The newspaper stated that such an act endangered Arab national existence in Palestine.<sup>245</sup> *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* called upon the Haifa businessman Tahir Karaman, who won a tender for paving Jordanian roads, to employ only Arab workers, rather than foreign workers.<sup>246</sup>

The press often relied on rumours for the content of its articles and analyses of the subject. Such articles opened with the words 'We have learned that' without mentioning the source. For example, the newspaper *Filastin*, when attacking Arabs who employed Jewish workers in the 'al-Nuzha' neighbourhood of Jaffa, wrote: 'We have heard that some Arabs are building new houses in the al-Nuzha neighbourhood and employing Jewish workers, particularly for electricity work. We take this opportunity to appeal to these people and we hope that they will stop employing foreign workers and resume the employment of Arab workers.'<sup>247</sup>

In certain cases the press itself did not give a good example of practising what it preached. For example, the newspapers called for the

boycotting of Rutenberg's Electricity Company and warned that once Rotenberg's Electricity illuminated Arab cities Rotenberg and his company would have conquered the land.<sup>248</sup> However, at the same time the newspapers themselves, which were becoming more sophisticated and buying new equipment, could not maintain the boycott and continued to use electricity. Even the most outspoken newspapers, such as Sheikh al-Farouqi's *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, claimed that 'The end justifies the means'. While *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* attacked any Arab that even greeted a Jew,<sup>249</sup> it was not dissuaded from employing a Jewish print worker, after the newspaper *Filastin* succeeded in persuading the former's print worker to transfer to it, thereby aiming to stop the newspaper's publication. In this instance, *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* appealed to Gavriel Zifroni, who was working as night editor for the *Habokir* newspaper, and he found newspaper a Jewish print worker for the newspaper, whereupon it continued to appear as usual.<sup>250</sup> *Al-Difa'*, which was no less stringent in its preaching for the boycott of Jewish products and businesses than *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, encouraged the development of Arab businesses, since they guaranteed the success of the Arab National movement and preservation of Arab honour.<sup>251</sup> However it was not deterred from advertising Jewish businesses or professionals, for example Dr Eli'ezer Levy, a Jewish ophthalmologist from Tel-Aviv.<sup>252</sup> This case was another example of 'the end justifying the means', since visits to Jewish physicians were vital, particularly where there were no Arab physicians. In such cases it was difficult to convince people to implement the boycott.

The Palestinian journalist Muhammad 'Ali Tahir, who lived in Egypt, where he published the newspaper *al-Sbura*, wrote an article for *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, entitled 'Thoughts and comments'. In this article the writer discussed, among other things, the boycott against the British and the Jews, and he said:

I suggest to my brethren in Palestine that before boycotting the English and the Jews they should boycott the traitors, the speculators and the hypocrites, who say many things and do not implement them. Boycotting the British might lead to an embargo of our oranges and then we will die of hunger. I suggest that anyone who has five pounds or a carpet, should sell the carpet and buy a piece of land, even one dunam.<sup>253</sup>

In summary, the Palestinian press made many efforts to place the subject of boycotting the Jews on the public agenda, but these were

mainly unsuccessful, due on the one hand to the numerous difficulties involved in enforcing the boycott and on the other to the inability of the press and the journalists to act as an example for the general public. In addition, there were many disputes and accusations among the journalists themselves who blamed each other of not obeying the boycott calls. These accusations led to counter-accusations and denials, and thus the press could not lead the campaign calling for a boycott and enforce its implementation.

### *Call for increasing solidarity between Muslims and Christians*

The subject of national solidarity between the two components of the Palestinian people – the Muslims and the Christians – occupied the Palestinian press, which was itself divided between newspapers characterized as Muslim and those characterized as Christian, despite the denial of those involved. The Christian-owned newspapers tried to appear anti-sectarian and pan-national. They celebrated Muslim festivals, and they did not designate Sunday as their day of rest in order to avoid its use as a sign of the newspaper's sectarian affiliation. The newspaper *Filastin*, which was the largest-circulated Christian newspaper, chose Monday as its weekly day of rest.

In contrast, a few Muslim newspapers, headed by the pan-Islam newspaper *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, were more forceful in stressing their Muslim character and often complained that Muslims carried the main burden of the national work while Christians received positions in the administrative systems of the Mandate government.<sup>254</sup> *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* described the Christians as parasites and spies who took advantage of the Muslims' struggle and work.<sup>255</sup> The newspaper served as the voice of an association of young, educated Muslims who objected to Christian privileges in regard to governmental positions that should be awarded to Arabs. Members of this association visited the editorial office of the newspaper and thanked the editor for the articles he wrote in support of their demands and claims of deprivation compared to Christian youth.<sup>256</sup> The newspaper persisted in its confrontations with the Christians. In another article it accused them of arrogance and called upon them to treat the Muslims as they would like the Muslims to treat them.<sup>257</sup> It said that they had no reason to be angry at Muslim demands as they were just,<sup>258</sup> and the number of Christians who were government employees spokes for itself.<sup>259</sup>

The Christian newspapers tried to defend themselves against the attacks of *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, claiming that they occupied positions

intended for Arabs not because they were Christians but because they had the required skills. *Mir'at al-Sbarq* said that 'the Christians are Arabs for all intents and are not foreigners, their feelings of belonging are not inferior to those of the Muslims'.<sup>260</sup> In regard to their employment the newspaper said:

A Christian should not be prevented from occupying a position if he is suitable for it. Christians are national Arabs and have all the national rights of Muslims. The right to be appointed to governmental positions is a right of all Palestinian Arabs and it should not be divided proportionately between Muslims and Christians, since if we agree to proportional distribution that will be the end of Arab unity in Palestine.<sup>261</sup>

*Mir'at al-Sbarq* indicated the cause of the anger felt by Muslim youth, expressed in articles published in *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*. They demanded proportional distribution of governmental positions, i.e., that the majority of government positions would be filled by Muslims who constitute a larger proportion of the population. However, *Mir'at al-Sbarq* claimed that the distribution had to be performed according to ability and quality, assuming that the Christians, in the opinion of the writer, were more able and qualified. This may be concluded from the last sentence cited above, which claimed that if the distribution is proportional, i.e., if more positions are given to Muslims, it would lead to the demise of Arab national activities. This caused the writers of *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* to request that the Christians abandon their arrogant attitude towards the Muslims.

The newspaper *Filastin* acknowledged the existence of sectarianism in Palestinian society and the hatred between the various religious groups. It referred to an affair in which Christians resigned from the cultural students' club in Jaffa in August 1932 and said: 'We feel that there is a great deal of hatred not only between students, but also between the various elements of the two groups that comprise the Arab people in Palestine.'<sup>262</sup> *Filastin* was the newspaper that dealt with the problem most openly. The newspaper responded to the Muslim accusation that the Christians saw themselves primarily as Christians, with their Arab identity being only secondary, with the result that they felt more loyalty to Christianity and its imperialistic powers: 'The fact that Christians are part of the most ancient religious group in Palestine cannot be denied. They live in the birthplace of their faith and they are called Nazarenes after the city Nazareth – their spiritual land. They

represent no less than seven hundred million Christians.”<sup>263</sup> *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* responded by saying: ‘The Arabs of Palestine are fighting for their freedom and independence. They fought in Muslim Turkey to achieve their liberty and independence. Palestine will belong neither to the Zionists nor to the seven hundred million Christians. It will be Arab as long as Arab blood flows in our veins.’<sup>264</sup> In the same issue the newspaper repeated its accusations about the Christians who wanted the Muslims to remain wood-cutters and water-drawers. It even attacked the orthodox bishop, Bishop Hajjar, accusing him of spying for western Christian countries.<sup>265</sup>

The rivalry between *Filastin* and *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* was expressed in a religious decision by Sheikh Muhammad Husayn Kashif al-Ghita', given to Sheikh al-Farouqi, editor of *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, forbidding Muslims to read the newspaper *Filastin* – anyone doing so would be considered a heretic.<sup>266</sup> The other newspapers treated the problem in a more moderate manner and called for reconciliation between Muslims and Christians, enabling them to fight ‘the enemies of the nation’. Among these newspapers were *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* and *Sawt al-Sha'b*. The newspaper *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* reminded the people that the welfare of the Arab nation and the interests of the National movement demanded an end to the conflict between Muslims and Christians. It predicted a bleak future for the Arabs and their National movement should the conflict continue.<sup>267</sup> *Sawt al-Sha'b*, owned by Christians, also called for national reconciliation, and accused the Jews of inciting this feud with the aim of sowing disharmony within the Arab camp. It believed that the two sides should demonstrate leniency in order to prevent the Jews from realizing their plans.<sup>268</sup>

The furore that grew up in the press over the Christian–Muslim conflict forced the Executive Committee to intervene in order to put an end to the feud. It issued an appeal to the people, saying: ‘The struggle for an independent Palestine is a national struggle with no distinction between religious groups. The Executive Committee has discussed the issue of sectarian rivalry and requests that the press put a complete stop to discussions of sectarian conflicts.’<sup>269</sup> The feud abated after the intervention of the Arab Executive Committee, but it reared its head again from time to time, in particular when specific plans and proposals were discussed, for example the British proposal to found a Legislative Council. The Christian newspapers, headed by *Filastin* and *Mir'at al-Sharq*, supported the proposal, while the Muslim newspapers *al-Difa'*, *al-Liwa*, and *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, objected to the idea and branded its supporters as traitors.

## RELATIONS WITH BRITAIN

As a result of the role of the press in the events of 1929 and in the early 1930s, and following the severe criticism expressed by the various investigation committees and the report of the press officer, Furness, clearly indicating the role of the press in preaching, inciting and arousing the Palestinian national struggle against the Mandate authorities and the indifference of the authorities towards these activities, the authorities decided to take the initiative and tighten their censorship of the press. In January 1933 the new press ordinance<sup>270</sup> was issued, replacing the former Ottoman press ordinance.

The new ordinance included many restrictions imposed on and tightening control and supervision of the press. The eighth clause of this ordinance stated that the management of each newspaper must send two copies of each issue together with any appendices to the Chief Secretary and two copies to the local District Commissioner. Failure to comply would be considered a breach of the law and a daily penalty of 5 Palestinian pounds would be imposed as a punishment for delays.<sup>271</sup> The tenth clause of the ordinance required newspapers to publish formal announcements and declarations for the attention of the public free of charge. If the Chief Secretary saw that a certain newspaper published an incorrect or inaccurate announcement, the newspaper's editor would be required to publish a correction or cancellation of the announcement free of charge.<sup>272</sup> However, the harshest clause, limiting the freedom of the press to a great degree, was clause 19. It stated that the High Commissioner reserved the right to warn newspapers or to suspend their publication if he thought that they were endangering public peace and/or threatening general security.<sup>273</sup> This ordinance gave the High Commissioner and the British rule broad authority to closely supervise press publications. The authorities' reactions to the press were much more rapid and firm than those described by Furness in his report, stating that the authorities reacted only two or even four weeks after publication.<sup>274</sup>

The researcher Muhammad Sulayman claimed that this ordinance did indeed burden the work of the Arabic press, but also created problems and functioning difficulties for the British censor workers, as they now had new tasks which hampered the proper functioning of the Office of the Censor.<sup>275</sup> Sulayman is partly correct, with regard to the heavy tasks imposed on the workers of the Office of the Censor, difficulties relating to adjustments to the new situation, and changes in a long-standing work routine. However, these difficulties were only



short-lived, and in time supervision of the press became much more efficient and tighter than in the past. Newspapers breaking the law would be sanctioned the very next day, as stated in the ordinance. The authorities warned and suspended many newspapers and had no hesitation in arresting or detaining journalists and even senior editors. This situation reached a climax in May–June 1936, during the Great Strike, when the authorities suspended the publication of most Arabic newspapers for a long period, even closing some of them permanently.<sup>276</sup>

The series of severe steps taken by the British authorities against the newspapers did not lead to mitigation of their activities. The annual report of the Mandate government for 1933 said that ‘the hostility of the Arabic press towards the British has not slackened, and it has continued its scathing attacks on the Mandate and its major institutions’.<sup>277</sup> Another report of the British Foreign Office, written in early December 1935, said that the tone of the Arabic press towards the British authorities has become harsher, in particular the articles by Akram Zu‘aitir in the newspaper *al-Jami‘a al-Islamiyya* and the editorials of the newspaper *al-Difa‘*. These articles – said the report – ‘increasingly incite the public. Today the press has become a very provocative instrument, and this might cause tension and hatred in the future.’<sup>278</sup>

In another report, written in late December 1935, the list of provocative newspapers was extended to include Jerusalem-based *al-Liwa* and *al-Jami‘a al-‘Arabiyya*, and Jaffa-based *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim* and *al-Difa‘*, based on the following claims:

The newspapers *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim* and *al-Difa‘* assist in circulating the ideas of the young Arabs and in encouraging their acts of provocation and incitement. The newspapers *al-Jami‘a al-Islamiyya* and *al-Liwa* publish articles of the independent nationalist young people, Hamdi al-Husayni, Hashim al-Sabi‘, and Akram Zu‘aitir. The newspaper *al-Liwa* included in its editorial office Nimr ‘Ouda, who resigned from the Educational Administration and took part in the activities of the nationalist young people ... The Youth Congress has published its new newspaper *al-Kifah* and the newspapers *al-Jami‘a al-‘Arabiyya* and *al-Liwa* are occupied with clarifying possible damages of the plan for a legislative council.<sup>279</sup>

A glance at the list presented in this report does not show any Christian-owned newspapers. The list of article writers of concern to the British authorities also did not include any Christian journalists or

activists, nor did it include names of senior activists who were writing at the time for the press. These findings lead us to the conclusion that the split in late 1935 and early 1936 was not between the *Maǧlisīyyun* and the *Mu'aridun*, but rather between those who accepted the British proposal of a legislative council and those who objected to it. The Muslim-owned newspapers objected to the proposal and sharply attacked its defenders, while the Christian-owned newspapers, headed by *al-Karmil* and *Filastin*, tended to accept it. The age group described in the report as young people were central activists of al-Istiqlal and the Youth Congress who perceived the British as their primary enemy, resisting any attempt by veteran powers to talk to or negotiate with Britain. It must be stated that this split between supporters of rapprochement with Britain and those who objected to it underwent many changes. The newspapers and the editors, as well as junior journalists, frequently changed their views. In other words, the views described in the British report from late 1935 had significantly changed by mid-1936, a transition particularly characteristic of the Great Strike of April–October 1936. As mentioned in the report, the articles written by the younger people, Akram Zu'aitir, Hamdi al-Husayni and Ibrahim al-Shanti, were the harshest, fervently objecting to negotiations with Britain.

In December 1932, on the fifteenth anniversary of the occupation of Jerusalem by the British, Akram Zu'aitir published two articles, one in *Filastin* and the other in *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*. In the article in *Filastin* he said: 'In the past I called 2 November "the day of betrayal" and today I call 9 December "the day of misery and bad luck", because this is the day that began a miserable period of darkness, in which we have tasted much suffering and disaster.'<sup>280</sup> In the article in *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* he appealed to the Palestinians, saying:

Let them [the British] do as they wish but don't let them take control of your heart, since if you retain your heart you will be able to retain your land. In order to retain your heart you must defend and it and prevent others from exploiting it. You can do this only if you are strong. You must become stronger. Search for this strength.<sup>281</sup>

In a different article, Zu'aitir stated that the British rule of Palestine had caused the Arabs to become strangers in their homeland and poor people in their own homes; the British had caused them only trouble: vigorous Jewish immigration and British officials who occupied important

posts and received their high salaries from the miserable locals.<sup>282</sup> Later in the article Zu'aitir criticized the attitude of Palestinian leaders towards British policy and accused them of continuing British exploitation of the Palestinian Arabs. They received personal benefits from the British authorities and thus proclaimed their weakness, and Britain is not known for her respect for the weak.<sup>283</sup>

Hamdi al-Husayni also blamed the leaders for the poor condition of Palestinian Arabs under British rule. In an article entitled 'Learn to be strong from the Balfour Declaration', he wrote:

The Arabs deluded themselves, or others deluded them, that Britain made this declaration under heavy pressure that it could not bear and that it will renege on its promises to the Jews if the Arabs protest the declaration and reject it ... but we see that England guards this declaration like a beggar guarding his money. If the Arabs had understood this when the Mandate disaster hit them, they would have known that the disaster of the National Home is the real disaster of the Mandate. The Mandate is the source of all disasters and the disaster of the National Home is but a small offshoot of it ... If the Arabs had known this they would have spared themselves the bitter experience of 16 years of suffering and the leaders would have spared themselves their comic-paradoxical role: on the one hand verbal protests and on the other hand legitimization of the Balfour Declaration by selling land to Jews.<sup>284</sup>

Ibrahim al-Shanti joined the group of young people who attacked the Mandate authorities and their policy. The first attacks appeared in *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, which he joined immediately after returning from his studies at the American University of Beirut in 1932. His critical articles continued in the *al-Difa'* newspaper, which he founded together with the group that broke away from *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*. At his incentive *al-Difa'* became one of the most radical newspapers in its attitude to the British mandate and Britain in general. In an article he wrote entitled 'Regret' he expressed the Arabs' regret for supporting the British and fighting against the Turks in the First World War.

According to al-Shanti, the Turkish period was a time of exploitation and tyranny, but the exploitation and tyranny were the lot of both Turks and Arabs. However, today, under British rule, only the Arabs are exploited, and only the Jews receive justice ... In

the past the Arabs had some respect and many rights and today everything has changed and they have nothing.<sup>285</sup>

Then al-Shanti appealed to the Arabs to awaken and use their strength to change the British approach, 'since nothing will come from London aside from those things harmful and repulsive that cause the Arabs to detest their life and wish for the end and to prefer death to a life of humiliation'.<sup>286</sup>

The newspaper *al-'Arab*, voice of the al-Istiqlal party, which objected to any cooperation with the British, called upon the Arabs to boycott even the projects aimed at serving the public, such as the project for expansion of the port of Haifa. The newspaper called for a boycott of the inauguration ceremony of the port, since it was founded with Arab money but without their permission or consent. The newspapers described the port as the handcuffs of imperialism, constricting Arab hand movements in their endeavour to build a temple of liberty and independence.<sup>287</sup> The newspaper added: 'The Port of Haifa symbolizes imperialism in all its forms and objectives: military, strategic and economic. Its commercial benefits for the public are minimal and they are situated at the end of Britain's long list of objectives.'<sup>288</sup>

The Arab press called for outright rejection of the Mandate, but some of the newspapers revealed that this was more an objection to the British than to the Mandate, since if the Mandate had to be applied they would prefer that it not be a British Mandate. *Sawt al-Sha'b* said that a German Mandate was preferable to the British Mandate, since if the Mandate for Palestine were awarded to the Germans there would be no more atrocities against Arabs, and they would not be dispossessed of their lands and exiled in the name of the law.<sup>289</sup> At the end of the article the newspaper defined the wish for a German Mandate as 'a wish for peace, tranquility, justice and integrity'.<sup>290</sup>

The newspaper *al-'Arab* requested that the Mandate be given to the government of Abyssinia, which had historical contacts with the Arab East, as well as Eastern blood flowing in the veins of its citizens.<sup>291</sup>

*Al-Difa'* stressed that the Arabs' only request was liberty and independence and that they did not prefer one foreign government over another. However, if there were no refuge from applying a Mandate, it was preferable that the Mandate be given to Turkey, as the British Mandate strove to destroy the Palestinian Arab people and was doing so by opening the immigration gates to Jews.<sup>292</sup>

Claims of Britain's wishes to destroy the Arab people or the values of Arab society frequently appeared in the Arabic Palestinian press.

*Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* said: 'The British Mandate has destroyed the nation's virtues and turned its sons into traitors, pimps and spies. Britain is responsible for all the disasters that have befallen us.'<sup>293</sup>

The most surprising views of Britain in this period were voiced by *Filastin*. While most of the newspapers competed in their hostility towards Britain, *Filastin* displayed a conciliatory approach and attempted to remind the public that a hostile attitude towards the authorities did not necessarily require hatred towards the British people as a whole. In an article entitled 'Talk to the English people and not to the politicians' it said:

There is a world of difference between the thoughts of the English politicians and government officials and the thoughts of the English people in its entirety. The politicians are impervious to the pain of other nations, while the traditional English thought is original, rich in feelings, willing to understand people's rights and act to implement them.<sup>294</sup>

However, British documents of the era indicate that *Filastin's* position is not surprising. The British authorities, in particular the censors, were aware of the struggle between *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* and *Filastin* and were very concerned with the weakening of *Filastin* compared to other newspapers, especially *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, which demonstrated blatant hostility towards Britain. In the report of press officer Piron in 1932 to the chief secretary of the Mandate government concerning his impressions from a visit to the editorial office of *Filastin* and a conversation with 'Issa al-'Issa, he said:

The editor of *Filastin* has suffered greatly from the work of his competitors. The newspaper began losing 100 British pounds a month. He was very concerned by relations between Muslims and Christians and in particular by the Islamic propaganda of *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*. Not only his newspaper is boycotted, rather also Christian goods ... He said that he was denounced when he wished to use the newspaper as the voice of the government, and on the other hand he is encouraged to write against the government in order to win public sympathy ... He will be concerned when the Christians are under independent Muslim rule.<sup>295</sup>

At the end of his report, the press officer noted his conclusions and recommendations as follows: 'It will be very distressing if *Filastin* were

to be eliminated by *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, since despite all its mistakes, *Filastin* has attempted to maintain a proper level of professional journalism.<sup>296</sup>

During this period, *Filastin* tried to satisfy both the Arab public and the British censor. It allowed nationalist writers, such as Akram Zu'aitir, to write scathing articles against Britain, but it also tried its best to maintain a gentle tone towards Britain in its editorials. It seems that it was more successful in its efforts to satisfy the British than the nationalist activists, in particular after revealing its views of the plans for a legislative council proposed once more by Britain in December 1935. At first, the newspaper enlisted Raghīb al-Nashashibi, leader of the opposition, who used *Filastin* to call upon the Arabs to accept the proposal and not miss this opportunity, as in 1922.<sup>297</sup> Later, in an editorial, 'Issa al-'Issa compared the 1922 proposal, rejected by the Arabs, and the new proposal, and found a number of positive points in the new proposal.<sup>298</sup>

In an editorial, *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* attacked those who were inclined to accept the plan, claiming that it is a useless political trick.<sup>299</sup> The newspaper explained its objection to the plan as follows:

We, the Islamic community in Palestine, have been reduced from a nation to a community. After being the 'Islamic nation' we are now called the 'Islamic community', similar to the 'Jewish community'. The number of Jewish delegates on the proposed council is almost equal to the number of Muslim delegates, and in addition this council will not be able to fight Jewish immigration or limit the absolute rule of the Mandate. Taking all this into consideration, what kind of council will this be?<sup>300</sup>

*Filastin* reiterated its warning to the Arabs that if they reject the proposal and miss this opportunity there will be no other such chance before the Jews become an absolute majority in Palestine.<sup>301</sup> These views voiced by *Filastin* aroused much public anger, expressed by prominent attacks in the objecting newspapers. The reaction caused the newspaper to withdraw to a certain degree from its sympathetic views towards the plan and towards Britain in general. Signs of this withdrawal are evident in an article published by the paper, in which it said:

We do not perceive the plan for a legislative council as a plan that can realize Arab national demands. We perceive it merely as a formal means of declaring our protests to the world. The Arabs have no other means aside from the press or national outbursts that

disappear quickly, methods that are of course ineffective for the purpose of external propaganda.<sup>302</sup>

This article was the beginning of *Filastin's* withdrawal from its moderate views towards Britain. In early 1936, and mainly during the strike, it joined the newspapers that expressed hostile views towards the Mandate and was also a target for closure and suspension by the authorities, similar to the other newspapers.

### THE STRENGTHENING OF THE JEWISH FORCE AND THE ZIONIST MOVEMENT

The reaction of the Arabic press to the increasing strength of the Jewish Settlement and the increasing number of immigrants settling in Palestine focused mainly on the anxiety and concern of the Arab public. This reaction was expressed in various ways, which may be summarized in three main areas:

1. Disparaging the Jewish settlement and incitement against the Jews.
2. Attacks against the Hebrew press.
3. Vilifying Palestinian political rivals for their contact with Jews.

#### *Disparaging the Jewish Settlement and incitement against the Jews*

With the rise in the rate of Jewish immigration and the resulting increase in the unease of the Arab public, the press began placing the responsibility for every misfortune or disaster to befall the country on the Jews. *Filastin* accused the Jews of instigating the British government's customs fees on flour,<sup>303</sup> while *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* blamed them for the decrease in the value of the British pound.<sup>304</sup> The Jews were even held responsible for natural disasters. The same newspaper accused them of taking advantage of the drought that occurred in the winter of 1932 in order to strike at the miserable Arab peasant.<sup>305</sup> *Sawt al-Sha'b* perceived the Jews as 'traitors to all rules, blood-thirsty and law evaders'.<sup>306</sup> *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* expressed anxiety at the waves of Jewish immigration, in particular of Jews banished from Germany, and said:

These are groups of rude immigrants, their eyes glowing and

their hearts full of hatred towards the people who deported them. They come to our land in order to restore their respect and steal the bread from the mouths of the Arab citizens ... Every day tens and hundreds of Jews enter the land, carrying the germs of communism, the seeds of heresy and other destructive social ideas.<sup>307</sup>

The claim that the Jews brought communism and heresy to Palestine was a common claim in the Arabic press of the period. *Sawt al-Sha'b* said that 'only communist Jews scheming against all human society immigrate to Palestine'.<sup>308</sup> *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* was surprised to see the connection between the Jewish immigrants and the communist ideal and said:

This is the strangest communism known to man. Communism as we know it does not recognize religion or nationality, while Zionist communism recognizes the Jewish national element [*al-jins al-watani al-yahudi*] that resents all other ethnic elements and perceives them as 'gentiles' and recognizes the Jewish religion and is unwilling to forego it even in countries where anti-Semitism is on the rise.<sup>309</sup>

*Al-Difa'* also referred to the matter of the deportation of Jews from Germany at the time and claimed that this was a result of their Zionist activities. Through Zionism, Judaism was transformed from a religion with cultural–spiritual characteristics to a nationalist religion. The newspaper described Zionism:

The Zionist ideal is one of the worst national crimes of the modern era, and the Jewish people are the first victims of this ideal. When this ideal began appearing among the Jews, the nations of the world could no longer suffer them in their midst and this is the reason for the oppression and deportation of Jews from Germany and Poland.<sup>310</sup>

Sami al-Sarraj, editor of *al-Difa'*, wrote in an editorial: 'The Jews were people of intrigue and rebelliousness everywhere they went and in every period. They have always disrupted public security and caused tension and disturbances not only in foreign communities but also within their own community. This is a known fact about the Jews.'<sup>311</sup>

The press sought to demonstrate the danger imminent in the increasing strength of the Jewish Settlement by aggravating the anxi-



eties and alarm of the Arab public. *Filastin*, for example, reported in August 1933 on a request submitted by the Jewish Agency to the Mandate authorities to allow 400,000 Jews to enter Palestine.<sup>311</sup> The newspaper explained to the readers the danger posed by these immigrants, who would enjoy the fruit of the land at the expense of the Arab citizens.<sup>312</sup> A month after this report, *Filastin* reported the arrival in Palestine of 60,000 German Jews.<sup>313</sup> *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* related in October 1935 that the Jewish Agency was bringing soldiers to Palestine and not labourers.<sup>314</sup> In December of the same year *al-Liwa* reported the arrival in Palestine of 200,000 Jews from Germany.<sup>315</sup>

The press demonstrated through cartoons the danger of the Jewish movement not only to Palestinian Arabs but to the whole world. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* published a cartoon in which a Jew was portrayed collecting money for the Jewish Agency and using the money not only for Jewish settlement in Palestine, but rather in order to manage world interests, such as combating religion and faith, disseminating communism, and organizing revolutions world-wide.<sup>316</sup> *Filastin* portrayed Zionism as an intimidating crocodile, opening its mouth wide to swallow two Arab peasants. The sight is calmly witnessed by a fully-armed British soldier standing on the side.<sup>317</sup> *Al-Difa'* compared living conditions in Jewish villages and towns with living conditions in Arab villages and Arab cities. It claimed that anyone visiting Jewish villages would think that he had reached heaven, as he would see organized villages, prosperous cities and rich neighbourhoods, but if he were to visit Arab villages and Arab cities he would find only poverty, misery and despair.<sup>318</sup>

The press did not stop at describing the grave situation and warning against its dangers. Journalists called upon the public to forsake words and slogans and start acting to prepare for the worst and to thwart it, or at least reduce its intensity and impact. *Filastin* called upon the Arab nation and said: 'Oh magnificent Arab nation! Know that the present situation will eventually lead to your annihilation. You must forsake words and start acting. The homeland is calling you, you must sacrifice everything you can for it.'<sup>319</sup> Elsewhere the same newspaper called upon the Arab public to open its eyes and remain awake as long as the danger persisted.<sup>320</sup> *Al-Difa'* described the struggle of the Arabs against the Zionists as a holy war (jihad), saying that anyone who does not take part in it is committing a great sin.<sup>321</sup> *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* published an article by the renowned pan-Arab leader, Shakib Arsalan, in which he described the grave situation resulting from the growing power of the Jews in Palestine by saying:

In my opinion the situation is quite serious, and all Arabs, including the Arabs of Palestine, must awaken in order to prepare for the worst. They must send a delegation to Europe to visit its cities and explain to the enlightened world the injustice that is being perpetrated against them and the danger to their future. Otherwise, the people of Europe will believe that the Arabs have become resigned to the Zionists' intentions and are ready to live in the shadow of the Jewish kingdom.<sup>323</sup>

*Mir'at al-Sharq* was the only Arabic newspaper with a positive view of the possibility of Arab–Jewish cooperation. It saw such cooperation as vital to promoting the standard of living of both nations. In April 1935 it said: 'The anti-Semitic persecution of Jews, currently escalating in Europe, proves that Jews have no other safe haven aside from the Arab East. They belong to the Semitic race. Jews and Arabs are cousins. They have similar languages, traditions and customs. These factors are enough to lead to mutual sympathy.'<sup>324</sup> *Mir'at al-Sharq* was denounced by the other newspapers and accused of collaborating with the Jews. The editor of *al-Difa'*, Sami al-Sarraj, expressed his sorrow at this collaboration, and also at the British government's provocations against the Arab youth organizations that objected to illegal Jewish immigration and organized guard shifts on the coasts.<sup>325</sup> *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* mocked the calls for Jewish–Arab cooperation, saying: 'Such cooperation will only be possible if the Jews announce that they are abandoning their disgraceful political ideals, ceasing immigration, and handing over all matters pertaining to the land to its rightful owners.'<sup>326</sup>

In summary, the press usually displayed inflexibility and rejected any attempt at negotiations or cooperation with the Jews. However, more than once, certain newspapers changed their orientation and spoke of possible benefits of Arab–Jewish cooperation. An example is the Palestinian newspaper *Alef Baa*, which was published in Damascus and usually demonstrated a distinct anti-Zionist orientation. This newspaper was affected by the dominant attitude amongst Syrian journalists and politicians, who were willing to sell land to Jews in order to improve the economic situation in their country. The newspaper's reporter in Palestine said that 'the economic situation in Palestine is better than that of Syria, mainly due to the sale of Arab lands to Jews'.<sup>327</sup> The same reporter wrote two months later that the economic situation in places that sold land to Jews was much better than in places that had not engaged in such sales, for instance Nablus.<sup>328</sup> This shift in the newspaper's view was short-lived, and cannot be seen as a long-

term change. In return for the temporary change in orientation, the editor received a large sum of money from the Jewish Agency in order to enlist support for the sale of Arab land to Jews.<sup>329</sup>

### *Attacks against the Hebrew press*

An important element of the Arabic press campaign against the Jewish Settlement and the Zionist Movement was its harsh struggle against the Hebrew press, a major propaganda tool of the Zionist Movement. The main claim of the Arabic press was that the British authorities 'preferred' the Hebrew press to the Arabic newspapers and turned a blind eye to the blood libels of the Hebrew press against the Arabs.<sup>330</sup> *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* believed that these strong attacks against the Jewish press were an indication of the panic felt by the writers, and that they only contributed to the deepening rift between the two nations.<sup>331</sup>

*Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* criticized the British censorship for ignoring the provocations in the Jewish press, which called for revenge following the murder of Yosef Binyamini during an altercation between members of the Jewish Settlement and the Arabs of Wadi al-Hawarith. In the opinion of the newspaper, the silence of the British authorities was clearly indicates of an unfair attitude towards the Arabic press – they urged punishment of those who even hinted at criticism of the government, while the Hebrew press, which did stop at hints, was not punished at all.<sup>332</sup> The hostile attitude of the Arabic press towards the Hebrew newspapers did not prevent them from cooperating covertly. Special relations existed between the two newspapers that represented the most radical of the two national movements: the pan-Arab *al-Difa'* on the side of the Palestinian National Movement and the revisionist *Habokir* on the side of the Zionist Movement. These relations helped the two newspapers reach news and reports that they could not have attained otherwise. On curfew days, for example, *al-Difa'* managed to distribute its copies in areas that other Arabic newspapers could not reach, with the help of the workers of *Habokir* who transported them through the Jewish areas or in the vehicle that distributed their own paper.<sup>333</sup> Even *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, which strictly objected to the Zionist Movement and the Jewish Settlement, was not deterred from employing a Jewish print worker in order that the newspaper would be published on time and not bow to the dictates of the rival newspaper, *Filastin*.<sup>334</sup>

*Vilifying Palestinian political rivals for their contact with Jews*

Contact and relationships with Jews were a significant issue between political rivals in the Palestinian National movement, and one which became particularly integrated in the conflict between the Husaynis and their rivals. *Al-Difa'*, in an article written by its editor Sami al-Sarraj, strictly criticized *Mir'at al-Sharq* for participating in a Hebrew press campaign against the guards from the Arab youth and Youth Congress and the al-Istiqlal party.<sup>335</sup> *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* reproached the opposition newspapers which constantly attacked the High Muslim Council and its president, Amin al-Husayni. The newspaper believed that they were acting according to a programme devised by Jewish political and religious associations, aimed at destroying the High Muslim Council at any price.<sup>336</sup> The newspaper explained the relationship between the Jews and the *Mu'arada* newspapers in these words:

The Jews, more than any other people, recognize the value of money and propaganda, and for this reason they always make an effort to collect money, with which they form propaganda tools for their Zionist interests and bribe Arabs to fight against their brothers in religion and homeland ... These newspapers, published today in the disguise of national newspapers, are but false journalism, betrayed to the Jews; in their call to unify the nation they strive to expand the rift within the nation.<sup>337</sup>

*Filastin* answered the accusations of *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* and said:

The journalists described by the Mufti's newspaper as 'corrupt' are those who fought the Jewish exhibits, those who organized the 1933 demonstrations, and those who attack the Zionists every morning and arouse the people's attention to their intrigues, schemes and enterprises ... They did this while the Mufti refrained from supporting the organizers of the 1933 demonstrations, and his newspaper refrained from publishing even one article against 'the Jewish exhibits and from attacking their Arab visitors.'<sup>338</sup>

It must be stated that such mutual attacks would appear in times of crisis and splits in the Palestinian society, but during the short lulls in the internal rivalries (such as during the strike) the Arabic press made a

joint effort to attack the Zionist Movement and the Jewish Settlement. The intensity of these attacks varied among the newspapers. *Filastin* was known for its particularly scathing criticism, apparently stemming from its wish to prove affiliation and loyalty to the national camp.

#### THE ATTITUDE OF THE PALESTINIAN PRESS TO INTER-ARAB RELATIONS

The rising influence of pan-Arab factors in the Palestinian National movement (the Youth Congress and the al-Istiqlal party) was accompanied by the rising interest of the Palestinian Arab press in events occurring in other Arab countries.

Until the early 1930s the Palestinian readership received news of these countries through Arabic newspapers (especially Egyptian, Syrian and Lebanese newspapers), sent to Palestine almost every morning. These newspapers were an important source of information connecting Palestinian readers with other Arab countries. *Al-Difa'*, established in 1934, was the first newspaper with reporters stationed in most Arab countries. It served as a source of news from Arab countries for the other Palestinian newspapers, covering news not mentioned in the foreign newspapers that reached Palestine.<sup>39</sup> It is easy to understand the interest of *al-Difa'* and *al-'Arab* in the Arab world, since they belonged to the Istiqlali pan-Arab group. However, other newspapers also made an effort to expand their coverage of Arab matters, either in order to compete with these two newspapers or due to the increasing involvement of other Arab countries in Palestinian matters. The major areas discussed in Palestinian newspapers in the pan-Arab context were:

1. Arab unity
2. Inter-Arab relations
3. Zionist activities in Arab countries.

#### *Arab unity*

The Palestinian journalists were aware of the ideological processes occurring in Arab countries, in particular the idea of unity between Arab countries and the basic identity of this unity. The journalist Hashim al-Sabi', in an article for *Filastin*, referred to 'the Eastern League of Cooperation', an idea formulated by the Egyptian visionary, Fathi Radwan. Al-Sabi' rejected this idea and said:

Egypt should be a leader of unity based on Arab nationalism, since Egypt is considered an Arab country and the Arabs are a nation with a common language, tradition and ethics. They also have common goals and the same blood flows in their veins ... The Arab nation consists only of Arabs. However, its national development has not yet ended and it is still at the stage of affiliation to a family or tribe. Therefore it is very dangerous at present to advocate the idea of an Islamic League or an Eastern League.<sup>340</sup>

*Al-Karmil* called upon the Arabs to revive Arab national sentiment since 'it is a vast power that is always victorious. It is a clean, pure and sublime sentiment. The revival of this sentiment requires good intentions, integrity and sacrifice.'<sup>341</sup> *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* spoke of what must be done in order to realize Arab unity. It tried to answer this question, saying:

It is possible to realize Arab unity in two stages: The *first* stage is achieving peace between the present kings and princes of the Arab nation, and forming a foundation of faith in common interests and common goals. The *second* stage is the establishment of one Arab state with one ruler who will lead the Arabs ... In order to realize the first stage, each Arab country must select a ruler who is immersed in the lives of his citizens and understands their thoughts. Then the leaders must reach ideological unity and only subsequently will citizens of the Arab countries be able to enjoy cultural and national unity.<sup>342</sup>

It may be perceived that the newspaper did not object to the idea of local nationalism (*wataniyya*) at the stage preceding total Arab unity (*qawmiyya*). However, it is significant that it considered contemporary Arab leaders and their rivalries as an obstacle to realizing their nationalism. In other words, the conflicts between Arab countries were conflicts between leaders and not between nations. The writer of the article, in criticizing the behaviour of the Arab leaders and portraying the image of the ideal Arab leader, was probably envisioning the image of Mufti Amin al-Husayni, whose voice he represented at the time.

It should be stated that the newspapers advocating the pan-Arab idea and calling for realization of Arab unity were those that firmly objected to the manifests published in Amman by the 'Jordanian Youth Associations', which called for the unification of Palestine with

Transjordan under the leadership of Emir Abdullah. The basis of this objection was the claim that this unity will lead to Zionist domination of Transjordan as well as of Palestine.<sup>343</sup>

### *Inter-Arab relations*

As stated above, in the early 1930s there was an increase in the involvement and interest of the Palestinian press in the Arab countries and their relationships. The two countries that were widely reviewed in the Palestinian press, and which also responded to the news presented, were Egypt and Iraq. These two countries and Palestine had an important factor in common – British rule. Egypt and Iraq both made large steps towards national independence through their national movements' negotiations with the British authorities. Another issue that drew the attention of Palestinian journalists was the conflict within these countries between those who supported the Arab ideal and Arab unity and those who objected. The Palestinian press termed those who objected to this ideal in Arab countries (in particular Egypt and Iraq) '*Shu'ubiyya*'.<sup>344</sup> The press sympathized with those national movements that did not object to Arab unity. In Egypt, for example, the Wafd party gained much prestige among the Palestinian public, although it did not openly support Arab unity. Palestinian leaders copied its operations and its symbols and the Palestinian press perceived Sa'd Zaghlul as an Arab leader, and not only an Egyptian national leader. The leader and journalist Jamal al-Husayni stressed the need to follow the example of the Egyptian national movement in order to achieve independence that would facilitate progress towards the stage of Arab unity.<sup>345</sup> For example, he introduced a programme to help the needy, '*Masbrou' al-Qirsh*', just as it had been introduced in Egypt by the Young Egypt (*Misr al-Fatat*) Association. The newspaper he established, *al-Liwa*, '*The Flag*', was not named randomly, rather it was named after the newspaper published by Mustafa Kamil.

