

Jerusalem's Other Voice

**I dedicate this book to
the memory of Ragheb Nashashibi.**

Jerusalem's Other Voice
*Ragheb Nashashibi and Moderation
in Palestinian Politics, 1920–1948*

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Note on Transliteration

In general I have given proper names and words of Arabic origin in their Arabic form except those which commonly appear in Western publications. Thus I have used the better known version of the name of Gamal Abdel Nasser rather than Jamal Abd al-Nasir, (King) Farouk rather than Faruq, (King) Saud rather than Sa'ud and Nahas (Pasha) rather than Nahhas.

I have also dropped the Arabic indefinite article *al* in two names that are frequently used, namely Nashashibi and Alami. I have used (') to indicate an *'ayn* and (') to indicate a *hamza* where they occur in the middle of a word, and have used the letter *q* for the Arabic *qaf*. For simplicity, diacritical marks have been omitted.

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valuable suggestions. I have known Albert Hourani for over forty years, but every time I meet him I am struck by his moderation in all things, his unimpeachable integrity and his unswerving loyalty to his friends.

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Needless to say, I alone am responsible for any inaccuracies that remain and for the views and sentiments expressed.

Preface

This book is not a systematic narrative of the history of Palestine or Jerusalem but a collection of portraits and sketches of individuals that have set the scene, the pace, and the course of the contemporary history of Palestine: from the mandate to the present day.

This work is not to be regarded as a textbook but as a complement to much that has been written on Palestine, for it deals largely with the personalities of the leading players in this political drama. This is a personal account of the Palestine story during the period of the mandate and beyond with frequent references to the disharmony in political perception between the two principal leaders of the two principal Arab families in Palestine, Ragheb Nashashibi and Haj Amin al-Husaini, and to the eclipse of moderate policies by the forces of radical extremism.

In telling this story I was much influenced by numerous conversations I had with my uncle, Ragheb, and Musa Alami. I also had interesting conversations with Haj Amin al-Husaini whom I met several times in Beirut, Cairo, and Jerusalem. Other eminent Arabs like Abd al-Latif Saleh, Ya'qub Ghusain, and Jamal al-Husaini were kind enough to spare so much of their time talking politics to me when I was still a boy.

I must add that I have no intention of glorifying the Nashashibis in this book, or of maligning their Arab opponents, though a measure of *parti pris* in my case is inescapable. My intention is simply to speak my mind about a unique and intractable problem, to describe historical events and personalities from first-hand experience and original material in my possession—letters, tape recordings and diaries—as well as from official documents and private papers. I also intend to recount stories hitherto untold, correct distortions, express opinions and, occasionally, reminisce.

In writing this book I tried to be as objective as is humanly possible for a man with my background and experience. I am a Palestinian Arab of the Nashashibi family, whose uncle was Ragheb Nashashibi, the voice of moderation in Palestinian politics from the early twenties until the late forties. It is a matter of deep regret for me that this voice was not allowed to be as widely heard as I would have wished.

Jerusalem and the Nashashibi Connection

I had always dreaded the day when I should have to leave Jerusalem, but the reality was sharper than I had ever dreamed.

Sir Ronald Storrs, *Orientalisms* (1937)

King Juan Carlos of Spain told me in 1980 that among the many titles he carries was that of King of Jerusalem, and that he was very proud of it because he saw in it the 'greatness of history'. For the same reason the Palestinians are proud of their country and their great city Jerusalem.

For centuries, Jerusalem has been subjected to conquests from East and West because of its political, strategic and uniquely spiritual value, and all those who have lived there have had to pay a price for being Jerusalemites. They have paid with their safety, with their property, and often with their lives.

Jerusalem was called the city of peace. In the Bible it was called Salem. In Egyptian and Babylonian literature it is called Yuoshalimio from which the Hebrew Yuroshalime comes. But this city never saw peace. Throughout its history the city has been captured twenty-five times.

Round about the beginning of the first millenium BC, King David took the city and made it the capital of his kingdom. In 587 BC it was captured by the Babylonians. From then on until the Romans took the city in 63 BC, it was conquered many times by foreign invaders such as the Persians and the Greeks. As the Jews revolted against the Roman government, the second Temple was destroyed and the Jews driven out by Emperor Titus in AD 70. In 638 Jerusalem fell to the Arabs. The Crusaders under Godfrey de Bouillon took the city in 1099, but in 1187 they were driven out by Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi, and in 1517 the Ottoman Turks occupied Jerusalem.

On 9 December 1917 Jerusalem fell into the hands of General Allenby. It remained under British occupation until 14 May 1948, but

part of it was soon occupied by the newly established state of Israel. In June 1967 the Old City was invaded and has remained annexed to Israel to this day.

It was in AD 638 that the second Caliph of Islam, Omar Ibn al-Khattab, entered Jerusalem riding a white camel and received the surrender of the city from the head of the Byzantine Church, the Patriarch Sophronius. Since then Jerusalem has been a city sacred to all Muslims all over the world—indeed, it was originally towards Jerusalem, not Mecca, that the faithful were instructed to turn in their prayers—and for almost all that time, except for the brief interval of the Crusaders' kingdom (less than a hundred years) and during the thirty years of the British mandate, until its occupation by Israel in 1967, the city has been in Muslim hands and its population predominantly Arab.

I am a Muslim and an Arab, and although I think of Jerusalem as mine, I write on behalf of all Muslims and Arabs, for in a very real sense Jerusalem is theirs too.

I was born in Jerusalem, and because the history of the city and of my family have been so closely interwoven for so many centuries I feel as if I had known it well in a previous life, just as I feel that I shall continue to know it in a life to come.

My family's association with Jerusalem began during the revived Arab rule, 1239–1514, some 600 years ago, with the arrival of Ahmad Nashashibi. His son, whose name I bear, Nasir al-Din Nashashibi, was ordered by the Mamluk Sultan of Egypt, Jakmak, to bring relief to the people of Palestine who were suffering from famine and a failure of the water supply. This he did. He became known as the Emir of al-Haramain, guardian of the two mosques, the al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem and the mosque in Hebron. Since then the badge or blazon of my family has been in the shape of a cup between two daggers, the cup representing the life-giving water to the dying and the daggers symbolizing the military arm which made Nasir's mission of mercy possible.

The Cairo origins of the Nashashibi family have always been a source of pride for us. The Mamluks, who were responsible for sending the first Nashashibi to Palestine, were one of the most powerful of Arab rulers. For nearly three centuries (AD 1250–1517) they dominated the area which is now known as the Middle East. It was they who stemmed the advance of the Mongols under Hulagu and the army of a later conqueror from central Asia, Timur (Tamerlaine). They drove the Crusaders out from their last foothold in Palestine. Nor were they simply men of the sword. Many Mamluk rulers showed a keen appreciation of the arts, particularly of architecture. Every time I used

to cast my eyes around the al-Haram area in Jerusalem I thought with gratitude of the part they played in making this one of the most beautiful places on earth.

There is another, less happy, reason why we Arabs should remember the Mamluks. My uncle Ragheb Nashashibi in the last years of his life (he died in 1951) often used to point out to me that their history provided an object-lesson for our own times. The Mamluks fell because they were weakened by internal divisions, more concerned with fighting each other than with uniting against the common enemy. It was the failure of the Arabs—inside as well as outside Palestine—to unite that was largely responsible for the tragedy of 1948 and so for condemning many thousands of Palestinians to exile, and this failure has bedevilled the Arabs ever since. 'I wish some of our leaders would study the history of the Mamluks', my uncle Ragheb used to say.

From the earliest times the Nashashibis have been prominent in public life in Palestine in various capacities, as well as in the field of learning. My grandfather, Osman Nashashibi, represented Jerusalem in the Ottoman parliament after the elections of 1912 and used this forum to urge the case for a degree of self-rule in the Arab provinces of the empire, and in particular for greater autonomy for Jerusalem. After the 1914 elections Osman was joined by his nephew, Ragheb Nashashibi, and by a member of another prominent Jerusalem family, Faidi Alami. My maternal uncle and cousin of Ragheb was Is'af Nashashibi, the distinguished scholar in the fields of literature, philosophy and theology; he taught at the Salahiyah College in Jerusalem, where he imbued his pupils with the same patriotic principles. He was commonly known as *Adib al-Arabiyyah*, the scholar of the Arabic language. His books are widely read and highly regarded in the schools and universities of the Arab world. His house became a sort of club, a meeting place for the intelligentsia of Jerusalem where political as well as literary and theological problems were the subjects of lively debates.

Other members of the Nashashibi family joined the secret societies which sprang up in Constantinople and other important centres in the Ottoman Empire demanding self-government for the Arabs within the framework of the empire (complete independence was not at first considered an attainable goal). Several belonged to al-Ahd, a society which included such distinguished figures as Aziz Pasha al-Masri and Yasin Hashimi, later to become prime minister of Iraq. One of my uncles, Dr Ali Nashashibi, was so outspoken in his advocacy of the Arab cause that he was arrested by the Turks on a charge of treason, sentenced to death, and hanged in Aley in Lebanon.

The end of Ottoman rule in Palestine came in December 1917 when General Allenby's army entered Jerusalem and drove the disintegrating Turkish forces northwards. The husbands of two of my aunts, Abd al-Qadir Alami and Ahmad Sharaf, both of whom had been officers in the Turkish army, were among those who were delegated to hand over the keys of Jerusalem to its new masters. That same month Ronald Storrs, until then Oriental Secretary at the British Residency in Cairo, was appointed Military Governor of Jerusalem.

Easter 1920 saw the first serious clash between Arabs and Jews in Palestine. The mayor of Jerusalem, Musa Pasha Kazem al-Husaini, had, as Storrs wrote, 'been impelled . . . to make himself leader and spokesman of the opposition to the Mandate', and had to be replaced.¹ Storrs offered the post to my uncle, Ragheb Nashashibi, who was 'unquestionably the ablest Arab in Palestine.' Storrs continued: 'He was gifted with an imagination, a swiftness of perception and of action, and an absence of fatalism and *laissez-aller* regrettably rare among his co-religionists.'²

Ragheb Bey was to hold the post for fourteen years. Much later, in 1942, when I was talking to him in his Jerusalem home, I asked him why he had accepted Storr's offer. His answer was forthright. 'I knew', he said, 'that if I refused they would appoint an Englishman as mayor. One of the few responsible positions available to Arabs would have passed out of our hands.'

A few years after Ragheb Bey had become mayor I was born. I was educated first at St George's School, which was attached to the Anglican cathedral in Jerusalem, and then at Bishop Gobat School, an earlier foundation, called after a nineteenth-century bishop in Jerusalem. Both schools had a high academic reputation and were modelled on English public schools. All the teaching was in English, and the teachers were from England. At St George's we wore blue blazers and blue caps, like little English boys of our own age. We learned to play football and cricket, joined the Boy Scouts and went to camp in tents. And although most of us were Muslims, we saw nothing strange or wrong in attending Christian services on Sundays. Above all, we were taught to cultivate the same virtues that were supposed to be prized by English public schoolboys: self-respect, self-discipline, tolerance, love of freedom and fair play.

All this we accepted as right and proper within the walls of our schools. But when we came outside those walls and went home we

1 Ronald Storrs, *Orientations* (London, 1945), p. 333.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 402.

found a very different world. By the 1930s Palestine had become a land of strife. Tanks rumbled through the streets of Jerusalem; police were on every corner; there were frequent curfews, and one was always liable to be stopped and searched. Why was all this happening? We would ask our parents for an explanation, and they would tell us that this was due to the contradictory promises Britain had given to the Arabs and the Jews during the Great War. They told us about the pledges given to King Husain of the Hejaz. They told us about the Balfour Declaration. It seemed extraordinary to us that a British government, some two thousand miles away, should consider itself to have the right to give away our country to someone else. We came to appreciate the sharp contrast between what we were taught at school and the reality outside: between paying lip-service to the ideal of freedom and the demands of colonialism.

Jerusalem was then my home, and I still regard it as my home. How can I describe the city in which I was born—the city which my parents and grandparents had known and loved?

The general view of Jerusalem, as portrayed by so many artists in the nineteenth century—men like David Roberts and Edward Lear—is probably familiar to most people. They would recognize the walled city, set on its seven hills, with the Dome of the Rock and the Mosque of al-Aqsa in the al-Haram al-Sharif, the Noble Sanctuary, dominating the foreground. Jerusalem had not changed much from these early impressions when I first knew it; a bit more building outside the walls erected by Sultan Sulaiman the Magnificent, certainly, but none of those hideous high-rise concrete blocks which today overwhelm the city from all sides. Now Jerusalem is being rapidly transformed by developers to look much like a bustling American city. It has been robbed of its unique character, robbed of the beauty which used to strike visitors when they first came to it as forcibly as the first sight of Venice.

Typical of many was the impression it made on the American foreign correspondent, Vincent Sheean, whose autobiography, *Personal History*, was an outstanding success when it was first published in 1937 and is still very relevant. He describes Jerusalem as he first saw it:

Jerusalem enchanted me from the beginning by the compactness and precision with which it fulfilled its physical tradition: the Mount of Olives exactly here, the Valley of Jehoshophat exactly there, The Temple of Solomon (Mosque of Omar) exactly opposite, the Mount of Calvary (Church of the Sepulchre) just up the way . . .