*Al-Difa'* also entreated the Palestinians to embrace the methods of the Egyptian movement, such as student demonstrations against the authorities, which were the turning point that led Britain to comply with Egyptian demands.<sup>346</sup> Palestinian newspapers' support of the Wafd party was expressed in demonstrations organized by the newspapers against Isma'il Sidki, the sworn enemy of the *Wafd*, on his visit to Palestine.<sup>347</sup>

*Al-Difa'* provided extensive reviews of Iraqi news and emphasized the steps taken by the Iraqi people in order to achieve their independ-

ence, in particular the establishment of a national army as the nucleus of an Arab national army. The writer said: 'We are proud of the progress of the Iraqi army, but we simultaneously feel sorrow and pain at our own inaction. We live in difficult conditions with no hope under the detested colonial rule.'<sup>348</sup>

In regard to the armed struggle that took place in early 1934 between Saudi Arabia and Yemen, the Palestinian press adopted a neutral attitude during the war and supported Saudi Arabia (the victors) after its conclusion. *Al-Difa'* reported at length on the course of the war through a reporter situated in the area (unlike the other newspapers). He wrote: 'We hope that this war will come to an end so that the Arabs will be able to fight their national war. We must fight for Arab unity against the foreigners instead of fighting between brothers'.<sup>349</sup> However, when the war ended with a Saudi victory, the editor of the newspaper, Sami al-Sarraj, known for his affinity with the Saudi royal family, wrote:

The victor was the propaganda supporting the ideas advocated by the Saudis versus the tyranny and exploitation of the Yemen Imam. The Yemenites accepted the Saudi propaganda due to their hatred of the Imam and his exploitative rule, just as the Hijazis welcomed the Saudis due to their hatred of Sharif Husayn, the Sharif of Mecca.<sup>350</sup>

### *Zionist activities in Arab countries*

The Palestinian press was very sensitive to any cooperation between Arab countries and the Zionist Movement, and objected to any programme or enterprise attempted by the Zionist Movement in Arab countries. One of the subjects discussed by the press was the activities of the Freemason Movement in Egypt, with *Al-Jami'a al-Arabiyya* covering this subject more than any other newspaper. In August 1932 it wrote:

The Jewish members of the Egyptian Freemason Movement attempted to open branches in Palestine, as a preparatory move towards the establishment of the Palestinian association, which began operating during 1932... The Arab national newspapers are aware of the activities of this association and are trying to warn the Arabs of its dangers.<sup>351</sup>

The same newspaper repeated its warnings and protested against the visit to Palestine of Husayn Sabri Pasha, governor of Alexandria and



senior activist of the Egyptian Freemason association.<sup>352</sup> However, the issue that most agitated the Palestinian press in regard to the relations of the Zionist Movement with Arab countries was the leasing of the Ghour al-Kabd lands in Transjordan to the Jewish Agency. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*<sup>353</sup> strongly attacked the deal and compared Emir Abdullah's role in this deal to that of the Arab who led the Abyssinian attackers of Mecca in the Battle of al-File.<sup>354</sup>

Boulous Shihada, editor of *Mir'at al-Sharq*, who maintained good relations with the emir, wrote of the affair: 'We do not believe that the report is true, that the emir is aware of the consequences of such an act. In our opinion, the emir must publish a detailed denial that will reassure us.'<sup>355</sup> However, even the emir's denial did not restore the peace. The newspaper *al-Arab* claimed that even after the emir's formal denial of his contacts with the Jewish Agency, secret negotiations between representatives of the Emir and of the Jewish Agency continued. The newspaper said: 'Public opinion is not satisfied with formal announcements. Developments prove that the snake's head has already been cut in Ghour; public opinion demands that the matter be closed decisively and clearly.'<sup>356</sup> Sheikh al-Farouqi, editor of *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, called upon the leaders of Jordan to mend their ways and repent from their great sin.<sup>357</sup> *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* described the leaders of Transjordan as rising against the national consensus (*khawaraj*) and warned them against continuing their disgraceful conduct, since they were helping the greedy Jews to take over Transjordan.<sup>358</sup> The attacks of the Arabic newspapers bore fruit and eventually led the emir to change (at least in public) his intentions of leasing the lands of Ghour al-Kabd, however this did not prevent the emir and the sheikhs of Transjordan from maintaining a strong relationship with the leaders of the Jewish Agency.<sup>359</sup>

#### THE PALESTINIAN PRESS AND ITS ATTITUDE TO INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

The Palestinian press of the period also increased its involvement in the international issues concerning the world at large, in particular two major issues:

1. The rising power and influence of the fascist movement in Italy and the Nazi Movement in Germany.
2. The effects of a future world war on Arabs in general and Palestinians in particular.

*Reactions of the Palestinian press to the rising power of Fascism and Nazism*

The rising power and influence of the Italian and German regimes were acknowledged by the Palestinian press. It discussed this subject in detail, in particular its possible consequences for Palestinian issues. The opinions expressed were usually sympathetic, but they changed from time to time according to the circumstances and operations of each of the two countries in the Arab and Muslim world. This sympathy had two possible causes. First, these two countries stressed national pride and its symbols as a way of redeeming the people from their difficulties. Another cause was the hostility of both regimes towards Britain, which was perceived by Palestinian Arabs at the time as their major and primary enemy.

Germany naturally won more sympathy, due to its colonial non-involvement in the Arab and Muslim East. Almost all the newspapers affiliated with the Husaynis and their opposition displayed sympathy and admiration towards the German regime and its leader, but they were quick to explain that this sympathy was more indicative of their hatred of the enemies of Germany than of their love of Germany.<sup>360</sup> *Filastin* rejected British and Jewish claims in regard to activities of the Nazi movement among Palestinian Arabs and said:

The truth is that the claim of the Jews and their British allies concerning a Nazi movement in Palestine is based on lies, as Palestine does not need fascist and Nazi ideas in order to arouse the feelings of its sons against Zionism and its greediness in Arab countries. Our loathing of Zionism has deep roots, originating many years before the emergence of Nazism.<sup>361</sup>

*Filastin* expressed appreciation for Nazi leader Adolf Hitler and compared him to Palestinian leaders, saying:

Hitler, who has proven himself a remarkable leader striving to redeem his people, did not rely on personal or family influence or on social, scientific and economic status. He based his acts on the sincerity of his mission, while in Palestine the leaders are corrupt, liars, robbers, servants of the Mandate government, who prefer this government to the homeland and to the future of its sons.<sup>362</sup>

However, this sympathy for Hitler was voiced by *Filastin* a few months after the newspaper described him as 'builder of the Jewish National

Home'. The newspaper believed that he facilitated this by deporting the Jews from Germany, the great majority of whom then came to Palestine.<sup>363</sup>

*Al-Difa'* was more sympathetic than any other newspaper towards the Nazi regime. In July 1934 it published the platform of the Nazi party and called it 'the national pride programme'. The newspaper called upon young Arabs to read the programme and choose a new national course.<sup>364</sup> The newspaper also published Hitler's call to young Arabs in which he said:

Germany was disgraced and in sacrificing ourselves for our country we erased its disgraceful shame. It was divided and shattered and we succeeded in reinstating the unity of the German people. It was easy prey for the Allies, the Jews and the Communists, and we turned it into a sacred place that is home only to pure German blood.<sup>365</sup>

The newspaper followed this appeal, which did not mention Arab countries or Arab youth, as claimed, by encouraging the young people to learn from Hitler and to emulate him so that they too would be able to create unity – Arab unity.<sup>366</sup>

*Al-Difa'* had a reporter stationed in Berlin, and almost every day he sent articles describing what was happening in the German capital, viewed, inevitably from a sympathetic perspective and in rosy colours. For example, he described the German celebration of Hitler's birthday, saying: 'Germany celebrates the birthday of its redeemer from misery, poverty and shame.'<sup>367</sup> *Al-Difa'*'s increasing interest in Germany was apparently influenced by the financial support that the newspaper received from the Germans. Jewish sources<sup>368</sup> referring to the Palestinian press emphasized this fact, but they also tended to exaggerate, for example, Yehoshuwa claimed that *al-Shanti* also supported Mussolini's activities in the East,<sup>369</sup> although *al-Shanti* adamantly denied this.<sup>370</sup>

The links between *al-Difa'* and the Germans are undeniable. The newspaper received from the German consulate pictures that were not available to any other newspaper. German financial support enabled the newspaper to significantly improve the level of technical work with new machines bought with German aid. The manager of the newspaper, Shawkat Hammad, opened a bank account in Tel-Aviv, into which the Germans transferred money. When curfews were imposed and during the 1936–39 revolt Hammad would call upon his friend from

the newspaper *Habokir*, Gavriel Zifroni, and request his assistance in withdrawing money from the bank and bringing it to the offices of the newspaper in Jaffa.<sup>371</sup>

The attitude of the Palestinian press towards Italy was less sympathetic, in particular during the Italo-Abyssinia war and at the time of Italy's colonial activities in Libya. The only newspaper that persisted in its positive attitude towards Italy was *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, probably due to the special relationship between Amin al-Husayni and Shakib Arsalan, Italy's man in the east. The relationship between Arsalan and the mufti and Italy angered the Palestinian press during the first half of 1935, when *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* published a letter from Shakib Arsalan to the mufti, asking him to boycott Britain and help circulate Italian propaganda in the Arab east.<sup>372</sup> Alongside with a photograph of the letter, Sheikh al-Farouqi presented verses from the Koran denouncing anyone acting against the good of the believers.<sup>373</sup>

In response to this letter Shakib Arsalan published a denial in *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*. The denial was accompanied by verses from the Koran, presented by the editor, denouncing liars and forgers. In his denial, Arsalan said that the letter is 'a base plot of forgers and liars and he will sue them to reveal their lies'.<sup>374</sup> *Filastin* and *al-Difa'* denounced the letter and the role of Arsalan as an ally of Italy. However, when the letter was exposed as a fake they did not apologize, as did Sheikh al-Farouqi, who published the letter.<sup>375</sup> The forgery of the letter was eventually attributed to Fakhri al-Nashashibi, nephew of the opposition leader, Raghīb al-Nashashibi.<sup>376</sup> The exposure of this affair did not succeed in dissuading *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* from its support of Italy, and a month after the affair the editor, Munif al-Husayni, wrote an article stating: 'The Italians have greatly improved the conditions of the Arabs and Muslims under their patronage.'<sup>377</sup> During the Abyssinian War, Italy was sharply criticized, in particular in the Christian-owned newspapers, *al-Karmil* and *Filastin*, since Abyssinia had a Christian majority and special ties with Palestinian Christians.

The impact of the fascist and Nazi ideas was conspicuously evident in their symbols. The newspapers wished that their leaders were more similar to the leaders of Germany, as *al-Karmil* asked: 'Will an Arab Hitler rise in our midst to arouse the Arabs, gather them, and lead them to fight and defend their rights and their homeland?'<sup>378</sup> They also wished to provide Palestinian youth with an education similar to that of German and Italian youth, as Emil al-Ghuri wrote in the first issue of his newspaper, *al-Sbabab*:

Oh Arab youth! Awaken and see what the aggressive enemies have done to you. Exploited Palestine calls upon you to save it from the teeth of enslavement and exploitation ... In every town, every village and every tent, you must found national youth companies as in Italy and Germany that will operate in favour of independence and Arab unity.<sup>179</sup>

*Filastin* published the words of Najib al-Hakim, secretary of the al-Ghazi club in Haifa: 'Oh young Arabs, emulate Nazism, fascism and Kamilism, and to be precise national socialism. There is no other way for the enslaved nations to achieve liberty... power and order are the lifeblood of nations.'<sup>180</sup>

*The effects of a future world war on Arabs in general and Palestinians in particular*

The issue of the approaching world war occupied the Arab press, especially how such a war would affect the international balance of power and what its consequences would be for the fate of Arabs in general and the Palestinians in particular.

*Al-Difa'* often discussed this issue and published articles sent by its reporters from Western capitals, especially London, Paris and Berlin. In June 1934 the newspaper published an article sent by its reporter in London, describing the leaders of Western diplomacy. The reporter described the foreign secretaries of France and of the USSR as two brave and adventurous politicians who might lead the world to a total war.<sup>181</sup>

In August 1934 *al-Difa'* published a series of articles by the Lebanese journalist As'ad Dagher including an analysis of current international diplomacy. He wrote: 'World political and social ethics have reached a low point. The culture of this generation is advancing towards decay and ruin, since all industries and sciences are at present directed at creating instruments of war and destruction.'<sup>182</sup> In an editorial in *al-Difa'* on 30 September 1935, the editor wrote: 'All Arabs yearn for the war that will liberate them from the yoke of Western powers. They believe that war is the only means that will help realize Arab national ambitions and put an end to Zionist pressures.'<sup>183</sup> *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* turned to the Jews and said:

The Jews must remember that the Arab countries comprise 40 million Arabs and in case of a world war, which will undoubtedly

break out, the English will not be able to spare a single soldier or bullet to defend the Jews in Palestine. Then the Arabs will have an opportunity to attack them from all directions with results that will surely be undesirable to the Jews.<sup>1384</sup>

## NOTES

1. On the establishment of this party and its activities see: Zu'aitir, 1994, pp. 412-75.
2. On these conclusions see Chapter 2.
3. For more on this ordinance, see: Sulayman, 1988, pp. 51-5.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Al-Mawsou'a al-Filastiniyya*, Part II, pp. 440-41.
7. Yehoshuwa, pp. 99-100.
8. Ibrahim al-Shanti (1910-80) was born in Jaffa to a family of *fallabin* originating from Qalqilya (family members claim that he was born in Qalqilya in 1905 and not as stated in most sources). He was a graduate of the American University of Beirut (1932). Upon his return to Palestine, he worked for Sheikh al-Farouqi's newspaper, *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*. In 1934 he left the paper, accompanied by other senior journalists, and together they founded the newspaper *al-Difa' - 'The Defence'*. In a short time, this newspaper became the largest newspaper in Palestine. In 1949 he founded the newspaper *al-Qabira* in Egypt and in 1950 he returned to Jerusalem and published *al-Difa'*. In 1958 he moved the newspaper to Amman (*al-'Udat*, 1992, p. 330).
9. Al-Qasri, B, p. 6.
10. Yehoshuwa, p. 100.
11. Shimoni, p. 407.
12. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, 18 April 1935.
13. Emil al-Ghoury (1907-82) was born in Jerusalem and studied at the French High School in the city. During 1922-29 he was the Secretary of the Arab-Orthodox Club. In 1933 he completed his studies at the University of Cincinnati in the United States. He was a member of the Executive Committee and of the Palestinian Arab party. He published a number of newspapers: *al-Wibda Al-'Arabiyya*, *al-Sbab*, *al-Wibda*. He also wrote a number of important history books about the Palestinian issue. In 1966 he became the representative of Jerusalem in the Jordanian parliament, in 1969 he was appointed minister of Labor in the Jordanian government, and in 1971 he served as Minister without portfolio (*al-'Udat*, 1992, 480-4).
14. Al-'Aqqad, p. 153.
15. *Al-Waqai' al-Filastiniyya*, 407, 14 December 1933, p. 2308.
16. DEC, P/986/03093.
17. Al-Mawsou'a al-Filastiniyya, p. 441.
18. DEC, P/986/3093.
19. *Al-Mawsou'a al-Filastiniyya*, p. 441.
20. *Al-Waqai' al-Filastiniyya*, 448, Appendix 2, 21 June 1934, p. 734.
21. Khouri, p. 76.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 77.
23. *Al-Waqai' al-Filastiniyya*, 467, Appendix 6, 20 September 1934, p. 1206.
24. Khouri, p. 79.
25. *Al-Waqai' al-Filastiniyya*, 473, Appendix 2, 25 October 1934, p. 1321.
26. Khouri, p. 80.
27. Fu'ad Saba was born in Shfaram and studied at the Catholic School in Haifa and at the Anglican School in Jerusalem. He completed his academic studies at the American University of Beirut. In 1926 he opened an accountancy firm. In 1934 he published the Arab economic newspaper, and in 1936 he published the newspaper *Palestine and Trans Jordan*. In

1937 he was appointed secretary of the Arab Higher Committee, and after the murder of Andrews (British governor of the Galilee region) he was exiled to the Seychelles together with the other members of the committee. In 1939 he participated in the St James Conference in London and then was permitted to return to Palestine al-'Udat, 1992, pp. 253–55).

28. Khouri, p. 81.
29. Al-'Aqqad, p. 203.
30. CZA S25/22224.
31. Zu'aitir, 1994, p. 415.
32. CZA, S25/22224.
33. Yehoshuwa, pp. 97–8.
34. Interview with Fawzi al-Shanti in May 1994, who served at the time as secretary of the newspaper.
35. Shimoni, p. 467.
36. Yehoshuwa, pp. 97–8.
37. *Al-Waqa'i' al-Filastiniyya*, 494, 14 February 1935, p. 238.
38. Khouri, p. 82.
39. *Al-Waqa'i' al-Filastiniyya*, 607, June 25, 1936, p. 808.
40. Khouri, p. 83.
41. *Al-Waqa'i' al-Filastiniyya*, 498, Appendix, 14 March 1935, p. 385.
42. *Ibid.*, 506, Appendix 2, 25 April 1935, p. 571.
43. Al-'Aqqad, p. 203.
44. *Al-Waqa'i' al-Filastiniyya*, 736, Appendix 2, 11 November 1937, p. 1368.
45. Al-'Aqqad, p. 202.
46. *Al-Waqa'i' al-Filastiniyya*, 552, Appendix 2, 21 November 1935, p. 1608.
47. Khouri, p. 88.
48. Yehoshuwa, p. 78.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 76.
50. Shimoni, p. 410.
51. *Ibid.*
52. *Ibid.*
53. Ohana, 1981, p. 201.
54. Fawzi al-Shanti, interview, May 1994.
55. Ohana, 1981, p. 201.
56. Interview with the journalist Boulous Farah, December 1992.
57. The development of the ideological orientation of the members of this group is described in Zu'aitir, 1994, pp. 318–450, and in al-Hout, pp. 253–77.
58. This was discussed by Subhi al-Khadra in an article in the newspaper *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* on 17 June 1930, entitled 'Britain – source of all illness and basis of disasters'.
59. Zu'aitir, 1994, pp. 307–13.
60. *Al-Zumur*, 12 May 1932.
61. *Ibid.*
62. *Al-'Arab*, 17 September 1932.
63. *Filastin*, 3 June 1933.
64. *Al-Difa'*, 24 April 1934.
65. See Documents of the Executive Committee, DEC, P/986/03093.
66. *Al-Difa'*, 8 May 1934.
67. For more on the establishment of this party see: 'Atiyya, pp. 140–7.
68. For details about this convention see: *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, 2 August 1931.
69. *Ibid.*, 25 August 1931.
70. Zu'aitir, 1994, p. 310.
71. *Ibid.*, p. 359.
72. *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, 23 September 1931.
73. See: Zu'aitir, 1994, p. 359.
74. Al-Hout, pp. 255–6, note 5.
75. Zu'aitir, 1994, p. 361.
76. The minutes of this meeting appear in DEC, P/986/01798, pp. 1–8.

77. Ibid., p. 7.
78. Ibid.
79. Ibid.
80. *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, 15 October 1931.
81. *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, 8 January 1932.
82. *Al-Karmil*, 6 January 1932.
83. Khalla, p. 515.
84. *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, 10 January 1932.
85. Ibid., 3 March 1932.
86. In the 1940s, when Jamal al-Husayni tried to re-establish the Higher Arab Committee, which was disbanded by the authorities in September 1937, the members of the Youth Congress objected and joined the opposition to the Husaynis.
87. For more details of the ideological platform of this party see: Zu'aitir, 1994, pp. 413–6.
88. On his attempt and the role of Palestinian activists in Faysal's government in Damascus (1918–20) see: Qasmiyya.
89. For more on the conditions in which this emirate was established see: Dan.
90. About this see: Zu'aitir, 1994, pp. 400–2
91. *Al-Hayat*, 19 June 1931.
92. Ibid.
93. *Al-'Arab*, 17 December 1932.
94. Ibid.
95. *Al-Karmil*, 29 June 1931.
96. *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, 27 November 1931.
97. *Filastin*, 5 August 1932.
98. Ibid.
99. Ibid., 22 May 1934.
100. *Al-Karmil*, 14 December 1932.
101. *Al-'Arab*, 21 June 1933.
102. bid.
103. Zu'aitir, 1994, p. 456.
104. Ibid.
105. About this affair see following chapters.
106. This popularity is evidenced in the readers' letters to the newspapers' editorial offices, expressing their appreciation of Zu'aitir's national activity. For an example of these letters see: *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, 15 September 1932.
107. This newspaper was published by Yusuf al-'Issa, cousin of 'Issa al-'Issa and co-founder of the newspaper *Filastin* in 1911. In 1919 he was exiled to Damascus where he published the newspaper *Alef Baa*, which appeared there until 1958.
108. *Al-'Arab*, 14 January 1933.
109. This letter from Muhammad Chirqas to Jamal al-Husayni is in the State Archives, DEC, P/986/03093.
110. Porat, 1978, pp. 154–5.
111. Darwaza, 3, p. 101.
112. On this policy see: al-Hout, pp. 283–90; *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, 26 February 1933.
113. Al-Hout, p. 287.
114. Ibid., p. 288.
115. *Al-'Arab*, 1 April 1933.
116. Darwaza, Vol.3, pp. 110–11.
117. *Al-'Arab*, 24 March 1934.
118. Ibid., 25 November 1933.
119. Ibid.
120. The full version of the speech may be found in al-Kayyali, 1968, pp. 324–6.
121. *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, 27 March 1933.
122. *Filastin*, 29 March 1934.
123. Ibid.
124. Al-Hout, p. 298.



125. *Ibid.*, p. 302.
126. On the development of the conflict between the two families over the control of the municipality of Jerusalem see: Horowitz, pp. 58–9.
127. The feud began when Munif al-Husayni, editor of *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, wished to marry one of the daughters of the al-Khalidi family, despite the objections of her family. Eventually the marriage took place and the families were later reconciled (for more on this see Porat, p. 150).
128. Related by Dr al-Khalidi in his memoirs, cited by al-Hout, p. 310.
129. *Filastin*, 22 December 1934.
130. *Ibid.*
131. *Ibid.*, 28 June 1935.
132. *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, 26 March 1935.
133. See for example, *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, 13 June 1965, describing the visit of Jamal al-Husayni to Bisan.
134. About this see the documents of Jamal al-Husayni, president of the party, at DEC P/986/03093.
135. *Al-Difa'*, 12 February 1935.
136. *Ibid.*, 2 May 1935.
137. *Ibid.*
138. *Al-Karmil*, 26 October 1935.
139. *Ibid.*
140. See for example, Mahaftha, p. 68.
141. About this band see: Ohana, 1981, p. 264.
142. *Ibid.*
143. *Mir'at al-Sbarq*, 21 February 1930.
144. *Ibid.*, 15 March 1930.
145. *Zu'aitir*, 1994, p. 130.
146. *Ibid.*, p. 389.
147. *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, 10 April 1932.
148. *Filastin*, 21 October 1933.
149. *Ibid.*, 3 October 1933.
150. This visit by Abu Jilda was described by Ma'moun, son of Majid al-Qutub, in an interview I held with him on 14 June 1995.
151. *Ibid.*
152. *Filastin*, 8 April 1934.
153. *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, 15 April 1934.
154. *Ibid.*
155. *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, 19 December 1933.
156. *Mir'at al-Sbarq*, 20 December 1933.
157. *Al-Difa'*, 22 August 1934.
158. Fawzi al-Shanti, interview, May 1994.
159. CZA, News of the Arab Office, S25/22224.
160. *Ibid.*
161. Sheikh 'Iz al-Din al-Qassam (1882–1935) was born in the village Jabla near the city Lathiqiyya in Syria. He studied at al-Azhar under Muhammad 'Abdu. At first he participated in violent resistance acts against the French authorities in Syria. He came to Haifa in 1922 and worked as a teacher at the al-Burj School and as a preacher at the 'al-Istiqlal' Mosque. He received his salary from the High Muslim Council, and thus came in contact with Mufti Amin al-Husayni. In 1928 he participated in the establishment of the 'Young Muslim Associations'. In 1929 he founded the first underground cell consisting of residents of Haifa slums or labourers who came from the villages. Al-Qassam's armed band underwent many transformations and at some point moved from Haifa to Zipori, in the vicinity of Nazareth. Saffuria Al-Qassam was known as the leader of this band only when he left for the area of Jenin and was killed in November 1935. For more details see: Hammouda, p. 319.
162. On this band see: Ohana, 1981, pp. 265–6; Porat, pp. 163–5.

163. See: Yasin, p. 26.
164. Report by Zimroni to the Arab Office of the Jewish Agency, 16 January 1935. Appears in the news of the Arab Office, CZA, S25/22224.
165. *Ibid.*, 25 January 1935, p. 3.
166. *Al-Ghourī*, 1, pp. 251-2.
167. *Darwaza*, 3, p. 116.
168. *Al-Jamī'a al-'Arabiyya*, 21 July 1932.
169. *Al-Karmil*, 6 June 1925.
170. *Al-Jamī'a al-Islamiyya*, 20 November 1933.
171. *Al-Jamī'a al-'Arabiyya*, 22 November 1935.
172. *Filastin*, 21 November 1935.
173. *Al-Jamī'a al-Islamiyya*, 21 November 1935.
174. *Filastin*, 23 November 1935.
175. *Al-Karmil*, 30 November 1935.
176. *Al-Jamī'a al-'Arabiyya*, 21 November 1935.
177. *Ibid.*
178. *Ibid.*
179. *Al-Jamī'a al-'Arabiyya*, 29 November 1935.
180. *Ibid.*, 26 November 1935.
181. *Al-Jamī'a al-Islamiyya*, 24 November 1935.
182. *Al-Karmil*, 23 November 1935.
183. *Al-Jamī'a al-'Arabiyya*, 8 December 1935.
184. *Ibid.*, 7 January 1936.
185. *Al-Jamī'a al-Islamiyya*, 23 December 1935.
186. *Zu'aitir*, 1980, p. 40.
187. For more on this newspaper and the conditions of its establishment see: *al-Difa'*, 12 June 1934.
188. *Al-Jamī'a al-Islamiyya*, 2 November 1936.
189. The Koran, sura 8, verse 60.
190. *Al-Difa'*, 4 May 1934.
191. *Ibid.*
192. *Al-Jamī'a al-'Arabiyya*, 1 April 1932.
193. *Al-Jamī'a al-Islamiyya*, 16 October 1932.
194. *Ibid.*
195. *Al-Difa'*, 23 April 1934.
196. For more on this movement and the activities of the people affiliated with *al-Difa'* on this matter see: CZA, Arab Office News, S25/22224, p. 2.
197. *Al-Difa'*, 10 July 1934.
198. *Filastin*, 17 June 1933.
199. *Al-Difa'*, 10 July 1934.
200. *Ibid.*
201. Ohana, 1981, p. 191. Ohana was mistaken in mentioning that 'Antara is a Muslim hero. The truth is that 'Antara (and not al-'Antar, as written by Ohana) is a Jahili poet known for his courage, and the source of many folktales.
202. *Filastin*, 17 November 1933.
203. For more on the activities of these committees, see: *Zu'aitir*, 1994, pp. 382-3.
204. *Ibid.*
205. *Al-Jamī'a al-'Arabiyya*, 10 April 1932.
206. *Zu'aitir*, 1994, p. 411.
207. *Al-Jamī'a al-Islamiyya*, 27 November 1935.
208. *Filastin*, 5 December 1935.
209. *Ibid.*, 3 February 1936.
210. *Al-'Arab*, 14 January 1933.
211. *Ibid.*
212. *Al-Difa'*, 28 August 1934.
213. *Ibid.*

214. Ibid.
215. Ibid., 23 April 1934.
216. Ibid.
217. Sheikh Salih al-Muhammad was one of the prominent leaders of Acre. He was Acre's envoy to the Ottoman parliament as a member of the Unity and Progress Party. During the Mandate period he was a supporter of the mufti and the High Muslim Council. He was very rich and possessed many assets and lands. In August 1933 he was murdered in Shfaram after prayers, *Zu'aitir*, 1980, p. 510.
218. *l-Karmil*, 12 August 1933.
219. *Al-Difa'*, 19 August 1934.
220. *Al-Karmil*, 16 August 1933.
221. For more details of this association and its composition see: *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, 12 May 1935.
222. *Filastin*, 23 August 1935.
223. *Al-Liwa*, 23 February 1936.
224. Ibid., 2 March 1936.
225. *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, 9 September 1932.
226. Ibid.
227. Ibid., 15 September 1932.
228. bid.
229. *Zu'aitir*, 1994, p. 433.
230. *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, 15 January 1935.
231. *Al-Difa'*, 19 June 1934.
232. *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, 23 January 1935.
233. Ibid., 22 January 1935.
234. For a more detailed description of this visit see: *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, 5 March 1935.
235. The full version of the Shara'i judgement is to be found in *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, 28 January 1935.
236. Ibid.
237. Ibid., 24 January 1935.
238. Ibid., 11 February 1935.
239. Ibid., 12 February 1935.
240. *Al-Difa'*, 31 October 1934.
241. *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, 30 April 1935.
242. Ahmad al-Akki was one of the activists in the field of economic entrepreneurship during the 1930s and one of the leaders of the Arab Youth Congress.
243. *Al-Karmil*, 19 August 1933.
244. *Al-'Arab*, 29 November 1932.
245. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, 3 August 1934.
246. *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, 26 August 1932.
247. *Filastin*, 7 June 1935.
248. See, for example, *Filastin*, 25 August 1932.
249. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, 19 October 1932.
250. Gavriel Zifroni, December, 1995w.
251. See, for example, *al-Difa'*, 4 May 1934, the advertizement calling for the construction of an Arab national cinema.
252. *Al-Difa'*, 12 June 1934.
253. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, 5 April 1933.
254. For more on these complaints see: *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, 26 September 1932.
255. Ibid., 8 January 1933.
256. Ibid., 26 September 1932.
257. Ibid.
258. Ibid., 12 December 1932.
259. Ibid., 18 January 1933.
260. *Mir'at al-Sbarq*, 24 September 1932.
261. Ibid., 28 September 1935.

262. *Filastin*, 4 August 1932.
263. *Ibid.*, October 14, 1932.
264. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, 17 October 1932.
265. *Ibid.*
266. *Ibid.*, 31 July 1934.
267. *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, 4 September 1932.
268. *Sawt al-Sba'b*, 15 October 1932.
269. *Filastin*, 25 October 1932.
270. The full version of this ordinance appeared in *al-Waqa'i' al-Filastiniyya*, 340, January 19, 1933, pp. 70-98.
271. *Ibid.*
272. *Ibid.*
273. *Ibid.*
274. On the Furness Report see Chapter 2.
275. Sulayman, 1988, p. 51.
276. On the suspension of many newspapers during this period see: *al-Waqa'i' al-Filastiniyya*, 607, 25 June 1936, Appendix 2, p. 808.
277. Report for 1933, pp. 16-17.
278. FO 371/20018: PAS no. 18/35.
279. FO 371/20018: PAS no. 19/35.
280. *Filastin*, December 9, 1932.
281. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, 9 December 1932.
282. *Filastin*, 2 November 1932.
283. *Ibid.*
284. *Ibid.*
285. *Al-Difa'*, 23 April 1934.
286. *Ibid.*, 12 June 1934.
287. *Al-'Arab*, 28 October 1933.
288. *Ibid.*
289. *Sawt al-Sba'b*, 27 May 1933.
290. *Ibid.*
291. *Al-'Arab*, 17 December 1932.
292. *Al-Difa'*, 30 March 1936.
293. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, 2 November 1932.
294. *Filastin*, 1 July 1933.
295. Report of press officer Piron to the Chief Secretary of the Mandate government, 15 October 1932, CO 733/221.
296. *Ibid.*
297. *Filastin*, 8 December 1935.
298. *Ibid.*, 24 December 1935.
299. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, 24 December 1935.
300. *Ibid.*
301. *Filastin*, 30 December 1935.
302. *Ibid.*, 10 January 1936.
303. *Ibid.*, 23 December 1932.
304. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, 22 December 1932.
305. *Ibid.*
306. *Sawt al-Sba'b*, 24 December 1932.
307. *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, 23 October 1933.
308. *Sawt al-Sba'b*, 24 December 1932.
309. *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, 20 December 1933.
310. *Al-Difa'*, 5 April 1936.
311. *Ibid.*, 19 August 1934.
312. *Filastin*, 24 August 1933.
313. *Ibid.*
314. *Ibid.*, 20 September 1933.

315. *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, 1 October 1935.
316. *Al-Liwa*, December 6, 1935.
317. *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, 4 September 1932.
318. *Filastin*, 16 September 1932.
319. *Al-Difa'*, 12 June 1934.
320. *Filastin*, 14 October 1933.
321. *Ibid.*, 27 September 1933.
322. *Al-Difa'*, 12 March 1936.
323. *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, 12 March 1935.
324. *Mir'at al-Sbarq*, 10 April 1935.
325. *Al-Difa'*, 19 August 1934.
326. *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, 21 September 1933.
327. *Alef Baa*, 9 October 1934.
328. *Ibid.*, 2 December 1934.
329. For more details about this affair see: CZA, S25/220021, report by Eliyahu Eilat for the attention of the Arab Office, in which he relates that the money was given to Yusuf Hanna by Emir Fa'our who dealt with the sale of land to Jews.
330. Such claims were often presented by *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, see, for example its issue of 27 December 1932.
331. *Ibid.*
332. *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, 6 March 1933.
333. Gavriel Zifroni, interview, December 1995.
334. *Ibid.*
335. *Al-Difa'*, 19 August 1934.
336. *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, 9 May 1935.
337. *Ibid.*
338. *Filastin*, 13 September 1935.
339. *Al-Difa'*, 4 May 1934.
340. *Filastin*, 25 August 1932.
341. *Al-Karmil*, 27 December 1933.
342. *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, 10 April 1934.
343. *Ibid.*
344. 'Shu'oubiyya' is an anti-Arab cultural literary movement that grew during the Abbasid Empire (750–1258) and was comprised of the non-Arab ethnic elements of the Islamic country. The authors and poets of this movement mocked and denounced the Arab culture. For more details see: Goldziher.
345. About this see *al-Liwa*, 20 March 1936.
346. *Al-Difa'*, 20 November 1935.
347. For more on the role of journalists in organizing these demonstrations see: Zu'aitir, 1994, p. 383.
348. *Al-Difa'*, 19 August 1934.
349. *Ibid.*, 23 April 1934.
350. *Ibid.*, 4 May 1934.
351. *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, 15 August 1932.
352. *Ibid.*, 5 August 1935.
353. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, 20 January 1933.
354. A battle that took place in 570 (the year in which Prophet Muhammad was born), and in which the Abyssinians who came from Yemen tried to conquer Mecca and the Ka'ba and direct the pilgrims to Sana. The battle is called the Battle of the Elephant, since the Abyssinians appeared riding elephants, as described in the Kuran, Sura no. 105.
355. *Mir'at al-Sbarq*, 21 January 1933.
356. *Al-'Arab*, 18 February 1933.
357. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, 10 May 1933.
358. *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, 17 May 1933.
359. For more details of the relationship of the Emir with the Jewish Agency leaders see: Bashir.
360. *Filastin*, 17 July 1934.

361. Ibid., 7 June 1934.
362. Ibid., 4 April 1933.
363. Ibid.
364. *Al-Difa'*, 9 July 1934.
365. Ibid., 1 June 1934.
366. Ibid.
367. Ibid., 4 May 1934.
368. For such claims about the newspaper's relationship with the Germans and the Italians see Yehoshuwa, p. 98, and Shimoni, p. 410.
369. Yehoshuwa, pp. 98–9.
370. *Al-Difa'*, 14 August 1934.
371. Gavriel Zifroni, interview, December 1995.
372. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, 13 April 1935.
373. Ibid.
374. *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, 24 April 1935.
375. *Zu'aitir*, 1994, p. 715.
376. Ibid., p. 716.
377. *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, 13 May 1935.
378. *Al-Karmil*, 24 May 1933.
379. *Al-Sbabab*, 11 June 1934.
380. *Filastin*, 29 December 1933.
381. *Al-Difa'*, 12 June 1934.
382. Ibid., 28 August 1934.
383. Ibid., 30 September 1935.
384. *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, 29 August 1933.

## *The Arabic Press during the Great Strike, April–October 1936*

From early 1936 until the strike ended on 13 October 1936, the British authorities issued four new licenses to publish newspapers to the following publications:

- The newspaper of the Islamic Orphanage, *Majallat Dar al-Aytam al-Islamiyya*, edited by 'Abd al-Latif al-Husayni, which was first published in Jerusalem on 2 March 1936.
- The newspaper of the German News Bureau (DNB) edited by Franz Rikert, a daily newspaper that appeared in Jerusalem from 23 March 1936.
- The newspaper of the national high school edited by Nasri al-Jawzi, first published in Bethlehem on 12 May 1936 in Arabic and English.
- *The Palestine and Trans Jordan* edited by Yunis and Mousa al-Husayni, a weekly that first appeared in Jerusalem on 2 June 1936 in English and French.<sup>1</sup>

These newspapers appeared in addition to scores of existing newspapers, of which the most significant and conspicuous were: *Filastin* – a daily newspaper owned by 'Issa al-'Issa and edited by Yusuf Hanna; *al-Liwa* – a daily newspaper, the journal of the Husaynis, of which the editor-in-chief was Jamal al-Husayni and the managing editor was the Syrian, 'Othman Qasim (when he left Palestine on 19 June 1936 editorship of the newspaper was taken over by Emil al-Ghourri and 'Ali al-Husayni<sup>2</sup>); *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* – a daily newspaper, owned and edited by Sheikh Sulayman al-Taji al-Farouqi; *al-Karmil al-Jadid*, published twice weekly, edited by Najib and Sadhaj Nassar; *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim* – appeared twice weekly at first, and then daily from 5 June 1936<sup>3</sup> – edited by Sheikh 'Abdullah al-Qalqili.

The Royal Peel Commission, appointed to investigate the events of 1936, estimated the newspapers' circulation as follows: *al-Liwa* 3,000–4,000 copies; *Filastin* 4,000–6,000 copies; *al-Difa'* 4,000–6,000 copies; and *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* 2,000 copies.<sup>4</sup>

## INTERNAL PALESTINIAN STRUGGLES AND CONFLICTS

The struggles and conflicts within Palestinian society, primarily the infamous rivalry between the Husaynis and the Nashashibis, were adequately reflected in the newspapers identified with the large blocs, but were nearly absent from newspapers that attempted to develop a non-sectarian and neutral approach, almost completely ignoring internal disputes.

Muhammad Sulayman claimed<sup>5</sup> that this reflection of the internal disputes and conflicts in the Arabic press was detrimental to the efforts at raising its level and prevented it from coping with the contemporary Hebrew press. The degree to which internal conflicts were reflected in the press depended on current relations with the British Mandate authorities and on the progress of the struggle against the Zionist movement. The tension-laden periods of the struggle against the Mandate and the points of friction with the Jewish Settlement became milestones in the development of the press and in the journalists' ability to overcome internal struggles. Sulayman wrote:

The contemporary conflicts within the press and among the journalists will not prevent me from saying that the national cause demanded unity on the political level. The press was the most efficient means of raising the Palestinian people's awareness of the struggle against Zionism and their awareness of the dangers of Zionism and British imperialism. It served as a mirror reflecting the conscience of the citizens, forcing them to consolidate their views, indicating weak points and alerting them to dangers.<sup>6</sup>

Sulayman added that during the strike the press concentrated on maintaining the process of national awakening and the revolutionary climate that contributed greatly to the process of social development.

The death of 'Iz al-Din al-Qassam and his associates in a grove near the village of Ya'bad in the Jenin district became an important milestone in the development of the Arabic press in Palestine, in particular the daily press. In the last months of 1935 (the year of al-Qassam's death) nine requests to publish newspapers were submitted, compared to 1934 and 1936 in which only three and four requests were submitted, respectively.<sup>7</sup> According to Sulayman, this was a result of the National Movement's accurate estimates of the important role of the press and the far-reaching vision of an imminent revolt. The national leadership decided to provide whatever was necessary to aggravate the



revolt and to promise its continuation and the support of those advocating it, and the press played a major part in these activities. Accordingly, it is possible to understand the great interest of the National movement and its leadership in requests for newspaper concessions submitted to the authorities.<sup>8</sup> Michael Asaf also perceived the extensive publication of Arabic daily newspapers in Palestine, rather than weekly or twice-weekly newspapers, as a sign of the political maturation of the Arab public.<sup>9</sup> Muhammad Sulayman undeservedly credited the Palestinian National movement and the leaders of the traditional blocs, the *Majlissiyyun* and the *Mu'arada*, when attempting to explain the large number of license requests in 1935 and the decline in requests in 1936 compared to 1935.