There were . . . mosques everywhere, and Islam's call to

prayer haunted the still air of an evening, so that I could scarcely see a photograph of the roofs of Jerusalem afterwards without hearing the long cry of the muezzin as part of it . . .

That was, probably, the first impression I received of walled Jerusalem in the early days: that it was an Arab city. It was as Arab as Cairo or Baghdad, and the Zionist Jews (that is, the modern Jews) were as foreign to it as I was myself.³

An Arab city Jerusalem it certainly was in the 1920s, as it had been for twelve hundred years before. But of course its special character was derived from the fact that it was a city sacred to three faiths: to Christianity and Judaism as well as to Islam, the faith of the majority. This was symbolized by the division of the Old City into quarters, the Muslim, Christian, Jewish and Armenian quarters, where, on the whole, the communities lived amicably side by side. This was often more than just the simple tolerance of people of one faith for the people of another faith: there was active co-operation.

Here is an example. One of the distinguished Palestinians of this century was a man called Musa Alami, with whom I was privileged to work soon after I had left university. The Alamis were one of the leading Palestinian families, and it was his father, Faidi Alami, who had been a member of the Ottoman parliament. The story of Musa's childhood and the circumstances of his birth give a vivid picture of Jerusalem society at the turn of the century and the friendly relations that existed between the different ethnic communities. Sir Geoffrey Furlonge wrote:

After Musa was born [that is, on 8 May 1897], there was no ceremony corresponding to the Christian baptism or the Jewish circumcision, but a few days later a curious local custom had to be fulfilled. Under this, when two male children were born in the same quarter at approximately the same time, the two mothers, if they did not know one another, were put in touch by the midwife, who had of course officiated at both births, and each suckled the other's son; whereupon the two boys were deemed 'foster-brothers' and expected to regard each other as brothers throughout their lives; their families, too, were expected to become friends if they were not already. The custom took no account of the religion or social status of the two families, but only of the

3 Vincent Sheean, *Personal History* (New York, 1937), pp. 336-7.

times of birth and propinquity. Musa recalls that the child who became his own foster-brother was the son of the Jewish grocer down the street, and that for the next thirty years the two families used to visit each other, to exchange presents on each other's feast days, and to proffer congratulations or condolences as occasion demanded, until in the 1920s militant Zionism began to frown on such contacts between Jews and Arabs and brought the relationship to an end.⁴

Can anyone imagine this happening today? Much abuse has been heaped on the Ottoman Empire, and we still tend to look at it through the spectacles of Victorian liberals. But that is not how the Alamis and Nashashibis of those days would have seen it. They would have known that this was an empire in which they could rise to the highest positions in the state, even though they were not Turks, and where, by the so-called 'millet' system, each community could look after its own affairs. As Lord Kinross put it:

Minorities . . . were organized into *millets*, or nations, self-governing communities preserving their own laws and usages under a religious head responsible to the central power for the administration and good behaviour of his people . . . Their opportunity to enjoy the benefits of peace and prosperity were to remain unimpaired and indeed, in the expanding commercial field, to become greatly enhanced. In these terms [Sultan] Mehmed now required that, side by side with the ulema, the Islamic authority, there should reside within the walls of Istanbul the Greek Orthodox Patriarch, the Armenian Patriarch, and the Jewish Chief Rabbi.⁵

In the empire's Arab cities official positions were held by old Arab families of 'notables' with a tradition of learning and leadership. In Jerusalem, for instance, there were the Djanis, the al-Husainis, the Nashashibis and the Alamis; in Damascus there were the Asalis as were the Jabiris in Aleppo and the Gaylanis in Baghdad. Under the Ottomans, these notables acted as intermediaries between the central power and the local population.

The various communities enjoyed peace, tolerance and protection at the turn of the century.

⁴ Geoffrey Furlonge, *Palestine is My Country: the Story of Musa Alami* (London, 1969), p. 6.

⁵ Lord Kinross, *The Ottoman Centuries: the Rise and Fall of the Turkish Empire* (London, 1977). pp. 112, 113.

I do not suppose there was anyone living in Jerusalem then who did not love the city. Certainly, all my family did. We had the same feelings about Jerusalem and Palestine as those expressed by President Kennedy in his inaugural address—we were concerned not with what our city and country could do for us, but with what we could do for them. It was in this spirit that we served, under the Turks and then under the British, as mayors, political leaders, government servants, as scholars and writers. In every branch of the administration, in every institution of learning, you could always find a Nashashibi.

But no longer. Many have died in exile and in poverty. The library of that great scholar, Is'af Nashashibi, containing over two hundred thousand volumes and manuscripts, was looted and scattered in the 1948 fighting. Parts of it are to be found, ironically enough, on the shelves of the Hebrew University. He himself is buried, not in his native land, but in Cairo, the very man who as early as 1910 warned his Arab countrymen with the prophetic words: 'Awake. It is your homeland. Do not let it be sold to strangers.' His cousin, Azmi Nashashibi, who ran the Arabic Service of the Palestine Broadcasting System during the war, was rewarded for his loyalty to the Allies by exile. He too is buried in Egypt. My own mother died in London. Many others of my relations died and were buried far from Jerusalem. What has happened to the lands we owned for so many centuries, to the orange groves and forests of oak and olive trees? We have lost everything.

Like the other four million Palestinians we face the alternatives of living under Israeli rule as second or third class citizens, without civil or legal rights, of living in the squalor of refugee camps, or of trying to earn a living in other countries where we are often made to feel far from welcome, even in Arab countries.

I was interested to read the farewell address given to the Bundestag in 1986 by the former Chancellor, Helmut Schmidt. He said: 'Europeans, it seems to me,' [and he might have said Americans too] 'feel at home—and need to feel at home—in three ways: among their families and friends; in the social and spiritual environment of their home religion; and, finally, in the possibility of identification with a nation-state . . . But we Germans have not been able to restore that third circle in which one can feel at home, the nation-state.'

It is not only Europeans or Americans who have the need to feel at home. The Germans now have their settled families; they have a settled social and spiritual environment in their home region. But they were grouped into two separate states not the single nation-state they used to have. This, said Helmut Schmidt, 'is perhaps one of the reasons that

the restlessness of young people is greater in Germany than in the rest of Europe.'

Palestinians have no state. Many of them have no settled home and no settled environment. But, Zionists say, Palestinians have no claim to statehood since they never were a nation in the sense that, say, the Germans are a nation. But they are a people, just as the Arabs of Syria or Iraq or Morocco are a people, and it is thanks to the European idea of the nation-state that the states of Syria and Iraq, or Morocco and Algeria, of Egypt and the Sudan, have come into being. And it was, it must not be forgotten, the same idea of the nation-state that inspired Zionism. It would therefore seem mindless to suppose that the Palestinians alone could be left out.

After 1948, some members of the Nashashibi family went to live in Cairo and Alexandria, and others were forced to leave Jerusalem for Amman and Damascus. Many left for the USA, while some went to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

In happier days we Nashashibis lived for the most part in Mount Scopus (the approach roads to which bear the names of two of my uncles—Ragheb Nashashibi and Is'af Nashashibi), or in the Nashashibi quarter, as it was known, on the way to Ramallah and Nablus, at the junction which leads to the Mount of Olives. Four hundred members of the Nashashibi family lived there, which is why it was called the Nashashibi quarter. Next to our houses lived such people as George Antonius and his wife Katy; nearby stood the British School for Archeology in Palestine, the Swedish, Belgian, Turkish and British Consulates and the Red Cross Headquarters. St John's Eye Hospital was also there. Soon after 1949, I let one of my houses, which was situated on the way to the Mount of Olives, to Sir Hugh Dow, the British Consul General in Jerusalem.

Not far from where we lived, in the Nashashibi quarter, there was an al-Husaini quarter, where most members of the al-Husaini family lived, and where a distinguished Jewish scholar and leader, Dr Judah Magnes, also lived. From 1922 until 1938 Dr Magnes, who was the Chancellor of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, was a good neighbour of the al-Husainis until the tragic murder of a cab driver just outside his front door. This incident forced him to move to the square in the Rehavia area which still bears his name, Kikar Magnes.

On the occasion of Magnes's sixtieth birthday, he received hundreds of congratulatory messages, one of which was a letter from Albert Einstein. Einstein wrote: 'Today I assure you of my sympathy and esteem, for in your life you have heeded not the call of convenience but the call of conscience. You especially merit praise because you have

attempted, with every means at your disposal, to have our fellow Jews pursue a sagacious and conciliatory policy with the Arabs. Now, the vindictive will understand how right you have been.'⁶

Before the creation of Israel, my family contributed to various charitable foundations and welfare institutions. I remember that my father and uncle used to help fund the Syrian Orphanage Foundation in the Schneller quarter. The Foundation helped the orphans to stand on their feet and live useful lives with self-respect—making a range of beautiful artefacts for sale to tourists. They used mother-of-pearl, olive wood, black stone from the Dead Sea and brass, and made rugs, kelims and postcards depicting the different views and sites of Jerusalem. Sadly, all such Foundations had to close down after the Zionist occupation in 1948.

I still remember vividly the stores in which the Syrian Orphanage Foundation used to exhibit their artefacts: one was in the Schneller quarter and another in Mamillah Road. I also remember the Asfar and Sarkis Shop, a Syrian store selling all kinds of work from Damascus. There was also a store called 'The Art' in Jaffa Road, near Hotel Fast. In the same street there was a photographer, Ra'd, and an optician, Dumyani, and the Photo House.

On the right-hand side of the Jaffa Gate, there was a store for oriental hand-made jewellery, called 'Sphinx', and at the beginning of Jaffa Road, near Hotel Fast on the Arab East side of Jerusalem, a German restaurant and café for soft and hard drinks; also in Jaffa Road there was an oriental carpet store, owned by Emhran Kalbian. My mind is crammed with images of shops and cafés across the length and breadth of Jerusalem. I can see with my mind's eye the American Colony Stores in Jerusalem, the Nile Mission Press, the Mary Salman Souvenir Bookshop, Bethlehem Dresses, the New American Salon, and the Aweidah Brothers in Mamillah Road as well as tourist operators and car dealers.

Hotel Fast in Jerusalem was a first-class hotel with more than 120 beds, each with private bathroom and all centrally heated with hot and cold running water. This hotel was owned and run by Arab people. It is hard to forget their names and faces. It is also hard to forget that Jerusalem was Jerusalem a long time before anyone came visiting and a long, long time before the Jewish immigrants, whether Sefardim or Ashkenazim, came to pretend that they had built it all.

⁶ Quoted in Gabriel Stern, 'He looked out on Zion from atop Mount Scopus and dreamt of peace: a memoir' in W. M. Brinner and M. Rischin (eds), *Like All the Nations? The Life and Legacy of Judah L. Magnes* (New York, 1987), p. 178.

The Arabs had built it, stone by stone, and had lived in it for generations.

Mamillah Road was built by Arabs and owned by Arabs. The road from Mamillah to Upper- and Lower-al-Baq'ah and to Qatamon, is where notable Christian Arabs lived, while the other road from the YMCA building to the Talbiyyah is where the well-known advocates like Mughanam Mughanam, and businessmen like Shibli Jamal and Sulaiman Tannus (the Agent for General Motors) lived in their own villas in the early thirties—again, long before anybody from Poland or from Russia could claim that they had taught the Arab Jerusalemites how to build stone houses.

The Mount Scopus quarter where we lived was built by Arabs. From Mount Scopus to the Jaffa Road, near the Italian Hospital and the Italian School, everything was built by Arabs. Down St Mary's Street, Mamillah Road and King George Road, all these places were built and inhabited mostly by Arabs.

I cannot forget the biggest bookstore in Jerusalem, called the 'Palestine Educational Library' located on the Jaffa Road in the Eastern part of Old Jerusalem. It was owned by Boulos and Wadi Sa'id, respectively, the father and uncle of Edward Sa'id, the Arab-American expert on the contemporary history of Palestine who often appears on American and British television pleading the Palestinian case. The American Colony Stores owned by Mrs Vester & Company was located not far from where my family and I lived in Nablus Road.

Jerusalem was a very cosmopolitan city, and it would be very difficult to find a greater diversity of race and nationality anywhere else than within its walls.

At the time I lived there the majority of Jerusalem's inhabitants were Arabs—either Muslim or Christian. Of the Jewish population, the majority were East Europeans, mostly from Russia and Poland, but many came from Germany and Austria. Their numbers started increasing fast with increased immigration authorized by the British Mandatory. Most of these Jews retained their foreign citizenship and went to settle outside the Old City on the Northern and Western sides. However, there were some Oriental Jews who had been settled in Eastern Jerusalem for centuries, having come from different parts of the Middle East.

There was also a large community of Greeks living mainly in the suburbs of the Western part of the city. Large Greek monasteries were much in evidence. There were also Armenians in the city whose numbers steadily grew with the influx of refugees fleeing from Turkey during the war. All of us were ruled by the British who held the

mandate for Palestine. The High Commissioner was head of the governors of the different districts of Palestine, and was accountable to the Secretary of State for the Colonies in London. The Chief Secretary came next, and through him the orders of the High Commissioner were transmitted to other officials. The Chief Secretary was also the principal advisor to the High Commissioner and represented him when he was away.

In those days, the High Commissioner lived next to our quarter, not far from Mount Scopus. He lived in a building on the Mount of Olives, which was originally a sanatorium built by the German Kaiserin Augusta Victoria. The Secretariat, the office of the Chief Secretary was located just outside Damascus Gate in the heart of Jerusalem, where stood another German building (now occupied by a German school).

Jerusalem—whose Muslim majority belonged to the Sunni brand of Islam—has been regarded since the dawn of Islam with the highest reverence—being the place from which Muslims believe the Prophet Muhammad ascended to heaven (from the spot where the al-Aqsa Mosque now stands). At first Muhammad conjured the faithful to turn towards Jerusalem to pray—but later they were to face the 'Qibla' towards the Noble Mosque in Mecca.

In many parts of Jerusalem are to be found charitable foundations known as Waqfs—properties such as mosques, schools and kitchens, bequeathed by Muslims for the benefit of the poor and needy future generations. Many of these Waqfs were of splendid construction, and were carefully administered and preserved under the aegis of the Director General of the Waqf Islamic Department. I still remember many of these Waqf buildings—the school of al-Haram, al-Baq'ah School and Rawdet al-Ma'arif School. Each Waqf had a guardian—and one such was my father who held this responsibility among his other duties. However, after the occupation of the Old City in 1967, most of these marvellous old buildings—the Nashashibi Waqfs among them—were bulldozed by Jewish companies to make room for new Jewish immigrants.

The beauty of Jerusalem was unsurpassed. The colour of the stone used in the houses was of a special pink which gave a unique character to such quarters as Mount Scopus, al-Baq'ah and Talbiyyah. We loved Jerusalem and its superb climate: we would watch the clouds in autumn drift over the seven hills and savour the peace of the evening as the muezzin called the faithful to prayer. Then, there were no skyscrapers, no buildings cluttering up the hillsides and frowning down upon the valley dwellers. In those times, neighbour respected neighbour. The British War Cemetery on the Mount of Olives was planted with

hundreds of trees by the Arab owners of the surrounding land as a mark of respect for the British soldiers who had fallen in Palestine during the Great War.

Now the gentle pattern of the life of those days is gone; the land has been swallowed up by concrete housing estates where once we used to go for peaceful walks; hotels and blocks of flats stand where once stood our favourite haunts—the Sports Club in the German compound where we would play football, or the YMCA where we would go to swim, or browse in the library or stage debates in the auditorium (I was one of the first few hundred of junior members in the YMCA in the early thirties).

I miss the lost peace on the white hills overlooking Jerusalem from the north, known as the 'French Hill'. Now replacing the trees and gardens, stands the new Jewish quarter—Kiriath Eshkol—named after a former prime minister of Israel.

The Man and the Family

Ragheb Nashashibi was born in Jerusalem in 1882. He studied engineering and town planning at the University of Constantinople, and after taking his degree came back to Palestine to work as a district engineer in Jerusalem. He was also responsible for the rebuilding of Beersheba as an Ottoman frontier town. Later, when mayor of Jerusalem he excelled as a planner and organizer. To quote Ronald Storrs, 'as a planner he was hardly surpassed by competitors wholly without his other qualifications.' Much of the layout of modern Jerusalem is due to him, as are many of its best buildings, including the municipality building in which he, and more recently Tedd Kollek, held sway.

When Ragheb was a deputy in the Ottoman parliament he represented Jerusalem, but always maintained that he did not regard himself as a natural politician. Indeed, he was too honest and straightforward to get involved in the sort of political intrigue which fascinated so many others. He disliked controversy, and when wronged he would not seek revenge. He was too confident a man for that. But he was also very strong-minded. Once he was given authority he would insist that he and he alone, would exercise it. 'I am the municipality,' he used to say. 'I intend to be the boss. I don't mean to be a dictator, but I must be my own master and do things in my own way.'

Ragheb had, fortunately for him and for those who worked with him, a keen sense of humour, and this helped to resolve many problems. He sometimes would cast decorum aside and use strong language to make a point. I recall Ragheb telling me that on one occasion Edwin Samuel, 'the rather pompous' son of the first High Commissioner, Herbert Samuel, and who was at that time with the District Commissioner's office in Jerusalem, called on Ragheb after the 1926 municipal elections had confirmed him in office as mayor. Ruhi Bey was acting as interpreter, for though Ragheb spoke good French as well as, of course, Turkish and Arabic, he never mastered English. Edwin Samuel was combining flowery compliments with a series of demands and instructions. 'Please tell His Excellency that we shall require a special place

where Jews can slaughter according to Kosher rules. Please explain to His Excellency that Jewish employees must not be expected to work on the Sabbath. Kindly confirm with His Excellency that streets in the Jewish quarter must be named after prominent figures in Jewish history.' And so on and on. Ragheb agreed to each request, and when the long list came to an end he turned to Ruhi and said: 'Is that all? Are you sure this man doesn't want the key to His Excellency's bedroom?'

But in fact Ragheb took his duties as mayor extremely seriously and performed them with great conscientiousness. He was always the first to telephone and call on religious dignitaries on their festivals and holy days, regarding himself as responsible for the welfare and safety of all people living in the Holy City, whatever their race or creed. It was typical of him that when he was awoken at three o'clock on a bitter winter's morning in 1950 to be told that a fire had broken out in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre he should have dressed and been on the scene within ten minutes, staying there on his feet until noon, when he was satisfied that the blaze (which had been caused by an electrical fault) had come under control and that there was no longer any danger to this most sacred of Christian sites.

Every year Ragheb would give two large parties in his house on Mount Scopus, the first in his official capacity as mayor, to which were invited senior members of the mandatory government—the High Commissioner, Chief Secretary, Chief Justice, service chiefs, heads of departments and so on, as well as the mayors of the main Arab towns, Jaffa, Haifa, Ramleh, Bethlehem, all of whom were his personal friends; the second party was unofficial given for his friends in all communities and for any distinguished visitors who happened to be in Jerusalem at the time. On both occasions the catering was on a lavish scale, food and drink being supplied from the kitchens and cellars of Hotel Fast and later from those of the King David Hotel, for which Ragheb had a great affection (he always had his hair cut there). On both occasions the police band would play as the crowds moved around in the large house and gardens. Jerusalemites knew that when a really bad traffic jam formed on the Ramallah Road it meant that the mayor was giving one of his parties.

Ragheb's house in Shaikh Jarrah on the slopes of Mount Scopus had been built by his father and commanded a magnificent view over the Old City and the honey-coloured walls built in the sixteenth century by the Sultan Sulaiman the Lawgiver. Its gardens and grounds of olives and palm trees were extensive enough to ensure that it was not overlooked by any others, the nearest house being on the other side of the road, belonging to the Jarallah family. Inside, the house was

furnished in a mixture of oriental and western styles, with large Turkish crystal chandeliers hanging from the ceiling of the main salon.

Ragheb's study contained signed photographs of many of the prominent personalities he had come to know. I recall, for example, those of Churchill, Montgomery, Roosevelt, several popes and all the High Commissioners. He liked to stretch out on a sofa in his study, a box of cigarettes ready to hand. He was a heavy smoker, getting through about eighty cigarettes a day, always in an amber holder. The special brand called Jockey Club, which he started smoking when a young man in Constantinople and which he continued to have imported especially through Albina Stores in the Mamillah Road.

Ragheb was of medium height and never became stout. His hair was white in early middle age, but his most striking features were his eyes, which commanded instant respect. When he arrived in Egypt after the tragic events of 1938 the well-known Cairo journalist, Mustafa Amin, wrote an article in the magazine *Al-Ithnain* under the title 'The Return of Adli Yaghan'. This referred to the former white-haired Prime Minister of Egypt, whose general appearance was so similar to Ragheb's, and whose opposition to Zaghul was paralleled with Ragheb's opposition to the emotionalism of the masses in Palestine.

Apart from smoking cigarettes, Ragheb was abstemious in his habits. He had inherited considerable riches from his father and allowed himself a few luxuries. His suits always came from the best tailors in London and Paris, and he had an enormous collection of walking-sticks brought from Turkey or England, many with ivory handles and gold bands on them. He used to select a stick to match the suit he was wearing. He was the first person in Jerusalem to own a large American limousine—a dark green Packard which was changed for a new one every year. The mayor's car, with its Armenian driver and bodyguard seated in front, was one of the most familiar sights in the city. Ragheb was never seen without a tarbush (fez) on his head, but this was not the ordinary tarbush worn by most town dwellers in Egypt and Syria; it lacked the stiffening material inside and was consequently flatter, more like the headgear to be seen in pictures of the old Ottoman Sultans and Egyptian Khedives.

Ragheb Nashashibi drew much strength from the history of his family and from his living kinsmen.

He would recall with pride the story of his first cousin, Dr Ali Nashashibi, who was born in 1883 and hanged by the Turkish dictator Jamal Pasha in Aley in 1916. Even the adversaries of the Nashashibi family admit that Ali was the force that inspired the Arab awakening among the youths of Jerusalem.

Another man who impressed Ragheb was his uncle Osman Nashashibi. Osman was my grandfather on my mother's side. He was one of the richest men in Palestine owning much land all over the country. His father arranged his marriage to the daughter of Haj Mustafa Abu Ghosh, known as the King of the Mountains. Osman became a government official in the Ottoman empire and later joined the Party of Progress and Unity. In 1912, he was elected to the Ottoman Parliament. Osman was a firm and well-known anti-Zionist and opposed the granting of land concessions to the Jews in Jerusalem, the constituency which he represented in parliament throughout the First World War.

Ragheb's father, Haj Rashid Nashashibi was also a very wealthy man. He had inherited a huge fortune from his father Sulaiman Muhammad Nashashibi and much land around the villages of Yalo, and Zakaria and Na'was. His business was trading in food and wheat in the Arab world and he was a member of the Jerusalem city council. Sulaiman Nashashibi's wife was the sister of Omar Fahmi al-Husaini, mayor of Jerusalem. It was the first marriage between the Nashashibi and the al-Husaini families. Sulaiman, who died in 1866, was the most formidable personality to emerge from the Nashashibi family since Emir Nasir al-Din.

Like any large family, we had an assortment of the good and the not so good; indeed, we had our fair share of villains and rogues, some loveable, some not so loveable.

As my family came from Jerusalem, they naturally loved their city, and so served it, each in his own way, and according to his means and ability. While some of us were skilled doctors, engineers, contractors and prosperous advocates, others, like Durrar Nashashibi, were wealthy and militant and patronized political prisoners and Arab terrorists held in gaol. His political outlook and temperament were totally at odds with those of Ragheb. Durrar was the godfather of tens of Arab bandits, such as Abu Jeilda, al-Armeit and Yusuf Sa'id Abu-Durrah. In August 1936, together with Fakhri Abd al-Hadi, and Shaikh Farhan al-Sa'di, and other revolutionary commanders, Durrar decided to form three territorial commands in the Nablus mountains to support the Arab rebellion.¹

The Nashashibis have long been prominent in public life in Palestine. Ragheb used to say how lucky he was to have so many talented relatives whose support for his political stance he cherished.

¹ Yehoshua Porath, *The Palestinian Arab National Movement, 1929-1939* (London, 1977), vol. 2, p. 186.

He spoke of his cousin, Azmi Nashashibi, a graduate of the London School of Economics, who rose to the rank of Director General of the Arab section of the Public Information Office in Jaffa, after having worked for a long time as a District Officer in different cities of Palestine.

Ragheb spoke highly of his relative Aref Hikmat Nashashibi—the top man in the department of Muslim Waqfs in Jerusalem. This department administered the religious and charitable 'endowments' created during the Ottoman rule of Palestine. As he was fluent in Turkish he was able to dig out much information on land under Waqf from the archives in Istanbul. This prevented much land from passing on to the public domain and so, in theory, he served the interests of the needy.

Ragheb recalled how Aref was dismissed by order of the Mufti, Haj Amin al-Husaini, and replaced by his junior, Izzat Darwaza of Nablus, a devoted supporter of the Mufti. Darwaza later became the self-styled chronicler of Palestinian history known for his strong bias towards Haj Amin and against the Nashashibis.

Ragheb, being an engineer by profession, had a soft spot for his relatives who were engaged in this profession and in the field of education in general. He praised Ibrahim Nashashibi, the Arab General Director of the Jerusalem Electric Company as a gifted engineer who had been responsible for the electricity services in every part of the capital of Palestine both Jewish and Arab.

A much respected relative was Sharif Nashashibi, an educator and General Director of al-Rashidiyyah (state) School of Jerusalem, from which hundreds of Jerusalem Arab boys graduated. He worked hard to raise the standard of education to a level that enabled his graduates to enter Oxford or Cambridge Universities without having to take the entrance examinations.

Most of Ragheb's younger relations looked up to him and tried to emulate him. Most were politically minded, primarily because of Ragheb's influence, but partly of course because of the turbulent political situation prevailing at the time.