First, it is impossible to refer to National Palestinian leadership as one entity with regard to its attitude to the press and its awareness of the significance of the press as an influential instrument among the various population groups. The traditional leadership supported the press that was affiliated with political groups and saw to it that as many newspapers as possible voiced its opinions, whether openly or covertly. When necessary, whenever the authorities closed newspapers that were open supporters of the leadership, the leadership used the services of those newspapers that demonstrated indirect support. Sulayman's claim of the Palestinian leadership's realistic perception is contradicted by the fact that those who led this leadership to rebel were the junior leadership or junior activists and disapproving newspapers that caused the leadership, headed by Mufti Haj Amin, much grief. Until the beginning of the general strike, and even in its first days, the *Mu'arada* newspapers, headed by *Filastin*,<sup>10</sup> strongly attacked the Jerusalemite leadership and even called it a 'criminal leadership' when it did not react to the denigration of Arabs by Meir Dizengoff, Mayor of Tel-Aviv. Only Sulayman Tuqan (Mayor of Nablus and a member of the *Mu'arada*) bothered to answer Dizengoff. *Filastin* criticized the Jerusalemite leadership and said: 'The criminal leadership in Jerusalem, a leadership with no honour or feelings, and the coalition, demonstrate contempt and indifference, while the state of the nation demands the utmost gravity.'<sup>11</sup> *Filastin* did not slacken its attacks against the leadership, continuing to entreat and urge it towards confronting the authorities and identifying more actively with the strike. In an editorial entitled 'We want daring leaders', it said: 'We want our leaders to be bold, we want a magnificent adventure that will satisfy us, that will shake people up and awaken them; will the leaders ever lead or will they always lag

behind, at such a time when lagging behind is the greatest crime in our national history?"<sup>12</sup>

*Filastin* continued to attack the Arab Higher Committee. In an editorial entitled 'The Higher Committee numbs our senses' it said:

We want action that will satisfy us, otherwise the committee must resign. The letter of clarification sent by the Higher Committee to the High Commission and presenting the complaints of the Arabs and their national demands is insufficient. This letter is a sign of ideological frailty, frailty in the presentation and frailty in the loyal submittal of Arab demands.<sup>13</sup>

The newspaper described the actions of the Arab Higher Committee as those of an old-fashioned leadership, consisting only of baseless clowning and numbing of the senses. It claimed that the leadership constantly blocked the people's agitation even when this agitation stemmed from self-justifying motives.<sup>14</sup> 'Issa al-'Issa, owner of the newspaper, appealed to the Palestinian leadership, saying:

Oh supreme leadership, listen to the words of a devoted man: We recognize your leadership (at present) and entrust the fate of the nation and the country in your hands, although we know for sure that you are the source of all illness and the basis of all disaster. We ignore (at present) your past deeds, hoping that in the future you will mend all that you have distorted by dividing the nation into groups and political parties. We hope that you will not resume the cycle of corruption that focused on personal and familial interests. I offer the following proposals that might serve both your interests and those of this ravaged land:

1. This strike, encompassing the entire country, is very damaging to the working class, who have been an example of sacrifice and devotion. Therefore the landowners and the rich must also bear the burden of the strike, which is based on the principle of 'no taxes without representation', a goal that unites everyone in this strike.
2. Since the monetary aid for the poor is presently collected from workers, merchants and craftsmen, I propose that it be collected only from those who grew rich from the sale of land to Jews and thus have greatly facilitated construction of the Jewish national homeland.

3. Since the strike was not accompanied by an embargo of Jewish goods, Arabs are accruing heavy losses; therefore I propose that an embargo be declared and implemented.
4. I propose that the Arab Bank and its branches move to unite the merchants and establish import companies for all Arab needs, such as construction implements, iron, wood and cement. In addition, Arab professional workers should be employed in their various fields of expertise, enabling Arabs to forego any contact with Jews.<sup>15</sup>

It must be emphasized that al-'Issa's advice formed the cornerstone of the policy guiding *Filastin* during the strike. The newspaper criticized the leadership unsparingly, in addition to organizing operations that provided internal reinforcement, through fundraising events aimed at various groups and institutions. Almost every day during the strike the newspaper published lists of contributors – individuals, associations or institutions.<sup>16</sup> The editor fulfilled his promise and supported the operations of the Arab Higher Committee when it began orchestrating the strike. When the leaders of the Arab Higher Committee began visiting the different cities and districts, the newspaper immediately expressed its support and even admiration of the Higher Committee and its president. A reporter described the welcome received by the members of the Arab Higher Committee in Jenin: 'A wonderful welcome in Jenin, the supportive speeches heard all along the road between 'Arabe and Jenin. I saw Alfred Rok (member of the Arab Higher Committee) with tears of emotion in his eyes, and I also saw Raghīb al-Nashashibi and Jamal al-Husayni, who were very excited.'<sup>17</sup>

Other newspapers also criticized the work of the Arab Higher Committee and its helplessness at the start of the strike. An article by Akram Zu'aitir, who was one of the organizers of the general strike and the popular committees, appeared in *al-Difa'* in April 1936:

The memorandum sent by the Arab Higher Committee to the High Commissioner at the beginning of the events that led to the strike is insufficient and cannot satisfy the public. We expect the Arab Higher Committee to travel all over Palestine in order to encourage the people and instill in them a spirit of rebelliousness. We want the members of the Arab Higher Committee to serve as an example of sacrifice for the homeland. They should know that such memorandums are useless.<sup>18</sup>

Zu'aitir testifies in his memoirs that this article, published in *al-Difa'*, greatly angered the mufti's supporters in Nablus, who saw it as a personal affront to the mufti and his leadership. Two of them began collecting signatures in the street for a petition against him (Zu'aitir) without mentioning his name. The petition stated that the signers support the Arab Higher Committee and its national jihad work and denounce the attempt to disrupt the existing harmony in the current difficult conditions.<sup>19</sup> Zu'aitir also claimed that the national committee established in Nablus immediately after the troubles began on 18 April 1936, played a central role in the extending of the strike to other cities which also established their own committees. He also stressed that he was guided by his recognition of the traditional leadership's inability to lead the people. On the day the strike broke out he wrote in his memoirs:

Everyone is angry. The first signs of the riots are on the horizon despite the sectarian disputes that have not totally disappeared. The newspaper *al-Liwa*, speaking for the *Majlissiyyun* [the Arab Party] and the newspaper *Filastin*, voice of the *Mu'aridun*, are exchanging mutual accusations. The owner of *Filastin*, Mr. 'Issa al-'Issa, published harsh criticism of the *Majlissiyyun* in his newspaper today [18 April 1936]. He praised me and Hamdi al-Husayni, saying: 'The conduct of these two people, who speak of independence, complements their ideology.' This strengthened my certainty that our National movement should be independent of the dictates of the existing sectarian leadership, in the knowledge that we are supported by public opinion and praise be to God.<sup>20</sup>

In a letter written to the Egyptian writer, Mahmoud 'Azmi, editor of *al-Shabab*, on 17 May 1936, Zu'aitir detailed the stages of the popular struggle, and said: 'The decision to refrain from paying taxes is the second stage of the struggle while the protracted strike was the first stage; now it is time to realize the third stage, the stage of violence, and we cannot foresee its dangerous results.'<sup>21</sup>

It must be stated that the press served as a major instrument in organizing the strike and preaching in its favour. Zu'aitir testified that on the eve of the declaration of the strike he telephoned all the newspapers and dictated to them the announcement of the strike. He said that the newspapers promised to publish the announcement in its entirety and allocated sufficient space for it. Only one of the newspapers apologized for not being able to publish the full announcement and was

compelled to publish its essence, emphasizing the call to establish national committees.<sup>22</sup> Zu'aitir and other organizers wrote proficiently in praise of the strike and expressed their calls for its continuation in most of the newspapers. He himself wrote mainly in *al-Difa'* and sometimes in *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*. However, in time the other newspapers also developed a more active role in organizing the strike and shaping public opinion and national solidarity. *Filastin* initiated the establishment of an organization that united all the different newspapers and acted and preached among the people to continue the strike and escalate the acts of protest. For this purpose a meeting named the 'Arabic press convention' was held in Ramle (at the residence of Sheikh al-Farouqi) on 27 May 1936. It was attended by representatives of the newspapers *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim*, *Filastin*, *Mir'at al-Sharq*, *al-Iqdam*, *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, and *al-Difa'*. The next day's issue of *Filastin* claimed that the convention was also supported by the newspapers *al-Liwa* and *al-Karmil*, although their representatives did not attend.<sup>23</sup> Sheikh 'Abd Allah al-Qalqili, editor of *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim*, was chosen to lead this convention, and its secretary was Ibrahim al-Shanti, editor of *al-Difa'*. These were the decisions reached at the convention:

1. The Arabic newspapers are unified under the feeling of national solidarity, and their major goal is to serve the general interests.
2. The newspapers will hold a three-day protest strike.
3. The newspapers will publish a statement explaining the current conditions.
4. Formal government announcements will not be published.
5. An appeal will be made to the Arabic newspapers in sister Arab countries requesting their help in enlisting the support of other Arab peoples to continue encouraging the Palestinians in their current predicament.
6. An appeal will be made to the committees established in Egypt, Syria and Iraq, to assist the Palestinians.
7. A statement will be sent to the Lebanese newspapers and to the President of the Republic, calling upon Lebanon to withdraw from the Zionist Fair in Tel-Aviv within a week. If it will not do so, Palestinian newspapers will act to prevent the travel of Palestinians and other Arabs to Lebanon in the summer for purposes of tourism and recreation.
8. The Arabic newspapers must refrain from publishing Jewish advertisements.

9. An additional meeting will be held in Ramle in order to elect an Arab journalist society and to prepare a more detailed statement.
10. The suspension of the newspaper *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* by the authorities and their suppression of the Arabic press will be denounced.<sup>44</sup>

Upon examining implementation of these decisions, it seems that the newspaper *Filastin* (that initiated the convention) kept only four of the ten promises. The newspaper signed the statement issued on behalf of the newspapers, suspended its publication for three days together with the other newspapers, and sent 'thank you' letters to Arab countries and to aid committees established in them. It also denounced the suspension of the newspaper *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*.

As to the other steps declared, nothing was done, or at least nothing that was known or announced. The Lebanese delegation did not comply with the warnings and did not withdraw from the Zionist Fair. The sanctions threatened were not implemented, rather the opposite. *Filastin* advertized from time to time (even during the strike) notices of its agents and locations at which the newspaper could be purchased in the different Lebanese tourist towns.<sup>45</sup> This was also true of any restraint in publishing formal announcements. The newspaper continued to publish these announcements, probably under pressure from the authorities and the British censor.<sup>46</sup> The newspaper did not directly advertize Jewish businesses, but did not refrain from advertizing businesses that had Jewish partners or Jewish business contacts. Most important was the failure of the attempt to unify the Arabic newspapers or to form an atmosphere of complete reconciliation between the different newspapers belonging to the two rival camps.

It must be remembered that there was a consensus concerning the call to continue and reinforce the strike and on issues of attitudes towards the Jewish Settlement. It is possible to indicate two levels serving as a focus for the journalistic work and reflecting the attitude of the newspapers to the different issues: the propaganda level and the operative-practical level.

On the propaganda level, the newspapers competed with each other in their zealously to criticize the authorities and the Jews and tried to accuse each other of relaxing this criticism. *Filastin* was the newspaper that began denigrating rivals who hesitated to sever their relations with the authorities or towards whom the authorities were more lenient. In the issue published on 5 May 1936, the newspaper turned to

those who still hesitated, saying: 'The nation is involved in a holy war, a "jihad". Beware of taking personal advantage of this jihad and do not try to disrupt the morale of the people by numbing them or causing them to hesitate.' In June 1936 *Filastin* criticized those belonging to the mufti's camp and mocked the light punishments they received compared with those belonging to the *Mu'arada*. It wrote:

The *Palestine Post* says that yesterday night the authorities banished Mr Munif al-Husayni [editor of *al-Jami'a al-Arabiyya* and an activist in the mufti's camp] to 'Awja al-Hafir. Although this seems strange, as the man's name had not been mentioned at all lately, we ask that the honourable High Commissioner treat him as he treated his two brothers, 'Izzat Darwaza and Tahir al-Fityani, and allow him to remain in Jerusalem'.<sup>27</sup>

In comparison, the newspaper praised and commended the acts of the *Mu'aridun*. In one case it praised Sulayman Tuqan, Mayor of Nablus, who wisely answered an anti-Arab article written by Dizengoff, Mayor of Tel-Aviv, with an equally forceful article;<sup>28</sup> in another case it conspicuously published the ban on contacting Fakhri al-Nashashibi, his house arrest, and the fact that the decision was enforced by a British police unit.<sup>29</sup>

With regard to the attitude of the authorities to the various newspapers, *Filastin* sympathized with the newspapers of the *Mu'arada* and not with those of the *Majlissiyun*. It stressed the inflexible attitude of the authorities towards the newspapers of the *Mu'arada* and even created an uproar when one of these newspapers was closed by the authorities. For example, on 26 May 1936, *Filastin* conspicuously announced the closing of the newspaper *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* by publishing an announcement by the management of the latter that the authorities had confiscated the current day's printed copies, asking the readers to accept its absence with understanding. *Filastin* not only published the announcement, but also added its opinion: 'The authorities' suppression of Arabic newspapers has become prevalent, the best proof being the attitude towards our colleagues at *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, an attitude of constant suppression. However, those who act for the good of the homeland must withstand these actions until the cloud passes and the homeland attains its liberty and independence in light of the constant sacrifice of its sons.' On another occasion, when *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* was suspended for 21 days, *Filastin* wrote: 'If the authorities think that by suspending newspapers they will prevent the deprived

people from voicing their complaints in the Arab and Islamic world, they are wrong. The whole nation, headed by the Arabic press, will not retract its plans until its hopes are realized.<sup>30</sup> On another occasion *Filastin* expressed its support of *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* and its owner and editor, and drew a cartoon of Sheikh al-Farouqi, his chest adorned with decorations and medals received from the authorities by closing his newspaper and exalting him as a fighter against the authorities and for the liberty of his people.<sup>31</sup>

Even the suspension of *al-Nafir*, whose owner, Ilya Zakka, was known for his warm relationship with the authorities and with the Zionist Movement, was denounced by the other newspapers that expressed their sympathy and identification with the newspaper and its owners.<sup>32</sup>

It must be stated that the press, in particular *Filastin*, did not refer to the general strike and the revolt of the armed bands as an isolated phenomenon. When the events began, *Filastin* perceived the general strike as a civilian revolt, a natural continuation of the policy of non-cooperation. This was reflected in the editorials written intermittently by the newspaper's owner, 'Issa al-'Issa, under the title '*Masa'il al-Yawm*' (daily matters). The newspaper designated the rebels that attacked British targets as 'disturbers', using the authorities' term, and only two months after the events began did *Filastin* join the new wave and begin calling them '*thuwwar*' (liberty fighters).<sup>33</sup> The issue published on 14 June 1936, said:

A large battle took place between the rebels, *thuwwar*, and the soldiers of the authorities: British soldiers clashed yesterday with a large group of rebels near the village Sanur in a lengthy battle of approximately five hours, involving four tanks and three aircraft. The rebels were assisted by their brethren and succeeded in retreating unscathed.

In the same issue the newspaper apologized to its readers for not providing a full review of the news, similar to newspapers in other Arab countries, such as Syria and Egypt. It said that this is not due to the absence of reporters in the field, as the reporters were present and provided all the details. However, due to existing conditions editorial offices are compelled to ignore the vast majority of these reports and to use shortened versions, only after the editors had 'consulted' with the authorities in order to 'confirm' the accuracy of the news. In the process the news was delayed and became outdated.



Due to *Filastin's* tendency to express extreme views of the authorities and to embrace the radical national orientation advocated by Akram Zu'aitir and his colleagues in the young leadership, its circulation increased. The best proof of this is the newspaper's repeated request to its readers to return copies of issues that had been sold out, because they were in much demand.<sup>34</sup> The newspaper began acting to support the continued strike. These actions were performed in different sectors and in various fields. For example, it organized fundraising events among the wealthy for the benefit of the needy and those suffering from the continued strike. It revived the initiative of the Executive Committee during the 1920s, the 'Qirsh Project'. During the strike the newspaper published notices about those joining this initiative and about other such initiatives.<sup>35</sup>

A month after the beginning of the strike, the newspaper started noting the number of strike days on its title-page. On the hundredth day it wrote:

Today all Palestine is celebrating the hundredth day of the historic general strike, and it is renewing the oath to continue the struggle and the sacrifice of money and souls for the sake of its independence and in order to retain its praised Arab existence. Today it commends its best sons, the mujahedin, and thanks those who took part in the jihad and helped ease the travails of the needy; it remembers with pride its fallen sons whose names appear in the list of glory and sacrifice.<sup>36</sup>

The newspaper tried to voice its demands through appeals from various levels of society to the High Commissioner and the British officials in Palestine or to the conscience of the British people in general. On 29 July 1936, the newspaper published the appeal of an Arab woman to the High Commissioner. The woman called upon the notable Fayiz bi Haddad, saying:

The Arab woman has already descended to the battlefield and she will not retreat. Know, honourable Commissioner, that the Arab woman in Palestine will not be deterred from performing her national duty to fight in these difficult days. Following the struggle, she will either live and realize her holy wishes or she will die when these wishes fade. She cannot remain at home after seeing all the men of her nation suppressed and degraded, her sons in hell, a dark future awaiting them.

The newspaper also published an appeal from Palestinian Christians for the support of all Christians of the world. The appeal said: 'Oh Christians, last year your holy places were ridiculed when Jewish youth entered the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, where Jesus was born, and defiled it with immoral deeds, necessitating the use of force to remove them.' The appeal was signed by Ya'qoub Farraj, 'Issa al-'Issa, Mughannam Elias, General Secretary of the Defence Party, Alfred Rok, member of the Arab Higher Committee and others.<sup>37</sup> A look at the list shows that most of the signatories were Orthodox Christians (apart from Alfred Rok) and most belonged to the *Mu'arada* or were affiliated with it (again apart from Alfred Rok, member of the mufti's Palestinian Arab Party, who represented the Catholic Christians on the Arab Higher Committee).

The newspaper also enlisted renowned Arab poets, who wrote verses emphasizing the fact that the Holy Places were in danger, directed towards people throughout the Arab and Islamic world. For example, the renowned Syrian poet 'Omar Abu Risha who wrote a *qasida* entitled: 'Holy Buraq calls: Oh Tahah [meaning Prophet Muhammad], where are you'. In this *qasida* Abu Risha said that anyone who saw the Arab lion of glory bitten by a poisonous snake was overcome by shame; he called to restore the glory through hard struggle, since a nation that sacrifices its blood for its independence is a nation that will live forever.<sup>38</sup>

Following the conclusion of the strike, in anticipation of the arrival of the Royal Commission headed by Lord Peel, the newspaper began preparing the ground for appearances before the commission, with the express intention of pleasing its members. On this matter, in an article entitled 'Our duty before the arrival of the Royal Commission', it said:

Jewish propaganda invests many efforts in accusing the Arabs of being a people opposed to order, with no character, and with radical and incomprehensible demands. Therefore, they claim that a thousand commissions will not suffice in order to understand their demands and fulfill their wishes. The Arab press must deal with this topic and allocate to it a proper amount of propaganda. In order that the representatives of the people will be able to represent the nation honourably and to present its spirit and its real intellectual abilities, it is necessary to practice restraint and to examine the ideas presented judiciously. The commission must conclude that our nation is worthy of respect and appreciation and worthy of its positive recommendations and their implementation.

The press, even more than the people, must remain composed while the commission is in Palestine, since the Jews and their British companions continue to claim that the Arabic press does nothing aside from incite against Zionism and the Mandate authorities. They believe that the Arabic press was the decisive factor that led to the events in Palestine.<sup>39</sup>

Sometime later *Filastin* called upon the Arabic press to allocate more attention to the Royal Commission, in order to encourage the masses to discuss the matter and to increase their awareness, thus benefiting from the work of the commission.<sup>40</sup> The newspaper believed that the activities of the press should not serve as a substitute for the activities of the Arab Higher Committee. It said:

The Arab Higher Committee established sub-committees to deal with training, but we should not refrain from exchanging opinions on this subject in a way that will help present the Arab issue in the best possible manner. For the good of the cause we continue to discuss the subject and to present to the masses various opinions that might clarify various courses of action. We propose the founding of an economic committee composed of well known experts, such as Sa'id Hamada, Raja'i al-Husayni, Fu'ad Saba, Mishil Abakaryus and Mousa Nadir, in order to examine economic developments that lack strong foundations. These developments stemmed from the lies of political elements who exposed the future of the land to surprises. These experts will also examine the subject of income tax and the basis of Jewish objections in order to present their findings to the Royal Commission.<sup>41</sup>

In order to understand this it is necessary to understand the underlying relations between the newspaper *Filastin* and the Arab Higher Committee, which was certainly aware of the activity of the press and its increasing influence, in particular as a result of the arrival of the Royal Commission. The newspapers joined the local national committees and began managing and directing events. However, when *Filastin* began to try and direct the moves of the Arab Higher Committee as well, the leadership of the committee could not accept this. For example, *Filastin* called upon the leadership to form a single national front and disband the political parties.<sup>42</sup> If we add the newspaper's appeal to the Palestinian people and its representatives on 28 October 1936, to appear before the commission in the most proper manner, we will

understand the reaction of the Arab Higher Committee, which called for a boycott of the commission. The newspapers affiliated with the *Majlissiyyun* and the mufti's camp embraced the position of the Higher Arab Committee, causing *Filastin* to modify its support of the commission, to change direction and begin operating in areas not directly related to the functioning of the supreme leadership, albeit for a short period. These efforts were concentrated on two levels. The first was the attempt to develop and institutionalize a national economy based on local Arab entrepreneurship, and the second was the effort to improve the image of the Palestinians.

#### ATTEMPTS AT DEVELOPING A NATIONAL ECONOMY

*Filastin's* editorial on 16 October 1936, called for the release from foreign dictatorship in economic matters. The editor explained that economic independence is the basis of political independence, and extolled the new economic initiatives emerging all over Palestine. A short while later the newspaper announced the establishment of a new company – 'The Arab Iron Company' – its members consisting of owners of Arab iron works. The initial investment in the company was 20,000 Palestinian pounds and each share was worth 1 Palestinian pound.<sup>43</sup> The establishment of plants apparently required the approval of the popular committees, as was indicated in an announcement in the 6 November 1936 issue of *Filastin*, that said: 'The national committee in Jerusalem examined all matters pertaining to the 'al-Sharq' cinema owned by the Talhami brothers, and found that it is an impeccable national business and the honourable nation is encouraged to use its services. We take this opportunity to list the Talhami brothers as performing national work.' This orientation was reflected in contemporary advertisements. The 12 November 1936 issue included an advertisement for the Arab Iron Company, which said: 'To all Arabs of this country. Economic independence is the next step towards a national jihad. The Arab Iron Company is the company of all Arabs of this country. It prevents the transfer of Arab money to foreign hands.' In the same issue the newspaper called upon entrepreneurs in this field to continue their efforts and not to desist after the strike's conclusion, as this had led to the great revival of the Palestinian country in its development of Arab economic independence. Another advertisement in the same issue announced:

If you are a devout Arab nationalist, who appreciates vital public projects, loves his nation and his country, strives for profit and to ensure a steady income for himself and his children, you now have an opportunity that will be to your benefit. Come as soon as possible to the offices of the Arab Workshop Company, pride of the national institutions.

In time the projects themselves received names expressing the spirit of the times. In early December 1936 the 'Arab Unity Bank' was established, owned among others by 'Issa al-'Issa, owner of *Filastin*. On 4 December 1936, the newspaper reported that the bank shares were being offered for sale in Nablus and that they were in great demand. The reporter added that in a gathering held by the Islamic Association in Haifa certain matters were discussed and a decision was taken to establish a special committee charged with the advancement of national products.

A look at these advertizements reveals the newspaper's intent to encourage products manufactured or sold by Arabs. It attempted to legitimize this call with the help of national symbols and expressions. It also enlisted the national committees that legitimized the work of people accused of breaching the nation's defences, such as the Talhami brothers, owners of the al-Sharq cinema. The newspaper also advertized businesses in which its owners were partners (the Arab Unity Bank). In order to prevent undesirable interpretations of its legitimization of businesses whose owners belonged to the Christian community, it brought the report of the gathering of the Islamic Association in Haifa, with the aim of emphasizing Christian-Islamic solidarity under the banner of Palestinian or Arab nationalism. This trend was also evident in businesses established at the time. For example, the director of the Arab Iron Company was Amin Andraws (Christian) and the treasurer was Mousa 'Abd al-Nabi (Muslim). Those active in the Arab Unity Bank were 'Issa al-'Issa (Christian) and Sulayman Tuqan (Muslim) and they both belonged to the same political camp – the *Mu'arada*. The advertisements sought to show the public that these activities are beneficial not only on the national level, rather also on the personal level, or as defined by the newspaper: 'to those who strive for material gain'. This meant that national activities did not involve sanctions and financial loss, as was prevalent in this economically devastating period, in particular for entrepreneurs and businessmen who had business contacts with the Jewish Settlement. These relationships were badly damaged during the strike and any business that maintained such contacts was denounced, and sometimes even physically harmed.

However, *Filastin* violated the rules that it itself advocated. During the strike and later the newspaper advertized foreign products and tried to legitimize even these products in an absurd manner. Thus, for example, one advertizement said: 'Strong standing is the basis of success; the workers of the German Faik are national Arabs',<sup>44</sup> i.e. although the owners are not Arabs at least the workers are national Arabs. Another advertizement said: 'The authorities' choice of the Wills car during the events against the rebels prove that this is a first-rate and excellent car.'<sup>45</sup> The newspaper outdid itself when a few days after calling for a boycott of foreign products and institutions it published an announcement of Arab shareholders' earnings at a Belgian bank and encouraged investment in this bank. The profits were accrued not by simple people, but rather by famous Arabs, who operated in Palestine for reasons of national Arab solidarity. Common sense indicated that they should have served as an example to those whom the newspaper called upon a few days earlier to boycott foreigners, their products and institutions. The list included, among others, Fawzi Qawiqji, commander of the Arab revolt forces until October 1936,<sup>46</sup> Major Salah al-Din al-Sabbagh,<sup>47</sup> and Muhammad Jawad and Raji Hammani from Iraq.<sup>48</sup>

In summary, it seems that at this stage the initiative of building an independent economy was not very successful, as the foundations of local entrepreneurship were based on relationships with entrepreneurs and institutions defined as foreign. The primary achievement of this initiative was the unification and national solidarity which did initially attain certain goals. However, they too disappeared in time, and the entire economy was once again thrown open to private initiatives in which national considerations formed but a minimal part.

#### ATTEMPTS TO IMPROVE THE PALESTINIAN IMAGE

*Filastin* engaged in the strengthening of solidarity between the two ethnic components of the people: Christians and Muslims. Two factors influenced this endeavour of the newspaper. One was the attempt to change its mark as a 'Christian newspaper' as much as possible. Other competing newspapers took advantage of this characterization, in particular *al-Difa'*, which many saw as a counterbalance to *Filastin* (the Christian paper).<sup>49</sup> The other factor stemmed from the newspaper owner's wish to impart to the Palestinian people new values that could overcome existing ethnic tensions. He certainly knew that instilling these values would involve significant changes in all areas, and above

all, that in a situation of ethnic tension he as a minority Christian and the entire Christian community would be placed in a very precarious position. However, if common denominators (Palestinian, Arab) could be found, the members of this community would probably form a significant part of the leadership, at a higher proportion than their percentage of the population, since most of the intelligentsia came from the Christian community. On the al-Fitr Festival of that year the newspaper called upon the public not to forget the fallen and the families that had been injured in the events.<sup>50</sup> The newspaper also praised the al-Karmil association of Freemasons and its president Imil Butaji for distributing money and gifts to the poor during the month of Ramadan.<sup>51</sup> It should be noted that *Filastin* demonstrated clear support for this association and believed that press reviews of its activities might greatly improve its weak public image and also improve relations between the two communities.

However, in that same period manifests signed by the Muslim drivers were distributed in Jerusalem, claiming ethnic discrimination. *Filastin* created an uproar about these manifests, leading the Arab Higher Committee and its president to convene an urgent meeting and publish an announcement stating that:

The Arab Higher Committee has received a manifest signed by the Muslim drivers that might result in ethnic unrest. The Arab Higher Committee believes that the tone of this manifest was directed by a malicious element with the aim of distorting the beauty of Arab unity, which is rising every day and which has become strengthened by the common struggle for the sacred national cause. The Arab Higher Committee strictly denounces such intrigues, and is certain that the enemies of the Arabs are financing these intrigues and operating agents to fan the flames.<sup>52</sup>

It should be mentioned that every time the Arab Higher Committee accommodated the newspapers' calls and demands it was rewarded by positive attention and a respectful attitude. The acts of its president were widely reviewed and made much of in the press, as for example, the visit to Jaffa of the mufti, President of the Arab Higher Council, which was covered in considerable detail. The newspaper related that on the last day of his visit a man entered the place where the mufti was staying and told him that his son, injured during the events, was still hospitalized and that his family refused to help. When the mufti heard this, he gave the man 12 Palestinian pounds to care for his injured son.<sup>53</sup>

Another area of solidarity occupying the press was the attempt to reach reconciliation between the two traditionally rival camps: the *Majlissiyyun* and the *Mu'arada*. This task was undertaken mainly by non-Palestinian Arab journalists and intellectuals, who visited or worked in Palestine or who were deported to Palestine from the French mandate countries. For example, *Filastin* published an interview with the Lebanese intellectual Amin al-Rihani, who said:

Among the defence forces I saw strength and wisdom revealed in four areas: the first – unity of the parties and consolidation of the inner front, real unification. Maybe there are personal disputes between members of the Arab Higher Committee, but these disputes are at present dormant or forgotten, due to the united cause that has replaced the attempt to unite the hearts. The second fertile area is the emergence of the Arab issue, presented and expressed by the leaders in their writings. Thus has the awareness reached the hearts of the people. Today this ideal is alive and active in the souls of the peasant and the worker, the man and the woman, both in the cities and in the villages. The third area is the propaganda strived for in the past, to be dispersed among the American and European nations. The fourth and most important factor is the recognition of Arab kings and princes that the Palestinian issue has today become a general Arab issue.<sup>54</sup>

The press was also occupied with following those who collaborated with the British authorities or the Jewish Agency, in particular in the sale of land. The newspapers warned against such actions and even threatened those active in this field. On 6 November 1936, *Filastin* published a threat against notorious land speculators who had begun visiting the Land Registration Offices in order to sign deals, despite the lingering effects of the strike and the events, 'and due to the importance of this matter we have decided to pay special attention to it. We will present the names of these traitors to the national institutions.'

When these general threats did not help, the newspaper began addressing people directly. Thus it appealed to a man from the village of Salameh<sup>55</sup> and said: 'We have heard from a reliable source that a man from the village of Salameh, whom we know by name, is trying to entice Mr Hasan Basyouni of the village Yazour<sup>56</sup> to sell 30 dunams of his land near the town of Ezra. Mr Hasan has refused adamantly, but this man is pursuing him, and we suggest that this man cease his deplorable work.'<sup>57</sup> It should be stated that the newspaper did not call



upon people to punish those defined as traitors, preferring to indicate that the responsibility for punishing them belonged to the national organizations (the popular committees). The newspaper remained loyal to this position even when individuals who thought they were in charge tried to vent their anger on the property of people who were surrounded by doubts and accusations. This happened when the home of Zuhdi Abu al-Jabin was attacked and his possessions destroyed. The newspaper turned to the national committee in Jaffa, which issued an announcement denouncing the act and claiming that it did not originate from the national organizations.

Mr Abu al-Jabin was one of the first to assist and support the national organizations during the strike. He gave the national committee in Jaffa large sums totalling 1,200 Palestinian pounds, in addition to immediate donations to the needy. The announcement was signed by 'Omar al-Bitar, head of the national committee in Jaffa.<sup>58</sup>

In other cases the newspaper advocated relations of solidarity in daily matters. For example, it requested that owners of rented flats ease the burden on their tenants and refrain from pressuring them unnecessarily, in the interest of the national cause.<sup>59</sup>

#### THE ATTITUDE OF THE PRESS TOWARDS THE BRITISH AUTHORITIES

Until the outbreak of the events in April 1936 the relationship between the British censor and the Arabic press was governed by the 1933 Press Ordinance, which permitted the authorities to close down any newspaper considered provocative or disruptive. During the years 1932–36 the attitude of the press towards the authorities underwent a conspicuous transition; many newspapers began describing the British Mandate authorities as the Arabs' major enemy, the source of dangers threatening the country's Arab character. The Mandate authorities were aware of this transition. Contemporary British reports relate that the Arabic press had increased its hostility and its attacks against the Mandate authorities and its major institutions.<sup>60</sup>

In late 1935 a British report stated that the tone of the Arabic press, in particular an article by Akram Zu'aitir in the newspaper *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* and the articles published in the newspaper *al-Difa'*, was

inflammatory and incited public opinion. The report went on to say that in a short time the press had become particularly provocative and that it might lead to hatred and tension if it were allowed to continue expressing its present views.<sup>61</sup> Another report said that *al-Difa'* and *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim* helped to spread the ideas of the young Arabs and encourage their provocative behaviour, while *al-jammi'a al-Islamiyya* and *al-Liwa* publish articles by the young nationalists Hamdi al-Husayni, Hashim al-Sabi', and Akram Zu'aitir.<sup>62</sup> This conjecture, in regard to the role of the young leaders, in particular Akram Zu'aitir, must have arisen following the activities organized by Zu'aitir when he returned from Iraq in October 1935. He organized a popular rally in Nablus on the 18th anniversary of the Balfour Declaration.<sup>63</sup> This activity was widely discussed in the Palestinian press, which published extensive reports, in addition to a call to strike and also to boycott the British authorities, in particular the High Commissioner. Sections of Zu'aitir's speech at the rally became used as slogans and were much emulated.<sup>64</sup>

*Al-Karmil* expressed its admiration for the rally and the decisions reached and said that 'these decisions indicate that we have progressed and changed our manner of protest. We have started talking with greater strength.'<sup>65</sup> As a result of the support attained by Zu'aitir in the Arabic press he became a target for attacks in the Hebrew press.<sup>66</sup> He was also 'visited' by an investigating officer of the British police who objected to his words at the rally.<sup>67</sup> Until April 1936 the censor was assisted by a group of Jewish and Arab aides, however, when the British censorship was expanded a decision was made to add positions and personnel, among them a person responsible for following reporters' telegrams and articles and another staff member responsible for following the journals and weekly newspapers.<sup>68</sup> This limited the duties of the officials working at the Office of the Censor. The eighth clause of the emergency regulations approved by the High Commissioner in March 1936 said: 'Any person working at the Office of the Censor or responsible for following the press is committing a crime if as part of his work or at the time of his work he gives material to others who should not be so informed.'<sup>69</sup> Muhammad Sulayman says that this section was directed at the Palestinian officials working at the Office of the Censor, and he perceived it as evidence of the authorities' suspicions of these officials.<sup>70</sup>

Sulayman claimed that this section supported another section of the emergency regulations that extended the commissioner's freedom of action to sanction newspapers which he perceived as intentionally

disturbing public order and security. In these circumstances the commissioner might provide an officer with written authorization to enter the offices of a newspaper whenever he sees fit, using physical force if necessary. The officer could question the owner or anyone on the premises or investigate any person or vehicle taken from the premises. He could also confiscate any written or printed material or type or print instruments used in the printing process that were found during the investigation.<sup>71</sup>

Sulayman adds that these emergency regulations were issued by the Mandate authorities in order to suppress the Palestinian revolt that began in April 1936. However, it is very easy to refute this claim, as the regulations were issued in March, approximately one month before the strike broke out, on 20 April 20, 1936. In addition, the course of affairs leading to the expansion of the strike that eventually included most of the country, was often random or followed local initiatives of the popular committees, and the authorities could not have anticipated this a month earlier. The authorities were indeed aware of the increasing role of the press as an almost exclusive source of information with a great deal of influence on the nation's state of mind. On this point we must re-emphasize that a significant number of those involved in the press were also active in the political sphere (among others Akram Zu'aitir, Sheikh al-Farouqi, Ibrahim al-Shanti, 'Issa al-'Issa and Hasan Sidki al-Dajani).

With regard to the reflection in the press of the authorities' harsh attitude towards the Palestinian press and of their reactions to it during the strike, it is possible to discern a guiding principle, related to the ambivalent attitude of the mandate authorities towards the Arab–Jewish conflict in Palestine. In the opinion of the Arabic press, the Mandate authorities were predisposed towards the Jewish cause and supported Jewish demands and wishes to establish a national home, while suppressing the Arab majority and its wishes to establish an Arab state or a state with an Arab national character. The claim that the British authorities act as dictated by 'their masters the Jews' was reiterated. For example, an editorial in *Filastin*, entitled 'The prohibition against publishing local cartoons and photographs in accordance with the request of the Zionist institutions and newspapers', said:

Anyone following recent developments can see that the government acts only as proposed by the Jewish newspapers. These are the newspapers that requested the emergency regulations and they are those that demanded that the authorities accelerate their investigations and searches against the Arabs and against the arti-

cles of the young leaders and the activists of the Arab National Movement. They are those that called for the suspension of Arabic newspapers and for banning the dissemination of Arab propaganda from other countries.<sup>72</sup>

As an example the writer chose an incident involving *Filastin* itself, when it decided to publish a booklet entitled *Palestine Events in Pictures*. The booklet included pictures and cartoons published in previous issues and photographs of the fallen, the leaders and the activists of the National movement. The Jewish newspapers created an uproar and asked the government to forbid its distribution and to ban publication of pictures involving Jews. The government did not disappoint the Jews and confiscated the second edition of the booklet.<sup>73</sup> The owner of *Filastin* accused the Jews of leading the authorities to use violence against the Arabs, stating:

The Mandate authorities would clearly not have used these violent means were it not for the provocations of the Jews and the Jewish press. In the present situation anyone looking at Palestine would think that it is a battlefield, there are so many British soldiers, and all types of destructive weapons are exhibited by day and by night at sea, on land and in the air.<sup>74</sup>

The banning of cartoons probably stemmed from their daring criticism of the Mandate authorities. In one cartoon, for example, under the English title 'Soldiers for Hire', the Abyssinian emperor and the British prime minister are portrayed at the entrance to the British War Office. The Abyssinian emperor is saying: 'After you deserted me and neglected your promises to me, can I now hire from you some troops to fight the Italians and drive them from my country? How much do you want?' John Bull replies: 'I'm sorry, but you're too late. I've hired out all my "reserve" troops to the Jews in Palestine'.<sup>75</sup> Another *Filastin* cartoon features a horse, a cow and a jackass.

*The horse:* Wars and revolutions cannot exist without me, since I carry the burdens and drag the wagons and the cannons, climb the mountains and descend into the deep valleys.

*The cow:* Without me there would be no revolutions, because I provide the fighters with meat and dairy products that nourish them.