A typical representative of this breed was Anwar Nashashibi, a close relative, who was a well-known advocate in Jerusalem, and later became a Minister in Jordan. He had worked in the Arab Offices with Musa Alami in London and in America. A graduate of the Sorbonne University in France, he had also practised in Gray's Inn in London. In 1947, when the idea of partition seemed the only practical solution for the Palestine problem, Anwar wrote a letter to the editor of *The Times* in the name of the Arab Office, an extract of which I quote below:

Sir, You advocate the partition of Palestine as the only solution of the problem . . . No one can but understand and sympathise with your endeavour to find a way out of the impasse. To help in this direction, the Arab League would, therefore, be ready to recognise the Jewish National Home in Palestine to the extent in which it has developed, which, be it noted, was developed from its initiation against the will of the Arabs. As to the Holy Places, their safeguard and the free access to them can be internationally guaranteed. But if it is meant to solve the world Jewish problem, Palestine, being no larger than Wales, is politically and physically unfit . . .

Such a balanced argument put forward by a Palestinian Arab as early as 1947 when there was still no compelling reason for acquiescence, shows how conciliatory and realistic the Nashashibis were. Ragheb himself had accepted the principle of partition but his younger relative, being a member of the Arab Office, his main concern was to inform the reader of the reality of the situation.

Ragheb had one sister, Lebiba, who never married and lived in her own house in Jerusalem about two hundred yards away from his. She was devoted to her brother, and there was nobody whose advice he trusted more, that is, except his wife, Laila.

His wife, Madame Nashashibi, as she was always called, was a Roman Catholic Turk whom he had met in Constantinople. She was very beautiful, extremely able, and a woman of great dignity and culture, a superb hostess, speaking French, Italian and English as well as Turkish and Arabic. Ragheb, a devout Muslim though he was, never tried to persuade her to change her religion, and some of his narrow-minded opponents criticized him for not having married a Muslim. But nobody could have been a better partner to him than this big-hearted and open-minded woman who loved Jerusalem as much as he did, and whose fate was to die in exile, in Alexandria.

Some members of my family married Christians and Jews, some English and French, others married Turks and Poles.

In 1949, after a year in Egypt, Ragheb was summoned by King Abdullah to Amman and was appointed Minister of the newly created Ministry for Refugees. He subsequently became Minister of Transport and then Minister of Agriculture. In 1950 King Abdullah made him Governor of the West Bank and shortly afterwards elevated him to the highly prestigious office of First Guardian of the al-Haram al-Sharif and Supreme Custodian of the Holy Places. I was then political adviser to the King and Chamberlain at the Hashemite Court, and it fell on me

to go to Jerusalem and deliver the King's congratulations to my uncle on his appointment.

Ragheb was a man of great generosity, but of course he had lost everything in 1948 and found it hard to be unable to do as much for others as he had been accustomed to. One day King Abdullah presented him with a car, a Studebaker. Ragheb felt obliged to accept this handsome gift, since it came from the King, but wished to make some gesture in return. All the valuable contents of his house in Jerusalem had been lost in the fighting, except for one object, the statue of a guitar player where the guitar and its strings were made of gold. Ragheb summoned me and showed me that statue. 'I took this with me to Alexandria', he said, 'because I loved it, and I brought it back here. Now you must take it to the King.' This I did, and I have no doubt that it is still to be seen in some corner of one of the royal palaces.

A year later Ragheb was taken to the Augusta Victoria Hospital in Jerusalem suffering from cancer of the liver. King Abdullah wished to visit him and took me with him. We found Ragheb sitting on his bed, looking pale and emaciated. Abdullah sat down next to his old friend and they both fell silent for fifteen minutes. They then embraced and the King left, visibly shaken. Two days later Ragheb was dead. He was buried in a small private tomb opposite his old house in Jerusalem.

When he died he was heavily in debt, particularly to the two big banks, the Arab Bank and the Ottoman Bank. The house he was building and had not completed in Jerusalem was taken over by the banks and sold. His old house in Jerusalem was demolished, and on its site rose the Ambassador Hotel. He left three sons, Mansur, an agricultural engineer, Adnan, a doctor and Munjed, an architect. The last two live in the French city of Nice and Mansur lived and died in Jerusalem.

If I were asked to write Ragheb's epitaph, I would use three words: 'Jerusalem's Other Voice'. A brief epilogue to this chapter will show why.

Since the early 1920s until the Israeli conquest of much of Palestine in 1949, the Nashashibi family, led by Ragheb, and the al-Husaini family, led by Haj Amin, were at loggerheads with one another over the question of how best to achieve a Palestinian national entity. Haj Amin favoured the use of force, Ragheb favoured diplomacy. Ragheb held the office of mayor of Jerusalem from 1920 to 1934 and when he lost it, he formed the National Defence Party to carry out his policy of moderation and co-operation with the mandatory power in order to gain concessions and promote the development of self-governing institutions for the Palestinian Arabs. This, he believed, was a realistic and,

in the circumstances, the most promising way of securing a pre-eminent position for his Palestinian compatriots in Palestine.

In contrast, Haj Amin al-Husaini pursued a policy of uncompromising rigidity, hostility and radicalism. This looked much like patriotism and had great appeal for the Arab masses. He was not only the Mufti of Jerusalem but also the President of the Supreme Muslim Council and the spiritual leader of his political party, the Palestine Arab Party. These positions provided him with vast resources which he used to consolidate his power over the Palestinian masses and enhance his prestige in a number of Arab countries. It was therefore natural that most Western (and other) politicians, journalists and other writers concentrated their attention almost exclusively on the extremist nature of Palestinian Arab resistance.

This book is an attempt to redress the balance, to remind students of Palestine's contemporary history that there were many eminent Palestinian Arabs who whole-heartedly endorsed Ragheb Nashashibi's policy of moderation, that he was indeed Jerusalem's other voice.

Jerusalem's Mayor, 1920–34

Ragheb Nashashibi was a man of the people. Unlike many other leaders, who enjoyed the airs and graces of power but preferred not to soil their hands with the grubby yet vital chores of everyday life, Nashashibi took it upon himself as mayor of Jerusalem to tackle the seemingly intractable problems which had accumulated over the years. Many travellers in the last century graphically described the squalor of parts of the city, focusing their attention on the plight of the Jewish inhabitants.

Chateaubriand, who visited Jerusalem in 1806, gave a vivid picture of the Jewish quarters and the Jews:

On the right hand of the bazaar, between the temple and the foot of Mount Zion, we enter the Jews' quarters . . . They [the Jews] appeared covered with rags, seated in the dust of Zion, seeking the vermin which devoured them and keeping their eyes fixed on the temple.¹

In 1853 W. H. Bartlett wrote that the poorer Jews in Jerusalem lived in hovels and 'carried privation and sickliness in their pallid countenance.'²

Tudor Parfitt listed the diseases which were endemic in Jerusalem as follows:

There were open sewers running down the middle of the streets and it was commonplace to find dead dogs, cats and even camels lying in various stages of decomposition in the streets. This being the case it is no surprise that disease of all sorts was rampant in the city. The diseases that were most rife in Jerusalem as elsewhere in Palestine were malaria,

¹ Viscount de Chateaubriand, *Travels to Jerusalem and The Holy Land* (London, 1835), p. 71.

² W. H. Bartlett, *Jerusalem Revisited* (Jerusalem, 1855), p. 72.

cholera, typhoid, dysentery, scarlet fever, smallpox and enteritis.³

A factor which exacerbated both the problem of disease and poverty was Jerusalem's poor water supply. The majority lived in houses without cisterns, which meant that the water they consumed had to be purchased, usually from the fellaheen of the villages of Silwan and Lifta. During the summer, and particularly during long periods of drought, the price of water increased sharply. This could go up to between 12 and 60 piastres for a day's supply. In brief, water was the most serious problem in Jerusalem.

Ragheb knew that providing fresh and reliable water supplies would automatically improve public health. Better infrastructure would speed up the exchange of goods and services, thus boosting the city's economy.

Jerusalem depended on annual rainfall but as the reservoirs were too small to store enough water from exceptionally rainy years to last through the lean years, water shortages were bound to occur. This state of affairs was a constant source of anxiety for Nashashibi who emphasized the urgency of implementing water supply schemes to deal with this endemic problem.

The ninth annual report on the operation of the Jerusalem water supply, from the beginning of the mandate to the end of 1929, states:⁴

All existing sources and pumping stations were made use of and have been in operation for shorter or longer periods, depending on the available yield of sources, and demand.

The yields of the springs and our reserve storage in hand on 1 January 1929 were as follows.

Arrub: The reservoir here was quite empty, while cleaning took place. The yield of the spring was 1256 gallons per day, still diminishing, due to insufficient rainfall. Obviously no forecast of possible supply from this source during the following year could be made, so as a precaution the supply was limited to the utmost minimum.

Solomon's pools: Two of the three pools, the middle and lower ones, were empty for cleaning, while a storage of 6 million gallons—half its capacity—existed in the third. The yield of the springs here was also practically negligible. The

³ Tudor Parfitt, *The Jews in Palestine, 1880-1882* (London, 1987), p. 13.

⁴ Jerusalem Municipality, Water Supply Department, *Ninth Annual Report, 1930* (Jerusalem, 1930).

Ain Saleh yielded only about 11,000 gallons per day, while the Wadi Biar was completely dry for several months.

Ain Farah: This spring, which maintains its flow at a virtually constant rate, was yielding 234,000 gallons per day and, assuming a rainfall not below the usual minimum, it could be safely estimated that an average daily supply of 200,000 gallons per day would be available from this source all year round.

This figure was well below the required average daily supply of not less than 300,000 gallons, and therefore, although maintaining a daily supply of 223,000 gallons to all the districts of the town, the utmost economy had to be observed pending the arrival of the heavy rains and with these the recovery of the springs.

By the end of February 1929, the rainfall was already satisfactory, and with the increased output from the springs during March it was possible to prepare estimates for the year's supply on a more or less reliable basis.

Notwithstanding this fortunate turn of events, however, the essential fact remains that *we are still depending almost absolutely on annual rainfall, not having at our disposal reservoirs of sufficient impounding capacity to enable the storage of possible surpluses in exceptionally rainy years for the lean ones, nor perennial sources which could be relied upon.*

On 21 October 1930, Nashashibi sent the following letter to the government of Palestine, represented then by the deputy district commissioner in Jerusalem:

Sub: The Permanent Water Supply Scheme

Ref: Decision of the Water Board on the 21st inst.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit herewith enclosed two copies of the water engineer's report on the urgent necessity of the execution of the Permanent Water Supply Scheme, which has been discussed and fully agreed by the Board at the meeting held on the 21st inst.

As, unless some definite measures are taken, we look forward to very grave calamities for which the Municipality can take no responsibility, and according to the decision of the Board, I beg to request you kindly to forward same to the

Chief Secretary for his urgent consideration. I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Ragheb Bey Nashashibi

MAYOR

In February 1931, at the government's invitation, the representative of the concessionaires came from London to discuss the issue, and in particular the permissible maximum water rate. Nothing definite, however, was agreed during the discussions, and a final decision could not be made before the end of the year.

The water shortage had worsened as a result of very low rainfall in the winter of 1929-30. Nashashibi had written that he had been 'compelled to consider the establishment of an additional emergency supply from some other sources, as we had to do in 1925.'⁵

The mayor immediately put into action a scheme submitted to him by the water engineers. In July 1932 he revoked the water concessions from all companies which had failed to guarantee an adequate water supply to the city's inhabitants. This cleared the way for the early provision of water at a reasonable price.

Nashashibi sent the water supply scheme to the Colonial Office in London urging the earliest possible approval. Moreover, he enacted an emergency scheme from the Wadi Kelt water sources and appointed an administrative board under his chairmanship to supervise the water supply. This board had thirteen regular and several other committee meetings, when major issues of principle were discussed.⁶

By the end of 1933, the age-old problem of the water supply to the capital of Palestine was finally solved.

The High Commissioner, Lieutenant-General Sir Arthur Grenfell Wauchope sent a letter of thanks and appreciation to Ragheb Nashashibi, thanking him 'in the name of the Holy City and on behalf of its inhabitants' for all he had done 'to ensure the supply of water throughout the year to every house in Jerusalem.'

Nashashibi's approach to the water problem contrasts starkly with that of the Israelis since 1967. While the mayor's policy treated all citizens equally, ensuring an adequate supply to all, Israeli policy has deliberately discriminated between Jew and Arab throughout the occupied areas. While Jewish settlements boast swimming pools, Arab villages suffer water shortages as a result of Israeli orders banning any

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ *Twelfth Annual Report, 1933* (Jerusalem, 1933).

increase above the 1967 quotas in Palestinian wells. Illegal Israeli settlements bloom, while Palestinian crops wither.

For many years Ragheb Nashashibi and the members of the council discussed and implemented various projects such as the construction of new roads, the widening and realignment of existing roads, the building of a commercial centre and generally provided Jerusalem with all the requirements of a large modern city.

The water problem and the building of new roads in and around Jerusalem were not the only issues tackled successfully by Nashashibi. When he decided to run for another period as mayor of Jerusalem, he issued a pamphlet outlining some of his achievements over the previous fourteen years as mayor. These included introducing asphaltting of Jerusalem streets and electric lighting; building public rest houses all over the city; constructing abattoirs; fighting the malaria epidemic in the suburbs. Nashashibi also created a new public health and sanitation enforcement office to implement the new, higher standards he had set for public hygiene. This included constructing a huge incinerator for domestic refuse.

Ragheb believed that it was important to build better links between the Palestinian population centres, not only for the movement of people but for increased trade also. He helped to set up traffic companies to run public bus services out of Jerusalem, and opened connecting highways from the city centre to towns and villages in the north and south. King George Road, the biggest in new Jerusalem, was built and opened during Nashashibi's period as mayor, and the new white building of the municipality in Jaffa Road was designed and built under his personal supervision in 1931.

Nashashibi backed the Jerusalem Society, established under Ronald Storrs in 1922. Its activities included the financing of projects such as urban planning and the preservation of historical sites.

Aware of the growing Jewish settlement in Palestine, Ragheb Nashashibi did not hesitate to annex several Arab villages to the municipality of Jerusalem. His purpose was to prevent the city's traditional Arab population being outnumbered by Jewish immigrants.

His efforts to improve the lot of Jerusalem's citizens did not go unnoticed by the British. For instance in April 1925, Sir Herbert Samuel, in his report to London expressed his appreciation for the services rendered by Ragheb Nashashibi and two other mayors. He wrote:

The District governors have received much assistance from the heads of the principal municipal bodies, in particular

from three who have held their offices throughout the period of five years: Ragheb Bey Nashashibi CBE, mayor of Jerusalem, Assem Bey Saeed OBE, mayor of Jaffa, and Hassan Shukry, mayor of Haifa. To these gentlemen and to their staff of all grades, British and Palestinian, civil and military, I offer my thanks. It is upon them that this burden of the task has fallen. No administrator should desire more loyal or more efficient colleagues. The volume of work that has been done, and the prevalence throughout of a spirit of friendly co-operation speaks more in their praise than could any words of commendation from me.⁷

Through his post as mayor, Ragheb Nashashibi came to meet the great names of the British Empire and elsewhere. Among those who dined at his table were General Allenby, Sir John Shea, Sir Philip Palin, Air Commodore E. Gerrard, Lieutenant-Colonel McNeil and F. Peake (or Peake Pasha as he was otherwise known), and the governor Lieutenant-Colonel C. Cox, the chief British representative in Transjordan in the early 1920s. He also received Arab visitors from Iraq, Syria and Lebanon. Few other houses in Palestine hosted and entertained like the Nashashibi residence. When Rudyard Kipling, the 'poet of the empire' arrived in Jerusalem, Nashashibi gave a big party in his honour. But his generosity cost him the fortune he had inherited from his father. He had to sell his orange groves at Wadi Hunain, between Jaffa and Gaza. He began building a new house next to his old one, but could not afford to complete it.

Ragheb's vision for a new Jerusalem evolved during his many visits to European cities. He saw how the provisions of the most mundane, basic facilities could completely transform a city, and this was why he set out to bring Jerusalem up to European standards in health, hygiene and public services. Ragheb built Jerusalem as much as Jerusalem built Ragheb Nashashibi. He gave it his time, energy, talent and pride, while Jerusalem repaid him in honour and glory.

In the summer of 1931, Lieutenant-Colonel Sir John Robert Chancellor, the High Commissioner for Palestine, retired from his service in the country to serve on many committees, councils and commissions in different parts of the British Empire. The municipality of Jerusalem held a special farewell party for Sir John, at which Ragheb delivered a speech on behalf of the people of Jerusalem. In that speech, whose text is kept amongst the private papers of Sir John Chancellor at

⁷ FO 733/101, 24 April 1925.

Rhodes House Library, Oxford, Ragheb expressed the appreciation of the people of Jerusalem towards those who gave them health, fresh water, good roads, abundant lighting, and, in effect, a modern lifestyle. It also summarized his own achievements as mayor. This is the text of the speech delivered by him on that occasion:

Your Excellency, Lady Chancellor, Ladies and Gentlemen. We are here to say farewell to Your Excellency and Lady Chancellor after staying with us for about three years. During this period you have given a good example of Anglo-Saxon character and devoted your efforts to the development of schemes which Palestine will always record with thanks.

If we look through the period during which Your Excellency stayed in Palestine, we find that various vital schemes and valuable services have been accomplished, thanks to Your Excellency. From this we shall always remember your strong will and sincere wish to conduct the affairs to the welfare of the public. You have exerted your utmost endeavours to the development of the country in spite of the great difficulties and numerous obstacles that you met during this period. Had Your Excellency administered the government for a further period, you would have personally seen the results of your efforts and would have been pleased to know that the country benefited by your endeavours in spite of your being abroad. The people will always remember your good actions, more especially the inhabitants of Jerusalem who would have suffered much had you not overcome the difficulty of the water. The Jerusalem Water Supply has been augmented by the Ain Fawar Scheme which has been completed within a short period in accordance with Your Excellency's instructions. The scheme necessitated the opening of a road five kilometres long through valleys and rough mountains off the Jericho Road to the spring and the laying of main pipes seven kilometres long to connect Ain Fawar to Ain Farah; also the necessary machines and accessories have been installed. All this has been carried out within seven weeks, being the time fixed by Your Excellency to Mr Pudsey, the Director of Public Works, who has carried out the work for which he deserved our hearty thanks. Everyone was astonished at the completion of works within such a short time. In this connection,

I would mention that all these temporary measures are insufficient as the city is developing rapidly and the inhabitants are increasing accordingly and I believe that Your Excellency felt that the General Scheme of Auja should be carried out in the near future, otherwise the question of water one day will become very serious.

I would also mention the reconstruction of El Wad Sewer inside the Old City which has been carried out accurately and which was a danger to some ancient buildings. Moreover, the Jerusalem Main Drainage Scheme for which Your Excellency has provided the necessary funds will commence in the near future and will undoubtedly improve the city from a health point of view.

The construction of the New Slaughter House and Meldrums destructors on the very modern and technical foundations and methods commenced a month ago and will be completed within a short time. The building of the new Municipal Offices and Barclays Bank will also be completed next November.

Furthermore, the inhabitants will always remember the building of the Museum, that commenced some time ago and will be completed on the fixed date.

I would mention the Princess Mary Road, Chancellor Avenue and the street connecting Jaffa Road to Shaareh Hessed which have been constructed during Your Excellency's administration, besides the repair and improvement of other important roads such as King George Avenue and Musrara Road. All this has been done through your efforts and encouragement.

As to Lady Chancellor, the women of Palestine hold every respect for her for her noble character. Her endeavours have always been devoted to the welfare of the children and poor people. The people of the country will always remember her benevolent deeds.

In conclusion, we wish Your Excellency and Lady Chancellor a happy journey and a prosperous, happy life.

We bid you farewell and pray the Almighty to keep and guard you.⁸

8 The Chancellor Papers, Box 15, File 6, 1931.

Ragheb was decorated with the Grand Cordon of Turkey, the Crown Commander of Italy, the Order of the British Empire, Officer de la Légion d'Honneur, together with decorations from Czechoslovakia and Abyssinia.

Above and beyond all he was honoured with the love of Jerusalem.

He may not be remembered as Haussman of Paris, or Willy Brandt of West Berlin. But he started from scratch and made out of the Ottoman Turkish town of Jerusalem a modern city, combining both the ancient glory of the East with the modernity of the West.

End of An Era

In politics there usually comes a time when a great power finds it necessary—and indeed quite normal—to sacrifice a traditional friend and ally whenever expedient. History is full of such examples, in peace and in war, both in the present and in the past.

In 1925, Sir Herbert Samuel, the first British High Commissioner for Palestine, described Ragheb Nashashibi as ‘a gentleman to his fingertips’ but the British government in Palestine did not feel itself bound by such considerations.

It is true that Ragheb Nashashibi became mayor of Jerusalem on the strength of Sir Ronald Storrs’s nomination, who described him as ‘unquestionably the ablest Arab in Palestine’. But personal ability alone was not a sufficient requisite to guarantee a stable tenure under any colonial regime. Politics in Palestine, as anywhere else, knew no friends. Contemporary political history of the Middle East and elsewhere was largely shaped by *realpolitik*, where the big powers sacrificed their friends—monarchs, presidents, prime ministers and politicians—to make way for others (often the latter’s rivals and enemies) who would serve their interests best. For example, in April 1979 the US government washed its hands of the Shah of Iran in order to appease the Iranian generals and the ayatollahs. Self-interest—of dubious value—seemed compelling enough for the US to ditch its old friend. Later, in February 1986, the US saw its dear ally and faithful friend, Ferdinand Marcos, off to Hawaii. The Lebanese Emile Edde—who welcomed Chaim Weizmann in 1937 as the future President of the future state in Palestine—was defeated in the presidential election of 1943, largely because the influence of the British representative, General Spears, was used on the side of his opponent, Bishara al-Khouri. But long before that the Hashemites were sacrificed in their own homeland, the Hejaz, and their leader, King Husain Bin Ali, had to spend the last days of his life in exile in Cyprus.

In Palestine, the fate of a Jew in far-away Poland prompting him to want to emigrate to Palestine, inexorably impinged on the fate of the

Palestinian Arabs including the mayor of Jerusalem. As from the end of 1932 the rate of Jewish immigration into Palestine accelerated appreciably. In 1933 the number of Jewish immigrants was 30,330 as compared to 9,550 in the previous year. Of these the overwhelming majority came from Eastern Europe. In the following year the number of Jewish immigrants climbed to 42,360.¹

Other factors came into play to shape the fate of the Holy City and its mayor; the appointment in 1931 of a new British High Commissioner, the various political manoeuvres by world Jewry, and inter-Arab rivalries in Palestine, all combined to cause the defeat of Ragheb in the municipal election of 1934. He could have won the second election for the post of mayor of Jerusalem just as easily as he had won the first one had it not been for the machinations of his so-called friends and admirers in the British administration.

In 1920 the British helped Ragheb to become mayor of Jerusalem and in 1934 the British High Commissioner, Sir Arthur Wauchope, helped to bring him down. The facts need to be examined in detail.

For the people of Palestine, the year 1933 is known as the great year of mass Jewish immigration to the Holy Land. I remember Ragheb saying that the High Commissioner, Sir Arthur Wauchope, used to tell the Palestinian Arabs with touching emotion that he was the real friend of the Palestinian Arab 'fellah', the peasant or the small-holder in the Arab villages of the country.

Wauchope claimed to be proud of this so-called friendship with the Palestinian fellah, and he used to refer to it frequently, in his official talks, conferences and private meetings. He did in fact advance a proposal in 1935 for the introduction of legislation to protect Arab small-holders, but his image in Arab eyes was not helped by the fact that the flood of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe to Palestine had reached its peak during the years that Arthur Wauchope was High Commissioner. In 1931, the number of Jewish immigrants to Palestine was just over 4,000. In 1932, it rose to 9,550 and in 1933 it more than trebled to 30,330. In 1934, the number increased further to 42,360 and in the following year the number peaked at nearly 62,000 immigrants.²

An alarming prediction was made on 31 December 1933 by the eminent Zionist, Arthur Ruppin, in his diary which, together with his memoirs and letters, was published in 1971. He wrote: 'If we could work at this pace for another five years, we would reach the figure of

¹ Naval Intelligence Division, Geographical Handbook Series, *Palestine and Trans-jordan* (Oxford and Cambridge, 1943), p. 177.

² *Ibid.*

almost 500,000, and then we would no longer have to live in fear, as we do today, that a serious Arab revolt would ruin all our work.’³ The Peel Commission observed: ‘The Jewish national home was growing at a pace which far surpassed the hopes even of many ardent supporters.’⁴ Wauchope was of course not responsible for this unprecedented influx of Jews into Palestine. In fact he did complain to his government in London, but London would not listen. Nevertheless, this influx did not do his image any good as far as the Palestinian Arabs were concerned. At about the time the municipal elections for the mayorality of Jerusalem was due, Wauchope proposed the creation of a legislative council, under the aegis of the British, where both Jews and Arabs would participate. Whitehall acceded, probably because it had control over Jewish immigration and could therefore decide on the composition of the proposed legislative council.

The Arabs of Palestine received Sir Arthur’s proposal for a legislative council with little enthusiasm, but insisted that it be implemented immediately. On the other hand, the Jews in their nineteenth Zionist Congress held in the summer of 1935 in Lucerne declared their total opposition to any move in the direction of self-government in Palestine and specifically to Wauchope’s proposal for a legislative council which they described as ‘contrary to the spirit of the Mandate’.

Ragheb Nashashibi asked Wauchope whether he thought such a scheme would be easily and smoothly implemented. After a pause, Sir Arthur Wauchope looked at Ragheb and asked: ‘What do you think? Are you for it or against it?’ Ragheb answered, ‘Yes, I am all for it. I have accepted every solution the British government has suggested to us since 1920. I accepted the legislative council that was suggested by Winston Churchill in the 1920s, and I support your advocacy for a legislative council now in 1934.’ Wauchope said, with a glint in his eye: ‘But don’t you think, Ragheb Bey, that we should start with a modification of the municipal laws and hold new elections for all the municipal councils in Palestine, before we discuss the institution of a representative council?’ Then Ragheb asked with some amazement: ‘But why should the creation of a legislative council be conditional on the holding of municipal elections?’ Wauchope replied, ‘Because now there is a new element in the population of Palestine, and it should be

3 Arthur Ruppin, *Memoirs, Diaries, Letters*, edited with an introduction by Alex Bein, translated from the German by Karen Gershon with an afterword by Moshe Dayan (London, 1971), p. 266.