*The jackass:* Without government jackasses there would be no

wars and no revolts.<sup>76</sup>

Claims of Britain's discrimination against Palestinian Arabs and of its predisposition towards the Jewish side of the struggle over the land were voiced in almost all Arabic newspapers, such that nearly all of them were suspended at some point during the strike. However, it is possible to make certain distinctions between the newspapers their attitudes towards Britain and towards the Jews and the struggle against them. The Arabic newspapers can be divided into two groups: one group did indeed criticize the Mandate authorities, sometimes blatantly, but never perceived Britain as the major enemy with which all ties must be severed. The newspapers in this group protested against the unfairness and injustice of the British attitude to the Arab–Jewish conflict, and saw Britain as an unjust judge predisposed towards one side of the game, but they did not feel that this justified others' attempts to deny any possibility of negotiations with Britain and with the government officials who were portrayed as honest. This group included the newspapers *Filastin*, *al-Karmil* and *Mir'at al-Sbarq*. These newspapers, in particular *Filastin* and *al-Karmil*, demonstrated a most hostile attitude towards the Jews and tried through various linguistic formulas to distinguish between British injustice and hostility towards the Jews. They continued to entertain hopes that the honest elements in the British governing system would overcome those portrayed as enthusiastic supporters of the Jewish issue. Thus, for example, after a *Filastin* editorial expressed criticism of the British predisposition towards the Jewish side, it tried to appeal to the British, saying:

If the British wish to prove to the Arabs that they are strong and free of the influence of the Jews and that they wish to do justice, being strong they can turn to the weak Arabs and prove that they are a devoted Mandate country, serving a nation that trusted them and that was greatly disappointed with the policy implemented from the beginning of its Mandate.<sup>77</sup>

Elsewhere the editor of *Filastin* did not stop at appealing to the British. After presenting his criticism, he attempted to warn them about the possible dangers of refraining from reconsidering their support of the Jews. He said:

It should greatly concern the government that now that the rebels 'thuwwar' Have succeeded in reaching the water pipes of Jerusalem and the Iraqi oil pipes, it is very likely that the

Bedouins of Transjordan and of the Arab desert will join them, coming to the help of their brothers the Palestinians, and will start sabotaging the pipes in their area. Thus they will strike imperialism where it hurts. This will obviously have far-reaching consequences for the government, but one word from the High Commissioner or the Secretary of State for the Colonies or the British Parliament can prevent this. This is the word that will reinstate people's rights and their safety and peace.<sup>78</sup>

The second group of newspapers assumed that the Arabs' main enemy were the British, and that fighting them was the most efficient way of fighting the Jews, their allies. Therefore they did not see any reason to compromise and to try to portray their struggle as a pan-Arab, pan-Islamic struggle. The main newspapers in this group included *al-Difa'*, *al-Liwa* and *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*. These newspapers stressed the struggles of other Arab countries against European imperialism and completely identified with them, while attempting to provoke the British. *Al-Liwa*, for example, expressed its elation at the achievements of the Syrians in their struggle against the French, and in explanation of this elation, it said: 'How should we not be joyful at the victory of our brothers the Syrians? Palestine is an inseparable and integral part of Syria and we are all fighting for its complete independence'.<sup>79</sup>

In a different referral to Syria, *al-Liwa* asked: If Syria is progressing towards independence, what about the Palestinians? Does England really want the Palestinians to stand idly by?<sup>80</sup> *Al-Difa'*, in contrast, tried to answer the question: If the Arabs are given a choice between two foreign countries, which would they choose? It said:

No Palestinian Arab would choose one foreign government over another, be it Turkey, Britain, France or Germany, since Palestinian Arabs claim their right to independence and freedom, and they strive to establish pure Arab rule in Palestine that will later be able to join the united Arab entity. However, if they were forced to choose a single power, they would undoubtedly choose Turkey, since during the 17 years of the British Mandate they realized that Britain strives to destroy the Arabs and to banish them from the land by opening the gates to the Zionists.<sup>81</sup>

*Al-Sirat al-Mustaqim* usually did not hold distinct anti-British views, and it was even accused by many of serving British interests.<sup>82</sup> Nonetheless, towards the end of the strike it claimed that the British

Mandate is continuing the Crusade against the Islamic world.<sup>83</sup> *Al-Difa'* described Arab feelings towards Britain in an article entitled 'Wolf Claws' and said: 'They see the Mandate government with intense hatred, and they blame Britain for everything that happens.'<sup>84</sup> *Al-Difa'* explained this statement and said: 'Britain holds the most responsibility and the Jews come second. Therefore Palestinian Arabs must continue their sacrifices in order to save the land from the follies of colonialism.'<sup>85</sup>

It must be stated that this division of the Palestinian press during the strike into two dominant groups became vague towards the end of the strike and following it, as a result of the attitude of the authorities, which usually did not distinguish between the newspapers' various degrees of 'moderation'. Therefore the relative 'moderation' of certain newspapers and their attempts to preserve their relationships with the authorities did not protect them from suspension or confiscation orders or from the imprisonment or exile of journalists.

The Colonial Office report on the Arabic press in Palestine from November 1935 to April 1936 stated:

A national awakening is evident in the language of the press, in particular after the death of Sheikh 'Iz al-Din al-Qassam. The newspapers have been publishing calls to the youth to unify and demand their rights and steal back their liberty. During this period two Arabic newspapers were closed and two received formal warnings. No Hebrew newspaper was suspended, but two Hebrew newspapers received formal warnings.<sup>86</sup>

In contrast, during the general strike these numbers rose: Arabic newspapers were suspended thirty four times and they received thirteen formal warnings, compared with only thirteen suspensions and ten warnings for the Hebrew newspapers.<sup>87</sup> In another report submitted by the Colonial Office to the Royal Commission an attempt was made to explain the large increase in the number of suspensions and warnings during the revolt. It said:

The newspapers of both camps were very critical and hostile towards the government and they included continuous mutual attacks with racial and political foundations. The Arabic newspapers of Egypt, Syria and Iraq, had a great deal of political influence in Palestine. The government used its authority time and again and prevented the entrance of some of these newspapers to

Palestine and for a certain period it also censored them.<sup>88</sup>

The correspondence between the Office of the Censor in Jerusalem and the Colonial Office in London indicates that the British did not distinguish between the different newspapers in regard to their attitude and did not appreciate the 'moderate' disposition of the relatively 'moderate' newspapers, headed by *Filastin*. They also did not hesitate to sanction these newspapers when under the impression that they were being pulled in a more 'radical' direction.

The newspapers became aware of this attitude when the authorities demonstrated inflexibility in their treatment of the events and of those who were in favour of continuing the strike. Renown journalists, among them newspaper editors (Ibrahim al-Shanti, Hasan Sidki al-Dajani, Akram Zu'aitir, Munif al-Husayni, 'Izzat Darwaza and 'Ajaj Nuwayhid) were exiled to 'Awja al-Hfir and from there to Sarafand.<sup>89</sup> The government's actions caused much confusion among the journalists. This was well described in an article published in *Filastin*

At present the Arabic press is undergoing a most dangerous stage. The various governmental institutions are counting its heartbeats and calculating every small step. At such difficult times, when journalists are incapable of presenting the news as the government wishes, editors of Arabic newspapers sit behind their desks and wait for an official warning from the District Commissioner or the Commander of the Police Station, from the Office of the General Director or from the Censor.<sup>90</sup>

The newspapers' confusion probably stemmed from the dual pressure it encountered: on the one hand from the authorities and on the other from Palestinian public opinion, which encouraged displays of radicalism and severe criticism towards the authorities' actions. In order to satisfy public opinion the Arabic newspapers competed with each other in their criticism and radicalism, thus leading to warnings of suspension for various periods. *Filastin* received one such warning after it hinted at the events generated by workers in Haifa on 8 and 9 August 1936. Although this was only implied by the newspaper, which said that 'it cannot provide more details due to the situation',<sup>91</sup> it received a warning from the censor saying: 'The honorable High Commissioner is of the opinion that the notice published by the newspaper *Filastin* on August 10th concerning the riots in Haifa endangers public peace, and his honour will order a suspension of the newspaper if it publishes such news again.'<sup>92</sup> The newspaper published the warning accompanied by



criticism of this move and said: 'We publish this warning with sorrow, before others, mourning the fate of the Arabic press in Palestine that has become a merchant who satisfies neither the seller nor the buyer.'<sup>93</sup> The newspaper's final sentence indicated its confusion and the heavy bilateral pressures that it was forced to withstand.

The excessive inflexibility of the authorities generated many permutations in the views of those Arabic newspapers previously defined as 'moderate' and they began to change their basic views. This was expressed, for example, by the newspaper *Filastin*, which in the past had tended to accept the Mandate as an essential stage between the transitional stages and the establishment of an Arab entity in the country. In an article entitled 'The Writ of Mandate is not a holy book', which included a renewed overview of the Mandate and the practices of its authorities, the writer wondered about the Jews' refusal to accept the Royal Commission and their demand that the Mandate be retained in its present state, and determined: 'If retaining the Mandate is a Jewish request, then the Arabs must re-examine their acceptance of the Mandate authorities.'<sup>94</sup>

A perusal of the article leads to the conclusion that the newspaper supported the arrival of the Royal Commission because the Jews objected to it. However, when the Arab Higher Committee rejected the idea of appearing before the commission, in an announcement publicized on 7 November (the authorities forbade the newspapers from publishing the announcement), the newspaper began to doubt the objectivity of the commission, and in particular of some of the people who had appeared and would be appearing before it. The editorial from 24 November 1936, said:

Secretary of State for the Colonies Ormsby-Gore is destroying the objectivity of the Royal Commission. He speaks much of its neutrality and its impartiality and tries to convince the Arab side of this, but his behavior indicates a distinct Zionist predisposition and contradicts the neutrality of the Royal Commission and the sanctity of the law. The best example is the uproar created by the Jews concerning the verdicts of Chief Justice McDonnell, which eventually led to his dismissal by Ormsby-Gore, faithful ally of the Jews in London.

The appearance of Colonel Andrew before the Royal Commission was also criticized by *Filastin*, which perceived it as harming the neutrality of the Royal Commission. The newspaper was of the opinion that any-

one following Andrews' actions would see that he mostly defended Jewish interests and that he would only appear before the commission in order to support Jewish interests or damage Arab wishes and aspirations.<sup>95</sup>

A good example of the radicalization of *Filastin's* views is an article published by editor Yusuf Hanna, entitled 'A living example of British treachery':

In a speech given by Winston Churchill, the Secretary in charge of the British Navy and Fleet during the war, on the occasion of the unveiling of the statue of Lawrence at Oxford University, he said: 'Lawrence was aware of Napoleon's dream to conquer the East, and if the Great War had lasted longer Lawrence could have reconquered Istanbul in 1920, leading pure Arab troops.' I must add that this is the true role that Britain had estined for the Arabs in the Great War and I would also stress that Churchill is one of the most enthusiastic supporters of the Jews and of Zionism.<sup>96</sup>

These editorial words about the treachery of the British reflect the writings of the Palestinian press, which tried to express the disappointment of Palestinian Arabs with British reactions and conduct after the conclusion of the strike. It is possible to say that the Arabic press actually attempted to correct a mistake that it had itself created and tried to impart to its readership. The strike ended with the call of Arab kings and princes to end the strike in return for professed British promises to comply with Palestinian Arab demands. The newspapers widely reported this move and praised the efforts of Their Excellencies, the kings and princes of the Arab countries. The day after the strike ended, *Filastin* published verses by the poet 'Ali Mansour, who was also a journalist and worked for *Filastin* and formerly for other newspapers, praising the call of the kings that appeased the souls and removed the anger. This call marked the reopening of businesses and shops that had been closed for approximately six months. The poet did not forget to mention that the strike had achieved its goal and led to the failure of the schemes planned by the Arabs' enemies and their malicious intents. Finally he left an opening for the return of those whom he called 'well-known', saying that they have no more excuses to object to the nation's consensus.<sup>97</sup> However, the British swiftly denied any promise to the Arab kings or the other mediators who sought to help end the strike. The speeches of the Secretary of State for the Colonies in the British Parliament on this matter angered the Arabs

and led to unprecedented attacks in the press. *Al-Liwa* published harsh accusations of Britain and its policies in Palestine, which it claimed were guided by the Zionist leaders in London.<sup>98</sup>

Following this article the authorities suspended publication of the newspaper for three days, about which *Filastin* remarked that the authorities had not altered any part of their policy and that they were continuing their merciless pressure on the Arabic press.<sup>99</sup> In his memoirs, Akram Zu'aitir criticized the Arabic press for its naivety in thinking that the policy of the British Mandate would change after the strike ended. In his opinion, the press gave the British credit that they did not deserve.<sup>100</sup> Zu'aitir was actually partly correct, since the British authorities did not change their policy towards the Arabs in general or towards their press in particular and did not intend to do so. Most of the Arabic newspapers, apparently affected by the leaders, were naive in their thoughts and expectations when anticipating the longed-for change in British policy. There was no such change. Moreover, the British hurried to deny any promise to the Arab leaders. In terms of the press, those in charge of British censorship in Palestine were apparently convinced that the newspapers played a major role in inciting and provoking the public, and the memorandums that they submitted to the Royal Commission were in this spirit. One of these memorandums, dealing with an evaluation of the work of the Arabic and Jewish press during the strike, claimed:

The press on both sides agitated and misled the people on a racial and political basis. The reports of the daily Arabic press were totally untrue. It falsely accused the authorities, for example the report of British aircraft dropping poisonous sweets on Arab villages and towns. The Arabic press was more active, aiming to agitate the strike movement.<sup>101</sup>

This theme was reflected in the recommendations and conclusions of the Royal Commission in its final report: 'The unrest in Haifa and Northern Palestine stemmed from the authorities' leniency towards the press.'<sup>102</sup> As a result, the commission recommended stricter treatment of the press by 'efficient and firm implementation of the Press Ordinance, requiring a cash deposit that may be appropriated when necessary'. The commission also recommended that 'the government confiscate the newspaper and its assets' in cases of recurring offences.<sup>103</sup>

It should be remembered that the details of the memorandum submitted by the Jewish Agency to the Royal Commission concerning

the activity of the Arabic press are also reflected in the commission's conclusions. The memorandum prepared by Eliahu Sasson and Menahim Nisani, entitled 'Hatred for England and objection to the Mandate' said:

The Arabic newspapers were originally established to fight Zionism and the British Mandate in order to realize political ambitions, i.e. the establishment of a national Arab government and the annexation of Palestine to the anticipated Arab entity ... In their opinion, the Zionists are simply an instrument of British imperialism and a means to justify its rule of the East. Therefore the struggle must be aimed first and foremost at the Mandate.<sup>104</sup>

In summary, it may be said that the inflexible actions of the authorities against the press were neither criticized nor denounced by the Royal Commission. On the contrary, the commission concluded that these actions were excessively lenient when compared with the hostile activities of the press. Therefore it recommended stricter treatment of the press. However, a glance at the table shown below, reviewing the days on which *Filastin* was suspended by the authorities and the reasons for the suspension, proves that the sanctions and the moves taken by the authorities against the press were far from lenient. This is particularly true if we remember that the newspaper *Filastin* was con-

A SUMMARY OF THE DAYS ON WHICH THE NEWSPAPER *FILASTIN* WAS SUSPENDED AND THE REASONS FOR THE SUSPENSION:

No. of days suspended	Dates of suspension	Reason for suspension
5	20-24 May	Harsh critical articles
3	28-30 May	Implementation of the Press Convention decisions*
10	1-10 June	News of the Policemen's Convention
7	3-9 July	Editorial entitled 'Spirit of Satan'
4	19-22 July	Incorrect news of the fighting in Hebron
10	30 July-11 August	Harsh critical articles
7	21-27 September	Editorial entitled 'The next stage in our national struggle'
5	4-8 October	Editorial criticizing the emergency regulations. <sup>105</sup>

\* During these three days (May 28-30, 1936) the newspaper suspended its publication of its own volition rather than by order of the authorities, in fulfillment of the decisions of the Arab Press Convention held in the city of Ramle on May 27, 1936 at the initiative of its owner, 'Issa al-'Issa.

sidered 'moderate' in its attitude towards the British authorities in comparison with more radical newspapers, such as *al-Difa'* or *al-Liwa*. The authorities gave instructions to suspend publication of *Filastin* approximately 51 times during the 176 strike days, from 19 April to 13 October 1936.

Anyone following the relationship between the British censor and the newspaper *Filastin* will find that the newspaper would fulfill the authorities' requests for a very short period in which it was careful not to breach the regulations. However, it would usually eventually resume the same position that caused its closure. Thus for example, the newspaper reported that the doctor appointed by the authorities to the city of Hebron had left the city with no replacement, although the population of the city and the surrounding towns was suffering from fatal epidemics.<sup>106</sup> After a certain period the newspaper was obliged to retract its words at the request of the authorities and to publish a denial, stating that it was mistaken and deliberately misled the readers. The truth was that there were two doctors in the Hebron region and there was no need for a third doctor during the absence of the regional doctor as a result of a month's vacation.<sup>107</sup> However, the next day the newspaper reconsidered its denial and said:

The epidemic continues striking people in the Hebron region. The hospitals are full of patients and many of them are dying for lack of proper treatment. We cannot ignore this. We are forced to inform the Director of the General Health Bureau of the need to add doctors in the city to enable them to cope with the fatal epidemic.<sup>108</sup>

As a result, the authorities suspended the newspaper for an additional three days and harshly reprimanded its editor. In other cases the newspaper followed the censor's directives and made do with hints that in some cases seemed quite transparent. Thus, for example, the affair of the departure of Fawzi al-Qawiqli, general commander of the rebel forces in Palestine, through Transjordan. During Qawiqli's negotiations with the authorities both prior to and following his departure, the newspaper obeyed the authorities' order to refrain from mentioning Qawiqli's name or publishing his picture. He was referred to as 'the great man'.<sup>109</sup>

In other cases, hints given by the newspaper as an apology for its inability to publish a certain item had more influence on the readers than the items themselves. Thus, for example, the newspaper apolo-

gized to its readers for its inability to publish details of the expansion of the strike in Haifa due to the existing conditions.<sup>110</sup> Thus the newspaper succeeded in transmitting to its readers the required message without mentioning the details that it was forbidden by the authorities from publishing, but the authorities were aware of this and they suspended publication of the newspaper for eight days as a result of this offence.

Other newspapers known for their forceful views were suspended for lengthy periods, for example *al-Liwa*, *al-Difa'* and *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, while the newspaper *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* was permanently closed by order of the High Commissioner.<sup>111</sup>

#### THE ATTITUDE OF THE ARABIC PRESS TO THE JEWISH SETTLEMENT AND THE ZIONIST MOVEMENT DURING THE STRIKE

We mentioned above that the Arabic press was divided during the strike on the matter of the primary enemy to be attacked first – the British Mandate authorities or the Zionist movement. We also stated that the press, which was primarily Christian-owned (aside from *Mir'at al-Sbarq*) focused on the struggle against the Jewish Settlement towards which it was extremely hostile. However, it was not in favour of severing all contacts with the British Mandate authorities, despite the existing conflicts and their injustice and unfairness, and it did not give up on its efforts to convince them of the justification of the Arab position and perhaps influence them to change their policies. The Muslim-owned press embraced the militant position of the young leaders, in particular Akram Zu'aitir and Hamdi al-Husayni, both of whom perceived the Zionist Movement as a bitter enemy to be vehemently opposed, but believed that initially they must fight the British – source of all disasters which befell the Palestinian people. These groups maintained that efficient opposition to the Mandate authorities was the most effective opposition to the Jewish Settlement and the Zionist movement.

The Jews were depicted almost identically in most newspapers of both groups. These descriptions and the uncompromising struggle against the Jewish Settlement and the Zionist movement were almost the only topic on which the Arabic press was consistent and united at all times, in stark contrast to the inconsistency that characterized it on other topics.<sup>112</sup> In many cases the description of the Jews bordered on

racial slander. They were presented as cowards, and the newspapers published many stories to prove this. For example, *Filastin* ran the story of a Jew named Ya'qov Hesberg who came to the police station at Abu Kabir shaking from fear. He complained that two people had shot at him while he was walking along 'Asim Biq Street. The police investigation discovered that the two people described by Hesberg were two children playing with toy guns to signal the end of the Fast of Ramadan.<sup>113</sup> Another story brought by *Filastin*, entitled 'A new example of Jewish courage', told of an Armenian wearing a fez who passed near Jewish shops at the entrance to the Carmel Market. When the Jews saw the Armenian's red fez they started fleeing in the direction of Tel Aviv.<sup>114</sup> The city of Tel Aviv was known as a city of thievery, swarming with forgers and thieves.<sup>115</sup>

It is interesting that during the strike and after it ended the press associated Jews with world communism and attributed to both Jews and communists 'crimes and plots' that targeted Palestinian Arabs. *Filastin* accused the Jews and the communists of criminal collaboration in the Spanish Civil War. In an editorial published on 7 November 1936, the newspaper related crimes which were assumed to have been committed by the communists and the Jews, including cruel acts of murder and rape.

The editor of *Filastin* called upon the British administration to strike the communist movement in Palestine as its actions are detrimental to the Palestinian National movement. He claimed in the article that the Jewish members of the Palestinian Communist party refused to perform any action against Jewish targets in Palestine, since one of the Jewish communist leaders, Epstein, stated that any action taken by communists in Palestine would probably anger the American Communist party, of which all members are Jews.<sup>116</sup>

It should be noted that the denigration of Jews was expressed differently in Christian-owned and Muslim-owned newspapers. In contrast with the Christian *Filastin*, which accused the Jews of collaborating with the communists, the Muslim-owned newspapers accused them of conspiring against the Muslims and their Holy Places. A declaration published by Sheikh Sulayman al-Farouqi, editor of *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* in early 1936, entitled 'The call of endangered Palestine', said:

Oh Muslims, save Palestine before it is lost, don't spare your tears. Oh Muslim! When you leave your place of prayer remember that you have a mosque and it is destined to be lost, you have

a mosque that might be destroyed if you do not act to save it. If the British and Zionist politics realize their goals to turn Palestine into a Jewish Home, this mosque will have no worshippers, and this country will be empty of Muslims and of Arabs. Your brothers in Palestine do not rest and do not sleep, because English politics have oppressed them with a wave of Jewish immigrants. This concerns the population of the country, and with regard to property – it has all been transferred to the Jews. Your Muslim brothers have been forced to sell their land under the conditions formed by the English and the Jews. The Jews purchased the best lands. The English gave them the country's economic resources. They gave them the concession to the Dead Sea, the riches of which are estimated at thousands of millions. They gave them the electricity plant and put at their disposal the budget of Palestine. Roads are paved according to the location of Jewish agricultural towns, a third of the country's budget is spent on Jewish defence. Thus you will soon hear that Palestine has been lost just as Andalusia was lost, so don't spare your tears.<sup>117</sup>

The members of al-Istiqlal and the pan-Arab group accused Zionism of greed and of striving to control the whole Arab expanse. *Al-Difa'* brought sections of a speech given by Akram Zu'aitir to a delegation of Iraqi delegates visiting Nablus. In this speech Zu'aitir said that 'the criminal Zionism supported by "English" bayonets is a threat not only to Palestine but also to all other Arab countries; it disrupts their unity, their economic progress and their political development. Our war against Zionism is a "Holy War" and anyone who does not join it is committing an inexpressible sin.'<sup>118</sup>

This hostility did not prevent the Arabic newspapers (even the most hostile) from cooperating with Jewish newspapers when necessary. Gavriel Zifroni, future editor of the newspaper *Habokir* and its senior reporter during the strike, related his special relations with Sheikh Muhammad 'Atiyya, night editor of the Jaffa newspaper *al-Difa'*. Their friendship began while Sheikh Muhammad was working for the newspaper *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*. This relationship led to a gentlemen's agreement between Zifroni (approved by his editor, of course) and Shawkat Hammad, manager of *al-Difa'*, whereby the newspapers *Habokir* and *al-Difa'* planned a national review of events. Zifroni joined *al-Difa'*'s press car in Arab areas, and an *al-Difa'* reporter joined Zifroni's car in Jewish areas. The advantage of the deal was that *Habokir* and *al-Difa'* received all the news without need for translation



and thus preceded the other newspapers by an entire day.<sup>119</sup> The agreement continued until March 1948, aside from a short period during the general strike, when contact between the two newspapers was disrupted because the strike organizers forbade Arabs from telephoning Jewish newspapers. However, the contact was quickly resumed. The two newspapers helped each other to report special news in their respective areas. Moreover, reporters in mixed cities were asked to cooperate. Events and news from 'the battle zones' reached *al-Difa'* and thus also *Habokir* and vice versa, before details of the incidents were known to the police stations. At first the exchanges included news in the fields of economy, labour and criminal affairs, and later they expanded to include all areas.<sup>120</sup>

Zifroni's version is supported by testimony collected by the author from Muhammad al-Shanti, cousin of Ibrahim al-Shanti, editor of *al-Difa'*, who was employed during the strike as a messenger for the newspaper.<sup>121</sup> Al-Shanti related that during the strike and due to the strike of the Arab drivers, *al-Difa'* was compelled to rent a Jewish truck that distributed Hebrew newspapers to transport issues of *al-Difa'* from Jaffa to Haifa and Jerusalem. He would hide between the bundles of newspapers in order to pass through the Jewish areas in the Jewish truck and reach the newspaper's agents in different parts of Palestine.

Sheikh al-Farouqi's newspaper also appealed to Jewish newspapers for help when in trouble. During the 1936 strike when the newspaper was in need of a Jewish printer or a technician to repair the printing machine, the newspaper managers were assisted by Jewish workers, after receiving a special employment licence from the 'national supervision committee'. This permit ensured the safety of the Jewish workers who were summoned in return for a handsome fee.<sup>122</sup>

Journalistic Jewish–Arab cooperation also existed between the newspapers *Filastin* and *Davar*. Zifroni said that when the events of 1936 erupted, a young reporter began working for *Davar*. Her name was Miriam Goronchik (the younger sister of Rabbi Goren, as he later became known) and she assisted Ben Dor (coordinator of the newspaper's reporters) in compiling the municipal news. Soon her activities were extended to Jaffa, where the leaders of the armed bands were still on trial. Matters pertaining to the general strike and the striking Port of Jaffa were also newsworthy. Dawoud al-'Issa noticed Miriam's diligence and they agreed to exchange news by telephone. The contact lasted a year, and to the best of our knowledge did not produce sensational results, since neither *Davar* nor *Filastin* made any special efforts to expand this news network.<sup>123</sup>

These relationships were innovative in that they were no longer a subject for the denigration of rivals within the Arab camp, as they had been in previous years. Most of the prominent Arabic newspapers were involved in such relationships, and the newspaper leaders perceived them as essential for raising the level of journalistic reporting. However, they did not succeed in reducing the hostility towards the Zionist movement nor towards the Hebrew press itself. Time and again the Hebrew press was accused of provocation and incitements and the British authorities were accused of biased treatment of the Arabic and Hebrew press in Palestine, suppressing the Arabic press while giving a free hand to the Hebrew press.<sup>124</sup>

#### INTERNATIONAL ISSUES AND THEIR REFLECTION IN THE PRESS DURING THE STRIKE

The state of emergency that prevailed in the country during the strike occupied the Palestinian Arabic press and attracted most of its attention. However, international events, such as the rise and influence of Nazism and fascism, the Italian invasion of Abyssinia, and the Spanish Civil War, did not pass without comment.

##### *The Rise in Italian and German Influence*

Most of the newspapers denounced Italy for its invasion of Abyssinia and expressed their solidarity with the Abyssinian people. Some newspapers compared the events in Abyssinia to those in Palestine and denounced Britain for its hypocrisy. Their major claim was that Britain created an uproar concerning Abyssinia, while similarly exploiting the Palestinians.<sup>125</sup>

A cartoon published by *Filastin* on 26 July 1936 shows the Emperor of Abyssinia appealing to the British Prime Minister on a backdrop of the British War Office from which soldiers are exiting, with an English sign 'Soldiers for Hire'. This cartoon achieves two goals: first, it expresses solidarity with the Abyssinian people and their wish to drive Italy from their country. Second (and probably more important), it denigrates Britain and depicts it as breaking its promises and as a country that cannot be trusted, in particular due to its total identification with the Jews. This claim appeared in almost all the Palestinian newspapers of the period, even those that had previously hoped for British fairness and advocated the idea of distinguishing between Britain and the Jews.

It may be said that these attacks in *Filastin* against Italy renewed the lengthy and extensive smear campaign of the Palestinian newspapers against this country. *Filastin*, for example, used the services of the writer Khalil al-Budayri, who tried to analyze Palestinian Arab youth's sympathy towards the fascist ideology:

It is very easy to explain this phenomenon, as all we hear of this movement describes it as a new human revival, bringing with it prosperity and hope. It is inevitable that we, who are at the beginning of our national revival, will also strive to realize our goals and be drawn to those movements that promise to ensure them. Moreover, adolescents are inherently drawn to acts of power and bravery and detest beggary. Therefore they perceive fascism as an attractive phenomenon. The youth see the subversion and backwardness that surround them and perceive fascism as a means of rebelling against these conditions and against the national movements that cling to the enemy, begging for charity. They are attracted to nationalism that forces itself on the world and coerces others to acknowledge its merited place among the nations of the world.<sup>126</sup>

Thus Budayri is in essence criticizing the traditional leadership of the Palestinian National movement rather than fascism and Italy, in particular by describing the Palestinian movement as a movement suffering from paralysis and devotion to Britain instead of acting to enforce itself on the international stage.

The topic of educating and rearing Palestinian youth according to the tradition of power and valour (emulating the fascist model) was also discussed in the press before and during the Great Strike. Even *Mir'at al-Sbarq*, known for its affiliation with the British, took part in the calls to educate Palestinian youth according to fascist and Nazi models. The newspaper was of the opinion that the country was in need of a younger generation that was physically and mentally sound, similar to the Nazi youth in Germany and the fascist youth in Italy, who awaited their leaders' commands and were willing to sacrifice their lives for the honour of their people and the liberation of their homeland.<sup>127</sup>

The Arab Palestinian party, headed by Jamal al-Husayni, established a youth corps in early 1936. The party newspaper *al-Liwa* supported this move and even called upon party activists in its branches all over Palestine to emulate the Jerusalem and Lydda branches and estab-

lish branches of the youth corps.<sup>128</sup> The newspaper constantly reported its activities in this field, reaching a climax at the general gathering aimed at organizing the youth corps of the Arab party.<sup>129</sup>

Ibrahim al-Shanti, owner and chief editor of *al-Difa'*, was more active than any other senior journalist in his support of the youth corps. He took advantage of his many contacts in Palestine and started establishing a non-political national organization. He held the founding assembly of this organization at the home of Yusuf abu Badra in Jaffa.<sup>130</sup>

Al-Shanti wrote in an article in his paper after the assembly:

This assembly is the first step in organizing the Arab youth who have awakened and have decided to save the nation's honour. The next step will be quick to arrive, so that people will not say that the Arab youth in Palestine is ailing. In a few months this youth will appear in all its strength in order to form stronger foundations for the Palestinian issue, and it will demonstrate dedicated action for the glory of Arab Palestine.<sup>131</sup>

Al-Shanti's extensive involvement in this field and the adoption of Nazi and fascist symbols for his enterprise caused many historians to accuse him of Nazi propaganda and even of accepting large sums of money in return for spreading Nazi propaganda amongst Palestinian Arabs, veiled by forceful and comprehensive venomous pan-Arab propaganda.<sup>132</sup> This same claim was voiced about the editor of the newspaper *al-Kifab*, the attorney Mustafa Arshid, who was accused of receiving Nazi and fascist propaganda material from the German and Italian consuls in Palestine.<sup>133</sup> His newspaper served as the voice of the Youth Congress party, headed by Ya'qoub al-Ghusayn.<sup>134</sup> The newspaper appeared for a short period and its Nazi leanings may be easily discerned, although they were certainly not fascist, despite the excited calls upon the youth to become organized for the good of the Arab homeland. One sign of the possible influence of the Nazi and fascist movements was the fervour that characterized the newspaper's language. However, this was still a long way from presenting distinct Nazi propaganda.

It should be emphasized that the guiding principle of the Arabic press and intellectuals regarding this issue was 'my enemy's enemy is my ally', in other words, the degree of Nazi and fascist influence correlated with the hostility and bitterness towards Britain. In general, it is impossible to indicate any element of a newspaper or any person

engaged in journalism who was consistently positive in their attitude towards Italy and Germany, aside from those on the margin who were ardent supporters, in particular Syrian, Iraqi and Lebanese immigrants in contact with Shakib Arsalan or their strict opponents, such as leftist elements and the communists. However, the positions of the central group shifted according to developments, both in Palestine and in the international arena. Anyone following the Arabic press on the eve of the Great Strike would have noted that its sympathetic position towards Germany and Italy was intended to have an impact in the struggle against Britain, such that Britain would be forced to recognize of Arab national interests. For example, an editorial in *al-Liwa* questioned the Arab view of Britain in the prevailing international conditions, and answered:

Is it possible for the Arabs to be devoted and loyal to those who steal their right to independence? The Arabs are following events in Europe closely, and it would be a mistake to think that they do not intend to benefit from the serious world situation. They will not stand idly by and watch the events, since they well know that such international opportunities are rare.<sup>135</sup>

In contrast, *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* published an article by Sheikh al-Farouqi who said:

The German nation numbers 65 million people. The Arabs number 60 million people, and they too have a single language, a single religion and a single character. In addition to these qualities, antagonism and hatred have accumulated in our hearts towards the foreign imperialism that is enslaving us. Why are we idle, why do we not defend our rights, our liberty and the independence of our country? All these obstacles may be overcome and we may advance toward our anticipated goal if we know how to defend our liberty with honour.<sup>136</sup>

According to Farouqi, the primary factors giving rise to Nazi influence were an antipathy to imperialism (in Palestine's case – British imperialism) and the longing to be liberated and achieve a life of liberty and respect. *Filastin* outdid itself. After the strike had ended without receiving any significant concessions from the British, the newspaper editor wrote that the Arabs conclude that force was the only way of attaining results. Since in their present situation the Arabs could not overcome

Britain on their own, he suggested Italy ( against which he had spoken a few months before the strike and during the strike!) as an Arab ally, and explained his proposal:

The Arabs do not trust Italy and even hate this country. However, it is certainly possible to negotiate with Italy and to sign a treaty. Italy hopes, after the victory of the rebels in Spain, to control western access to the Mediterranean. The occupation of Abyssinia provided Italy in essence with a foothold on one side of the Red Sea, which is the Eastern gate to the Mediterranean. Friendship with the Arabs will ensure its control of the second coast of the Red Sea and of essential oil supply lines to the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean. Nothing is worth more to Italy than such a treaty, and although the idea may be repulsive to the Arabs, they must sign a pact with this country. This is the Arabs' only option in their struggle against Britain.<sup>137</sup>

It should be stressed that the newspaper was expressing the feelings of the people, who detested Britain and were willing to ally themselves with any other element that was hostile towards Britain or demonstrated its intentions to oppose British plans, be its ideology what it may. The masses undoubtedly harboured covert sympathy towards fascism and Nazism, as enemies of Britain and France, as evidenced by a story brought by Akram Zu'aitir in his memoirs:

On 21 April 1936, I received a telephone call from Tul Karim that the city was on strike and that a national committee would be established the same day. There was a large demonstration on the streets. During the demonstration a car passed, its driver wearing a Western hat. When the demonstrators began attacking the car the driver shouted 'Heil Hitler', hung a Nazi flag on his car, and gave the Nazi salute. The crowd then welcomed him, taking his hat and exchanging it for a fez.<sup>138</sup>

This story illustrates the degree of Nazi influence on the Palestinian masses. The people were acquainted with Nazi symbols, and more importantly – foreigners were aware of this affinity, thus in this instance the driver took advantage of it to save himself from the fury of the crowd.

## THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR AND ITS REFLECTION IN THE PRESS

Another topic covered in the Arabic press during the strike was the Spanish civil war. *Filastin* discussed the civil war more than any other newspaper. It also took a clearly hostile stance towards the government powers supported by Russia. The newspaper's excuse for its attacks on the republicans was that many Jews fought for them. It frequently reported crimes allegedly committed by supporters of the republicans, stating that they would murder and pillage, and rape any woman they met.<sup>139</sup>

Other newspapers reported the events adding few interpretations, aside from the PCP newspapers and its publications, which inevitably supported the government forces and even called upon the Palestinian Youth to volunteer to fight against the fascist right in Spain.

## INTER-ARAB RELATIONS AND THEIR REFLECTION IN THE PALESTINIAN PRESS DURING THE STRIKE

During the strike, attitudes in the newspapers reflected the split between the various groups regarding Palestine's role in the labyrinth of inter-Arab relations, and two major groups could be discerned. One group stressed local Palestinian nationalism with a certain affiliation to the Arab or Islamic world. This group consisted mainly of the newspapers: *Filastin*, *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* and *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim*. The second group stressed pan-Arabism or the idea of Greater Syria as an Arab entity. This group included the newspapers *al-Karmil*, *al-Difa'*, *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* and *al-Liwa*. However, it should be stated that this division did not remain constant throughout the strike, since the newspapers often changed their views or their priorities. Nevertheless, it is possible to indicate the sensitivity of the various sectors in the Palestinian press to events in neighbouring Arab countries, and their attentiveness to the involvement of these countries in Palestine.

On the eve of the Great Strike, *al-Liwa* often reviewed the struggle of the Syrians in achieving their independence from France. The newspaper did not hide its elation at the achievements of the national bloc in Syria, making such statements as: 'How should we not be joyful at the victory of our brothers the Syrians? Palestine is an inseparable and integral part of Syria and we are all fighting for its complete independence.'<sup>140</sup> Two weeks later, *al-Liwa* called upon Palestinian Arabs to take note of the events occurring in neighbouring Egypt and

Syria, saying that the Arabs in these two countries achieved what they did through the internal unity demonstrated by their leaders and the awakening of their young people. Finally the newspaper asked: 'What are the Palestinians waiting for? Why are they asleep? They too have leaders and young people.'<sup>141</sup>

*Al-Difa'*, with its pan-Arab tendencies, published a series of articles by the Istiqlali leader 'Ajaj Nuwayhid, entitled 'We want a treaty with Britain'. In this series Nuwayhid sketched the anticipated treaty modelled on the 1936 Anglo-Iraqi Treaty. However, he hoped that the treaty with the Palestinians would be final, with no intermediate stages, and with no recognition of any British rights in Palestine.<sup>142</sup>

The Arabic press welcomed the involvement of the leaders of Arab countries in ending the strike, and when it was over the newspapers rejoiced openly and praised Arab leaders for their role in mediating between Palestinian Arabs and Britain. On the day the strike ended *Filastin* published verses praising the struggle of the Palestinian Arabs and the Arab leaders who were sensitive to their struggle.<sup>143</sup>

*Al-Difa'* supported the mediation efforts of the Arab leaders that began in August 1936. The editor wrote:

The Palestinian problem is no longer a local problem, and thanks to Arab intervention it has become an international problem. Countries and Emirates treat our problem quite attentively, and Arab kings and princes give us their full attention ... We fully support this involvement and prefer that a solution be found with their help, and not in any other way. In addition, this is a wonderful step on the way to realizing Arab unity, and at the first possible opportunity the Jews will see this country forming part of the huge Arab homeland ... We applaud the efforts of the Arab leaders since this is their duty to God and to history.<sup>144</sup>

However, the optimism expressed by Ibrahim al-Shanti disappeared with the realization that Britain had not given anything in exchange for ending the strike. Instead of accusing the Arab leaders of misleading the Palestinians, he accused the Palestinian leadership of being unable to lead the people, and called for the election of a new leadership, for a national convention and for a national fund that would invest in the national struggle in a generous and well-planned manner.<sup>145</sup>

The newspaper *Filastin* waited longer to withdraw its support for the conclusion of the strike. It stressed the statements of Arab leaders regarding the Palestinian problem, in particular the statement made by



Emir Abdullah, who displayed an interest in Palestinian events after the strike ended. The newspaper perceived this interest as a realization of the Emir's wish for the resumption of normal life and prosperity in Palestine.<sup>146</sup> The newspaper also praised the support given by the Transjordan authorities to Qawiqji, commander of the rebellion forces, which had enabled him to leave Palestine in peace.<sup>147</sup>

*Al-Liwa*, mouthpiece of the Husaynis, also expressed support of the Arab leaders' actions and rejected the doubts voiced by some concerning Britain's readiness to provide benefits to the Arabs in return for ending the strike. The newspaper claimed that Britain must have examined the call made by Arab leaders before it was publicized, thus proving that it had decided to grant the Arabs some of their demands. This claim was also based on the words of the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the Palestinian delegation headed by Jamal al-Husayni. The secretary spoke of the need to put an end to the poor conditions suffered by the Arabs during the British rule and of discarding their concerns regarding the future of the country.<sup>148</sup>

However, the newspapers soon discovered that the anticipated change did not come. Their optimism faded and was replaced with unrestrained attacks against Britain, accusing it of treachery and dishonesty. It is interesting that the Arab leaders, who ostensibly conveyed the (nonexistent) British promises to the Arabs, were not openly criticized and blamed for the consequences.