4 *Report of Palestine Royal Commission, July 1937: The Peel Report*, Cmd 5479, p. 86.

represented in the municipalities of Palestine, especially in Jerusalem.' In the event, the municipality law was changed giving more power to the Jews, while the proposal for a legislative council was defeated in Westminster in 1936 as a result of fierce Zionist pressure.

Ragheb Nashashibi told me that he understood from this conversation that Sir Arthur was plotting something for the Jews in the municipality of Jerusalem. He said:

I have lived and filled the post of mayor of Jerusalem in my own way. I was the boss. I did not have to consult anybody about anything, and I made all my decisions myself. I did not ask any member of the government, or of the Jewish Agency, or any member in the municipality council for any opinion. I alone decided on the budget of the municipality and its various plans. I alone acted, planned, ordered and executed. I refused interference from anybody. This way of handling things was not liked by the Jews, especially the Jews of Jerusalem, so they decided to get rid of me. My trip to London in 1930 and my declarations there about the national rights of the Palestinians did not please the Jews. They thought that my hour had come!

This was what I heard from Ragheb in 1944. The turn of events proved that he was right in 1933 and 1934 to suspect that a plot to unseat him from his position as mayor of Jerusalem had been in the making. All his suspicions had come true. The Jews wanted a new mayor and a new municipal committee for Jerusalem to give them greater rights and more authority. To understand Jewish opposition to Ragheb Nashashibi it might be useful to go back to 27 January 1930 when the High Commissioner for Palestine, Sir John Chancellor, was having a meeting with the Vaad Leumi (National Jewish Council) in his offices in Jerusalem.

Most of the time was spent discussing the proposed new Arab delegation to London, in particular the attitude of the Jews of Palestine towards that delegation. The Vaad Leumi expressed bluntly to the High Commissioner the objection of the Jews to having the participation of Ragheb Nashashibi in the Arab delegation to London. The remarks made by Mr Ben Zvi and his colleagues, Rabbi Blau, Meyuhas, and Solomon, reflected a deep-rooted enmity of the Jews of Palestine towards Ragheb Nashashibi and the dissatisfaction with his being mayor of Jerusalem and their eagerness to be rid of him in the coming municipal election.

Following are the minutes of that meeting, kept amongst the private papers of John Chancellor.⁵

Mr Ben Zvi said that the first point which they wished to refer to His Excellency was the participation of Ragheb Bey Nashashibi, the city mayor, in the Arab Delegation to London. It was not the intention of the Jewish Council to interfere in the question of the selection of the Delegation; the Arabs were free to send what representatives they chose; but Ragheb Bey's inclusion was a question which was of special concern to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Ragheb Bey is the city mayor to which post he was elected by all the inhabitants. The Jewish population comprised not less than 60 per cent of the whole population of Jerusalem: they voted almost unanimously for the city mayor and the impression would therefore be given that he would be representing the Jewish population in a capacity which was of admitted opposition to the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate and thus to the Jewish population as a whole. They therefore felt justified in making a protest that the Jerusalem city mayor should take part in a sectional (p. 2, ff. 49 begins) representation which was opposed to the interests of the majority.

Mr Solomon said he had been personally to Ragheb Bey and had explained to him the dissatisfaction that was caused among the Jews of Jerusalem. He admitted that they did not wish to interfere in the matter of the composition of the Arab Delegation.

His Excellency remarked that it appeared that this was what they were doing.

Mr Solomon pointed out that they were referring to Ragheb Bey in his capacity as mayor, not as a leading Arab.

Mr Ben Zvi said that the position was different from the participation of Jemal Effendi in the Delegation or again from himself, as a Councillor, attending at the Zionist Executive.

His Excellency said that he would not take any action in this matter.

Mr Meyuhas stated that Ragheb Bey had been chosen by the votes of all the Jews of Jerusalem.

His Excellency pointed out that Ragheb Bey had received the

⁵ Chancellor Papers, Box 13/6, ff. 48-52, 1 February 1930.

votes of many Arabs as well. *The Jewish voters would have an opportunity of showing their change of views in regard to Ragheb Bey at the next election.*

Mr Solomon said that they probably would. He felt himself that a person holding the responsible position that Ragheb Bey held should not take part in a movement against any particular section of the population. They therefore thought that they had a right to ask that he should be replaced. Ragheb Bey might accompany the delegation but (p. 3, ff. 50 begins) then another mayor should be nominated.

His Excellency said that he would not take any steps to bring about the resignation of Ragheb Bey from the mayoralty if that was what they meant. The choice of the members of the Delegation was entirely the affair of the Arabs. Ragheb Bey was going as a member of the Arab Delegation and nobody would think for one moment that he was representing the Jews of Jerusalem.

Rabbi Blau remarked that at the time of the elections the Jews had endeavoured to reconcile the two parties amongst the Arabs.

His Excellency pointed out that Ragheb Bey would have been elected to the Council without the aid of the Jewish votes. He repeated he would not interfere in the matter. The Jews had many powerful representatives in England and it was only fair that the Arabs should be given the opportunity of sending as their representatives men of moderation and ability. He had told the Arabs so and had given them his opinion that their real leaders must be sent, men who had knowledge of affairs and not foolish young extremists. For that reason he was personally pleased to learn that Ragheb Bey would be a member of the Delegation for he knew him to be a moderate man who would not press impossible demands. He was a man who was likely to bring about what the Government and the Jews as well are anxious for, that is to say a reasonable agreement between the Arabs and the Jews. Ragheb Bey's inclusion in the Delegation was, in his opinion, in the interests of the Jewish population, and he thought they made a mistake in opposing his inclusion (p. 4, ff. 51 begins)

Mr Ben Zvi said he had received a programme of the Delegation which the Arab Executive had published. This was definitely framed against the Mandate and therefore any

member of the Delegation, no matter how moderate, was opposed to Jewish interests.

His Excellency said he had not seen the publication to which they referred; nor had he yet seen the members of the Delegation since their election. He would tell them what he had already told the Arab leaders on several occasions namely that it was useless for them to ask for the rescinding of the Balfour Declaration. He had explained to them why it was impossible for His Majesty's Government to repudiate a Declaration that had been categorically made and recently re-affirmed, and that it was therefore wiser for them to leave that matter alone. He was not informed of the Delegation's programme but he imagined that now that the Delegation had been chosen they would proceed to drawing up a programme.

Rabbi Blau said that if there was no protest against the Balfour Declaration by name there would certainly be against its tenor.

Mr Ben Zvi repeated the necessity of making it clear that Ragheb Bey in no way represented the Jews.

His Excellency said he was prepared to let the Secretary of State know that this Jewish (p. 5, ff. 52 begins) deputation had awaited upon him and that they had asked that it should be made quite clear to him that Ragheb Bey in no way represented the Jews of Jerusalem.

Mr Meyuhas said that they had come to convey to His Excellency the impression that had been made on the Jewish community in general and especially in Jerusalem, by Ragheb Bey's selection. Had Ragheb Bey's part been more in accord with Jewish interests then it would be easier to explain to the Jewish community what His Excellency had just explained to them but they were now in a dilemma and it was difficult to explain the position as Ragheb Bey had been elected by all the Jews of Jerusalem.

His Excellency repeated that he would inform the Secretary of State that Ragheb Bey did not in any way represent the Jews of Jerusalem.

In 1934 when the elections for the mayorship of Jerusalem were drawing near, Ragheb Nashashibi felt convinced that Arthur Wauchope had resolved to fight him. He felt appalled at what he regarded as duplicity on Wauchope's part and decided not to run again for the post

of mayor, and to confine his future activities to independent political work. The government got wind of Ragheb's intention and asked his cousin, Fakhri Nashashibi, to assure Ragheb that there were no grounds for his suspicions, and that 'a very clean election campaign would follow'. Ragheb gave in to Fakhri's pressure and decided, reluctantly, to enter the battle.

Ragheb told me:

Most of my life in politics, the al-Khalidis were our friends and our relatives. Ahmad Sameh al-Khalidi and his brother Dr Husain al-Khalidi, a senior officer in the Department of Health in Jerusalem, were good friends and companions of Fakhri Nashashibi, and spent their days and nights together. In 1921, when Kamel al-Husaini, the Mufti of Jerusalem, died, Shaikh Khalil al-Khalidi acted as a deputy Mufti. When the election campaign for the post of a new Mufti started, Shaikh Khalil nominated himself in opposition to Haj Amin al-Husaini. He came second after Shaikh Husam Jarallah, while Haj Amin came fourth. Later, Shaikh Khalil al-Khalidi, the head of the Muslim Shari'a Court, and Ahmad Sameh al-Khalidi were the main architects behind the launching of the 'Great Palestine Muslim Conference' on 11 December 1931 which was our answer to the General Muslim Conference which met in Jerusalem under the chairmanship of the Mufti [Haj Amin al-Husaini]. Also, Ragheb al-Khalidi was one of the notable and prominent Muslim Shaikhs who put their signatures on different petitions against the policy of the Mufti in administering the religious affairs of the Muslims. But suddenly Dr Husain al-Khalidi, my old friend, resigned from his post in the Department of Health and nominated himself as a candidate for the post of mayor of Jerusalem. Thus, the British manoeuvres succeeded in splitting up old friends and turning them into enemies.

Similar manoeuvres were employed eight years previously during the municipal elections of 1926 when Ragheb Nashashibi's opponents not only tried to induce Arab Muslims to run against Ragheb, but also contacted Colonel Frederick Kisch of the Jewish Agency with the proposition that they would not vote for the Jewish ultra-orthodox anti-Zionist candidates, collectively known as Agudath Israel, if the Jews did not vote for any Nashashibi candidate in that election. These facts have been disclosed, reported on, and confirmed by numerous

sources. It was said then that the enemies of Ragheb also appealed to Gad Frumkin, the Jewish Supreme Court Justice, proposing certain political concessions to Zionism for Jewish support against Ragheb Nashashibi. These arrangements were reported in the Arab Palestinian newspapers *Al-Karmel* on 6 February 1927 and in *Mir'at al-Sharq* on 6 April 1927.

It is worth remembering that all this bargaining between Ragheb's Muslim opponents and the Zionists was taking place in 1926 the year that the Zionists, in and outside Palestine, had already begun to reveal their ambitions in Palestine. One would have expected that all the Arabs would unite to face this serious threat and to listen carefully to what people like Dr Chaim Weizmann were saying inside Jerusalem that year: 'The Road to Allenby Bridge, along which we shall cross over to Transjordan will not be paved by soldiers but by Jewish labour and Jewish plough.'⁶

Despite the intrigues of the opposition Ragheb fought the municipal elections of 1926 and received a very high number of votes, together with his supporters, Ya'qub Farraj, a Christian Arab, and Zaki Nuseibeh, the father of Anwar Nuseibeh who was later to become the governor of the Arab part of Jerusalem under Jordanian rule. Zaki was a wealthy and respected Arab Jerusalemite whose second wife was a Nashashibi.

But in 1934, the Arab opponents of Ragheb decided with the help of the Jews and the British government to force him out of his post as mayor of Jerusalem. It was well-known that the High Commissioner never really liked Ragheb, and that the feeling was mutual. Ragheb was an aristocrat and Sir Arthur was a rugged Scot. Wauchope had spent many years in South Africa, Berlin and Northern Ireland before he came to Palestine as High Commissioner in 1931. In his will, he required that all his papers be destroyed after his death, with the exception of five volumes which contained his personal album, 53 copies of letters from him to Dr Chaim Weizmann and 31 letters from Dr Weizmann to himself. These letters are kept at the Weizmann Archives in Israel. To most Arabs the personality of Wauchope has remained something of a mystery; his real feelings towards the people of Palestine (whether they be the fellahs or the individual leaders) are not fully known. Unlike Wauchope, all the other High Commissioners for Palestine left their private papers at the disposal of anyone interested in the history of Palestine. Ragheb personally believed that people like Sir Arthur were to a large measure responsible for all the ills

6 Quoted in Alan R. Taylor, *Prelude to Israel* (New York, 1959), p. 38.

that befell the Palestinian Arabs, and him personally. The Jews, for their part, thought any new Arab mayor could not be worse than Ragheb who had been running the office of mayor of Jerusalem as a 'one-man show' for fourteen years.