#### NOTES

1. *Al-Mawsou'a al-Filastiniyya*, p. 442. For more details see: Khouri, pp. 91–3; 'Aqqad, pp. 149–50; *al-Waqa'i' al-Filastiniyya*, issue 582, appendix 2, 9 April 1936, p. 331, and issue 598, appendix 2, 28 May 1936, p. 535.
2. *Filastin*, 20 June 1936.
3. Khouri, p. 90.
4. Peel Commission, pp. 132–3.
5. Sulayman, 1988, pp. 117–8.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 114–5.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 116–7.
8. *Ibid.*
9. Asaf, 1967, p. 124.
10. *Filastin*, 25 April 1936.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*, 29 April 1936.
13. *Ibid.*, 1 May 1936.
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Ibid.*
16. See, for example, the issue published on 26 April 1936.
17. *Filastin*, 13 May 1936.
18. *Al-Difa'*, 30 April 1936.
19. Zu'aitir, 1980, p. 80.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 56.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 101.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 62.
23. *Filastin*, May 28, 1936.
24. *Ibid.*
25. See, for example, *ibid.*, 13 June 1936.
26. See, for example, *ibid.*, 16 August 1936.
27. *Ibid.*, 11 June 1936.
28. *Ibid.*
29. *Ibid.*, 28 May 36.
30. *Ibid.*, 13 July 1936.
31. *Ibid.*, 29 June 1936.
32. *Ibid.*, 11 June 1936.
33. It is difficult to translate the Arabic term '*tbuwwar*', as in the Hebrew sources these people were referred to as 'gangsters', while in the Arabic sources, among them of course the contemporary press, the events were referred to as '*tbawra*', meaning revolt.
34. See, for example, the issue published on 7 May 1936.
35. See, for example, the issue published on 26 July 1936.
36. *Filastin*, 27 July 1936.
37. *Ibid.*, 29 July 1936.
38. *Ibid.*, 9 August 1936.
39. *Ibid.*, 28 October 1936.
40. *Ibid.*, 6 November 1936.
41. *Ibid.*
42. *Ibid.*, 16 October 16, 1936.
43. *Ibid.*, 24 October 24, 1936.
44. *Ibid.*, 6 November 6, 1936.
45. *Ibid.*, 26 April 26, 1936.
46. *Ibid.*, May 1, 1936.
47. General Salah al-Din al-Sabbagh was one of the four influential generals affiliated with the Iraqi administration in the late 1930. They were known as the 'golden foursome'. Al-Sabbagh took part in Rashid 'Ali al-Kaylani's revolt in 1941, escaped to Iran, was caught and sentenced to death in 1945.
48. *Filastin*, 1 May 1936.
49. Interview with the journalist 'Ali 'Ashour, November 1994.
50. *Filastin*, 15 December 1936.
51. *Ibid.*, 10 December 1936.
52. *Ibid.*, 15 December 1936.
53. *Ibid.*, 8 December 1936.
54. *Ibid.*, 6 November 1936.
55. A village in the Jaffa district.
56. A village in the Ramle district.
57. *Filastin*, 4 December 1936.
58. *Ibid.*
59. *Ibid.*, 7 November 1936.
60. Report for 1933, pp. 16–17.
61. FO 371/20018: PAS no. 18/35.
62. FO 371/20018: PAS no. 19/36.
63. *Zu'aitir*, 1980, pp. 4–12.
64. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, 4 November 1935.
65. *Al-Karmil*, 4 November 1935.
66. See for example the newspaper *Habokir* from 4 November 1935, or the newspaper *Palestine Post* from 3 November 1935.
67. *Zu'aitir*, 1980, pp. 14–15.
68. Najjar, p. 8.
69. *Al-Waqa'i' al-Filastiniyya*, appendix 1, 19 March 1936.
70. Sulayman, 1988, p. 66.
71. *Al-Waqa'i' al-Filastiniyya*, 577, appendix 1, 19 March 1936.
72. *Filastin*, 13 August 1936.

73. Ibid.
74. Ibid., 17 June 1936.
75. Ibid., 26 July 1936.
76. Ibid., 16 August 1936.
77. Ibid., 26 May 1936.
78. Ibid., 12 June 1936.
79. *Al-Liwa*, 5 March 1936.
80. Ibid., 30 March 1936.
81. *Al-Difa'*, 17 December 1936.
82. See, for example, Khalla's book.
83. *Al-Sirat al-Mustaqim*, 6 October 1936.
84. *Al-Difa'*, 17 December 1936.
85. Ibid., 21 December 1936.
86. CO 733/346, p. 3.
87. Ibid., p. 7.
88. CO 733/346, p. 4.
89. For more on this see: Zu'aitir, 1980, pp. 198–230.
90. *Filastin*, 19 May 1936.
91. Ibid., 10 August 1936.
92. Ibid., 16 August 1936.
93. Ibid.
94. Ibid., 31 October 1936.
95. Ibid., 2 December 1936.
96. Ibid., 5 December 1936.
97. Ibid., 14 October 1936.
98. *Al-Liwa*, October 22, 1936.
99. *Filastin*, 23 October 1936.
100. Zu'aitir, 1980, p. 207.
101. CO 733/346, pp. 4–5.
102. Peel Commission, p. 368.
103. Ibid., p. 194.
104. E. Sasson, M. Nisani, memorandum on the Arabic press submitted to the Royal Commission, July 1937. CZA, S25/22051, p. 3.
105. *Filastin*, 13 October 1936.
106. Ibid., 25 October 1936.
107. Ibid., 11 December 1936.
108. Ibid., 12 December 1936.
109. See, for example, issues of *Filastin* from 1 November 1936 and 6 November 1936.
110. *Filastin*, 9 August 1936.
111. *Al-Waqa'i' al-Filastiniyya*, 607, appendix 2, 25 June 1936.
112. Shimoni, p. 408.
113. *Filastin*, 6 December 1936, p. 2.
114. Ibid., 6 September 1936, p. 3.
115. *Al-Difa'*, 18 March 1936.
116. Ibid., 9 December 1936.
117. CZA, S25/22051.
118. *Al-Difa'*, 12 March 1936.
119. Zifroni, interview, December 1995.
120. bid.
121. I heard Ahmad al-Shanti's testimony at his home in Jerusalem on May 24, 1994.
122. Gavriel Zifroni, interview, December 1995.
123. Ibid.
124. *Filastin*, 9 October 1936, p. 2.
125. Ibid., 12 May 1936.
126. Ibid., 5 January 1936.
127. *Mir'at al-Sbarq*, 14 October 1935.
128. *Al-Liwa*, 1 March 1936.
129. Ibid., 15 April 1936.
130. CZA, S25/220152.

131. *Al-Difa'*, 14 April 1936.
132. About this see: Asaf, 1970, pp. 284-5. Also Yehoshuwa, p. 97.
133. *ibid.*, p. 76.
134. Ya'qoub al-Ghusayn (1900-47) was born in Wadi Hnin in the Ramle region. He completed his higher studies in Izmir, Turkey, in 1932. He took part in the establishment of the Youth Congress Party and in 1936 became a member of the Arab Higher Committee. In 1946 he was elected as Mayor of Ramle, where he passed away unexpectedly a year later. For more details see: *al-Mawsou'a al-Filastiniyya*, pp. 633-34.
135. *Al-Liwa*, 16 February 1936.
136. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, 24 March 1936.
137. *Filastin*, 7 November 1936.
138. *Zu'aitir*, 1980, p. 69.
139. *Filastin*, 7 November 1936.
140. *Al-Liwa*, 5 March 1936.
141. *Ibid.*, 18 March 1936.
142. *Al-Difa'*, 12 November, 20 November, 2 December 1936.
143. *Filastin*, 12 October 1936.
144. *Al-Difa'*, 26 August 1936.
145. *Ibid.*, 11 October 1936.
146. *Filastin*, 1 November 1936.
147. *Ibid.*
148. *Al-Liwa*, 12 October 1936.

## *The Role of the Palestinian Press during the Revolt of 1936–39*

When the strike ended the political leadership resumed its control of the National Movement's operations, and the press was compelled to adapt itself to the direction determined by the leadership. Following the strike, the Arab armed bands rapidly became the leading force, controlling everyone, including the press, with an iron fist. Within this force a prominent social group emerged. This group comprised mainly peasants from the margins of Palestinian society who took advantage of the events as an opportunity to climb the ladder of social and political influence in Palestinian society.<sup>1</sup>

### THE PRESS OF THE PERIOD: AN OVERVIEW

During the years 1936–39 sixteen new newspapers were published. Some newspapers renewed their licenses after a lengthy break during the strike, although one prominent newspaper that did not renew its appearance was *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, which had served as the voice of the mufti and the High Muslim Council. The other prominent newspapers, such as *Filastin*, *al-Difa'*, *al-Karmil*, *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* and *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim*, continued to appear during this period.

Below follows a brief summary of the new newspapers that were published in this period.

*Al-Sarkba*: published in Jaffa, owned and edited by Muhammad Farid al-Shanti. This newspaper continued the newspaper *al-Khamis* formerly published by al-Shanti. In February 1937 it was named *al-Sarkba* ('The Shout'). The newspaper ceased to appear in November 1937, after being closed by the authorities.<sup>2</sup>

*Majalat al-Asbriya al-Sinama'iyya wa- Sinama*: A professional, weekly newspaper specializing in cinematic matters. Its owner and editor was Ibrahim Talhami. It was published in Jerusalem in English and Arabic. It first appeared in May 1937,<sup>3</sup> and ceased publication on 20 September 1946.<sup>4</sup>

*Wakalat al-Anba' al-'Arabiyya* ('The Arab News Agency'): Published in Jerusalem as a daily newspaper edited by Fu'ad Saba and Mousa Yunis al-Husayni.<sup>5</sup> The front page of the newspaper stated that it dealt with political, economic and social matters. Its inaugural issue was published on 2 November 1937.<sup>6</sup>

*Al-Haqiqa al-Musawwara*: Published in Acre in June 1937 as a weekly. Its owner was Muhammad Mustafa al-Ghandur and its editor was Kamal Ahmad 'Abbas. This newspaper did not last long and no more than five issues were published.<sup>7</sup>

*Sawt al-Ra'i al-'Am*: A newspaper published by Mustafa al-Ghandur and Kamal 'Abbas under the licence of *al-Haqiqa al-Musawwara*. Its first issue appeared in Acre on 9 December 1939. Its title-page stated that it dealt with matters concerning criticism, news, politics and cinema.<sup>8</sup>

*Misbah al-Haq*: A monthly that appeared in Jerusalem in early January 1938. Its owner and editor was L. Whitman, and it focused on Christianity.<sup>9</sup>

*Al-Labab*: Declared itself as a daily, but appeared once a week in Jerusalem beginning on February 1938. The newspaper was owned by Adib Khouri and its editor was the Egyptian journalist Yusuf Fransis. The newspaper's title-page declared: 'One homeland, one people and one leader.'<sup>10</sup> It did not appear for long and ceased publication in January 1939.<sup>11</sup>

*Al-Salam wa al-Khayr*: A Christian-Catholic religious newspaper that appeared in Jerusalem in 1937. In 1940 it moved to Nazareth, where it was edited by Nadim Bathish, then Deputy Mayor of Nazareth.<sup>12</sup> During its publication in Jerusalem the name of the editor was not mentioned; the newspaper's declared goal was to protect the sanctity of the land.<sup>13</sup>

*Al-Ghad*: Appeared weekly in Bethlehem, from April 1938.<sup>14</sup> Its owner and editor was Dawoud Tirzi. The newspaper focused mainly on literary matters.<sup>15</sup>

*Al-Hayat al-Riyadiyya*: Appeared in Jaffa and specialized in matters of sports, art and cinema. The newspaper's owner was Jamil 'Abd al-Ghani Shalali and its first editor was 'Ali Husayn al-As'ad. From November 1938 it was edited by 'Issa As'ad 'Aboud and in March 1939 he was replaced by Dr Muhammad Najib.<sup>16</sup>

*Bayt al-Maqdis*: A daily newspaper that appeared in Jerusalem in August 1938. Its owner was Bandali Mashour and its editor Sami Niqola Nasir. The title-page of *Bayt al-Maqdis* stated that it dealt with political, literary and news matters.<sup>17</sup> The newspaper appeared until September 1946, when it was suspended by the British authorities.<sup>18</sup>

*Aakbir Sa'ab*: A daily newspaper, appeared in Haifa in early October 1938.<sup>19</sup> The owner of the newspaper was Yusuf Sallum and its editor Anas al-Khamra.<sup>20</sup> In early February 1939 al-Khamra was replaced by Ibrahim Sa'adah.<sup>21</sup>

*Al-Jibad*: A daily newspaper, appeared in Jaffa in early February 1939. Its owner was Muhammad 'Abdullah al-Musallami and its editor was Najib al-Tayyib.<sup>22</sup> Yusuf Khouri cites Zu'aitir, claiming that the founder of the newspaper was actually the Lebanese journalist Najib Franjiyya and its editor 'Ali al-'Uri.<sup>23</sup> Ahmad al-'Aqqad states that the newspaper published only a small number of issues,<sup>24</sup> however, his estimates are incorrect, since the National Library in Jerusalem has over 100 issues (issues 89–190) This proves that the newspaper continued appearing until the outbreak of the Second World War. Yehoshuwa attributed to this publication Nazi and fascist tendencies, since it allocated an entire page to pictures describing the actions of the Italian and German governments.<sup>25</sup>

*Al-Fajr*: A weekly newspaper that appeared in Jaffa in early 1939. According to its licence the owner and editor were 'Issa As'ad 'Aboud and Mahmoud Sayf al-Din al-Irani,<sup>26</sup> however, 'Arif al-'Azouni and Zuhdi al-Saqqa also took part in the editing. This newspaper was the continuation of a previous newspaper of the same name that appeared in 1934 edited by Iskandar al-Halabi.<sup>27</sup>

*Nuzbat al-Talib*: A weekly newspaper that appeared in Jaffa in early 1939. Its owner was Mahmoud Sayf al-Din al-Irani and its editor 'Issa As'ad 'Aboud. The newspaper's front page stated that it dealt with educational and scientific issues.<sup>28</sup>

*Al-'Abd al-Jadid*: Appeared in Jaffa twice a week. The newspaper's owners were Zuhdi al-Saqqa, Muhammad Ya'ish, and Mustafa 'Abdu, and its editor was Muhammad Hasan Suwayd.<sup>29</sup> Its title-page stated that it dealt with literary, scientific and social matters.<sup>30</sup>

A look at the newspapers listed above reveals a number of features that were influenced by the times. The first of these is the increase in the number of newspapers published outside the two main centres of Jaffa and Jerusalem (two newspapers in Acre, one in Bethlehem and one in Nazareth). Although Jaffa and Jerusalem continued to serve as the prominent centres of the press, there was a distinct increase in the number of newspapers published in less central cities, for which there were two main causes: first – the increase in the number of literate people in the countryside and in smaller towns, and second – the rising influence of the peasants and villagers during the events of 1936–39.

The second feature is the rapid closure of new newspapers, a phenomenon that also had two major causes: first – the precarious economic situation in Palestine which was expressed, among other ways, in matters pertaining to the press, and second – and most important – the attempt made by many of the newspapers to appear daily. The publication of a daily newspaper is a complex undertaking and requires significant financial investment on a scale that most new newspapers were unable to afford. Usually the editor would begin by announcing that the newspaper would appear daily; but very quickly, after the initial enthusiasm had waned, it lapsed to once or twice a week, often disappearing completely after a few months. An example of this is the newspaper *al-Labab*. On the title-page of the newspaper's first issue its publishers declared that it was 'a free daily newspaper',<sup>31</sup> but in the editorial they said: 'At first we intended to publish this newspaper on a daily basis but various difficulties and problems have compelled us, at least temporarily, to publish it once a week until we raise the funds necessary for daily publishing.'<sup>32</sup>

#### NEWSPAPER CIRCULATION DURING THIS PERIOD

As we have said, during the strike the press reached the height of its influence on the course of events within the Palestinian National Movement. Newspapers reached record circulation rates and attained the highest number of issues printed during the British Mandate period.

The large newspapers, *al-Difa'* and *Filastin*, achieved new records of 5,000–8,000 copies during the first half of the 1930s and during the strike according to formal estimates, and even 10,000 copies, according to the testimony of people who worked for the newspapers.<sup>33</sup> These numbers later dropped to 2,000–4,000 copies,<sup>34</sup> with the circulation of weeklies and less significant newspapers at between 500 and 1,000 copies.<sup>35</sup> Najib Nassar, editor of *al-Karmil*, described the difficulties encountered by those working in this field:

In the past we printed 2,000 copies of this newspaper. Today we print no more than five hundred copies, although we do all the work ourselves. I personally edit the newspaper and my sons do the typesetting and send the newspaper to subscribers. Although we tighten our belts in order to economize, we have reached the stage that we cannot pay the rent on the house and the newspaper offices.<sup>36</sup>



One reason for the newspaper's unstable situation was its dependence on mail subscriptions. However, in the conditions created during 1937–39 following the actions of the armed bands, the delivery of newspapers to subscribers by mail and via messengers was severely disrupted. Subscribers were unable to pay on time and newspapers were on the brink of bankruptcy. The editor of *al-Karmil*, for example, appealed to those who had not paid their subscriptions:

We have a number of good reasons to ask you to pay your debts from 1938. The first reason is: We pay for paper and stamps in advance. The price of paper has risen by 12%. The second reason: We pay our workers' salaries every month. The third reason: We pay for ink and typesetting in advance. The fourth reason: We want to eat bread in return for our services to the homeland and our defence of the nation's rights. The fifth reason: To begin with we founded this newspaper in order to fight the dangers of the Jewish-oriented policy that is threatening Arabism and Islam, and you must appreciate this.<sup>37</sup>

Nassar's candour is surprising. This was the first (and perhaps last) time that a newspaper editor openly admitted in his newspaper that his national activity was aimed primarily at feeding himself and his family. He called upon the people, to whom he had devoted the activities of his newspaper, to express their consideration and to compensate him for these activities. Finally he cited the Lebanese philosopher Shibli Shumayl,<sup>38</sup> who said, 'If the nation you serve believed that you would benefit from its curses it would refrain from cursing you so that you would not benefit.'<sup>39</sup>

The drop in the newspapers' circulation during this period also stemmed from the dual pressures they endured – both from the British authorities, who increased censorship of the press, and from the armed bands, who wished to use the newspapers as an instrument to promote their efforts and their actions against the authorities in order to receive the readers' support. More than once newspapers published news items that they were later compelled to alter or completely retract under pressure from the censor, or they were forced to repeat the initial version a day later under pressure from the armed bands. In such circumstances the reliability of the press was questioned, and readers' trust diminished. These sentiments were reflected in the public appeals to the newspapers to present a more reliable picture. In addition, a number of the editors (among them 'Issa al-'Issa, editor of

*Filastin*) gained a bad reputation after fleeing the country and choosing life in exile rather than life under the patronage of the leaders of the armed bands, most of whom were of peasant origins. Surrendering to the dictates of these peasants was considered an insult to the honour and status of the urban notables, which is how many of the newspaper editors and owners saw themselves.

#### THE ATTITUDE OF THE PRESS TO THE LEADERSHIP OF HAJ AMIN, 1936-39

As previously mentioned, the Palestinian press was at the height of its power and influence during the Great Strike, at which time it filled a central role in the organization and direction of the strike. When the strike ended following the mediation of the leaders of Arab countries, and based on the professed promises of Britain to those leaders concerning a solution to the Palestinian problem, the press praised this move and commended the Arab leaders, the Palestinian leaders (in particular Haj Amin) and Britain's good intentions.<sup>40</sup> However, when faced with the British disposition after the strike had ended and their firm denials of the promises ostensibly given to the Arab leaders, these exultant feelings were replaced by deep disappointment. What had been praise turned into harsh denunciations and criticism directed at all involved, including the mufti and the Arab Higher Committee, when the press accused of naivety and political shortsightedness.<sup>41</sup>

*Filastin* called to purify the land from the sins of the past. It stated that the country's afflictions were God's punishment for these sins.<sup>42</sup> At the end of the appeal the newspaper said: 'Today we call upon God to guide our leaders in the correct direction and to counsel them to transform their policies, so that they will be worthy of the public's support and love.'<sup>43</sup>

During this period, Haj Amin kept his public appearances to a minimum and refrained from making political statements. His intention was clearly to avoid any conflict with the British authorities, who were lying in wait for his slightest mistake in order to have an excuse to depose him. He was inclined to reconcile with his rivals or at least create a harmonious atmosphere. His representatives participated in Emir 'Abdullah's meeting with representatives of the various political parties at the home of Hasan Sidki al-Dajani.<sup>44</sup>

*Filastin* expressed its support of this meeting and perceived it as a trust-building step towards achieving internal unity. In an article entitled

'Our vital need for unity', the editor expressed his enthusiasm over the atmosphere at the meeting and his hope that this atmosphere would persist and would strengthen the position of Palestinian Arabs.<sup>45</sup>

The newspaper was of the opinion that the express intention of the presence of representatives of all political parties at the meeting with Emir 'Abdullah was to make clear to the emir the unified position of Palestinian Arabs, on the eve of his trip to London and his speech before the British Parliament.<sup>46</sup> They hoped that by demonstrating their unity they would influence his message to the British leaders with whom he was supposed to meet, thus possibly influencing the final conclusions of the Royal Commission that had investigated the situation in Palestine and was then ready to publish its findings. *Filastin* described the Arabs' tension and vigilance in anticipation of the report that the commission was to publish on the anniversary of the beginning of the April 1936 events, and said: 'An entire year has passed since the events began and we are still marking time, confused and tense, and do not know what the Royal Commission will decide. We hope that the Commission's recommendations will reinstate peace and quiet in Palestine.'<sup>47</sup>

It should be stressed that *Filastin* was not the only one to advocate reconciliation with Britain, as the Mufti had done; *al-Difa'* and *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* expressed similar views., something that greatly angered the leaders of the political prisoners, who circulated a declaration signed by 250 prisoners from the prison in Mazra'ah, in which they called upon the Arab people to denounce the leadership's grovelling before the British and the indifference of the press.<sup>48</sup>

*Filastin* responded to the declaration in an editorial under the headline 'The press has not given up and is not disdainful. This is true only of the leadership.' In this article the editor said:

I would like to stress to our brothers the prisoners that the press has not shown any contempt and has not relinquished any of the Arab people's rights. We were the first to protest the leaders' participation in coronation celebrations held by the British authorities in Palestine. If our brother prisoners would understand the difficult situation of the press they would refrain from targeting it in their accusations.<sup>49</sup>

The newspaper also referred to the communication from Muhammad 'Izzat Darwaza, in which he claimed that the compliant views demonstrated by the press caused much suffering to both the

prisoners and the exiled. The editor's response to Darwaza was: 'He must refer his exhortations to the Arab Higher Committee of which he is a member. This committee exists only for formal purposes. It appears only at celebrations and does not take any practical steps unless compelled to do so by the public.'<sup>50</sup>

*Filastin* continued its attacks on the work of the Arab Higher Committee but never mentioned Haj Amin. In one editorial it accused members of the Higher Committee of leaking details of their meetings to the Jewish press and complained that these details were published the next day, while Arabic newspapers did not have access to this information and were only able to cite the time of the meeting and the names of the participants.<sup>51</sup> The newspaper stated that this happened repeatedly and therefore the leaders of the committee needed to investigate. At the time the newspapers belonging to the mufti's camp could not respond to the attacks in *Filastin* and the other opposition newspapers for two reasons: first, at that time the major newspapers in the Husayni camp were not being printed. *Al-Jami'a al-Arabiyya* had been closed and *al-Liwa* was under recurring suspensions by order of the British authorities. The other reason derived from the Mufti's wish to retain internal unity or at least the appearance of such unity, on the eve of the publication of the Royal Commission's recommendations.

The published recommendations both stunned and disappointed Palestinian Arabs. They had hoped for much more positive recommendations following the solicitation of British authorities by many Arab and Muslim leaders.<sup>52</sup> Even leaders known for their support of British policy and of the principle of partition, such as Raghīb al-Nashāshibi, disagreed with the commission's recommendations,<sup>53</sup> and even attacked Emir 'Abdullah, whom they perceived as hastening to support the partition plan recommended by the commission.<sup>54</sup> The Arab Higher Committee's objections to partition were supported by the press and by leaders known for their traditional opposition, such as Sheikh As'ad al-Shuqayri of Acre, whose city was included in the partition plan's proposed Jewish state.

The press published the reaction of the Arab Higher Committee and its objections to the partition and appealed to Arab and Muslim leaders to join in these objections in order to preserve the sanctity of the land and prevent its partition.<sup>55</sup> On this occasion the mufti was very careful and reserved in his responses, although the British authorities held him responsible for organization of the violent acts and support of the armed bands. A head-on clash between the mufti and the authorities was only a question of time. It occurred with the murder of the

Acting British Commissioner of the Galilee District, Lewis Andrews, on 26 September 1937, after Sunday prayers at the churches of Nazareth.

Following Andrews' murder, the mufti was relieved of all his duties.<sup>56</sup> The Arab Higher Committee was declared an illegal organization and most of its members were arrested and deported to the Seychelles. The remaining members fled the country and injunctions were issued prohibiting their return.<sup>57</sup> The authorities also forbade any activity of the popular committees. Thus Palestinian Arabs were left without political leadership, after learning of the mufti's escape from his hiding place at al-Haram al-Sharif to Lebanon where he settled under the watchful eyes of the French Mandate authorities.<sup>58</sup> The British did not stop at disbanding the leaders, they also suspended publication of most of the newspapers for a week and of some for longer. During this time the public relied mainly on rumours for information on the next steps to be taken by the Mandate government. When the newspapers finally reappeared, their main theme was the confusion felt by the Palestinian public following the harsh steps taken by the government, and the deportation of the senior leadership, headed by the mufti. Raghib al-Nashashibi did not take advantage of the mufti's absence, publishing only a reserved protest against the government's acts.<sup>59</sup>

The mufti's distinction as exclusive leader of the Palestinian National movement intensified after he was deposed by the British and fled to Lebanon. This is contrary to Yehoshuwa Porat's claim, based on British archival sources, that 'the flight of Amin al-Husayni damaged his status in Palestine and elsewhere since it was considered an act of cowardice'.<sup>60</sup>

If we perceive the press as a means of expressing contemporary Palestinian sentiments, we find that the traditional opponents of the mufti in the press, headed by the newspaper *Filastin*, which was long considered the journal of the mufti's opponents, displayed their support of him, stating that he was their sole leader and that his acts embodied the wishes of the Palestinian people. 'Issa al-'Issa wrote in an editorial:

All Palestinian Arabs are united in their hearts, with no political or ethnic differences. If an individual or a group suffer for the good of the homeland, the entire homeland suffers with them. Some of our leaders have been taken from us. They have been distanced from us but this brought them closer to our hearts. We

must turn our minds, our hearts and our feelings to one of these leaders. We must show him that we all feel as he does, and that in his person he embodies the whole nation.<sup>61</sup>

*Filastin* continued its reconciliatory attitude towards Haj Amin and his policies in its appeal to unite under his leadership. In a subsequent editorial it rejected the British distinction between 'moderates' and 'radicals' in Palestinian society and said:

When speaking of the Palestinian problem there are no moderates or radicals. We have rejected the partition plan and we will fight any idea or attempt to propose partition, as partition is a national disaster. No Arab who appreciates the national 'stake' will consent to negotiate on partition.<sup>62</sup>

A day after the article appeared, the editor boasted of the great impression it had made. In addition to the views presented in the article he stated that 'the Arabs must take the position of a unified nation and none of its sons may negotiate independently ... Egypt's recent negotiations that led to its independence must serve as an example for us.'<sup>63</sup> The question was who the newspaper meant by the 'sons' who were trying to hold separate negotiations with Britain. These were probably a few members of the defence party who were accused of holding secret negotiations with Britain on the nature of the partition. The newspaper published denials by prominent leaders of the *Mu'arada* camp concerning their involvement in negotiations. For example, Sheikh As'ad al-Shuqayri and Sheikh 'Abdullah al-Jazzar denied supporting of the partition plan.<sup>64</sup>

*Filastin* adhered to this view throughout the events. In order to distance the newspaper from any political affiliation, editor 'Issa al-'Issa published an announcement annulling his membership in the National Defence party headed by Raghīb al-Nashashibi. He explained this move by saying: 'At this time, when Palestine is nearing a solution and a single unified front is conducting negotiations, I believe that there is no further justification for the existence of political parties, and therefore I have decided not to belong to any single party. My newspaper and I will act in the service of the nation and for the good of the public.'<sup>65</sup> *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, known as an opposition paper, also modified its views of Haj Amin. It described the country after his departure as 'a ship in a storm with no captain to lead it to safety'.<sup>66</sup> The editor asked ironically: 'For whom are Palestinian Arabs waiting? Are they

waiting for a captain who will drop from heaven and save the drowning ship?<sup>67</sup>

*Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* was not as consistent as *Filastin* in its views of Haj Amin. Its attitude was volatile. However, the hostility it displayed was distinctly diminished in comparison to the period before Haj Amin was deposed and left the country. The transition in the views of Haj Amin's opponents towards him may be illustrated by a letter sent by Akram Zu'aitir to his eldest brother 'Adel. The brother was surprised at the change in Akram's views. Zu'aitir replied in a letter to his brother dated 17 January 1938:

I want to explain something that is causing you some distress: My attitude to Haj Amin today is essentially different than in the past. I previously criticized him when he was serving as President of the High Muslim Council. At the time I thought that he was leading the National Movement in a way that was tolerant of the British position. I criticized him also because he trusted only a limited number of people who had special relations with him. However, now Haj Amin is pursued by the British authorities. They have relieved him of all his duties and he is a target of English and Jewish attacks and has no role that might influence the course of events. He acts for the good of Palestine with an enthusiasm that satisfies me. I do not hesitate to cooperate with him. Moreover, I thank him for trusting me to execute many tasks for the good of the homeland. I have a clear conscience. Haj Amin is at present the only person to whom the Arabs direct their wishes, and under the existing conditions anyone devoted to the homeland can only cooperate with him or stand by idly.<sup>68</sup>

Even the press that was considered part of the Husayni camp helped to create an atmosphere that supported the mufti as the exclusive leader of Palestinian Arabs. The newspaper *al-Lahab*, edited by Yusuf Fransis, displayed the slogan: 'One homeland, one people and one leader' on its front page.<sup>69</sup> In its first issue it said that the Palestinian National movement had achieved significant goals in its struggle against Britain and the Jews as a result of the great efforts of its devoted leaders.<sup>70</sup>

*Al-Liwa*, which renewed its appearance in early 1938 after being suspended by the authorities in early October 1937, told of an English-Jewish plot aimed at disrupting the reliability and the good reputation of Haj Amin among his people. It said:

The Mandate government, comprised of an English body and a Jewish mind, thought that by examining the documents of the Higher Muslim Council it could destroy the authority of the country's leader and its trustee [*za'im al-bilad wa'amaniba*]. However, the auditors hid their faces in shame when they were forced to declare that all was in order and that the stake was secure.<sup>71</sup>

The newspaper declared that if the government had wished to encourage a new leadership by deposing the mufti and deporting the other leaders, its wishes and hopes had been dashed, since the nation did not and would not recognize any new leadership.<sup>72</sup>

*Sawt al-Sha'b* was the only newspaper that called to establish a new Arab leadership to replace the dismantled Higher Committee. It said that the leaders who remained in the country were immobilized and that they were suffering from spiritual bankruptcy.<sup>73</sup> The newspaper answered those claiming that new leaders could not fill the void left by the departure of the senior leadership, and said: 'The real leader is he who takes the reins in his hands in a time of crisis. Will it go down in history that not a single Palestinian Arab strode forward to lead the nation in these dark days?'<sup>74</sup> These strong words aroused the fury of Haj Amin's supporters among the armed bands, and they attacked the editor, threatened his life, finally causing him to flee the country until the revolt waned in 1939.<sup>75</sup>

*Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* tried to hint at the shortcomings of the Palestinian National movement and said: 'The new Commission will be arriving soon, and if the people, institutions and individuals, are asked for their opinion on certain issues, will they remain silent and not say a word? If each person says what he likes it will be the end of the nation.'<sup>76</sup> It then went on to say:

There is need for thorough consideration in order to shape a uniform opinion that will represent the views of a majority of the citizens. It is necessary to hold a general convention that will determine the views of the Arab public on the Palestinian issue. This convention must take place as quickly as possible before the situation worsens.<sup>77</sup>

However, this newspaper, probably under pressure from the supporters of Haj Amin, rapidly changed its views and began promoting the idea that any viable solution to the Palestinian problem had to have Haj Amin's blessing. The newspaper later declared that the Arab Higher



Committee represented Palestinian Arabs and that any attempt to involve other organizations or people in the negotiations was doomed.<sup>78</sup>

The newspaper that tried to encourage the Arab public and raise its morale was *al-Difa'*. Ibrahim al-Shanti wrote in an editorial:

There is no justification for the nation's despondency. Those who despair of life cannot perform even the most trivial duties. They must always be hopeful. Other nations who are alive today also suffered and the clouds that covered their skies passed and morning shone bright. We have been on the road a long time, and those who advance will reach their goal. There is an end to every road. We will live to see Palestine enjoy full liberty.<sup>79</sup>

Al-Shanti sought to calm the public and said that the solution to the Palestinian problem was closer than ever. He also told his readers that with the intercession of Arab leaders Britain would reinstate the exiled leaders in order to negotiate with them about the future of the country.<sup>80</sup>

*Al-Difa'* displayed a positive attitude towards Haj Amin, similar to most other Palestinian newspapers of the time. A reporter for the newspaper was permanently assigned to the town of Zuq Mikayil, where Haj Amin chose to live after leaving Palestine. *Filastin* and *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* also stationed reporters there. At the time the opposition was silent, and not one newspaper of those that continued to appear in Palestine could be identified as an opposition newspaper. Most of the newspapers either sympathized with Haj Amin's actions or remained silent, and instead of concentrating on the Palestinian issue they discussed international affairs, literary affairs or matters of faith.

#### REACTIONS OF THE PRESS TO THE ARMED BANDS, 1937-39

When the Arab armed bands first initiated their violent acts, their members were favoured and celebrated by the Arab public. However, when the violent acts increased the British censor tightened its control of the newspapers and forbid them to report these acts.<sup>81</sup> The Office of the Censor would publish a uniform formal report and order the newspapers to publish it. In these cases the members of the bands were described as 'hooligans' (*ashqiyā'*), 'terrorists' (*mukbarribun*) and law breakers. In order to inform the reader that these were not the newspaper's terms, the newspaper would clearly state at the head of the formal report that it had been given to the editor by the British censor.<sup>82</sup>

Any newspaper that refused to publish the formal report or tried to alter it would be suspended immediately and for a lengthy period, as was the case with *al-Liwa*, that was suspended from October 1937 until January 1938 by order of the Office of the Censor.<sup>83</sup> However, the press deviated from the censor's directions in its depiction of the affair of the arrest and execution of Sheikh Farhan al-Sa'adi, leader of the band that called itself 'Brothers of al-Qassam' (*Ikbwan al-Qassam*), perceived by many to be the successor of 'Iz al-Din al-Qassam. He was arrested on 22 November 1937, in his village al-Mazar, in the district of Jenin. The authorities declared that Farhan al-Sa'adi would be tried by a military tribunal, and everyone predicted that he would be sentenced to death.

In the short period between his arrest and execution the press operated on two levels: First, it depicted sheikh al-Sa'adi as a tortured national hero, and second, it appealed to the authorities to lighten his sentence. The hero's aura was created in part by mentioning the Sheikh's advanced age, over eighty. The newspapers also stressed that the trial was being held during the Fast of Ramadan, thus violating the sanctity of the month and basic human rights.<sup>84</sup> The manager of *al-Difa'*, Shawkat Hammad, was present at al-Sa'adi's trial and described it in detail. He expressed his admiration of the sheikh's composure on hearing his death sentence.<sup>85</sup>

The newspapers also directed various appeals and memorandums to the British government and the High Commissioner in an attempt to have al-Sa'adi's sentence reduced. Under the title 'Humane appeal' *al-Difa'* wrote:

We hereby appeal to the British government to commute Sheikh Farhan's sentence from death to imprisonment. This will lead to the peace and quiet that the government so wishes for and is working to achieve. The sheikh's advanced age, his status and his public support, all justify commuting his sentence.<sup>86</sup>

The newspaper explained its request and said: 'This country does not need any more acts that will increase the pain and bitterness. The Arab people now look to General Wavell, expecting him to change the verdict. This move would have a significant effect on Arab public opinion.'<sup>87</sup> The newspaper ended in a threatening tone, saying that the government had better cancel the verdict if it wished to maintain general security.<sup>88</sup>

*Filastin* published the memorandum sent by Raghib al-Nashashibi, President of the Defence party (the most senior leader remaining in

Palestine), to the military governor of Palestine, General Wavell, requesting a reduction of Sheikh al-Sa'adi's sentence.<sup>89</sup> *Filastin* mentioned other organizations that protested the sentence to the British authorities, such as the Arab Women's Association and the Arab Attorneys' Association in Palestine and Emir 'Abdullah in Transjordan.<sup>90</sup>

In an editorial *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* also requested that Sheikh al-Sa'adi's sentence be reduced and that his advanced age and the sanctity of the month of Ramadan be taken into consideration.<sup>91</sup> Thus, the newspapers spoke of Sheikh al-Sa'adi's age, his public stature and his public support, but did not praise the acts attributed to him. In most cases they even tended to underestimate the severity of the accusations against him and said that he was only accused of the illegal possession of weapons. The British authorities did not heed to these calls and carried out the death sentence, provoking furious reactions among Palestinian Arabs and in the newspapers. Despite the efforts of the latter to display restraint in their reactions, some of them were suspended.

Another issue occupying the Palestinian press during the events of 1937–39 was the battle of the armed bands against those who collaborated with the authorities, or whom they thought to be collaborators, or who were accused in public of performing actions contrary to 'the national interests'.

At first the press did not judge the acts of retribution performed by members of the armed bands or members of the popular committees who acted on their behalf. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, for example, reported that 'the car of a young traitor was set on fire'. It continued and said: 'Anonymous individuals set on fire a car belonging to Zayn "formerly" al-Husayni that was parked in front of his house.'<sup>92</sup> The newspaper explained that the word 'formerly' resulted from an announcement made by the man's family (the al-Husayni family), and voiced by Jamal al-Husayni, that 'it renounced the youth since he sold land to Jews during the strike'.<sup>93</sup>

However, with the deposing of Haj Amin and the deportation of most of the senior leaders, the bands' acts of violence increased, even against leaders who displayed signs of 'moderation', such as Hasan Shukri, Mayor of Haifa, and Sulayman Tuqan, Mayor of Nablus, who was shot by an unknown assailant in mid-December 1937 near the village Talluza.<sup>94</sup> When the editor of *Filastin* visited the home of Sulayman Tuqan he denounced the assassination attempt on behalf of all residents of Jaffa and called for the immediate cessation of such acts.<sup>95</sup> *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* appealed to all Palestinians and said:

Oh Palestinians! Do not destroy your home with your own hands. Oh people! Is not the fear of God in your hearts? Do you not fear the Day of Judgement? Are you not ashamed of the acts of our generation? The country is full of constant animosity, and the Arabs are responsible for most of it. The country is full of thievery, robbery and assassinations. Even our enemies did not wish this on us. Who gains from all these actions? Only the enemies. Who ensures that the spirit of revenge will not awaken among the injured and the animosity will not encounter counter-animosity, and only Allah knows what these actions will lead to. Oh Muslims and Arabs! Fear God and remember the homeland. Do not destroy your homes with your own hands and do not be the curse of future generations ... Repent from these deeds.<sup>96</sup>

The newspaper reiterated this message in the hope that by appealing to the conscience of those committing the assassinations and the violence it would succeed in convincing them to cease these actions. However it apparently did not make much impression on the band members. Later the newspaper reported that many people targeted by the bands had appealed to the British authorities to provide them with weapons for purposes of self-defence.<sup>97</sup>

*Filastin*, in contrast, empathized with the peasants who were tortured by everyone, on the one hand by the government and on the other hand by the rebels. It said: 'The government tortures them at every suspicious sign and the rebels attack them at every attempt to help the government that is incapable of guarding their lives.'<sup>98</sup> At the end of the article the newspaper appealed to the government to refrain from forcing the peasants to search for suspects.<sup>99</sup> The newspaper became more hostile when armed bands, composed mainly of peasants, began intruding on the urban sector and terrorizing citizens. This process reached its climax in August 1938, when the peasant rebels asked the city people to wear peasant head coverings (*kufiyas* and *'iqals*). Anyone who did not obey the rebels' instructions and dared to wear a fez on the streets of Jaffa was beaten and humiliated by rebel agents.<sup>100</sup> Later these directives were also enforced in Haifa, Gaza and Majdal.<sup>101</sup>

The newspaper *al-Akbbar* was annoyed that shopkeepers took advantage of the circumstances and raised the price of *kufiyas*. He called upon those responsible to prevent overcharging.<sup>102</sup>

Many people living in the cities perceived these actions as humiliating and chose to flee to Syria and Lebanon. Among them were senior

newspaper editors, such as 'Issa al-'Issa, editor of *Filastin*, and 'Issa al-Bandak, editor of *Sawt al-Sha'b*.<sup>103</sup> These two newspapers continued to appear nonetheless, although they were obliged to refrain from criticizing the actions of the armed bands. In certain cases *Filastin* referred positively to the leaders of the revolt, for example, when using the title 'valiant leader'<sup>104</sup> to denote the general commander of the revolt, Abd al-Rahim al-Haj Muhammad<sup>105</sup> from the village of Dinabe, who was killed in a battle with the British at the village of Sanur.