Ahmad Sameh al-Khalidi, the younger brother of Dr Husain al-Khalidi, was the principal of the Arab College in Jerusalem and an intimate friend of the (Irish) Director General of Education in Palestine, Jerome Farrell. Their friendship had started a long time before, in the early thirties when Farrell had been deputy director of the Department of Education and when both had been united in their dislike of Bowman, the then British Director of the Department of Education. Farrell's post—while innocuous in appearance—was in fact an important political post which gave Farrell much sway over political activities in Palestine. Ahmad Sameh al-Khalidi convinced his brother, Dr Husain, over whom he had great influence, to resign from his post in the Department of Health and run for the mayoralty of Jerusalem. Nobody was certain whether Ahmad Sameh acted on his own or on the advice of his friend, Jerome Farrell. But that much was known, that Husain's decision to run against Ragheb for the post of mayor of Jerusalem was unexpected, and that Farrell was definitely pleased. Ironically, during his last days in Palestine, Farrell had become a bitter enemy of Ahmad Sameh al-Khalidi.⁷

The Jewish position in this regard is succinctly described by the well-known Israeli politician, Elie Eliachar. Eliachar was a former deputy mayor of Jerusalem, a co-founder of the World Sephardi Federation, and later became a member of the first Knesset. His family had lived in Palestine for several centuries. He grew up with Arabs as his close friends, served in the Ottoman army, and in the British administration in Palestine. He was one of Israel's most prominent businessmen and industrialists, and was a member of the Supreme Council of Defence under David Ben-Gurion.

His recollections of the municipal elections of 1934 are recorded as follows:

I remember this in connection with an election to the Jerusalem municipality during the Mandatory Period. According to Mandatory rules, the mayor had to be an Arab. The heads of the Sephardi community proposed that the

⁷ Personal interview with Professor Hasan al-Karmi, formerly a high-ranking officer at the Department of Education in the Palestine government during the mandate; he was also a lecturer at the Arab College.

Jews should support Ragheb Bey Nashashibi for the role of mayor . . . Moshe Sharett decided, in consultation with the other heads of the Zionist movement, that Jews . . . should support the so-called progressives among the Arabs—meaning the intellectuals, the pseudo-left-wingers—against the conservatives. Incredible as it may seem, Jewish leaders encouraged the rise of the notables of the Husseini clan, who were to cause us so much misery. Sharett and others instructed the Jews to support Dr Hussein Khaldi for the mayoralty of Jerusalem. Khaldi was elected and Ragheb was defeated.⁸

Thus an unholy alliance between a collection of so-called Arab progressives and the Zionists had served its purpose.

The day after Ragheb had lost the municipal elections, the editor of the authoritative Arabic daily newspaper *Falastin* remarked in an open letter, addressed to Ragheb: 'If Jerusalem has lost you as its mayor, Palestine has won you as its leader.'⁹

Elie Eliachar commented:

I remember a fateful meeting we Sephardi leaders had with Colonel Kisch, Chairman of the Jewish Agency Executive, and Moshe Sharett. We tried desperately to convince them that it was our national duty to stand by the moderates against the extremists, but our arguments fell on deaf ears.¹⁰

Moshe Shertok who changed his name to Sharett in 1948 was then head of the Political Department of the Jewish Agency; he later became Foreign Secretary and then Prime Minister of Israel in the early fifties. He often boasted that he had been born and bred in the Old City of Jerusalem. He would say that the woman who had wet-nursed him had also suckled Arab babies there. This was one of the favourite claims he made before the various commissions of enquiry, and as it implied that he knew as much of the country as anyone—a 'Jewish Lawrence'—it gave him a certain prestige in the eyes of the Jewish immigrants from Europe.

This man hated the Arabs outside Jerusalem just as much as he claimed to love those inside its walls. Perhaps by including one small

⁸ Quoted in Philip Gillon, *Israelis and Palestinians: Co-Existence or . . . : the Credo of Elie Eliachar* (Tel Aviv, 1977), p. 68.

⁹ Open letter published on the front page of the daily newspaper *Falastin* on 16 October 1934 by its chief editor Yusef Hanna.

¹⁰ Gillon, p. 69.

Arab community among his friends, he hoped that he might avoid being accused of racist bigotry for his hatred of all the other Arabs was legendary. At the top of the 'hate list' were the Nashashibis, perhaps because, coming from a poor Jewish family, he instinctively resented the Jerusalemite aristocracy.

Avi Shlaim in his recent book *Collusion Across the Jordan* wrote: 'Equally unflattering was Sharett's opinion of Abdullah's supporters among the Palestinian Arabs, the Nashashibis.'¹¹

Elsewhere in this book, Avi Shlaim wrote about the position of the Nashashibis *vis-à-vis* the Zionists and the British.

The Nashashibis were less extreme than their Husayni rivals in the public posture they adopted towards the Zionists and the British. But their moderation had its limits: they were more willing to negotiate over specific issues; they were not willing to sacrifice basic Arab interests.¹²

Moshe Shertok was quite aware of that.

Jewish pressure for adequate representation in Jerusalem's municipal council was accompanied by pressure for more Jews to be employed by the municipality, for contracts to be awarded to Jews, for the development of the Jewish quarters, for more extensive use of Hebrew in the municipality (hitherto its use was very limited) and so on. Interestingly, Jewish pressure applied before the 1927 elections did not create in the municipality the same degree of tension as in the mid-1930s.

At the beginning of the 1930s, the management of the Jerusalem municipality became a central issue in national and political conflict; its activities throughout the thirties almost invariably triggered a series of crises. The composition and character of the Jerusalem municipality was the most important element in the Arab-Jewish confrontation.

In 1930 Ragheb Nashashibi while on an official visit to London, gave a number of nationalistic interviews which provoked an angry response from the Jewish councillors, and in 1931 the four Jewish councillors announced that they were boycotting the municipal council meetings. So for four full years—up to the 1934 elections—the municipality functioned without its Jewish members. The Jewish members who resigned from the council and whose names were published in the official gazette were: Isaac Ben-Zvi, Chaim Solomon, Isaac Eliachar

¹¹ Avi Shlaim, *Collusion Across the Jordan: King Abdullah, the Zionist Movement, and the Partition of Palestine* (Oxford, 1988), p. 61.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 6.

and Eliahu Shama'a. As the Jews then constituted no more than one-third of the council members—four out of twelve—the legally required quorum was maintained and Ragheb Nashashibi, the mayor, was spared the harassment of any Jewish member in the council during a full period of four years.

In 1932 and 1933 the British government officials held consultations on the new electoral law with individuals and groups from Arabs and Jews with the inevitable result that the old system was altered to accommodate greater Jewish representation. Thus before the elections of 1934 were held a revised municipal law was passed determining the number of voters that were to be included in the electoral register. This in turn determined the distribution of representatives on the municipal council as follows: six Jews, four Muslims and two Christians.

Despite the effort to conduct the elections on a purely communal basis 'within the Wards' a small number of Jewish voters residing in Ward 1 had the choice between Nashashibi and al-Khalidi, and they opted for al-Khalidi.

Dr Husain al-Khalidi became the new mayor of Jerusalem. Describing his personality and success in the last municipal election, the British reported:

The present mayor of Jerusalem is a highly respected person claiming aristocratic ancestry. He succeeded Ragheb Bey Al-Nashashibi as Mayor of Jerusalem when he was elected, owing to support given by the Mufti, Head of the Reform Party, the policy of which was originally opposed to that of the Mufti and in support of Ragheb Nashashibi. As a return for his appointment as Mayor of Jerusalem, he has now turned against Ragheb and is now pro-Mufti.¹³

After Ragheb's defeat in the elections, Wauchope invited him to tell him that if he felt the election had not been clean, as he (Ragheb) had been telling his friends, then why did he not bring a case before the Supreme Court of Justice, headed by a British judge, for the invalidation of the election result? When Ragheb asked Fakhri for advice, Fakhri answered that he had already learned of the High Commissioner's suggestion and thought it best that Ragheb should go to court.

Ragheb went to court and lost.

As the proceedings of the trial are not available, I interviewed on 10 April 1989 at the American Colony Hotel in Jerusalem the present

13 FO 371/20824, March 1937.

Palestinian Attorney General for the Occupied Territories, Khalil al-Silwani, who at the time had attended all the court sessions as an observer. He was then a junior advocate. He said that the action taken by Ragheb Nashashibi against Husain al-Khalidi was based on the allegation that the election was fraudulent by an inflated margin of votes. The law stipulated that only registered taxpayers were entitled to vote. The opposition, however, had applied what Ragheb's lawyer, Horowitz, described as an irregular method by which many extra votes had been unlawfully entered including those of dead people. This was done as follows. A bona fide taxpayer would cast his vote and name others—in this case as many as twenty to thirty people—as having given their verbal proxies to vote on their behalf. Bernard Joseph (later Dov Joseph), representing the plaintiff, argued that it was common practice for the head of a family or community, a registered taxpayer, to vote on behalf of his subordinates and relatives. This was corroborated by an Arab officer of the Taxation Department, a tax-collector, Yehia Hammuda, that such a practice was indeed customary. He also said that although some people were not individually registered as taxpayers, they were registered under the name of their headman. He added that he himself was present at the polling station in the village of Lifta, a suburb of Jerusalem, and saw no irregularities. Khalil al-Silwani said however that the number of these 'unregisterd taxpayers' was inordinately high, running into many hundreds. But the merits of the case 'depended on the assessment of the judge', concluded Khalil al-Silwani. When asfor his personal comments on the trial in general, al-Silwani remarked that to declare any election null and void was considered an act of extreme gravity and that the circumstances surrounding the election had to be truly extraordinary. They were; but the judge felt otherwise.

After the trial Ragheb paid a visit to Wauchope and said: 'We hear a lot about British justice, and how great and unbiased it is. Now I come to tell you, after losing my case, that I think in the light of the astonishing outcome, that the judge must have been either a fool or a Frenchman.' Sir Arthur did not respond. Ragheb was convinced that the trial was a charade. He had outlived his usefulness and had to go. Ragheb firmly believed that Wauchope held a personal grudge against him for the imperious manner in which he used to run the municipality of Jerusalem, never allowing the British to interfere—nor for that matter, the Jews.

Three years later the British Royal Commission on Palestine, known as the Peel Commission—named after its chairman, Lord Peel—visited Jerusalem in November 1936, and in its final report it referred to the inter-Arab conflict in Palestine as follows:

The two most influential nationalist families in Palestine were the Husseinis and the Nashashibis.

It is important to bear in mind that Arab internal affairs were largely dominated and influenced by the rivalry between the members of the Husseini and the Nashashibi factions, though both factions are united in uncompromising hostility to the policy of the National Home.¹⁴

The municipal election at the end of 1934 made it clear to the Arabs that their control of the Jerusalem municipality was coming to an end. The Jewish councillors came back from their self-imposed exile and took their seats in the municipal council. In accordance with the constitution of the council, deputy mayors were appointed: one Jewish—Daniel Auster—and one Christian—Ya'qub Farraj. The powers of the Jewish deputy were defined in separate talks between the High Commissioner, Moshe Shertok and Dr Husain al-Khalidi. It was agreed that Auster would enjoy the position and power of first deputy to the mayor. But after taking up his post, Husain al-Khalidi tried to distance himself from the agreement by denying that Daniel Auster was his first deputy. It looked better that way *vis-à-vis* his Arab compatriots.

The municipal council's first year of office passed peacefully. The main difficulties related to the questions of which official language was to be used in the municipality and to the problem of allocating jobs and contracts between Arabs and Jews. In April 1936 after the onset of the Arab general strike, and the outbreak of civil disturbances, the new mayor stressed in a letter to the District Commissioner that the current functioning of the municipality was 'stable' and that intercommunal relations between Arabs and Jews were good! He promised the District Commissioner to resolve the language issue and to regularize the allocation of contracts between Jews and Arabs.

In August 1937 al-Khalidi went on leave and, like many other Arab Palestinians during the rebellion, he was deported to Rhodesia. The British District Commissioner then appointed Daniel Auster, the Jewish deputy, as acting mayor until August 1938.

The outbreak of the Second World War put an end to all discussions on matters concerning the governance of the municipality of Jerusalem. The municipality was henceforth to be administered by British officials. Ragheb Nashashibi lost the post of mayor of Jerusalem in 1934 and the Arabs, three years later, lost all control over it.

14 The Peel Report, chapter 6, paragraphs 87–90.

The Plight of the Moderates

The lives of Jerusalemites are beset with enough problems, but these intensify when they get involved in politics. A case in point is one of Ragheb's cousins, Fakhri Nashashibi. He was an officer in the Turkish army, became aide-de-camp to the first High Commissioner for Palestine, and then assistant to the mayor of Jerusalem. He was extremely intelligent, spoke several languages fluently, and was full of life. At the age of forty he was shot dead. Fakhri was an example of a Jerusalemite who wanted to serve his country in his own way, by logic, pragmatism, manoeuvres and moderation. He was fought, not only by the Jews and the British, but by his own countrymen. His greatest mistake was to disagree with the Mufti.

In 1926 both he and Ragheb were bitterly attacked by the Mufti's party in the municipal elections of that year. The Nashashibis were portrayed by their rivals as 'traitors . . . infidels . . . stooges . . . British agents . . . Zionists' allies' and so on.¹

During the municipal elections of 1934, the same methods were employed. Through his candidates, the Mufti attacked everything to do with the Nashashibis, and put about the notion that the re-election of Ragheb Nashashibi as mayor meant the re-election of a Zionist in that post.