The praises heaped on 'Abd al-Rahim and the condemnation of those who informed the British of his whereabouts, indicated the newspaper's new tendency to side with the rebels, and in particular with the position of Haj Amin, and to support almost total separation from the *Mu'arada* camp. The members of this camp operated in opposition to the rebels, and inspired by the British they founded new armed bands called 'peace bands' (*Fasa'il al-Salam*). Fakhri al-Nashashibi, who organized the *Mu'arada* activities against the revolt, was treated in a hostile manner by most of the newspapers, and he was described as 'rebelling against the national consensus' (*kbawarij 'an ijma' al-'umma*). *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, usually affiliated with the *Mu'arada* camp, also withdrew its support from this camp, albeit more mildly than *Filastin*. It referred to the rebels as 'members of armed bands' (*afrad jama'at musallab*)<sup>106</sup> and not as rebels (*shurwar*) as did most of the other newspapers who were 'rewarded' by many days of suspension. *Filastin* appeased the members of the bands by holding the British government responsible for the country's troubles, as it encouraged acts of violence within Palestinian society.<sup>107</sup>

It should be stated that it was not only newspapers that withdrew their support of the *Mu'arada*. Prominent people in this camp, who symbolized the opposition to Haj Amin, tended to compromise with his views and even to adapt themselves to the deeds of the armed bands and comply with their requests. *Al-Difa'* emphasized the initiative of attorney Mughannam Mughannam, Secretary of the Nashashibi Defence party, who assembled the Arab attorneys in his Jerusalem home to protest the British prohibition against wearing *Kufiyahs* and 'iqals. They appealed to the British chief justice, petitioning for the cancellation of the order of the British courts that prevented Arab attorneys from entering the courts in a *kufiyah* and 'iqal.<sup>108</sup>

The decline in support for the *Mu'arada* camp and the displays of support for Haj Amin and his men in the field derived mainly from the apprehension of editors and journalists, who feared the band members. The newspapers distinguished between actions aimed at the British

authorities or at the Jews and violent deeds performed within Palestinian society. Actions against the British authorities and against the Jews were supported by the newspapers, directly or indirectly, while acts of violence within Palestinian society were ignored by the press (aside from certain cases, for example the assassination attempt on Sulayman Tuqan, which was denounced by all the newspapers).

*Al-Karmil* was the only newspaper that criticized all violent acts within Palestinian society, no matter who the initiators. In an article entitled 'Don't judge the homeland by the sins of its sons' Najib Nassar said:

When visiting some Palestinian towns I felt that a certain group of people have feelings of resentment and vengefulness towards the homeland, since some of its sons doubted their loyalty and even treated them rudely. I was surprised to find that this is the opinion of intelligent people with long-term vision. I do not understand what the homeland did that these people are punishing it. Some of its sons had mistaken intentions or meant to harm others, but the homeland belongs to everyone, and all its sons have the same rights.<sup>109</sup>

At the end of the article Nassar appealed to those who were injured by acts performed by others in the name of nationalism and said: 'Anyone injured by acts performed in the name of the homeland must love the homeland even more, and be prepared to defend it and to display more determination in its service. They must make those who harmed them ashamed of their deeds. They must compete with the others' devotion and resolve to serve the homeland.'<sup>110</sup>

#### THE CALL FOR NATIONAL SOLIDARITY AND TO IMPROVE THE PALESTINIAN IMAGE

During the revolt, and particularly in its last stages, when Palestinian society was rife with acts of violence and internal conflicts, the press had an increasing role in combating these occurrences and in advocating national unity. The newspapers concentrated their efforts on three main areas:

1. Increasing solidarity between Muslims and Christians.
2. Combating social ailments and advocating help for the needy.
3. Objecting to the sale of land to Jews.

*Increasing solidarity between Muslims and Christians*

The issue of the relationship between Muslims and Christians in Palestinian society occupied the Palestinian press from time to time, in particular following outbreaks of religious-based struggles or debates. In early January 1937 such an outbreak occurred, in response to a manifest distributed in many areas signed by 'the flag-bearers of al-Qassam' (*Hamilu rayat al-Qassam*). The manifest referred to Christian involvement in the Palestinian national struggle and their inclination to reach some form of reconciliation with Britain.<sup>111</sup>

*Filastin* attacked this manifest and described its originators as agents of Zionism and colonialism whose goal it was to create conflict between the nation's two communities.<sup>112</sup> The newspaper published denouncements by different organizations. For example, it published a denouncement by the National Committee of Bethlehem and by the Islamic Sports Club of Jaffa,<sup>113</sup> as well as reactions of Muslims who objected to the accusations made about the Christians. At first the newspaper published an article by Sheikh As'ad al-Shuqayri, who appealed to the writers of the manifest:

Oh writers of the manifest. The Christians are our protégés, their responsibilities are our responsibilities and their rights are our rights. We must protect them under God and his messenger and the Muslim kings and princes who bestowed our protection on them. Who gave you the right to violate these sacred promises? Who gave you permission? Oh writers of the manifest! The Christians did not try to turn this sacred country into their national homeland and did not buy agricultural lands with the aim of settling them, and did not accumulate weapons in their homes. Why are you operating futilely? If the Zionists led you astray you must return to the truthful way and ask God's forgiveness for this act.<sup>114</sup>

Later the newspaper published an article by Sulayman Tuqan, Mayor of Nablus, in which he testified that he had received the manifest by mail and that he perceived it as a 'cowardly conspiracy aimed at distorting the face of the nation'.<sup>115</sup> The newspaper also published the reaction of Muhammad al-Qassam, son of Sheikh 'Iz al-Din al-Qassam, in which he said:

The manifest is intended to harm this country and its sons by

sowing amongst them seeds of discord. This is not commensurate with the principles upheld by my late father 'al-Qassam' for which he sacrificed his soul. On my behalf and on behalf of my father the martyr [*shahid*] I ask the members of our Arab nation, Muslims and Christians, to ignore these manifests and to treat them with contempt, and thus they will maintain their brotherhood and their unity. Only this will appease the spirit of al-Qassam and allow it peace and quiet.<sup>116</sup>

These reactions helped calm matters and the affair abated. The testimony of Bishop Hajjar before the Royal Commission also contributed to this, in particular when he aimed accusations at the Jews, using quotes from the New Testament and the Koran. This led Sheikh 'Abdullah al-Qalqili, editor of *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim* and one of those who had previously embraced Muslim claims against the Christians, to write an article praising the testimony of Bishop Hajjar and its contribution to Palestinian unity amongst both Christians and Muslims.<sup>117</sup> Al-Qalqili said that this testimony was all the more important as it came from one of the greatest Palestinian Christians of all time.<sup>118</sup>

The tensions between Muslims and Christians stemming from the manifest ebbed, but they erupted again following the affair in which the Maronite Bishop of Lebanon, Bishop Mubarak, praised Zionism and called upon the Jews to come to Lebanon.<sup>119</sup> This utterance aroused angry reactions on all levels, and the newspapers called for a boycott of the Maronite recreational towns in Lebanon.<sup>120</sup> *Filastin* published these reactions, in particular those of Christian and Muslim clerics, such as Sheikh As'ad al-Shuqayri and Bishop Hajjar.<sup>121</sup>

The newspaper that was accused most of attempting to generate ethnic-based tensions between Muslims and Christians was Sheikh al-Farouqi's *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*.<sup>122</sup> The newspaper voiced many complaints against the Christians, in particular regarding national activities, the burden of which was carried by Muslims, while the Christians enjoyed the fruit of their efforts. In an article entitled 'The ethnic clubs' the editor wrote:

Each of the ethnic groups of our Christian brothers has a club where they convene. It is nice to see the club members visit each other and reinforce their affection and close relations. However, it would be nicer if these clubs were to permit non-Christian members just as the Muslims happily admit non-Muslim members to their clubs. Seclusion is not a very favourable trait.<sup>123</sup>



Here the writer criticizes Christian clubs that did not accept Muslim members, leading to numerous complaints by Muslims and to a rekindling of the issue of ethnic tension between Muslims and Christians on the public agenda. However, this affair did not lead to a crisis, as signs heralding the Second World War had begun appearing on the horizon, diverting all attention from trivial internal matters to the international arena.

*Combating social ailments and advocating help for the needy*

In this period many newspapers dealt with the difficult living conditions of the Palestinian public and with the prevalent debauchery and corruption. The newspapers were of the opinion that this was a result of the policy of the British Mandatory government in Palestine. *Filastin*, for example, believed that the phenomenon of Arabs 'informing' on their (Arab) brothers to the Mandate authorities was a consequence of Britain's announcement of the establishment of military courts. It added that 'the informers not only provide the authorities with information about the existence of weapons in a certain house, but also plot against the innocent'.<sup>124</sup> The newspaper ended by warning the authorities that the corruption would spread if the military courts continued to issue verdicts without attending to the 'psychological impacts' of their judgements.<sup>125</sup>

When the second wave of the revolt began, in mid-1938, the newspapers' reports of social hardship became more serious and dismal. *Al-Difa'* reported that poverty was widespread.<sup>126</sup> *Mir'at al-Sharq* said that many Arab businesses had closed down due to the difficult economic situation and pervasive poverty.<sup>127</sup> *Al-Difa'*, similar to *Filastin*, said that these hardships were a result of the government's policy and that only the government could improve and amend the situation. In an article entitled 'The public's demands of the government' *al-Difa'* said: 'The people have a legitimate right to ask the government to be more attentive to the economic situation in Palestine. This situation requires the government's thorough intervention, which may have a significant effect in our small country.'<sup>128</sup> The newspaper editor, Ibrahim al-Shanti, wrote a great deal at the time about the implications of the harsh economic situation for the public's moral values. He said that the public's financial difficulties and their feelings of subjugation and humiliation would probably lead to the corruption of ethics and integrity.<sup>129</sup> *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* also joined those accusing the government of aggravating the living conditions of the population and said:

'The government's policy is the source of all disaster. It has had a negative effect on all areas of our lives and has shaken our good faith.'<sup>110</sup>

However, the press did not aim its accusations only at the government. It also tried to place some of the blame upon the Palestinian public, whose behaviour contributed to the corruption. In an article entitled 'Card games and wine drinking instead of constructive lectures and gatherings', *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* wrote:

Oh young man! You can do as you wish but remember that the homeland, the faith and the nation, have rights. The situation is indeed very difficult and people are depressed, therefore there is a need for nerves of steel. Who has such nerves if not the young? Our rights will not be realized by public card games and wine drinking. You must attend the cultural and sports clubs. Only they can strengthen the ties between the young and provide them with spiritual power that may serve as the helm that will lead the ship of the homeland, the faith and the nation to a safe harbour.<sup>111</sup>

*Al-Difa'* attacked the roulette games that had resurfaced after disappearing for a few years. He perceived this game as an expression of moral 'bankruptcy', particularly in light of the current difficult economic conditions.<sup>112</sup>

The editor of *al-Karmil* called upon the people to search their souls in order that they might arrive at the reasons for the moral decline within Palestinian society. He said:

The merchant makes a daily tally of his profits and losses. The labourer makes a weekly reckoning, the clerk makes a monthly reckoning and the peasant makes a seasonal reckoning, etc. We Arabs must make a reckoning of the twenty years that have passed since the First World War and what we have lost in our national activities and in our general interests. I personally think that our profit was minimal and our losses huge. Before the war we felt as one Arab nation and people among us acted in favour of nationalism [*Qawmiyya*] and the homeland [*watan*]. Many appreciated the work of these people, and we had high hopes for realizing our national aspirations. However, today our standing has been reduced and our future as a united nation is in danger. The number of those acting for the good of nationalism and of the homeland has been reduced and the people's appreciation for them has been diminished. The faith of the devoted workers has

been shaken and they have begun to turn a significant part of their efforts and thoughts to ensuring their future, or to be exact, their existence. This instead of utilizing their time in the service of the homeland and of its citizens. 133

During the second half of 1939, when the social and economic hardships were keenly felt, *al-Karmil* stressed the prevalent corruption and connected the economic deterioration to the moral deterioration. In an editorial written by Najib Nassar, entitled 'Our lives are intertwined with our ethics and our economy' he said:

We will never have a national entity if we lack morals. We will not realize any of our rights as long as our character remains as it is. We never believed that moral corruption would overcome our remaining goodness, until we saw the results of a market that trades in lies, flattery, jealousy and animosity. Oh my nation! Everything that we have suffered and that we are suffering is a result of our corrupted ethics. We must reform our ethics if we wish to continue living. Each of us should start with himself ... School teachers must reform themselves in order to serve as an example to their pupils, and religious preachers must serve as an example for everyone else through their acts, and not only their words.<sup>134</sup>

Nassar tried to recruit the clerics to his war against corruption. Two weeks after this article appeared he published the contents of a conversation he had with one of the Muslim *'alim*. The *'alim* said: 'The difficult events that the nation has experienced of late have on the one hand weakened the faith of many people and on the other served as a declaration of war on Arab ethics and tradition. Teachers must be aware of these facts and must attend to them.'<sup>135</sup> Faced with these difficulties, the press indicated weaknesses and acted to correct them. The newspapers targeted the most disadvantaged levels of society and called for the improvement of their living conditions and for their employment. They also called upon the rich to help the poor and upon society to help the needy. The editor of *al-Karmil* believed that by identifying weaknesses and attending to them appropriately it would be possible to extract the Palestinian Arab society from its severe difficulties.<sup>136</sup>

*Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* saw no sliver of hope as long as no one devoted to the homeland was active in the field.<sup>137</sup> *Al-Difa'* was more optimistic than the other newspapers and it apparently advocated a more

local method of treatment. For example, it concentrated on the stevedores of the Port of Jaffa and the urgent need to improve their working conditions.<sup>138</sup> *Al-Difa'* also referred to the matter of rents, which were arousing severe public conflicts due to the difficult economic situation and the inability of tenants to make payments. It suggested solving the problem through third-party arbitration, with consideration for the financial difficulties of most of the citizens.<sup>139</sup> Another problem referred to by the editor of *al-Difa'* almost every day in his editorial was the rental of citrus groves and the agricultural loans given by the government to the farmers.<sup>140</sup> Speaking of loans, the editor called upon the government to lower interest rates so that farmers would be able to make payments, thus preventing the gradual destruction of the citrus industry.<sup>141</sup> The newspaper also called upon the larger citrus growers, who leased their groves to the farmers, to show consideration for current conditions and to forfeit some of the debts owed them in order to help the lessees overcome their troubles.<sup>142</sup> After publishing this plea, the newspaper began publishing letters from the major citrus growers who consented and reduced significant sums from the leasing fees owed by the lessees.<sup>143</sup>

Regarding the conflicts that arose in the villages following the acts of hostility and violence committed during the revolt, *al-Difa'* called for the establishment of committees that would attempt to solve the conflicts between village clans, in order to resume a normal course of life.<sup>144</sup> The newspaper's reporter in Haifa reported that such committees established in the area even achieved certain goals.<sup>145</sup> In addition, *Al-Karmil* tried to call attention to the suffering in certain levels of society and often demanded its alleviation. In an appeal entitled 'Let the farmer work' Najib Nassar said:

In the present conditions and in the aftermath of the events [*jitterabat*] the country is in need of security. Landowners require this security in order to work their lands peacefully and without interruption. Any disturbance of their work or attack on their lands bringing harm to their crops causes them despair and depression. This may lead them to sell their lands. Anyone who loves the land and the homeland must reinstate the landowners' feeling of security.<sup>146</sup>

Nassar also attacked the shop owners, who rather than helping their suffering brethren and lowering prices, raised them to such a degree that the government was forced to intervene and enforce supervision.

He stated that this indicated weak national and human feelings.<sup>147</sup> In addition to their criticism, the newspapers tried to organize fundraising events for people who were injured in the events or at least to encourage people to contribute. The editor of *Filastin* related, in an article entitled 'Our duty towards the sons of the fallen', a conversation he had with Sulayman Tuqan, Mayor of Nablus, about the sons of the fallen and the need to care for them until they had grown up and could support themselves.<sup>148</sup> Almost all the newspapers carried an appeal to 'Help the sons of the fallen'<sup>149</sup> or 'Help the families of the injured'.<sup>150</sup> *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* objected to the presence of bothersome beggars in the streets. It said that in order to put an end to this phenomenon the rich must provide help and assistance to needy families whose sons were otherwise compelled to beg in the streets.<sup>151</sup> The same newspaper also praised the 'al-Is'af Hospital in Haifa for deciding to treat poor patients and providing them with medication free of charge,<sup>152</sup> and took the opportunity to ask other hospitals and clinics to do likewise.<sup>153</sup>

Almost all the efforts of the press to encourage national solidarity were futile. In general, the social and economic situation continued to deteriorate, in particular when the revolt waned and the Second World War broke out. Most of the senior political leadership was abroad and managed national matters from afar, and no other organization succeeded in managing the affairs of the Palestinian public in Palestine. The situation in the country at the time was best summarized by Najib Nassar in an editorial he wrote in April 1940:

Our situation today has remained as it was fifty years ago, our thinking has not changed although we have changed some of our ways of life ... I have reached old age and all I hope is to see prudent leaders guide my people to a proper way of life in the future. I would like to die knowing that a positive future awaits my people.<sup>154</sup>

### *Objecting to the sale of land to Jews*

During the revolt the newspapers did not allocate much space to the subject of the sale of land to Jews. Land sale deals diminished or were performed in total secrecy, due to the pressure of armed bands on landowners and assassination of people known to be involved in such deals. Only *al-Karmil* took advantage of every opportunity to issue warnings about these deals. In an article written in February 1937 the editor related that in one of his trips from Haifa to Nazareth he was stopped by a landowner who protested about difficult situation. He said:

I have three hundred dunam of agricultural land on which I have not grown anything this year. None of the existing banks [the Arab Bank, the Agricultural Bank and the Barclays Bank of Nazareth] is willing to give me a loan so that I will be able to cultivate my land. How can you ask me not to sell land to Jews? If you wish us to refrain from selling land to Jews you must help us find a solution.<sup>155</sup>

Nassar wanted to show that it was not always the landowners who were 'to blame' for the sale of land to Jews. Often those who called upon the landowners to refrain from selling their land to Jews did nothing to find an alternative solution or to ease these people's financial difficulties or compensate them. Similar criticism was implied by Ibrahim al-Shanti, editor of *al-Difa'*. He referred to the sad state of the orchard owners or lessors who in many cases were forced to sell their property in order to be relieved of their difficulties, as a result of the indifference of various factors in the National movement.<sup>156</sup> *Al-Karmil* discussed the issue of the lands more intensely in late 1939, after the revolt had waned and the armed bands were no longer dominant. In an article entitled 'The sale of lands', written in October 1939, it said:

The problem of the sale of lands has resumed its former status and even worsened. The reasons for the increase in sales are the prevailing insecurity, the economic hardships that have befallen the country due to the events, and the Jews' wish to exchange money for land, since the currency devaluation is causing them concern.<sup>157</sup>

This interpretation indicates a change in the writer's attitude to the sale of lands. The sellers no longer described as traitors who must be punished, rather the writer tries to identify objective causes, such as the sellers' financial difficulties or the buyers' distinctly economic considerations. This tendency continued in another article written by Nassar in late December 1939, in which he tried to explain that the reasons for his objection to the sale of land derive from the social and traditional differences between the sellers and the new buyers. Therefore, said Nassar, 'every Arab citizen must cordially convince his neighbour to refrain from selling land to foreigners, if he thinks that the neighbour may be so inclined'.<sup>158</sup> Nassar believed this should be achieved through persuasion and explanations and not through violent attacks or assassinations. This approach indicated a shift in the attitude of the press towards the sale of land from the outbreak of the Second World War.

## REACTIONS OF THE PALESTINIAN PRESS TO BRITISH EFFORTS TO SUPPRESS THE REVOLT

When the Great Strike ended, the Palestinian public was disappointed to hear British politicians deny the promises given by Britain to the Palestinians in return for ending the strike, promises conveyed by Arab kings and princes. At first the press criticized Palestinian leaders for believing the British promises and for trusting Arab leaders, who had supposedly misled the Palestinians. However, in time the accusations were increasingly aimed at Britain for its treachery and for breaking its promises. *Al-Difa'* claimed that the British government should be held responsible and that its actions had caused Arab hatred. The Arabs knew that they must continue to make sacrifices in order to save the country from the grip of colonialism.<sup>159</sup> The objection of the Arabic press to Britain's conduct was expressed in three spheres:

1. Objection to the partition plan.
2. Claims of deprivation and oppression of the population.
3. Claims of oppression of the Arabic press.

### *Objection to the partition plan*

The British leadership hoped to deal with the harsh criticism directed at them by announcing the dispatch to Palestine of the Royal Investigation Commission, appointed in order to thoroughly investigate the problem and to submit recommendations for a solution. At first the majority of the Palestinian public sided with the leadership in its decision to boycott the commission and refuse to cooperate with it. A large majority of the newspapers also supported the leadership and called upon the public to refrain from appearing before the commission. The exception was the newspaper *Filastin* that refused to declare its support of the boycott, and when Palestinian leaders reconsidered their approach and declared in early January 1937 that they would indeed appear before the commission, *Filastin* described this as a wise and commendable move.<sup>160</sup>

This attitude, adopted by the newspaper, was related to the attitude of the Nashashibi Defence party, accused by its rivals of consenting to appear before the commission when such a move still lacked the support of the majority. Following the publication of the Royal Commission's recommendations in July 1937, *Filastin* once again expressed opinions that were inconsistent with those of the other

newspapers. The latter published numerous articles attacking the recommendations of the Commission concerning partition of the country. In response, the authorities suspended the two most outspoken daily newspapers – *al-Liwa* and *al-Difa'* – while the newspaper *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* was already on a two-month suspension.<sup>161</sup> Thus *Filastin* remained the only Arabic daily newspaper to appear during the short period following the published report of the Royal Commission. This newspaper did not openly support the commission's recommendations, but nor did it object to them, even hinting that the British administration might find a way to make changes in the commission's proposals in favour of the Arabs.

This belief was probably inspired by the British authorities in Palestine, as indicated by a letter sent by the British High Commissioner in Palestine to the Secretary of State for the Colonies in London on 14 July 1937. The High Commissioner informed the Secretary of State for the Colonies that a number of articles implicitly supporting the partition plan would be published in *Filastin*, although he wrote that he did not think they would have much effect on Palestinian public opinion.<sup>162</sup> It should be stated that the newspaper *Filastin* was inconsistent in its opinion of the partition plan and its support of the government on this matter. When Palestinians began appearing before the commission, the editor of *Filastin* tried to influence its recommendations and began publishing 'rumours' about the work of the commission and its intended recommendations. He wrote:

According to the most prevalent rumors about its work the Investigative Commission intends to recommend restriction of Jewish immigration, prohibition of the sale of Arab lands and the establishment of some form of legislative council. It is quite possible that the Commission will recommend joint Arab-Jewish projects.<sup>163</sup>

Finally, the newspaper made sure to mention that,

all the above are purely speculations about the Commission's work, and close examination of British policies in Palestine dashes any hopes that the recommendations will be realized. These policies are characterized by excessive use of power and violence, clouding the positive spirit that prevailed following the conclusion of the strike.<sup>164</sup>

The newspaper described British policies as hesitant and ambiguous, and said that the Arabs would like to see clear and unbiased



policies. They would like to see that the assurances of the Secretary of State for the Colonies were indeed implemented.<sup>165</sup>

During this period the newspaper attacked government policies, as did the other Arab newspapers, but it also tried to offer the government suggestions and advice in order to avoid burning all its bridges. On the one hand it attacked the policies of banishment and collective fines, and on the other it suggested to the government a list of measures that could ease matters for the public, providing the population with the 'peace of mind' necessary in order to accept the recommendations of the Royal Commission.<sup>166</sup> *Filastin* supported Emir 'Abdullah, while *al-Liwa* accused him of supporting partition of the land between Jews and Arabs. *Filastin* claimed that the emir had played no part in this plot, and demanded that *al-Liwa* provide evidence to support its claims.<sup>167</sup> In its response it called the partition proposal a 'plot' that should be condemned. The newspaper's reporter in Beirut claimed to have firm proof of discussions held by Nuri al-Sa'id and 'Abd al-Rahman al-Shahbandar with Britain aimed at solving the Palestinian problem according to the partition principle, discussions of which Haj Amin was well aware.<sup>168</sup> The newspaper that led the attacks against the partition plan and against *Filastin* was *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*. It objected and said: 'This is not an opportune time for the surgery that politicians have scheduled for Palestine: the patient's relatives have not consented to the operation since it will be fatal for the patient. In addition, the climate and the conditions preclude surgery.'<sup>169</sup> In response to reports by *Filastin's* reporter in Beirut about an imminent solution to the Palestinian problem along the lines of partition, *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* said: 'Such reports cause confusion. Editors must refrain from publishing reports such as those published by *Filastin* until their reliability has been confirmed by the Palestinian Office of Propaganda and Publicity, operating under the patronage of the mufti.'<sup>170</sup>

*Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* did indeed reject the idea of partition, but at the same time criticized those who did so without proposing an alternative solution. It said: 'We did not follow up the noise we caused regarding partition with any action. We stuck to our "no" without proposing anything positive. Negativity is wrong and should be forsaken.'<sup>171</sup>

### *Claims of deprivation and oppression of the population*

The harshest complaints against British policies in Palestine concerned lack of consideration for Arab feelings and humiliation of the Arabs.

*Filastin* objected to the order issued by the educational administration of the Mandate government forbidding pupils to take part in demonstrations and celebrations, even after school hours.<sup>172</sup> It stated decisively that, 'it is impossible to understand what interest the educational administration might have in forbidding pupils to celebrate a religious festival most holy to Muslims in particular and Arabs in general after school hours and supervised by their parents'.<sup>173</sup>

*Filastin* also protested against the dismissal of six rural teachers on the grounds of their political activities, despite the great shortage of Palestinian teachers, in particular in the villages. The newspaper published a declaration by residents of the village of Zayta in the Tul Karim District protesting the dismissal of the only teacher in their village and claiming that the dismissal was unjustified and caused feelings of anger and humiliation. They asked that the teacher be reinstated in order to appease the villagers. When other similar cases were revealed, the editor of *Filastin* wrote an editorial entitled 'The vengeful policy of the educational administration', saying:

We see that the government is determined to implement a policy of revenge against Palestinian officials, particularly now that the Investigative Commission has completed its work and left the country ... It dismissed six rural teachers accused of 'national activities' and then expelled all the pupils of the Tul Karim agricultural school following their participation in the strike. We would like to draw the attention of the authorities to the danger of such vengefulness and to its effect on the country's peace and quiet.<sup>174</sup>

These quotations are indicative, on the one hand, of the newspaper's criticism of government policies and on the other of its attempt to refrain from angering the government and even to provide it with advice. However, this advice also contains the threat of unrest among the Arab population of Palestine, if the government would not reconsider its policy.

*Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, in contrast, turned to the Mandate government and said: 'The policy of intimidation is no longer effective in keeping the peace. Peace and quiet are not attained through intimidation, and security will not result from threats. It is necessary to reconsider the current strategy and find more efficient measures.'<sup>175</sup> This newspaper also tried to advise the Mandate government. It stated that if the government would not solve the Palestinian issue judiciously and

reinstate Arab rights, it would lose its last chance to improve relations with the Arab world.<sup>176</sup>

*Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* stated its belief that the British authorities were not interested in introducing order, since a state of unrest would pressurize the citizens to accept the partition plan.<sup>177</sup> It said that if this was indeed the government's intention, its policy was doomed.<sup>178</sup> The newspaper was of the opinion that the government could resume a state of security in two ways: 'by ceasing its struggle against the leaders and by increasing the authority of the Arab policeforce'.<sup>179</sup>

The newspapers could not give details of the specific acts of oppression and sanctions since they were prevented from dispatching reporters and had no choice but to publish the government version. Under such conditions the news items read along the following lines: 'We have received notice that the British army came last night to the village of 'Ara, destroyed two houses and arrested six people who were sent to the Mazra'a Prison. A fine of 200 pounds was imposed on the village.'<sup>180</sup> Newspapers deviating from the formal version were liable to be suspended by the censor. For example, the newspaper *al-Liwa*, which reported rioting by Arab citizens of Tiberias and supported their deeds,<sup>181</sup> was suspended for a week under the Press and Publication Ordinance.<sup>182</sup>

With the increase in the acts of hostility and violence initiated by the armed bands against the British, and in particular after the Andrews murder on 26 September 1937, the government recognized the enormous power of the newspapers and the effect they could have on public opinion. As a preventive step it banned all Arabic newspapers for a week, and in the second week it forbade them from reporting the wave of arrests of leaders and the sanctions executed by the authorities against the Arab population. However, the very first day on which the newspapers enjoyed certain relief of these measures, they declared that their silence had been imposed by the authorities. *Filastin* apologized to its readers for the press not having reacted to recent events and said that this was not through any fault of the newspapers, but was rather due to the government that forbade them to publish anything about the arrests aside from formal announcements.<sup>183</sup> *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* took advantage of the respite to report the arrest of senior leaders and the searches held in their homes.<sup>184</sup> Reports of the details of British measures developed in time into insinuated criticism, and when the British acts of oppression increased, this criticism became overt and blatant. *Filastin* stated that it was not interested in criticizing the government, however it would like to correct a mistake:

it had made. When the government arrested the leaders it declared that they were morally responsible for the assassinations that were committed in Palestine. The newspaper said that while it did not object to the government's attempts to put an end to crime in Palestine, it objects to holding the leaders responsible for these acts.<sup>185</sup> *Filastin* also complained that the government was imposing restrictions on Arab freedom of speech and freedom of thought, despite the looming political changes that would oblige the Arabs to express their unreserved opinions.<sup>186</sup>

*Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* escalated its criticism and said: 'The government's policies will not lead to realization of its goals. A larger budget and a larger police force will not bring security. The police are a contradiction of security and the two cannot exist simultaneously. Security will be resumed only with the return of civil rights.'<sup>187</sup> The harshest criticism of the government was voiced by *al-Liwa* in its first issue after an extended three-month suspension. It said:

Last October the Mandate government performed acts that even Hulagu<sup>188</sup> did not contemplate. The aim of these acts is to intimidate the citizens ... The intention of the government was to silence, to repress personal freedom, and to stifle the live conscience of the nation through a humiliating policy, and through enslavement and desecration of the nation.<sup>189</sup>

*Al-Difa'* was more reserved in its criticism and called upon the public to display restraint and to exercise responsibility until the danger was past.<sup>190</sup> In regard to the British measures, it said that these were temporary and would soon come to an end.<sup>191</sup> *Al-Difa'* suggested that the public recognize only the positive segments of the Royal Commission recommendations that Britain was striving to implement. For example, it mentioned the recommendation to cancel the Mandate as a positive point, and stated that only when the Mandate was terminated would the country achieve peace and contentment.<sup>192</sup> However, it was one of the only newspapers that criticized the High Commissioner personally. When Arthur Wauchop reached the end of his term the newspaper said that his tenure had been a failure. Wauchop committed a big mistake, according to the editor of *al-Difa'*, in ignoring the spiritual factor that is such a crucial part of the Palestinian issue. He was mistaken in treating this as a distinctly materialist issue.<sup>193</sup>

*Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* tried to compare the Ottoman rule to the

British rule and arrived at the conclusion that the British rule was worse than the Ottoman rule, since it endeavoured to change the nature and the mentality of the citizens.<sup>194</sup> The newspaper indicated Palestinian distrust of Britain, a country that gave them no cause for hope, and said:

The people have nothing to trust. When they see something they say: the next day we will see the opposite. This was particularly noticeable during the negotiations between the Arabs and the British in London. The Arabs saw slivers of hope and voiced cries of joy. However, these slivers quickly faded and all Arab hopes disappeared.<sup>195</sup>

The distrust of Britain, the waning of the Arab revolt and the subsequent tough internal conflicts within Palestinian society led to despair. This was also reflected in the editorials. In an editorial entitled 'Armed despair', Sheikh al-Farouqi wrote in his newspaper *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*:

Everyone you meet and everyone you ask is on the brink of despair. The despair is evident on people's faces. Everyone is desperate but everyone is armed, even if only with teeth and nails ... The government is persecuting the Muslims and disarming them. Where will we find a wise national leader to disarm us from the weapon of despair and resume our confidence and peace.<sup>196</sup>

*Al-Karmil* said that the British policies in Palestine had negative and destructive mental and moral consequences for the Arabs. Najib Nassar went on to explain this view:

The policies introduced in Palestine brazenly ruined our spirituality and the remnants of our morale. They damaged our perception and occupied our thoughts and desecrated the sanctity of our homes. They did not respect our elderly and our women and had no mercy for our children. As a result of this conduct we have lost our honour. Not one of us feels that there is a place for him in his homeland. All who could – left the country and those who remain suffer humiliation and loss of respect.<sup>197</sup>

It should be stated that Najib Nassar was writing at a time when his wife Sadhaj was under arrest, and the previous day the period of this

arrest had been extended for six additional months. However, despite Nassar's bitterness towards the British, after the Second World War broke out he declared that he still believed in the need for negotiations between the Arabs and the British and that he would continue to act to further such negotiations as he had done in the past.<sup>198</sup>

### *Claims of oppression of the Arabic press*

With the increase in the Arabic newspapers' tendency to glorify the acts of the armed bands against the Mandate authorities, the attitude of the authorities towards the press became more rigid and they suspended any newspaper implying incitement or support of these acts. In 1937 the British authorities issued twelve suspension orders for Arabic newspapers, totalling 216 days of suspension.<sup>199</sup>

*Al-Karmil* was suspended more than any other newspaper. During 1937 it was suspended four times, for a total of 101 days. *Al-Difa'* was also suspended four times, for a total of 52 days. *Filastin* was suspended twice for a total of 18 days, and *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* was suspended twice for a total of 45 days.<sup>200</sup> This indicates that the newspapers affiliated with Haj Amin, in particular his newspaper *al-Liwa*, suffered more from the British censor than did the newspapers that were affiliated with the *Mu'arada*, such as *Filastin*.

Another fact worth noting is that Muslim-owned newspapers suffered more than Christian-owned newspapers. At the beginning of the second wave of the revolt, on 9 October 1938, Press Officer O. Tweedy issued a prohibition against printing or circulating any report related to military or police manoeuvres in the north, in particular in the area of Acre and Safed. This prohibition applied to all newspapers and pamphlets and forbade them from expressly indicating or implying any act of sabotage aimed at the Mandate forces.<sup>201</sup>

In early September 1938 the British authorities issued another order preventing the Palestinian press from reporting any event that did not appear in the formal reports.<sup>202</sup> According to this order, any journalistic report would be considered a felony, and there was no way the newspapers could comply. Therefore, most of the Palestinian newspapers published at the time served as targets for warnings and suspensions. *Al-Sirat al-Mustaqim* was suspended once in 1938 for three months. *Filastin* was suspended three times for a total of twenty-one days. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* was suspended twice for a total of thirty days.<sup>203</sup> The only newspaper that was not suspended during this period was *al-Akhbar*. Zu'aitir mentions in his memoirs that this newspaper was not

suspended since it published reports of diseases, horses and American apples.<sup>204</sup>

These stringent measures against the press on the part of the authorities led the newspaper owners and editors to hold a meeting on 21 September 1938 under the patronage of *Filastin*. In addition to the newspaper owners and editors, prominent journalists, such as Akram al-Khalidi, 'Ali Mansour and 'Abd al- Hadi 'Irfan, were also present.<sup>205</sup> The principal decision reached at this meeting was to suspend publication of the Arabic newspapers for thirteen days and to issue a declaration denouncing the government's measures against the press and against the members and leaders of the nation who had been detained and exiled.<sup>206</sup>

Supervision of the press was gradually tightened. In many cases the censor objected to editorials at the last moment, and the space was left empty or replaced by the legend: 'The article was removed or erased by the censor.'<sup>207</sup> In addition to pressuring the press, the authorities also pressured the journalists, who received warnings and were even arrested as a result of their articles. For example, Yusuf Fransis, editor of *al-Labab*, was arrested and detained for interrogation.<sup>208</sup> 'Abd al- Rahim al-'Ali, a reporter for a number of newspapers in the Tul Karim area, was imprisoned for a longer period.<sup>209</sup> However, the most severe and far-reaching action of the authorities was the arrest of the journalist Sadhaj Nassar, wife of Najib Nassar, editor of *al-Karmil*. She was arrested in early February 1939 and held for six months. In July 1939 her incarceration was extended for an additional six months. The day after the extension her husband wrote in the newspaper's editorial:

The detention of the wife of the newspaper's owner under the emergency regulations and the extension of this detention, despite all their negative aspects, also have positive aspects, as follows: In the past: We have always commiserated with the detainees and understood how much they suffered from the restriction of their liberty and the loss of work days. This in addition to their families' suffering as a result of their arrest. In the present: Following my wife's arrest I myself feel the absence of the satisfaction that I crave in my later years; I can understand the feelings of the elderly, men and women, their pain and sorrow at the detention of their sons and providers.<sup>210</sup>

The government's escalated measures against the newspapers increased their feelings of national solidarity. They reported the sus-

pension of a certain newspaper with regret and criticized the government. For example *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, when reporting the suspension of *Filastin* in early July 1937:

We were sorry to hear that the authorities suspended publication of our associate newspaper *Filastin* for a period of seven days, due to articles that aroused their anger. This is not the first time that *Filastin* has been suspended and it has incurred great losses. This newspaper is to be commended for its dedicated and innocent suffering for the good of the country and its defence. We appeal to the government to be less rigid with our associate newspaper. The country is currently in a severe crisis and it needs a power to steer it through the great anarchy afflicting us. The Arabic press has proven, beyond any doubt, that it is capable of performing this labour of guidance and steering, for the good of God and of the homeland.<sup>211</sup>

*Filastin* also expressed its sorrow at the suspension of other newspapers, for example, when *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim* was suspended for seven days.<sup>212</sup>

The protests against the policy of suspension and the words of regret had no effect, which made it difficult for the press to function as an instrument attempting to steer and direct the population in the absence of its leaders. In order to continue functioning, most of the newspapers chose to deal with external and global matters and seldom discussed local matters. Therefore anyone perusing the Arabic press of this period should not be surprised to see that a topic such as the Spanish Civil War received the same amount of attention and sometimes even more than the topic of the Palestinian prisoners and detainees in British prisons.

#### THE ATTITUDE OF THE PRESS TOWARDS ZIONISM AND THE JEWS DURING THE ARAB REVOLT

The attitude of the Arabic press towards the Jews was reflected on two major spheres:

1. The struggle against Zionist activities
2. Denigrating the Jews of Palestine



*The struggle against Zionist activities*

After publication of the Royal Commission's recommendations regarding partition of the country, the Arabic newspapers expanded their coverage of Arab apprehension at Zionist activities aimed at implementing the Balfour Declaration concerning the Jewish National Home. These newspapers felt that the Jews were very close to realizing their goal and they even started referring to the 'future Jewish state'. This state, in the opinion of the newspaper *al-Karmil*, would strive to take control of the entire East, both politically and economically.<sup>213</sup> It explained and said:

If a handful of Jews in Iran and Egypt succeeded in ruling these countries unhindered, how will the Arab State defend itself from the Jewish State? The Jews are a destructive element everywhere. They defeated Tzarist Russia and brought bolshevism to the East. They fomented the war in Spain. Their main ambition is to rebuild the Temple of Solomon, which stands according to their tradition on the location of the 'Al-Aqsa' Mosque. Muslims of the world must fight the Jewish State and defend Palestine, their holy land, with the same resolve that they are willing to invest in the defense of Hijaz, birthplace of Islam.<sup>214</sup>

*Al-Difa'* stated that the Jews had to relinquish their intentions of establishing a national home. It said that 'The Jews' greediness is undermining the peace and quiet of Palestine. If the Jews wish to alter the turbulent situation in Palestine they must forego all their claims. Only then will the Arabs be tolerant of them as their forefathers in Spain were tolerant of the Jews.'<sup>215</sup>

*Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* appealed to the Jews to refrain from exciting the Arabs with violent acts, as these acts lead primarily to their own destruction.<sup>216</sup>

*Filastin* drew a bleak picture of the situation in which the Jews would be the majority in the country. It then sought to calm its readers by publishing a declaration by Bishop Hajjar, in which he said that the Muslims and Christians would adamantly oppose a state in which the Jews constituted the majority, and would do everything they could to prevent such a situation arising.<sup>217</sup> *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* took advantage of the reputation of the Jews as excellent forgers and said that

they take advantage of this natural quality in their political machinations. They have benefited greatly from their manipulative

behaviour, and most significantly, they knew where and when to benefit. They also know how to conceal the benefits accumulated, claiming that they are always on the losing side. In reality, the Arabs are the losers, each of their sectors accusing the other of accruing benefits.<sup>218</sup>

The Palestinian newspapers also attacked Zionist activities in Arab countries. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* reported the existence in Beirut of Jewish agents and spies charged with spying on Palestinian leaders in exile.<sup>219</sup> *Al-Liwa* discussed Zionist activities in Egypt, saying:

The Zionists are taking advantage of the patience of the Egyptian government and plotting against Palestinian Arabs, with the intention of causing a split between Egyptian Arabs and their Palestinian brethren. They circulate their propaganda through the 'Eastern Agency' that publishes their provocations in Arab newspapers in Egypt and elsewhere.<sup>220</sup>

The newspapers also continued their claims of a Zionist-British plot aimed at implementing the programme of a Jewish National Home. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* said that 'Jewish immigration to Palestine serves as a defence for the British Empire, and all British acts in favour of the Jews did not stem from love or greed, but rather were aimed at creating guards and defenders of this empire'.<sup>221</sup>

The same newspaper hinted to the Arabs that this cooperation was doomed. It predicted this sad end by means of a symbolic anecdote, leaving it up to the readers to interpret the moral of the story. Under the title 'Once upon a time' it said:

Once upon a time there was a strong, rich and despotic man. He achieved his wealth through exploitation and tyranny. One day a strong young man decided to fight him. The old man knew that if he would give the young man a small part of his wealth the young man would be less inclined to fight him, so he decided to do so. However, after a while the young man regretted his complacency and said to himself that he was able to achieve more. He returned and asked the old man for more of his wealth. The two fought each other until they grew weary. The people surrounding them grew tired of the fighting and killed them both.<sup>222</sup>

The readers easily understood that the old man was Britain, the young

man fighting him was the Zionist Movement, and the people surrounding them were the Arab and Islamic world.

In order to slightly reduce Arab apprehension towards the idea of a Jewish National Home in Palestine, the Arabic newspapers often mentioned rumours concerning suggestions to establish the Jewish National Home in other countries. *Al-Difa'* reported to its readers that the Jewish homeland would be established in Azerbaijan or in eastern Galicia.<sup>223</sup> *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* said that the new country promised to the Jews was New Guinea, which has good agricultural land and a good climate for refugees.<sup>224</sup> *Al-Difa'* repeatedly reported the efforts of wealthy Dutch Jews to persuade Mussolini to permit the resettlement of Jewish refugees in Abyssinia.<sup>225</sup> The same newspaper often mentioned Jewish refugees who had set sail for America, and explained to the readers that those encouraging their absorption were to be praised.<sup>226</sup> *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* tried to intimidate the Jews arriving in Palestine and said that the Zionist leaders are misleading them, striving to establish in Palestine a 'kingdom of the hungry'.<sup>227</sup> As the Second World War broke out the interest of the Arabic press in the Jewish issue grew, in particular concerning the extensive Zionist activities seeking to settle Jewish refugees fleeing Europe in Palestine.

In late November 1939 *al-ifa'* introduced a new section called 'Jewish news' (*Anba' al-yaboud*).<sup>228</sup> *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* dedicated an entire page to the 'News of the Jewish press' (*Akbbar al-subuf al-yaboudiyya*).<sup>229</sup> This newspaper led the campaign against the Jewish press and devoted some of its editorials to this purpose, in addition to an entire inner page. One of these said:

The Jewish press repeatedly demonstrates feelings of hatred and animosity towards our people and towards our national press. The newspaper *Davar* translates the main points discussed by *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, drawing governmental attention in particular to articles written by the editor. We can only ignore such base provocations.<sup>230</sup>

*Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* was the first Arabic newspaper to indicate the existence of a Jewish underground military organization, and said: 'We have revealed a Jewish terrorist organization whose targets are the Jewish Agency, the Arabs and the English. This organization is called the National Military Organization.'<sup>231</sup> Four days after the exposure the newspaper attributed to this organization an attack on an Arab crowd in Jaffa, in which eleven Arabs were killed and five injured.<sup>232</sup> It

described the perpetrators as 'bloodthirsty' (*saffabun*) and appealed to the British rulers, saying: 'We ask the authorities to cut off the hands of the criminals and to punish the cowardly murderers.'<sup>233</sup>

*Filastin* and *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* led the campaign against the attempts by Jewish elements to encourage a stronger relationship and negotiations between the two nations and their institutions. *Filastin* stressed that its hostility was directed at Zionism and not at Judaism. It even published declarations by Jews living in Arab countries objecting to Zionist activities in their countries. Thus, for example, the newspaper published a letter received from the 'Jewish Youth of Baghdad' in which they said that 'they appreciate those who operate for the good of Palestine and for its establishment as a proud Arab country'.<sup>234</sup> The newspaper reported that the letter was signed by the senior Jewish intelligentsia of Iraq, such as Anwar Shaul, Dr. Nur Allah, Dr Albir Elias and Dr Basri.<sup>235</sup> The newspaper also attempted to distinguish between Jews who were striving for peace between the two nations and Jews who were acting against the Arabs. It addressed Moshe Shartok and said:

We would like to tell Mr Shartok that hands extended to hurt may always be retracted, while hands extended for good purposes are never retracted. The Jewish Agency that Mr Shartok heads has never succeeded, in particular during his office, to extend its hand in peace in such a way that is acceptable to the Arabs, in a manner similar to Lord Samuel and the revered scholar Dr Magnes, who extended a pleasing and sincere hand. We suggest that if the Jews indeed wish for peace they should distance themselves from the ways of Shartok and his associates and emulate Lord Samuel, Dr. Magnes and their wise associates.<sup>236</sup>

Earlier the newspaper had described the attempts of the Jews to negotiate with the Arabs as the attempts of a merchant who declared bankruptcy and returned to his old notebooks, searching for something that might be of help.<sup>237</sup> It also cited the words of Bishop Hajjar, who did not see a future for Arab-Jewish negotiations due to 'Jewish treachery, selfishness and prevalent permissiveness'.<sup>238</sup> *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* defined the Jewish attempts at negotiations as 'unparalleled impudence'<sup>239</sup> and as hesitant.<sup>240</sup>

The rigid and uncompromising views of *Filastin* and *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, known for their support of the Mu'arada orientation, concerning negotiation attempts between Jews and Arabs, may explain the

overtures of the Jewish Agency towards newspapers and journalists known for their affiliation with the Mufti and the Husayni camp. Eliyahu Sasson, the representative of the Jewish Agency in charge of such contacts, recorded a discussion he had with Yusuf Fransis, editor of *al-Liwa* and *al-Labab*, the Husaynis newspapers. Sasson said of Fransis and of their discussion:

Before the 1936 events he would often come to my house and the department would take advantage of his contacts with the Husaynis to obtain authorized information ... He wanted to consult with me about a suggestion he had received from the league for Jewish-Arab rapprochement, through Mr Kalvarisky, aimed at reaching a political agreement between the two nations in Palestine. He said that Kalvarisky had invited him a month earlier to a discussion that took place in Tel Aviv and that lasted two hours. The discussion centred on the necessary means for reaching this goal. The discussion was attended by Muhammad Chirqas, an Arab journalist who was already in contact with the league and said that he had published articles in Egyptian and Syrian newspapers in favour of the sought-for rapprochement. The contact between the league and Mahmoud Chirqas was made through Mustafa Wahbi al-Tal of Transjordan, Kalvarisky's old friend, who had also helped him reach Emir 'Abdullah. At the same meeting Kalvarisky offered to buy the newspaper *al-Difa'*, published in Jaffa. Fransis agreed to talk to the owner.<sup>241</sup>

This document attests to the plan of those who believed in negotiations between the two nations and who tried to use the Arabic press, considered by many a 'radical press', towards this aim. However this plan did not appear in the press, aside from solitary articles written by Muhammad Chirqas for the Egyptian and Syrian press.

Yusuf Fransis apparently did not succeed in convincing Haj Amin or Jamal al-Husayni to disseminate the idea that he had discussed with Kalvarisky. *Al-Difa'* was also reluctant to become the voice of Kalvarisky's league. However, it must be stated that *al-Difa'* was less rigid and showed less aggression towards attempts at rapprochement and even published advertizements for Jewish businesses, while most contemporary Arabic newspapers refused to do so.<sup>242</sup>

*Denigrating the Jews of Palestine*

Although the majority of Arabic newspapers sought to prove that they objected to the Zionists and not to the Jews, some of them deviated and engaged in slandering the Jews as a nation. The most conspicuous Arabic newspaper in this field was *Filastin*. It often published news intended to illustrate the moral corruption of Jewish society. In one case the newspaper reported 'a Jew who killed an Arab girl in Jaffa'.<sup>243</sup> In another item the newspaper accused the Jews of 'Jewish piracy' when a Jewish boat took control of an Italian fishing boat off the coast of Jaffa.<sup>244</sup> In another incident the newspaper addressed the Jewish people and said: 'Oh Jewish people! Save your violated honour, a woman who has many love affairs even with her dog.'<sup>245</sup> Reports of the permissiveness prevalent in the Jewish community often appeared in the newspaper. Under the title 'Free love in the Jewish community' the newspaper related the story of a Jewish girl from Herzlia who 'trapped many in the net of her love. Her last victim is a socialist youth who became involved with her and does not know what to do.'<sup>246</sup> *Filastin* also spoke of the managers of the Jewish Bank, who embezzled the bank's money and transferred it to communist Russia.<sup>247</sup>

*Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* also used an abundance of slanderous remarks. In one case the newspaper quoted the Jewish expert Ernest Solomon, director of the National Education and Military Training Institute, who said that 'the Jews have no courage and valour, since there have been no Jewish heroes.'<sup>248</sup> In another incident the same newspaper said: 'The Jew is a slave to money. He says that he will not forget Palestine, but in reality he shows that what he does not forget is the money.'<sup>249</sup> In another case, under the title 'A snake and not a fish', the newspaper said that the British adopted the Jews and raised them to think that they are a fat fish that can be used. However, they were not aware that they had actually raised a poisonous snake that began by biting the hand that had nurtured it.<sup>250</sup>

#### REACTION OF THE PRESS TO THE INVOLVEMENT OF ARAB COUNTRIES IN THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE DURING THE REVOLT

The involvement of Arab countries in the Palestinian issue increased in the second half of 1937, in particular following the exile of the Palestinian leadership. This supplemented the active role of many Arab national organizations operating in Arab countries in support of

the Palestinian revolt and the many Arab fighters who volunteered to fight among the rebels. The significant achievements attained by many Arab countries in 1936 in their progress towards independence led the Palestinians to feel that they too were worthy of similar achievements that might eventually lead to pan-Arab unity.

*Filastin* was the leading advocate of pan-Arab unity. Editor Yusuf Hanna wrote an obituary for the Iraqi leader, Yasin al-Hashimi, who died in Damascus in early January 1937, in which he said: 'Last night the distinguished Arab leader Yasin al-Hashimi passed away. His death shocked the Arab world, a shock that expresses our united aim and our united sentiment. There is no doubt that Arab national awareness will expand and eventually reach total unity.'<sup>251</sup>

*Filastin*, previously known for its objection to the idea of Arab unity, began publishing articles advocating it and praising those who promoted it. For example, it published an article by Dr Anwar al-Shuqayri, calling upon the people not to be suspicious of the Egyptians and not to judge them according to the views presented by the *Wafd* party. Al-Shuqayri said that the views of the *Wafd*, emphasizing local Egyptian nationalism (*wataniyya misriyya*), were only temporary and would change in time.<sup>252</sup> Al-Shuqayri said that Egypt and all its leaders, writers and pupils, acted in favour of Arab unity and objected to Pharoanism and to any idea that might threaten its relations with other Arab countries.<sup>253</sup>

*Al-Difa'*, known for its pan-Arab tendencies since its founding, spoke of the duty of Arab countries towards the Palestinians, in particular in light of the policies of the Mandate government. It said: 'The major role of Palestinian Arabs at present is to increase the involvement of Arab countries in the Palestinian issue, in order that those shaping the new British policy will be faced not only with one million Arabs, but rather with tens of millions of Arabs.'<sup>254</sup> The newspaper suggested that Palestinian representatives should meet with representatives of the Arab countries in order to discuss the Palestinian issue in all its aspects and submit their conclusions as a memorandum to the League of Nations and to the British government.<sup>255</sup> *Al-Difa'* reiterated its call to the Arab countries to intervene in the Palestinian issue and find a solution to the Palestinian problem rather than waiting for a solution initiated by foreigners.<sup>256</sup> The editor of *al-Difa'* said that the Arab nation, and not the British, was responsible for suggesting solutions. Therefore the Palestinians would do better to accept the plan proposed by Nuri al-Sa'id, Iraqi Minister of Foreign Affairs, rather than the proposals of the British Colonial Office.<sup>257</sup>

*Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* was the least enthusiastic of the Palestinian newspapers on issues of Arab nationalism and unity. In certain cases, particularly at the zenith of the revolt, it objected to the involvement of the leaders of Arab countries in the Palestinian issue, and when a rumour was circulated that they intended to intervene once more in order to put an end to the revolt the editor responded that,

The nation is sufficiently mature and it will not fight its battle according to the directives of other countries... This time the nation will not bow to the orders and commands of the Arab kings and princes. This nation has sacrificed much and is still sacrificing. The press and the leadership derive their valour and strength from the nation. Therefore we must not restrain it and erase its achievements attained by the blood and tears of its sons.<sup>258</sup>

However, the newspaper did not object to Palestine's receiving everything that other Arab countries had received, although it clearly knew that the situation in Palestine was completely different. It compared the situation in Palestine to that of Syria and Egypt and reached the following conclusion:

The situation in Palestine is worse than that of Syria and Egypt, since each has its own 'woes'. The Syrians have the French and the Egyptians have the British. Our country has three 'woes':

1. The British, since they have decided to implement the partition plan in order to give the coastal plain to the Jews. The English do not trust the Arabs and trust only the Jews.
2. The Jews who come to Palestine, purchase its best lands, and bring with them an artificial feeling of well-being that passes rapidly and gives way to despair and frustration.
3. The 'internal' woe. The cursed politics have turned the citizens into traders interested only in furthering their own interests. The homeland and the religion have become commodities traded on the market for the benefit of individuals.<sup>259</sup>

*Al-Difa'* did not make do with simply praising the idea of Arab unity, it went further in trying to outline the essence of this unity and its implementation. In an article entitled 'Arab unity and its implementation', 'Issa al-Sifri wrote:

Arab unity should be executed by way of a treaty between the



independent Arab countries, such as Iraq, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Yemen, as a first stage. The second stage should be the unification of the Syrian countries (Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Transjordan). Then the Maghrib countries (Tunisia, Algiers, Morocco and Libya), who are fighting today for their independence, can be added.<sup>260</sup>

*Filastin* defended Arab leaders or Arab countries accused of acting against the idea of Arab unity. For example, it rejected such an accusation of Iraq and said that 'Iraq's feelings of solidarity with Palestine are sincere; and any accusation that Iraq is neglecting the issue of Arab unity and trying to draw closer to Turkey is baseless.'<sup>261</sup> The newspaper also defended Emir 'Abdullah of Transjordan, accused by many of supporting the partition of Palestine. It accused the Jewish press of circulating this rumour by faking the emir's words in an interview in the Damascus newspaper *Alef Baa* and quoting them out of context.<sup>262</sup> *Filastin* sought to prove that the popularity of the Arab leaders among the Palestinian public had not diminished despite their involvement in bringing the strike to its end. The newspaper reported that in the celebrations in honour of the Prophet Mousa in April 1937, the masses cheered for the Arab kings and princes and for the leader of the Arab forces during the revolt, Fawzi al-Qawiqqi.<sup>263</sup>

*Al-Difa'* tried to introduce European countries to the idea of Arab nationalism and the need for unity of the Arab countries. The British newspaper *The London Times* and the French *Le Temps* claimed that the idea of unity endangered England and France's interests in the east. *Al-Difa'* claimed that the opposite was true – Arab nationalism would be a new treasure that would benefit all humanity.<sup>264</sup> Elsewhere *al-Difa'* said: 'Arab nationalism is a pure idea. European countries do not support the idea of Arab unity because the Europeans know that the united Arab state will not agree to be a satellite of any other country.'<sup>265</sup> The newspaper also rejected the racist reputation of the Arabs, and stated that the Arabs had no racist-based ideals: even their hatred of the Jews stemmed exclusively from political conflicts.<sup>266</sup> In October 1937 the newspaper reported that attorneys and notables from Jaffa had received letters from Damascus. These letters included questionnaires asking: 'What is your opinion of Arab unity and which courses may lead to this unity? What is preferable for the Palestinians – unity as part of the Arab League or as part of an Eastern League?'<sup>267</sup> The latter was probably connected to the disagreement among Palestinian intelligentsia concerning the united entity which the Palestinians should join

when they achieve independence: would there be an Arab entity or an eastern entity uniting Arab and Islamic nations?

*Al-Difa'*, and later also *Filastin*, advocated an Arab national entity, while *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* supported the idea of an Eastern League. This disagreement increased once the recommendations of the Royal Commission were published, including a recommendation to cancel the British mandate. Rumours circulated concerning the possible transfer of the Palestine mandate to Egypt or Turkey. In an editorial written by Sheikh al-Farouqi, *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* announced to its readers a new plan in which the Syrian mandate would be given to Turkey while the Palestine mandate would belong to Egypt.<sup>268</sup> Al-Farouqi detailed the plan and said:

There are rumours that the two Mandate countries in Syria and Palestine will hold on to the areas that interest them, while everything else will be given to Turkey, and maybe also to Egypt. Egypt's part, if any, will include matters of administration and finance, while Turkey will manage foreign and military affairs.<sup>269</sup>

The newspaper explained the need to establish an Eastern League:

The Western League of Nations has failed dismally. The east must examine the reasons for the failure of the Western League of Nations, learn from them, and then try to establish an Arab Eastern League of Nations that will include the independent and non-independent countries of the east. We hope that through this League of Nations the Arab East will be able to realize its national ambitions.<sup>270</sup>

In late 1939 *al-Karmil*, known for its enthusiastic support of Arab nationalism, expressed its doubts as to the efficiency of the means used by Arab leaders to realize the longed-for Arab unity. In November 1939 an Arab summit was announced, attended by Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Yemen, with the aim of determining a united Arab position concerning the Second World War. *Al-Karmil* cynically doubted the efficacy and the sincerity of the summit.<sup>271</sup> In the same issue, Najib Nassar stated his credo with regard to Arab nationalism, and said:

My opinion concerning Arab national sentiments does not focus only on Palestinian Arabs. It also includes Syria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Yemen and the other Arab countries in Africa.

Following the First World War we passed from the rule of one master to the rule of other, stronger masters. The question is: What did we do for our nationalism? Since the end of the war all the nations of the world have acted to unify and strengthen themselves and they have accumulated weapons to defend their homeland. What have we Arabs done? This war broke out and surprised us and it is extremely dangerous. Where is our unity? Where are our armies and weapons? Where are our preparations? If our national sentiments had been alive during this period we would have become a single nation with a strong and weighty army. Instead, we search for allies who will defend our land. Our national feelings have not been aroused. They will only be aroused through devotion to the homeland and to nationalism. Real national feelings are the wall that defends the homeland, the good of society and the good of the individual. National feelings defend trade, the work of the clerk, the land of the farmer and all other labour. Oh Arabs, you must arouse your national feelings, revive and sustain them.<sup>272</sup>

Sadhaj Nassar joined her husband in preaching dedication to the national ideal and its efficient and dedicated service. After her release from prison she published a series of articles on 'real Arabism' (*al-'uruba al-haqqa*) and opened them with a moving appeal to the Arabs to demonstrate more dedication to their cause. In one of these appeals she said: 'Oh Arabs! Arabism [*al-'uruba*] has existed for many generations; it has always been the gem of these generations. It was always the symbol. Don't demean it with petty dreams and service, don't demean it. Strengthen it by realizing big deeds and dreams'.<sup>273</sup>

During this period the Arabic newspapers often praised Egypt and extolled its activities in support of the Palestinian issue, after having criticized and rebuked it in the past, in particular due to the hostile views of the large Egyptian political parties that scorned the Arab national ideal. *Al-Difa'* published in-depth and detailed reports of the demonstrations and gatherings held in Egypt in support of the Palestinian issue.<sup>274</sup> This was also true of *Filastin*,<sup>275</sup> and to a certain degree *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*. The positive shift in this newspaper's approach to Egypt occurred as a result of the significant role played by Muhammad Muhammad Pasha, Prime Minister of Egypt, in the preparations for the Round Table Conference, held in London in early 1939, and in mediating between the mufti and the British.<sup>276</sup>

*Al-Karmil* was once again doubtful of Egypt's ability to lead the

Arabs and to influence the Palestinian issue. The newspaper summarized King Farouq's speech in early December 1939 and said that the king stressed the renewed Egyptian inclination to Arabism (*al-'uruba*) and Easternism (*al-sharqiyya*) in his speech, thus signalling a retreat from Pharoanism (*al-far'ouniyya*).<sup>277</sup> However this was accompanied by the note:

We must take this opportunity to state that we have lately witnessed a number of steps by Egypt, striving to lead the Arab countries and to receive the title of khalifate. We must remember that leadership and the khalifate are dependent on conditions that are well known to the leaders of Egypt. There are responsibilities that must be fulfilled before the Arab world and the Islamic world will recognize them as their leaders.<sup>278</sup>

The writer's objection to the intentions of the Egyptian leader, King Farouq (not of Arab origin) to lead the Arabs or the Muslims as a khalif are easily discernible, and he clearly indicates the stipulation – it is necessary to be Arab in order to become a khalif. Another leader who fulfilled these prior conditions was Ibn Sa'oud, leader of the Saudi Kingdom, whom the editor of *al-Karmil* addressed thus:

To the honourable King Ibn Sa'oud: You have proven by your deeds that you wish to resume the former magnificence of the Arabs and of Islam as in the days of the grand leader, the praised prophet, and the direct line of khalifs who succeeded him. We are observing you, hoping that you will be able to realize Arab unity in these difficult conditions.<sup>279</sup>

It should be stated that the Palestinian press was not only interested in the involvement of the Arab countries in the Palestinian movement, rather also in the Arab countries per se. For example, they followed the Alexandretta District Affair and objected to the agreement between France and Turkey concerning the separation of this district from Syria and its annexation to Turkey.<sup>280</sup> When Syria was beset by strong floods in early November 1937, *Filastin* tried to help by organizing fund-raising events for those who had suffered losses. It addressed the rich and asked them to donate money to those suffering in Syria, 'the country that is willing to sacrifice everything precious for Palestine'.<sup>281</sup> *Filastin* reported on Arab officials serving within the Mandate government who approached the directors of their departments with a request to allow

them to donate money in support of the casualties of the Syrian floods in an attempt to refrain from breaking the law that forbade officials to donate money to factories and companies without permission.<sup>282</sup> The British authorities were aware of the influence of newspapers from Cairo, Beirut, Baghdad, Damascus and other Arab cities, on Palestinian public opinion in general and on reporters for the Palestinian press in particular. Therefore the import of many Arabic newspapers was often forbidden. In November 1936, for example, six Arab newspapers were banned: *al-Misri*, *al-Siyasa*, *al-Muqtataf* from Egypt, *Alef Baa* and *al-Sha'b* from Syria, and *Sawt al-Abrar* from Beirut.<sup>283</sup> In 1937 the government issued twenty-eight import bans against twenty-four newspapers,<sup>284</sup> in 1938 – forty-five entry bans against twenty-nine newspapers, and in 1939 the number of entry bans dropped to eighteen bans against thirteen newspapers.<sup>285</sup>

Muhammad Sulayman believes that the reason for the reduced number of entry bans against Arabic newspapers may have been the inclination of the Arab governments to compromise with the British and even 'to be part of the plot against the Arab nation and its revolt [*thawra*]'.<sup>286</sup> Sulayman's claims are connected to later claims by Palestinian writers regarding plots devised by Palestinian leaders against the Palestinian people, however, this claim was not expressed in Palestinian writings. The drop in the number of entry bans against Arabic newspapers has more to do with the waning Palestinian revolt (especially due to internal conflicts) and also with the Second World War, which diverted attention to other international issues.

#### INTERNATIONAL ISSUES AS REFLECTED IN THE PALESTINIAN PRESS DURING THE REVOLT

During this period the Palestinian press became more interested in international affairs. The newspapers devoted more space to these topics and their reporters (at least in the larger newspapers) sent articles from the locations of sensational events or from centres influencing such events, such as Berlin, London, Paris, Rome and Madrid. Events such as the Spanish Civil War and the Italo-Abyssinian War, as well as the imminent World War, were frequent topics in the contemporary Palestinian press. In addition, the newspapers discussed ideological trends, such as communism, Nazism and fascism, and the policies of the countries promoting them in the Arab and Islamic world.

Increasing interest in world affairs was not the only reason for allo-

cating more space to international issues in Palestinian newspapers. Another reason, no less important, was the strict policy of the British censor with regard to any news pertaining to the Palestinian issue, in particular the activities of the rebels and their skirmishes with the British forces in Palestine.

The main issue emphasized in press discussions of all the topics mentioned was who and what was good for the Arabs, and what the Arabs had to do in response to each development in international relations. Ibrahim al-Shanti, editor of *al-Difa'*, stated that Arab propaganda world-wide was weak and had no influence. Therefore he proposed that a White Paper signed by some of the higher political institutions within the Arab countries be published, explaining the Arab issue and all its developments. Thus European politicians would thus receive first-hand information about the Arab issue rather than material published by strangers.<sup>287</sup>

The guideline of the Palestinian press concerning relationships between the two international blocs (the Allies and the Axis powers) was to improve Palestinian relations with Britain despite all its previous actions. However, the newspapers referred to relationships characterized by cooperation and mutual respect, rather than dominance. This trend began appearing in 1937, gained momentum in 1938 and became firmly established in 1939, i.e. even before the advent of the Second World War. Most of the Arabic newspapers in Palestine (including *al-Difa'* and *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, accused of affiliation with the Axis powers) gambled on Britain and its allies and hoped for their victory, despite the relationship between Haj Amin and the rulers of Rome and Berlin. *Filastin*, for example, expressed its anger when the Arabs were accused of collaborating with Italy. It answered this claim by stating that, 'The Arabs are acting on behalf of their homeland and not on behalf of Italy. We are not enemies of England and we did not reject friendly relations with the English.'<sup>288</sup> The newspaper expressed bitterness at the British press campaign against the Arabs and claimed that the Jews were the source of the campaign, since they hated both fascism and the Arabs and were expressing their joint propaganda against the two.<sup>289</sup> The newspaper concluded by asking: 'Have the English forgotten the tumult that ensued in the Arab countries after the Tripoli Riots? Have they forgotten the protest aroused by the Muslim Congress in Jerusalem against fascism and the reaction of Sheikh al-Azhar when Mussolini assumed the title of Defender of Islam?'<sup>290</sup>

Even before the Second World War broke out, *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*

urged the Arabs to reach an agreement and to sign a treaty with Britain, on condition that this would reinstate their honour and glory. Under the title 'The last chance, Britain is searching for an ally', the editor, Sheik al-Farouqi, wrote: 'As Muslims and as Arabs we are interested in restoring our former glory. That is our goal. If we are sure that this will come about through a treaty with Britain we would prefer the English over the others, as long as this treaty promotes the interests of 'our Islamism and our Arabism' [*islamiyyatuna wa'arabiyyatuna*].'<sup>291</sup> After these words, addressed to the Arab reader, al-Farouqi appealed to the British and tried to convince them of the advisability of a treaty with the Arabs. He stated: 'We Arabs are better for Britain than all the other millions, and we are easy to satisfy. If we had cooperated with Britain, Italy would have been unable to do what it did in the Red Sea, Abyssinia, the Mediterranean and Albania.'<sup>292</sup>

When the Second World War broke out, the major Arabic newspapers continued their support of Britain. *Al-Difa'* tried to sketch the Palestinian opinion of the warring sides, saying:

The Palestinian Arabs, similar to the other Arab nations, have not deviated from their support of Britain and its Allies. They have followed the Egyptians, the Syrians and the Iraqis, despite recent events in Palestine. It is difficult to make demands at the present as it is a time of war.<sup>293</sup>

The newspaper stated that the Palestinians had not forgotten what the British did to them during the years of revolt. Nonetheless, they supported the British in time of war and were not taking advantage of the situation in order to present the British with demands concerning the future of their country. *Filastin* called upon Britain to enlist the Palestinians and include them in the British war effort. Among others, the newspaper thought that this might solve internal conflicts within Palestinian society.<sup>294</sup> Later the newspaper praised Britain and described it as 'an ally of the Arabs, defending their countries and providing them with sustenance'.<sup>295</sup> The editor of *al-Karmil* based his words on thirty-two years of specializing in relations between Britain and the Arabs and claimed that cooperation between the Arabs and the British would have been easy if not for the interference of the Jews.<sup>296</sup>

In another article, entitled 'The Arabs and the English', Nasir said:

England is a democratic country, mother and protector of all democratic countries. In 1914 it fought for democracy, and today

it is fighting against dominance, tyranny and hostility, so that the weak nations can achieve liberty and independence. For this reason the Arabs and the Muslims have supported England despite their disagreements[...] The Arabs, in particular Palestinian Arabs, would like England to treat them according to its democratic principles. We hope that British policies will be attentive to Arab demands and make a fresh start, reinstate the leaders exiled from Palestine and release the political detainees. Thus it will remove the doubts from Arab hearts and build a relationship of mutual trust that can become a strong foundation for cooperation.<sup>297</sup>

*Al-Karmil* also reported a shift in the attitude of the British press towards the Arabs and their view of Britain. The newspaper stated that the current attitude was positive and should be praised and appreciated.<sup>298</sup> The newspaper took this opportunity to address the English saying:

We praise God for helping the wise English understand the real view of the Arabs, to their mutual benefit ... However, we hope that British and French policy makers will redirect their policies in a more practical direction indicating their good intentions. They must also realize that the Arabs seek liberty and know that their interests are tied to the interests of the democratic countries and that the victory of the democracies is a victory that will benefit the Arabs and their national rights.<sup>299</sup>

Unlike Britain and the democracies, which received such wide support, the rival camp, in particular Italy, was blatantly denounced and attacked. *Al-Difa'* published an article by Akram Zu'aitir criticizing Mussolini for assuming the title of 'Defender of Islam'. He said that this was an affront to Islam and to all Muslims.<sup>300</sup> *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* also attacked Italy for presenting itself in broadcasts to the Muslim world as a friend of the Muslims. The newspaper claimed that in practice it 'swallowed up' Arab and Islamic countries under the guise of friendship.<sup>301</sup> The frequently voiced objections of *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* towards Italy, in particular on the eve of the Second World War, refute the common claim that this newspaper and another newspaper founded in Beirut by Jamal, son of Sheikh al-Farouqi, were financed mainly by Italian aid, a claim that was also presented by the Jewish Agency.<sup>302</sup> Jamal's newspaper did not last long. He returned to Palestine in 1938 and was appointed acting editor of *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* in 1939, when the newspaper reappeared after a lengthy suspension. *Al-Jami'a*



*al-Islamiyya* called upon the Arabs and the Muslims to disregard the propaganda of the Axis powers. It also attacked the Arabs who served this propaganda through their articles and speeches in the German and Italian media. He explained his appeal:

Italy and its broadcasting stations and newspapers cannot help you. Neither can Germany who broadcasts to you from overseas... The former claims that it is concerned with the interests of the Muslims, and the latter – with the interests of the Arabs. However, they do nothing for these interests ... What has Italy done aside from bombarding us with words? Germany, Italy and Japan, as permanent members of the League of Nations, could have done much for the Palestinians, but they did nothing.<sup>303</sup>

*Filastin* attacked fascism and Nazism, perceiving them as 'reactionary ideas that are returning humanity to the era of blind national fanaticism'.<sup>304</sup> This newspaper was less hostile towards Germany than towards Italy. However, when the Second World War broke out, Germany became the target of bitter attacks, as was its leader, who in the first half of the 1930s had enjoyed the support of the Palestinian press.

*Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* began the assault, writing in January 1938: 'What did Germany give the Arabs that it is worthy of their great sympathy? Such sympathy may stem from German hatred of the Jews. However, German hostility towards the Jews has been detrimental to us as it led to the great Jewish immigration [*bigra yaboudiyya*] to Palestine.'<sup>305</sup> The newspaper was scornful of the support expressed in the German press for the Palestinians. It perceived this support as part of the German propaganda against the British, and therefore addressed the Germans: 'The Arabs do not need your support and identification. They saw your actions in Slovakia and in Albany. Germany should realize that the actions of one thief are no excuse for the actions of others.'<sup>306</sup>

*Al-Difa'* also joined the attacks against the German propaganda, which in its opinion tried to disguise black as white.<sup>307</sup> The newspaper reported from time to time about expressions of bitterness and rebelliousness in Germany and even about attempts to assassinate Hitler.<sup>308</sup> It also frequently published news of British victories and valour,<sup>309</sup> comparing them to the misery of the German soldiers in the submarines, the acme of German pride.<sup>310</sup> The newspaper stressed German 'racial arrogance'. It told of genetics consultants who accompanied the German

army and encouraged German soldiers to marry. Each soldier who wished to get married required the approval of the unit's genetics consultant, and had to present certificates proving his own pure Arian origins and those of his fiancée.<sup>11</sup>

*Al-Difa'* also led a campaign against Soviet communism and its leader, Stalin. In an editorial published on 9 December 1939, Ibrahim al-Shanti wrote: 'The greed characteristic of the former residents of the Kremlin Palace has returned, just as though Peter the Great and Catherine II were still residing there.' The newspaper continued its attacks against Stalin, and said in one issue that 'The "Red Dictator" was expelled from school in childhood due to his destructive behaviour.'<sup>12</sup> *Filastini* also took part in the attacks against communism, conceived as a great danger threatening world peace and accompanied by riots and wars.<sup>13</sup> In another incident the newspaper printed on its front page a cartoon showing the symbol of communism alongside with two skulls and underneath the caption: 'This is the symbol of communism that strives to destroy the world.'<sup>14</sup>

#### NOTES

1. On tensions within Palestinian society during this period see: Ayyub, pp. 85–136.
2. *Al-Waqa'i' al-Filastiniyya*, 736, appendix 2, 11 November 1937, p. 1368.
3. *Ibid.*, 692, appendix 2, 20 May 1937, p. 596.
4. Khouri, p. 96.
5. Mousa Yunis al-Husayni (1915–52) was born in Jerusalem and graduated from the Rawdar al-Ma'arif High School. In 1935 he graduated from the American University of Beirut. During 1938–39 he served as the editor and director of 'The Arab News Agency' together with Fu'ad Saba. In 1940 he completed his PhD in economy at the American University of Beirut. He wrote many treatises on economy and lectured on economics at the University of Michigan in the US (Abu Hammad, p. 410).
6. Khouri, p. 96.
7. 'Aqqad, pp. 215–16.
8. Khouri, p. 97.
9. 'Aqqad, p. 157.
10. *Al-Labab*, 12 February 1938.
11. Yehoshuwa, p. 48.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 117.
13. Khouri, p. 99.
14. *Al-Waqa'i' al-Filastiniyya*, 776, appendix 2, 21 April 1938, p. 590. In contrast, 'Aqqad states that the newspaper began appearing in April 1937 ('Aqqad, p. 159).
15. Khouri, p. 100.
16. *Al-Waqa'i' al-Filastiniyya*, 873, appendix 2, 23 March 1939, p. 262.
17. Khouri, p. 102.
18. *Al-Waqa'i' al-Filastiniyya*, 1526, appendix 2, 3 October 1946, p. 1529.
19. Khouri, p. 102. 'Aqqad mistakenly states that the newspaper began appearing in 1936 ('Aqqad, p. 182).
20. Anas al-Khamra was born in Haifa and studied law at the American University of Beirut. He was very active in the social life of Haifa, particularly in the fields of journalism, sports and education. After 1948 he was exiled to Jordan where he published books on law and litera-

- ture (Abu Hammad, pp. 97–8).
21. *Al-Waqa'i' al-Filastiniyya*, 862, appendix 2, 2 February 1939, p. 124.
  22. *Ibid.*, p. 122.
  23. *hour*, p. 104.
  24. 'Aqqad, p. 206.
  25. Yehoshuwa, p. 91.
  26. *Al-Waqa'i' al-Filastiniyya*, 848, appendix 2, 15 December 1938, p. 1929.
  27. *Ibid.*
  28. Khouri, p. 103.
  29. *Al-Waqa'i' al-Filastiniyya*, 886, appendix 2, 11 May 1939, pp. 424–5.
  30. *Al-Labab*, 12 February 1938.
  31. *Al-Labab*, 12 February 1938.
  32. *Ibid.*
  33. For more on this see previous chapters.
  34. Memorandum submitted by A. Sasson and M. Nisani to the Royal Commission in 1937, CZA, S25/22051, p. 2.
  35. *Ibid.*
  36. *Al-Karmil*, 16 September 1939.
  37. *Ibid.*, 30 September 1939.
  38. Shibli Shumayl (1860–1917) was born in Lebanon and was exiled to Egypt. A medical doctor by profession, he engaged in philosophy and wrote many books of philosophy. He was the first Arab writer to write about Darwin's theory.
  39. *Al-Karmil*, 30 September 1939.
  40. *Filastin*, 12 October 1936.
  41. For more on this see: Zu'aitir, 1980, pp. 226–7.
  42. *Filastin*, May 8, 1937.
  43. *Ibid.*, April 16, 1937.
  44. *Ibid.*
  45. *bid.*
  46. *Ibid.*, 18 April 1936.
  47. *Ibid.*, 11 May 1937.
  48. *Ibid.*
  49. *Ibid.*
  50. *Ibid.*, 27 May 1937.
  51. *Ibid.*
  52. *Ibid.*, 9 July 1937.
  53. 'Raghib al-Nashashibi on the partition', 18 July 1937, CZA, S25/10097.
  54. *Ibid.*, S25/3052.
  55. *Filastin*, July 9, 1937.
  56. About this see: Porat, 1978, pp. 276–9.
  57. Ohana, Herev, p. 280.
  58. About the Mufi's flight see: Ohana, 1981, pp. 280–1; Alpeleg, p. 53, and Zu'aitir, 1980a, pp. 336–7.
  59. About the behaviour of Raghib al-Nashashibi see: Ohana, 1981, p. 281.
  60. Porat, 1978, p. 280.
  61. *Filastin*, 7 October 1937.
  62. *Ibid.*, 18 October 1937.
  63. *Ibid.*, 19 October 1937.
  64. *Ibid.*, 1 September 1939.
  65. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, 10 October 1937.
  66. *Ibid.*
  67. *Ibid.*
  68. Zu'aitir, 1980, p. 349.
  69. *Al-Labab*, 12 February 1938.
  70. *Ibid.*
  71. *Al-Liwa*, 2 January 1938.
  72. *Ibid.*
  73. *Sawt al-Sba'b*, 24 November 1937.
  74. *Ibid.*

75. On the editor's flight to Lebanon see: Zu'aitir, 1980, p. 502.
76. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, 3 anuary 1938.
77. Ibid.
78. Ibid., 7 January 1939.
79. *Al-Difa'*, 3 November 1937.
80. Ibid., 11 October 1937.
81. Sulayman, 1988, pp. 90-3.
82. About this see: *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, 11 November 1937; *al-Difa'*, 26 November 1937; *Filastin*, 26 November 1937.
83. *Al-Liwa*, 3 January 1938.
84. For more on this see: the issues of *Filastin*, *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, and *al-Difa'* from November 26, 1937.
85. *Al-Difa'*, 25 November 1937.
86. Ibid., 26 November 1937.
87. Ibid.
88. Ibid.
89. Ibid.
90. Ibid.
91. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, 25 November 1937.
92. Ibid., 7 December 1936.
93. Ibid.
94. *Filastin*, 17 December 1937.
95. Ibid.
96. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, 15 December 1937.
97. Ibid., 14 January 1938.
98. *Filastin*, 19 December 1937.
99. Ibid.
100. *Al-Sirat al-Mustaqim*, 26 August 1938.
101. *Al-Akbbar*, 1 September 1938.
102. Ibid., 8 September 1938.
103. About their flight see: Zu'aitir, 1994, p. 502.
104. *Filastin*, 27 March 1939.
105. 'Abd al-Rahim al-Haj Muhammad was born in the village Dinabe in the Tul Karim District. In his youth he traded in grains and vegetables. When Qawiiji came to Palestine he appointed 'Abd al-Rahim to head the 'Fasil' rebel band in the area of Tul Karim. After Qawiiji left, 'Abd al-Rahim assumed the title of 'General Commander of the Palestinian revolt'. In March 1939 he travelled to Damascus to enlist support and assistance for the rebels, and on the way back the British surrounded him with large forces at the village of Sanur near Jenin. In the ensuing battle 'Abd al-Rahim and his two bodyguards were killed. For more details see: Kabha, pp. 109-10.
106. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, 20 January 1939.
107. Ibid., 24 June 1939.
108. *Al-Difa'*, 5 August 1938.
109. *Al-Karmil*, 2 December 1939.
110. Ibid.
111. *Filastin*, 3 January 1937.
112. Ibid., 5 January 1937.
113. Ibid., 3 January 1937.
114. Ibid., 5 January 1937.
115. Ibid., 6 January 1937.
116. Ibid., 7 January 1937.
117. *Al-Sirat al-Mustaqim*, 24 January 1937.
118. Ibid.
119. *Filastin*, 21 April 1937.
120. Ibid., 28 April 1937.
121. Ibid., 29 April 1937.
122. See, for example, Sulayman, 1988, pp. 128-31.
123. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, 25 June 1939.
124. *Filastin*, 1 December 1937.

125. Ibid.
126. *Al-Difa'*, 5 August 1938.
127. *Mir'at al-Sharq*, 31 August 1938.
128. *Al-Difa'*, 16 November 1939.
129. Ibid., 19 November 1939.
130. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, 24 June 1939.
131. Ibid.
132. *Al-Difa'*, 17 December 1939.
133. *Al-Karmil*, 14 October 1939.
134. Ibid.
135. Ibid., 7 December 1939.
136. Ibid.
137. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, 23 June 1939.
138. *Al-Difa'*, 6 December 1939.
139. Ibid.
140. Ibid.
141. Ibid., 3 December 1939.
142. Ibid., 19 November 1939.
143. Ibid.
144. Ibid., 20 November 1939.
145. Ibid., 26 December 1939.
146. *Al-Karmil*, 23 December 1939.
147. Ibid., 16 September 1939.
148. *Filastin*, 5 January 1937.
149. *Al-Difa'*, 7 November 1939.
150. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, 23 June 1939.
151. Ibid., 24 June 1939.
152. Ibid., 6 January 1939.
153. Ibid.
154. *Al-Karmil*, 13 April 1940.
155. Ibid., 13 February 1937.
156. *Al-Difa'*, 19 November 1939.
157. *Al-Karmil*, 25 October 1939.
158. Ibid., 30 December 1939.
159. *Al-Difa'*, 21 December 1936.
160. *Filastin*, 7 January 1937.
161. *Al-Sbabab*, 21 July 1937.
162. Letter from the High Commissioner to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 14 July 1937, FO 371/20018/4566E.
163. *Filastin*, 12 February 1937.
164. Ibid.
165. Ibid.
166. Ibid., 24 April 1937.
167. Ibid., 24 February 1937.
168. Ibid., 19 December 1937.
169. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, 22 November 1937.
170. Ibid., 15 December 1937.
171. Ibid., 4 November 1937.
172. *Filastin*, 9 May 1937.
173. Ibid., 13 February 1937.
174. Ibid., February 16, 1937.
175. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, 29 November 1937.
176. Ibid., 17 December 1937.
177. Ibid., 19 December 1937.
178. Ibid.
179. Ibid., 20 December 1937.
180. *Al-Difa'*, 19 December 1937.
181. *Al-Liwa*, 26 February 1937.
182. Report of the British Office of the Censor from 7 March 1937 CO, 733/316.

183. *Filastin*, 5 October 1937.
184. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, 5 October 1937.
185. *Filastin*, 7 October 1937.
186. *Ibid.*, 10 October 1937.
187. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, 28 October 1937.
188. The Mongol leader who destroyed the City of Baghdad in 1258.
189. *Al-Liwa*, 2 January 1938.
190. *Al-Difa'*, 11 October 1937.
191. *Ibid.*
192. *Ibid.*, 3 January 1938.
193. *Ibid.*, 24 November 1937.
194. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, 2 December 1937.
195. *Ibid.*, 13 July 1939.
196. *Ibid.*, 28 July 1939.
197. *Al-Karmil*, 29 July 1939.
198. *Ibid.*, 14 October 1939.
199. Report for 1937, pp. 16-17.
200. *Ibid.*
201. Zu'aitir, 1980, p. 426.
202. *Ibid.*, pp. 442-3.
203. Report for 1938, p. 25.
204. Zu'aitir, 1980, p. 443.
205. *Ibid.*, p. 455.
206. *Ibid.*
207. See, for example, the editorial of *al-Karmil* banned by the censor on 7 December 1939.
208. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, 7 January 1939.
209. *Ibid.*, 16 July 1939.
210. *Al-Karmil*, 29 July 1939.
211. *Ibid.*, 2 July 1939.
212. *Filastin*, 27 April 1937.
213. *Al-Karmil*, 29 November 1937.
214. *Ibid.*
215. *Al-Difa'*, 15 December 1937.
216. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, 3 November 1937.
217. *Filastin*, 19 January 1937.
218. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, 28 July 1939.
219. *Ibid.*, 22 November 1937.
220. *Al-Liwa*, 2 January 1938.
221. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, 2 January 1938.
222. *Ibid.*, 26 June 1939.
223. *Al-Difa'*, 9 November 1939.
224. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, 8 January 1939.
225. *Al-Difa'*, 11 November 1939.
226. *Ibid.*, 25 November 1939.
227. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, 7 July 1939.
228. *Al-Difa'*, 30 November 1939.
229. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, 21 July 1939.
230. *Ibid.*, 6 July 1939.
231. *Ibid.*, 24 June 1939.
232. *Ibid.*, 30 June 1939.
233. *Ibid.*
234. *Filastin*, 10 August 1938.
235. *Ibid.*
236. *Ibid.*, 12 December 1937.
237. *Ibid.*, 6 January 1937.
238. *Ibid.*, 19 January 1937.
239. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, 18 July 1939.
240. *Ibid.*, 21 July 1939.
241. The discussion took place in January 1940, CZA, S25/22128.

242. See, for example: *al-Difa'*, November 7, 1939.
243. *Filastin*, 21 April 1937.
244. *Ibid.*, 27 February 1937.
245. *Ibid.*
246. *Ibid.*, 26 February 1937.
247. *Ibid.*, 16 February 1937.
248. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, 26 June 1939.
249. *Ibid.*, 23 July 1939.
250. *Ibid.*, 4 July 1939.
251. *Filastin*, 30 January 1937.
252. *Ibid.*, 9 January 1937.
253. *Ibid.*
254. *Al-Difa'*, 22 November 1937.
255. *Ibid.*
256. *Ibid.*, 12 December 1937.
257. *Ibid.*, 14 December 1937.
258. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, 12 December 1937.
259. *Ibid.*, 14 December 1937.
260. *Al-Difa'*, 4 July 1938.
261. *Filastin*, 24 April 1937.
262. *Ibid.*, 30 April 1937.
263. *Ibid.*, 24 April 1937.
264. *Al-Difa'*, 22 October 1937.
265. *Ibid.*, 27 October 1937.
266. *Ibid.*, 22 October 1937.
267. *Ibid.*, 10 October 1937.
268. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, 26 June 1939.
269. *Ibid.*
270. *Ibid.*, 23 June 1938.
271. *Ibid.*, 14 October 1939.
272. *Ibid.*
273. *Ibid.*
274. *Al-Difa'*, 11 October 1937.
275. *Filastin*, 1 February 1939.
276. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, 17 January 1939.
277. *Al-Karmil*, 2 December 1939.
278. *Ibid.*
279. *Ibid.*, 16 September 1939.
280. See, for example, *al-Difa'*, 20 January 1937.
281. *Filastin*, 2 November 1937.
282. *Ibid.*, 8 November 1937.
283. About the orders issued by the government on this matter see: *al-Waqa'i' al-Filastiniyya*, issue 642, appendix 2, 5 November 1936, and issue 646, appendix 2, 13 November 1936.
284. Sulayman, 1988, p. 97.
285. *Ibid.*
286. *Ibid.*
287. *Al-Difa'*, 14 October 1937.
288. *Filastin*, 24 October 1937.
289. *Ibid.*
290. *Ibid.*
291. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, 27 June 1939.
292. *Ibid.*
293. *Al-Difa'*, 13 September 1939.
294. *Filastin*, 28 October 1939.
295. *Ibid.*, 2 July 1940.
296. *Al-Karmil*, 14 October 1939.
297. *Ibid.*, 14 October 1939.
298. *Ibid.*, 14 November 1939.
299. *Ibid.*

300. *Al-Difa'*, 15 March 1937.
301. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, 27 June 1939.
302. This is cited as a contemporary document in Sasson's book, p. 82.
303. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, 3 July 1939.
304. *Filastin*, 27 September 1940.
305. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, 9 January 1938.
306. *Ibid.*, 24 June 1939.
307. *Al-Difa'*, 15 October 1939.
308. *Ibid.*, 10 October 1939.
309. *Ibid.*, 7 October 1939.
310. *Ibid.*
311. *Ibid.*
312. *Ibid.*, 29 December 1939.
313. *Filastin*, 9 February 1937.
314. *Ibid.*, 13 February 1937.



## Summary

During the period studied, 1929–39, the Palestinian press became a hugely significant medium. It shaped public opinion and played an important part in forming and informing political views. The growth and expansion of the journalistic discourse, the variety of topics discussed, and the increase in the number of readers who expressed interest in the information provided by journalists, in journalistic contents and in the intensive events in the political arena, greatly increased the influence of the press and it became a powerful public and national instrument. The influence of the press and its nature during this period has been measured in this book on two levels: the political level and the social/economic/institutional/cultural dimension. The influence of the press on the political level was examined in the various areas of change with regard to the Palestinian national struggle: the internal arena, relations with Britain (the Mandate state), relations with the Jewish Settlement and the Zionist movement, the inter-Arab dimension and the international arena.

At first the press tried to present itself as a neutral factor within the intra-Palestinian political system between the two rival camps (the *Majlisiyyun* and the *Mu'aridun*) and to serve as a third mediating group modifying internal conflicts and disagreements. However, when these two blocs started 'enlisting' those engaged in journalism and involving them in the power struggle, most of the press became an additional group that reflected the disagreements rather than bridging them. The newspaper owners and editors, and even regular journalists, served as members of the various national institutions representing the Palestinians. For example, the Palestinian Executive Committee, founded in 1920 and active until 1934, included among its members the most senior journalists of the period: 'Issa al-'Issa, 'Izzat Darwaza, 'Issa al-Bandak and Boulous Shihada.

Despite its 'integration' and its part in the internal disagreements, the press took the liberty of criticizing the activities of the representative political institutions and at times even dictated their moves in the direction of a more rigid approach to the Mandate authorities, calling

for the abandonment of the old *modus operandi* and embracing more efficient and even violent new methods. The influence of the press increased as the Palestinian Executive Committee weakened and finally disappeared following the death of its president, Mousa Kathim al-Husayni, in 1934.

Haj Amin, the young ambitious leader who ousted Mousa Kathim from the leadership of the Palestinian National movement, did not receive the wide consensus accorded his predecessor. His appointment as mufti (1921) and president of the High Muslim Council (1922) aroused a wave of fierce protests among the opposition camp to the Husaynis. This criticism included, among others, personal objection to Haj Amin himself by some (mainly 'alim) who saw themselves as more worthy of the supreme religious positions. One of these was As'ad al-Shuqayri of Acre, who wrote many articles in newspapers considered affiliated with the opposition camp, such as 'Issa al-'Issa's *Filastin* and Boulous Shihada's *Mir'at al-Sbarq*. One of those who was dissatisfied with the tone of the newspapers was 'Abdullah al-Qalqili, who founded the newspaper *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim* in Jaffa in 1924, which became the main platform of opposition to the High Muslim Council and its president.

Aside from *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim* and *Mir'at al-Sbarq*, which constantly (aside from short periods of reconciliation between the various camps) expressed harsh criticism and even hostility towards Haj Amin and the institutions he headed, no other prominent newspaper can be indicated as a strictly opposition newspaper. Some researchers have inaccurately categorized the Palestinian newspapers of the period as Husayni and anti-Husayni newspapers. The Husaynis, who controlled the funds of the national institutions, found it easy to win the sympathy of the newspapers and the journalists writing for them. Thus a large number of newspapers demonstrated support for their moves and were compensated for this support. Only those who could finance publication of a newspaper without the support of these institutions dared publish criticism against Haj Amin and the Husaynis, and even then not for long. When such a newspaper experienced financial difficulties the supporters of Haj Amin would come to its assistance and it would be compelled to change its tone. The best examples of this are the newspapers *Filastin* and *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* that displayed conspicuous volatility with regard to their attitude to Haj Amin and the representative institutions.

During the years 1936-39 the newspapers tended to change their tone not only due to financial constraints but also as a result of physical threats. The leaders of the armed bands heading the revolt terrorized

the various newspapers and dictated their moves. Senior newspaper editors, such as 'Issa al-'Issa (*Filastin*) and 'Issa al-Bandak (*Sawt al-Sha'b*) preferred under such conditions to leave the country and try to direct the policy of their newspapers from afar, however unsuccessfully.

The Husaynis not only supported some of the newspapers, they also hired journalists to express their views. Journalists wishing to earn a living from their work were usually employed by newspapers affiliated with the Husaynis. The journalist Emil al-Ghuri is the best example. Following his return in 1935 from studying in the United States he took part in the editing of all the newspapers belonging to the Husayni camp (*al-Liwa*, *al-Shabab*, *al-Wibda*, *al-Wibda al-'Arabiyya*). In addition, the Husaynis employed in their newspapers exiled journalists from neighbouring Arab countries who wished to earn a living from their journalistic work in Palestine, such as Mahmoud Chirqas, 'Uthman Qasim and Kamil 'Abbas.

During this period the press also served as a forum for journalistic discourse on the subject of the desired ideological orientation of the Palestinian National movement: local Palestinian nationalism (*wataniyya filastiniyya*), the pan-Arab national orientation (*qawmiyya 'arabiyya*), the pan-Islam orientation (*al-jami'a al-Islamiyya*), or the Eastern League ideal (*al-rabi'a al-sharqiyya*). *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* and *al-Yarmuk* and in certain instances *al-Karmil* began advocating the pan-Arab idea in the mid-1920s. This tendency intensified with the publication of the newspaper *al-'Arab* (1932) of the al-Istiqlal party and reached its peak with the publication of *al-Difa'* (1934), *al-Kifab* and *al-Liwa* (1935). Local Palestinian nationalism was represented in the 1920s by *Filastin* and *Mir'at al-Sharq*. In the 1930s *Filastin* retracted its support of this ideal and joined those stressing the pan-Arab ideal. The pan-Islam stream was represented mainly by *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim* (1924) and *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* (1932). The editors of these two newspapers were 'alim graduates of the al-Azhar College in Cairo, and both were bitter opponents of Haj Amin. The editor of *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, Sheikh al-Farouqi, also advocated the Eastern League idea at times, but with an Islamic religious character rather than the secular character used by the supporters of this orientation in Egypt, for example.

The criticism aimed by the press at the traditional leadership concerning the struggle against the Mandate authorities and the Jewish Settlement abounded with alternative methods, the most conspicuous being violent struggle. Many calls were voiced in the press against the arming of the Jewish Settlement and in support of organizing, training and arming Arab youth. The newspapers praised the actions of the

underground groups in the early 1930's against British and Jewish targets, and myths even grew up around the leaders of these groups.

The press reached the height of its public influence during the Great Strike, in April-October 1936. During this period the press joined the leaders of the youth organizations and the *istiqlals* (some of whom were themselves journalists or regular columnists) in order to arouse wide parts of the public with the aim of pressuring the traditional leadership into follow them. The press was quite successful in this endeavour. The traditional leadership, which during most of the strike was more led than leader, usually embraced the measures recommended by the columnists. The press and the leaders of the popular committees who joined it may be credited with the achievement of founding the Arab Higher Committee, which was one of the (brief) high points reached by the Palestinian National movement during the Mandate period.

The press not only organized the strike and dictated its course. It also nurtured feelings of national solidarity among the various components of Palestinian society, between Muslims and Christians and between rural and urban. It promoted the advancement of volunteer activities and the improvement of the image of society. Almost every newspaper organized a central office for contributions aimed at helping needy families or families harmed by the national activities (families of those killed, injured and detained). At the same time the press stressed the principle that there could be no political independence without economic independence and it advocated the construction of an independent national economy by encouraging local products and workshops and boycotting foreign products. It emphasized the establishment of new factories and even tried (for example *Filastin* and *al-Difa'*) to organize a campaign among the Palestinian diaspora (in the United States, Latin America and Europe) for investing in Palestine. Under these conditions the term '*wataniyya*' was continually stressed. Any business that had not previously incorporated this term in its name did so now. In newspaper advertisements this term was added everywhere: by manufacturers of cigarettes, sweets and medicine, by workshops, cinemas and public transportation companies. Foreign products still used despite the boycott for lack of alternative local products were legitimized as employing 'national workers'.

During the armed revolt, in 1936-39, the important and influential status achieved by the press during the strike was impaired. However, even with its meagre remaining power and limited scope the press succeeded in filling the not insignificant void left by the senior leaders, most of whom had been exiled by the authorities in October 1937.

With regard to the relationship with Britain, in the early Mandate years the press tried to avoid confrontation with the authorities in order to win their support in the Palestinian national struggle against the Zionist movement. Many newspapers, particularly those owned by Christians (*al-Karmil*, *Filastin* and *Mir'at al-Sbarq*) believed that national aspirations could be realized by cooperating with the authorities. They saw the authorities not as enemies, rather as 'fair arbitrators' in the struggle against the Jews. The Muslim-owned newspapers (*al-Sabab*, *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* and *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim*) were more suspicious and critical of the Mandate authorities, but at this stage were not interested in forcing a confrontation.

The turning point came with the events of August 1929 and the subsequent declaration of the high commissioner, which described Arab behaviour during the events as wild and barbaric. The Arabic newspapers, suspended by the authorities for a few days, renewed their publication with unprecedented attacks against the British authorities and the high commissioner himself. These attacks voiced the claims that the British authorities favoured the Jews over the Arabs and that their actions indicated greater commitment to the Balfour Declaration than to the Writ of Mandate. The newspapers called for implementation of a non-cooperation policy (*la ta'awun*) towards the British authorities until such time as they altered their pro-Jewish position. British officials and officers in the Mandate administration, accused by the Arabs of supporting for the Zionist movement, such as Bentwich, the attorney-general, were often denounced in the press. These denouncements apparently played a part in the numerous assassination attempts by Arabs of representatives of the British administration.

During the first half of the 1930s, and with the increase in the pan-Arab orientation within the Palestinian National movement, the newspapers voicing the opinions of this orientation (*al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, *al-'Arab*, *al-Difa'*) began claiming that Britain was the Arabs' principal enemy and that all efforts should be aimed against Britain. They compared British rule in Palestine to a large tree and the Zionist movement to one of its smallest branches, and according to these newspapers the Arabs would do better to cut down the tree trunk than to waste their energy on cutting down the branches.

The voice of these newspapers grew stronger during the Great Strike and the subsequent revolt, while the voice of those supporting cooperation with the British was almost silenced. The newspapers usually advocated boycotting the British and severing any contact with

them. Arab leaders and public figures, who took part in receptions held by the British on various occasions, were accused by the press of national treachery and even of taking part in the genocide of their own people by the authorities, who were vigorously working to establish the Jewish National Home. In the many cartoons depicting the Jews' actions and their efforts to establish a national home, British policemen or soldiers were always depicted guarding Jewish construction work.

It is interesting that despite the sharp denouncements of Britain during the revolt due to its efforts at suppression, Britain won the sympathy and support of most of the Arabic newspapers upon the advent of the Second World War. Some newspapers called upon the public to forget Britain's deeds during the revolt in the hope that it would win the war and solve the Palestinian problem, as only Britain could.

The British authorities recognized the increasing influence of the press and did everything they could to limit and suppress it through a list of laws and regulations limiting the freedom of the press and of the journalists. During the Great Strike, for example, the authorities not only suspended the newspapers, but also detained and exiled any journalist who expressed support for the strikers or acted for continuation of the strike.

As far as any relationship with the Zionist movement and the Jewish Settlement was concerned, from its inception the Palestinian press mostly displayed opposition and hostility towards the Zionist enterprise and perceived it as an existential danger to Palestinian Arabs. This position was expressed mainly by objecting to the sale of Arab land to Jews and in promoting a social and economic boycott of Jewish settlements. In order to demonstrate this danger, the Arabic press initiated an oppressive campaign against Jewish society, which it described as permissive, materialistic and corrupt. The implication being that any Arab contact with them would lead to the moral corruption of Arab society, thus producing further destruction and disaster. With regard to the sale of lands, the Zionist activities were described as aiming to dispossess the Palestinian peasants from their land, their sole livelihood. At first the press tried to prevent Arabs from arranging sales deals by means of persuasion, however, when this did not succeed the press began threatening the speculators and agents by reporting their part in the deals and publishing their names. This led to countless attacks against the speculators and their families. From time to time announcements appeared in the newspapers in which families renounced one of their sons for taking part in speculation and mediation of land sales. Newspaper editors also published letters of

readers who criticized the acts of the speculators and called upon the leadership to intervene and stop this phenomenon. Newspaper editors and senior journalists (such as Akram Zu'aitir and Munif al-Husayni) took part in delegations sent by the leadership to the villages to dissuade landowners from selling their land to Jews and to excommunicate those who took part in the sales.

It may be stated that the Arabic press was very involved in events within Jewish society. It had translators (albeit unprofessional) who translated and summarized articles written in the Hebrew press. In many cases the newspaper editors enlisted Palestinian writers from amongst the leadership to respond to articles written by Jewish leaders in the Hebrew press.

During the second half of the 1930s the major newspapers devoted two entire inner pages to Jewish matters. One was called *Jewish News* (*Akbbar al-Yaboud*) and the other brought quotes and parts of articles from the Hebrew press. The more prominent newspapers, *Filastin* and *al-Karmil*, persisted in their hostility towards the Jews more than *al-Difa'*, *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* and *al-Liwa*. The latter four newspapers did not spare the Zionist movement their hostility, but claimed that Britain was the main enemy against whom the struggle should be directed, and not the Jews.

Some insignificant newspapers displayed occasional sympathy for the Jewish enterprise and settlement. They believed that it could benefit the country, and that this benefit should be utilized. This group included *al-Nafir*, *al-Akbbar* and *Mir'at al-Sharq* (aside from the short period when Akram Zu'aitir edited the latter newspaper). The hostile relations between the Arabic and Jewish newspapers in Palestine did not deter some of them from cooperating in the field of journalism. Ongoing cooperation existed between the two newspapers considered radically nationalist, the Arab *al-Difa'* and the Jewish *Habokir*. The night editors of these newspapers exchanged news by telephone, and the reporters of each could join the patrols of the other newspaper's reporters in their relative areas. Another attempt at cooperation between *Filastin* and *Davar* was unsuccessful.

In the field of inter-Arab relations the development process of the Palestinian press was part of the general development process of the Arabic press throughout the Arab world. The stages of development of the Palestinian press were influenced by the journalistic experience of neighbouring Arab countries such as Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq, whose written press had reached more advanced stages. This experience was transferred to the Palestinian press through those Arabic

newspapers (in particular Egyptian) that reached Palestine and influenced the formation of the developing Arabic press in Palestine. For example, the Palestinian press embraced names and symbols prevalent in the neighbouring Arabic press (names such as *al-Liwa*, *al-Shabab*, *al-Akbbar* were in use in the various Arab countries before reaching Palestine). This influence was also expressed in the choice of subjects of discourse concerning the desired ideological orientation of the national movements in the different countries.

In addition to the Arabic press that reached Palestine, Arab journalists with vast reporting experience also came to Palestine from other countries and contributed significantly to enriching the Palestinian journalistic experience and raising its standards. These journalists, such as Khayr al-Din al-Zirakli, Sami al-Sarraj, 'Ajaj Nuwayhid and Muhammad Chirqas, had rich and proven experience in various Arab countries. Most of them held prominently pan-Arab views. This fact contributed to the intensification of the pan-Arab orientation in the Palestinian press in the first half of the 1930s.

The Palestinian press was also represented in other Arab countries. Senior Palestinian journalists and writers, such as Is'af al-Nashashibi, Akram Zu'aitir and Darwish al-Miqdadi, wrote in prominent Arab newspapers in Egypt, Syria and Iraq. In addition, exiled Palestinian journalists published newspapers supposedly representing the voice of the Palestinian movement in the diaspora. Muhammad 'Ali al-Tahir, for example, published *al-Shoura* in Cairo, and Yusuf al-'Issa published *Alef Baa* in Damascus.

The Palestinian press also displayed involvement in events in the Arab world. It strongly attacked anti-Arab views in Iraq and the Maghrib countries, Pharaonic tendencies in Egypt and Phoenician leanings in Syria and Lebanon. When Arab leaders visited Palestine the press welcomed those who supported pan-Arabism, such as Shukri al-Quwwatli and Yasin al-Hashimi, and received with demonstrations and protests those who tended to oppose the pan-Arab movement, such as the reception that awaited Isma'il Sidqi, Prime Minister of Egypt, on his visit to Palestine.

In the international field the Palestinian press displayed involvement in world events. At the beginning of this period they acted according to the principle of 'my enemy's enemy is my friend', i.e. any anti-British international power received the sympathy of the Palestinian press. However, this principle did not last long, in particular when the writers of the articles recognized that these powers had their own imperialistic aspirations towards the Arab and eastern



world. This began with fascist Italy, whose activities in Abyssinia and the Mediterranean basin aroused a wave of attacks and denouncements even among those who were supportive of the Italians and in contact with them, such as Shakib Arsalan and his Palestinian followers, Akram Zu'aitir and Munif al-Husayni. Similarly, Nazi Germany, which met with sympathy and praise and calls to emulate some of its organizational patterns during the first half of the 1930s, was denounced, particularly its leader Hitler, who was a supported and popular leader when he first rose to power. On the eve of the Second the Second World War almost all the Palestinian newspapers supported Britain and the democracies, despite Britain's activities to suppress the Arab Revolt in 1936-39 and despite the Palestinian leader Haj Amin al-Husayni's support of the Axis powers.

The Palestinian newspapers' support of the democratic camp created an interesting paradox. On the one hand, the deportation of Haj Amin from Palestine by the British led to press sympathy for Haj Amin. Even the opposition newspapers declared their loyalty to his leadership and his struggle against the British. On the other hand, this identification did not lead to support of Haj Amin's activities in the international field. Each side (Haj Amin and the newspapers) supported a different camp, but they almost never attacked each other for their views with regard to the struggle between the democracies and the Axis powers.

The international subject on which the Palestinian press held consistent views was its bitter hostility towards communism and its representatives. Stalin, leader of the USSR at this time, was always depicted as a bloodthirsty tyrant, and the communist ideal was described as anarchist, destructive and permissive. When a newspaper wanted to denigrate a political rival it accused this rival of cooperating with the communists.

On the social-economic level, the professional development of the newspapers, their circulation, the readership and its division according to geographical areas and communities has been discussed, along with a general portrait of the journalists of the period. In the field of professional development, the Palestinian press took great steps forward in this period with regard to improving presentation, forming permanent sections, and improvement of journalistic writing style. Newspapers began using pictures, cartoons and other means of illustration. With regard to circulation, until 1929 most of the newspapers printed a few hundred copies and only the big and well-established newspapers, *Filastin* and later *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, sometimes reached 3,000 copies.

After the events of 1929, when public interest in the press and its contents increased and the number of literate rose, there was a constant growth in the number of copies printed by the various newspapers. The large daily newspapers *Filastin* and *al-Difa'* printed 7,000-8,000 copies on average. The other daily newspapers, *al-Liwa*, *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* and *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim*, printed 2,000-4,000 copies on average, while weeklies such as *al-Karmil* and *al-'Arab* printed 1,500-2,000 copies on average. It should be noted that sensational events and points of tension in the Palestinian national struggle during this period increased the number of copies printed by hundreds and even thousands.

With regard to geographical and sectarian distribution, most of the readers were concentrated in the large cities, Jerusalem, Jaffa, Haifa, Nablus and Acre, and in the small towns Jenin, Lydda, Ramle, Tul Karim and Bethlehem. The first three cities were the major centres of journalistic activity. They were the location of the editorial offices and naturally most of the journalists lived there. In the first half of the 1930s a new level of readers expressed an interest in the press. In cities with a high percentage of Christian residents, Christian-owned newspapers were read - *Filastin*, *al-Karmil* and *Mir'at al-Sbarq* - while the villagers tended to read Muslim-owned newspapers - *al-Difa'*, *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* and *al-Liwa*. However, it was not only sectarian criteria that determined the readers' distribution, but also the newspapers' tendencies. Regions supportive of the Husaynis read newspapers belonging to the Husaynis or affiliated with them, and regions supportive of the Nashashibis (particularly in the cities) read newspapers tending to the opposition.

During this period approximately 253 journalists engaged in journalism, of them 233 Palestinians, seven from neighbouring Arab countries, and one Muslim from India. Of these journalists, approximately 187 were Muslim and 65 Christian. With regard to social origins, most of the journalists were of urban families (190 journalists were from the three large cities, Jaffa, Jerusalem and Haifa) and the low proportion of rural journalists began rising in the early 1930s and increased considerably during the period of the strike and the 1936-39 revolt when most of the band leaders were of rural origin.

The educational level of those engaged in journalism during the first years of the press was elementary or secondary at the most, aside from a few who had completed their academic studies, such as 'Issa al-'Issa, editor of *Filastin*, Boulous Shihada, editor of *Mir'at al-Sbarq*, 'Abdullah al-Qalqili editor of *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim* and Sheikh al-

Farouqi editor of *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*. During the 1930s young educated people, graduates of institutions of higher education, joined the field of journalism, such as Ibrahim al-Shanti, Akram Zu'aitir, Emil al-Ghouri and Ya'qoub Saba.

Most of those engaged in journalism were also involved in political activities and even served as members of the various political parties. The al-Istiqlal party was the most prominent of these, with 36.5 per cent of its activists also serving as active journalists. It should also be stated that 82 per cent of the senior activists of this party wrote articles in the press.

The cultural contribution of the journalistic discourse was expressed by creating a cultural discourse among a new generation of intelligentsia. The press contributed much to enriching the cultural life of this generation by advertizing plays, movies and other various cultural activities. It served as a window to the world and a powerful instrument for disseminating human culture and increasing awareness of it.

The end of the Great Revolt and the outbreak of the Second World War symbolized the beginning of a new stage in the history of the Palestinian press, a stage of decline and almost paralysis. The influence of the press was greatly reduced and its circulation dropped to a previously unknown level.

## Appendix 1

TABLE SUMMARY OF THE NEWSPAPERS PUBLISHED BEFORE 1929  
THAT CONTINUED TO APPEAL SUBSEQUENTLY

	Name of newspaper	Owner of concession	Editor (s)	Place and year of publication	Frequency of publication
1	<i>al-Nafir</i>	Ilya Zakka	Ilya Zakka	Jerusalem, 1908; from 1913 published in Haifa	Twice weekly
2	<i>Mir'at al-Sbarq al-Karmil</i>	Boulous Shihada Najib Nassar	Boulous Shihada Najib Nassar	Jerusalem, 1919 Haifa, 1908 years published	Twice weekly Weekly, but some twice weekly
4	<i>al-Zubour</i>	Jamil al-Bahri	Jamil al-Bahri	Haifa, 1921	Weekly; from 1927 published twice weekly
5	<i>al-Yarmuk</i>	Rashid al-Haj Ibrahim	Kamal 'Abbas and Hani Muslih	Haifa, 1924	Weekly; from 1927 published twice weekly
6	<i>al-Sirat al-Mustaqim</i>	'Abdullah al-Qalqili	'Abdullah al-Qalqili	Jaffa, 1924	First published twice weekly; published thrice weekly and sometimes daily
7	<i>Filastin</i>	'Issa al-'Issa and Yusuf al-'Issa	Yusuf al-'Issa and Yusuf Hanna	Jaffa, 1911	Twice weekly; daily from 1929
8	<i>al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya</i>	Munif al-Husayni	Munif al-Husayni and Taher al-Fityani	Jerusalem, 1927	Began as a weekly, then twice weekly, and then became a daily newspaper
9	<i>al-Iqdam</i>	Salim al-Hiliw and Yusuf Salam	Tanius Nasser and Yusuf Salam	Haifa, 1926; from 1933 moved to Jaffa	Weekly
10	<i>al-Zumur</i>	Khalil Zaqqout		Acre, 1927	Weekly

## Appendix 2

TABLE SUMMARIZING THE NEW ARABIC NEWSPAPERS PUBLISHED  
FROM 1929 UNTIL 1939

Name of newspaper	Owner of concession	Editor (s)	Place and year of publication	Frequency of publication	publication
1	<i>al-Hayat</i>	'Adil Jabr and Khayr al-Din al-Zirakli	'Adil Jabr and Khayr al-Din al-Zirakli	Jerusalem, 1930	Daily
2	<i>Kashshaf al-Sabara</i>	Mutlaq 'Abd al-Khaliq	Mutlaq 'Abd al Khaliq	Haifa, 1931	Monthly
3	<i>al-Akblaq</i>	Dawoud al-Kurdi	Jibra'il Rahhal	Jerusalem, 1931	Weekly
4	<i>Majlat Dar al-Itaim al-Islamiyya</i>	Jamil Wahba	Jamil Wahba	Jerusalem, 1932	Monthly
5	<i>al-'Arab</i>	'Ajaj Nuwayhid	'Ajaj Nuwayhid	Jerusalem, 1932	Weekly
6	<i>al-Liwa</i>	Jamal al-Husayni	Emil al-Ghouri 'Uthman Qasim	Jerusalem, 1933	Daily
7	<i>Sawt al-Sba'b</i>	'Issa al-Bandak	'Issa al-Bandak	Bethlehem, 1922	Weekly
8	<i>al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya</i>	Sulayman al-Farouqi	Sulayman al-Farouqi, Sami al-Sarraj, Jamal al-Farouqi	Jaffa, 1933	Daily
9	<i>al-Mitraqa</i>	Khalil abu al-'Afya	Khalil abu al-'Afyya	Jaffa, 1933	Daily
10	<i>al-Wibda a al-'Arabiyy</i>	Emil al-Ghouri	Emil al-Ghouri	Jerusalem, 1933	Daily
11	<i>al-Difa'</i>	Ibrahim al-Shanti	Ibrahim al-Shanti, Shawkat Hammad and Sami al-Sarraj	Jaffa, 1934	Daily
12	<i>Sada al-Nasira</i>	B.M. Cempert	B.M. Cempert	Nazareth, 1934	Monthly

Appendix 2 Continued

Appendix 2 Continued

	Name of newspaper	Owner of concession	Editor (s)	Place and year of publication	Frequency of publication
13	<i>al-Kasbsbaf</i>	N. Rishani	Ayyoub Musallam and Niqula Qashan	Bethlehem, 1934	Monthly
14	<i>al-Shabab</i>	Emil al-Ghouri	Emil al-Ghouri	Jerusalem, 1934	Twice weekly
15	<i>al-Busbra</i>	'Atallah ' Jalandahri	Arallah Jalandahri	Haifa, 1934	Monthly
16	<i>Majallat al-Iqtisadiyyat al-'Arabiyya</i>	Sharikat al-Matbu'at al-'Arabiyya	Fu'ad Saba and 'Adil Jabir	Jerusalem, 1934	Bi-monthly and weekly from 1936
17	<i>al-Fajr</i>	Iskandar Halabi	Iskandar Halabi, 'Aarif al-'Azuni and Mahmoud al-Irani	Jaffa, 1934 weekly and	Began twice then became a weekly
18	<i>al-Jil</i>	Ibrahim al-Shanti	Ibrahim al-Shanti	Jaffa, 1935	Weekly
19	<i>al-Sa'iq</i>	'Abd al- Ghani al-Karmi	Farid al-Shanti	Jaffa, 1935	Weekly
20	<i>al-Miryab al-Hayya al-Kbamis</i>	Khalil Jibra'il	Khalil Jibra'il	Jerusalem, 1935	Monthly
21		Muhammad Farid al-Shanti	Muhammad Farid al-Shanti	Jaffa, 1935	Weekly
22	<i>al-Kifab</i>	Mustafa Arshid	Mustafa Arshid	Jaffa, 1935	Weekly
23	<i>Majlat Dar al-Itam al-Islamiyya al-Sarkba</i>	Ishaq Darwish	'Abd al- Latif al-Husayni	Jerusalem, 1936	Monthly
24		Muhammad Farid al-Shanti	Muhammad Farid al-Shanti	Jaffa, 1937	Weekly
25	<i>al-Gbad</i>	Dawoud Tirzi	Dawoud Tirzi	Bethlehem, 1938	Weekly
26	<i>Sawt al-Ra'i al-'Am</i>	Mustafa al-Ghandur	Kamal 'Abbas	Acre,	1939 Weekly
27	<i>al-Haqiqa al-Musawwara</i>	Mustafa al-Ghandur	Kamal 'Abbas	Acre, 1937	Weekly
28	<i>al-Hayat al-Riyadiyya</i>	Jamil Shalali	'Ali Husayn	Jaffa, 1937	Weekly
29	<i>al-Labab</i>	Adib Khouri	Yusuf Fransis	Jerusalem, 1938	Daily
30	<i>al-Salam wa al-Kbayr</i>	Holy Land Society	Not noted	Jerusalem, 1937	Monthly

Name of newspaper	Owner of concession	Editor (s)	Place and year of publication	Frequency of publication	publication
31	<i>al-Akbbar</i>	Bandali Ghrabi	Alfonso Ya'qoub	Jaffa, 1937	Daily
32	<i>Misbab al-Haq</i>	L.P.Whitman	L.P.Whitman	Jerusalem, 1938	Monthly
33	<i>Aakbir Sa'a</i>	Yusuf Sallom	Anas al-Khamra and later Ibrahim Sa'adah	Haifa, 1938	Daily
34	<i>Bayt al-Maqdis</i>	Bandali Mashour	Sami Nassar	Jerusalem, 1938	Daily
35	<i>Nuzbat al-Talib</i>	Mahmoud Sayf al-Din al Irani	'Issa 'Abbud	Jaffa, 1939	Weekly
36	<i>al-Jibad</i>	Muhammad al-Musallami	Najib al-Tayyib	Jaffa, 1939	Daily
37	<i>al-'Abd al-Jadid</i>	Zuhdi al-Saqqa, Mahmoud Ya'is and Mustafa 'Abdu	Muhammad Hasan Sa'oud	Jaffa, 1939	Twice weekly
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The letter 'n' indicates a note, for example, 69n 146 indicates note 146 on page 69.

## Abbreviations used in the index

PNM Palestinian National  
Movement  
AEC Arab Executive Committee  
AHC Arab Higher Committee  
AYC Arab Youth Congress

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