In 1936, the Palestine rebellion erupted with a general strike, and after six months of turmoil it was still going strong, and had become a source of extreme concern to the British and the Jews. The Arabs had three demands: suspension of immigration, prohibition of the sale of land to the Jews and the establishment of a national government. In the event, after three long years of turmoil, none of these demands had been met.

From the start, Ragheb Nashashibi was reluctant to join the Arab Higher Committee, and his differences with the Mufti were not

¹ These epithets were published in the Mufti's newspapers and distributed by his men in the main towns and cities of Palestine.

resolved when he eventually joined. Moreover, there were continuous differences between the leadership of the Committee and the local national committees. Ragheb supported the general strike from the start, and went as far as calling upon civil servants to join in the strike so as to paralyse the government. Hasan Sidqi Dajani, the joint Secretary General of the National Defence Party, was the first to announce the strike of the public transport system in Jerusalem in his capacity as Secretary General of the trade union. The general strike was actually the brain-child of Ragheb Nashashibi, while the armed rebellion was the brain-child of the Mufti.

It was not a secret that the Mufti tried to avoid any direct or public confrontation with the British administration in Palestine. It was also known that the High Commissioner, Arthur Wauchope, had praised the Mufti's moderation in the first months of the rebellion.² He praised the Mufti's moderate tone which was reflected in the Friday speeches by the religious leaders in the mosques. 'I didn't expect such moderation' the High Commissioner wrote in one of his reports.³ Haj Amin was always ready to trade gestures of moderation for the right price. This fact was not unknown to the British High Commissioners in Palestine, especially to Sir John Chancellor. In 1931 he had reported to the Colonial Office:

in exchange for maintaining the status quo with regard to Sharii courts, and the Waqf funds, the Mufti was ready to take a more moderate political line towards the Palestine question.⁴

In August 1936 the Mufti began to change his stance from being a (reluctant) moderate to being an extremist militant. The British administration then arrested some of the Arab leaders and sent them to a desert exile called Oja Hafir in the Negev. Fakhri Nashashibi and Hasan Sidqi Dajani were the first to be arrested. In fact, the vast majority of those arrested then were from the National Defence Party.

The British High Commissioner was alarmed by the Mufti's militancy and the new direction the revolt was taking. The general strike turned into civil disobedience and escalated into a full-scale rebellion. Before his arrest Fakhri Nashashibi had

² Michael J. Cohen, 'Sir Arthur Wauchope, the army and the rebellion in Palestine, 1936', *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 2 (1 January 1973).

³ Wauchope to CO in CO 733/297, June 1936.

⁴ Chancellor to Shuckburgh in CO 733/178, 16 January 1931.

addressed the workers at Jaffa inciting them to resist the army and the police.⁵

The Palestinian Arabs demanded the suspension of Jewish immigration and the prohibition of land-sales to Jews. When the general strike began to turn into an armed rebellion, many Arab families in Palestine took up arms and joined in the struggle—the Tuqans of Nablus and the Irshaidis of Jenin. All were members of Ragheb's National Defence Party. As the rebellion proceeded, the character of the Mufti as well as his policies began to change. He became more despotic and secretive.⁶ His language was conciliatory but his actions were militant. Many commentators analysed his conduct as being governed by his desire to keep himself and his job (President of the Supreme Muslim Council) safe on the one hand and to retain the leadership of the rebellion on the other. Mistakes by the Mufti began to appear, one after another. As President of the Arab Higher Committee he sent telegrams to all the Arab monarchs and rulers, including Emir Abdullah, requesting their support for the cause. Immediately Abdullah received his telegram, he invited the Mufti to send a delegation to Amman to discuss the Palestine problem in general and the current situation in particular. The Mufti delegated Awni Abd al-Hadi and Jamal al-Husaini for that purpose. For Abdullah, the Emir of Transjordan, an appeal by the Palestinian Arabs, coming from their Grand Mufti, offered him a golden opportunity to gain a foothold in Palestine by assuming the role of mediator between the parties involved. Since he regarded Palestine as the first target in his ultimate goal of forming a 'Greater Syria' under his crown, success in bringing about a peaceful solution to the problems would be an important step towards achieving his goal. He therefore invited the Arab Higher Committee to meet him on 1 May in Raghadan Palace in Amman to discuss the matter.⁷

Emir Abdullah advised the Committee's delegates to end the strike and cease all military activities to enable the Royal Commission to proceed to Palestine. Since it was the Mufti who initiated contact with the Arab leaders it was natural that they should regard this as an invitation to involve themselves in the affairs of Palestine as mediators between Palestinian Arabs and the British government. While Emir Abdullah was deeply involved in his mediation effort, Iraq's Foreign Minister, Nuri al-Sa'id, started his own initiative on 9 June 1936 by

⁵ Porath, *The Palestinian Arab National Movement 1929-39*, p. 179.

⁶ Ali Sa'ud Atiyya, *Al-hizb al-arabi al-falastini wa al-hizb al-difa al-watani, 1934-1937* (Jerusalem, 1985), pp. 295, 322-5, passim.

⁷ Porath, p. 202.

putting forward a proposal for a sort of federation between Iraq, Jordan and Palestine. But the main prerequisite for the restoration of order was the suspension of Jewish immigration. All along Britain was encouraging such outside efforts,⁸ admittedly with reluctance, for this, in effect, undermined British prestige which the Zionists exploited to the full. Then came the turn of King Ibn Saud, who opposed the Iraplan. Ben-Gurion wrote in his memoirs:

Britain told Ibn Saud, if he is able to convince the Arabs of Palestine to end the strike, then not only will he be helping the British government, but he will also be helping the Arabs as well.⁹

Consequently, King Ibn Saud, as reported by Awni Abd al-Hadi in his memoirs, contacted Emir Abdullah and asked him if he would agree to make a public statement, together with King Ghazi of Iraq and Imam Yehia of the Yemen calling on the Palestinian Arabs to stop their strike. In response, Emir Abdullah of Transjordan contacted the Mufti urging him to stop all resistance and end the disturbances unconditionally.

In the face of so much diplomatic confusion Ragheb Nashashibi began to question the competence of the leadership of the Arab Higher Committee of which he was a member. At that juncture it began to dawn on the Mufti that any settlement of the problem brought about by the Arab rulers, and not by the Palestinians themselves, would be to the benefit of Emir Abdullah and to his own detriment. This would be intolerable even if Arab intervention secured the cessation of Jewish immigration and the release of all political detainees.¹⁰ The Mufti travelled to Amman more than once, and on every occasion his anger and resentment mounted, not only against Emir Abdullah, but also against the other Palestinian leader, Ragheb Nashashibi. But as he was unable to show his anger to Abdullah, he vented his spleen on Ragheb and all the members of the National Defence Party. Acts of murder were committed everywhere. A plot to assassinate Sulaiman Tuqan, the Mayor of Nablus, and Isa al-Isa, the owner of the Arab daily newspaper *Falastin* was uncovered.¹¹ The deteriorating social and economic situation in Palestine is succinctly described by Marlowe in his book about the rebellion as follows:

8 FO 371/20021, 7 July 1936.

9 David Ben-Gurion, *Recollections* (Geneva, 1970), p. 106.

10 FO 371/20018, 1 August 1936.

11 FO 371/20018, 27 October 1936.

The young men of the villages either volunteered or were pressed into the service of the gangs. Flocks were stolen and cattle were slaughtered. Small, hard-won sums of money, fruit of a year's labour, were either stolen by the bands or else taken to pay collective fines imposed by the military. All the half-forgotten blood feuds of the villages had flared up again; every village was divided against itself; none knew security either in the fields or within the doors of his house. Poverty deteriorated into destitution, destitution into despair, and finally, despair into a fierce anger against the 'holy warriors' and their brutal exactions.¹²

British official reports from Jerusalem were equally alarming.¹³

A new mediation initiative was taken by the Iraqi Foreign Minister, Nuri al-Sa'id. The Mufti who had by now refused to have any more dealings with Emir Abdullah in that matter, was content to preserve the unanimity and solidarity of the members of the Arab Higher Committee.¹⁴ Nuri's men, who happened to be friends of the Mufti, such as Awni Abd al-Hadi and Izzat Darwaza, succeeded in persuading the Mufti to agree to the terms of Nuri's mediation mission. These terms included the temporary suspension of Jewish immigration and the release of all political prisoners. The Mufti declared his acceptance of Nuri's terms, and after many diplomatic exchanges the British Colonial Secretary, Ormsby-Gore—known for his pro-Zionist inclinations—declared that he could not agree to Nuri's mediation in matters affecting British policy in Palestine.

General Sir John Dill, Commander of the British forces in Palestine, issued a declaration on 15 September 1936 demanding that the Arabs of Palestine surrender their arms forthwith otherwise martial law would be instituted and strong military action would be taken to restore law and order. An entire division arrived in Palestine. When the military began to intervene the Arabs witnessed many horrifying scenes. Meanwhile, the Mufti clashed with Fawzi al-Qawuqji, commander of the Syrian fighting units in Palestine, accusing him of interfering in the internal affairs of the Palestinians, and putting pressure on his own military arm, 'Al-Jihad al-Muqaddas'. Al-Qawuqji for his part accused the Mufti of despotism.

The disastrous effect of the general strike on the economic condition

¹² John Marlowe, *Rebellion in Palestine* (London, 1946), p. 213.

¹³ See for example, FO 371/20018, 1 August 1936.

¹⁴ J. C. Hurewitz, *The Struggle for Palestine* (London, 1942), p. 70.

of the Arabs of Palestine was becoming evident everywhere. Ragheb Nashashibi began to suggest that the strike be called off.¹⁵ In that he was not alone. He had the support of Awni Abd al-Hadi, who was feeling bitter and disheartened following the failure of Nuri's mediation effort a few weeks before.¹⁶ Dr Husain al-Khalidi and his party also felt the same way. With the exception of Jamal al-Husaini, all the members of the Arab Higher Committee felt there was no hope of extracting concessions in advance of ending the strike, and that the fighting should stop immediately.¹⁷ The revolutionary fighter, Abd al-Qader al-Husaini, a cousin of the Mufti, admitted (as reported by Emile al-Ghuri, one of the Mufti's leading advisers, in his book on Palestine) that 'the Mufti was beginning to face intense pressure from the other leaders of the Palestinian parties to end the strike and therevolution.'¹⁸

While Arthur Wauchope was planning the arrest and deportation of the Mufti, the latter was planning an orderly retreat. He issued a public declaration in his capacity as chairman of the Arab Higher Committee to the effect that the Arabs of Palestine would always welcome with pleasure and gratitude the mediation by the Arab rulers, and would be ready and willing to abide by their recommendations.

For a long time the Mufti had tried to persuade the Arab leaders to extract concessions such as the cessation of Jewish immigration as a condition for calling off the strike. They had tried, especially Nuri al-Sa'id, but in the end had had to give in to the British. In the political context of the time the Mufti's demands were perhaps too extreme to stand a reasonable chance of succeeding. To illustrate, in late September 1936 the British Ambassador in Baghdad, Sir Archibald Clark Kerr, quite simply threatened the Iraqi Prime Minister with these words: 'Every day that you waste in discussion and negotiation without obeying what we want from you, that is, the cessation of the disturbances in Palestine, is another nail in the coffin of the Arabs.'¹⁹ Shortly afterwards, on 8 October, he cabled the following message to Anthony Eden:

The Iraqi Prime Minister informed me that King Ibn Saud of Saudi Arabia agrees to the forthcoming text of the

15 He told me later—in 1943—that he had felt sickened by the plight of the ordinary people and had suspected that the Jews would probably profit from the Arab rebellion by stepping up co-operation with the British in Palestine.

16 Wauchope to CO in CO 733/311, 12 September 1936.

17 FO 371/20018, 7 October 1936.

18 Emile al-Ghuri, *Falastin abr settina aman* (Beirut, 1973), vol. 2, pp. 96, 97.

19 FO 371/20018, 28 September 1936.

declaration addressed to the Arabs of Palestine and the King would announce it soon. A copy of it would be sent to King Ghazi. Another copy would reach the Mufti tomorrow in Jerusalem, although the Mufti already has a copy of his own, which he would declare to the people of Palestine after consultation with the members of the Arab Higher Committee.²⁰

The Mufti told certain members of the Arab Higher Committee that he felt he was 'alone in a rough sea with a lot of strong currents'. He said to them that his political extremism found no support with the Arab kings and rulers and that the relationship between the Arab rulers and the British Empire was much stronger than the relationship between the Arab rulers and the Arabs of Palestine.²¹

In October, the Mufti declared the end of the strike.

In early November 1936, Ragheb Nashashibi asked his colleagues in the National Defence Party:

What next? After all this turmoil, these mediations and initiatives, politicking and pressuring, writing dozens of letters and making dozens of telephone calls, travelling hither and thither, all led to nothing and ended in nothing. Yet the Mufti has the nerve simply to leave Jerusalem for the Yemen without consulting anyone [to take part in the Arab mediation effort to bring about a settlement between the Saudis and the Yemenis]. The Arab Higher Committee was created to lead the Arabs during the strike, and the strike had now come to an end, yet it continues to exist and may be used as the voice of the Arab Palestinians. Moreover, a Royal Commission of Inquiry is arriving at any moment now, and the Mufti has resolved to boycott it so that no Arab will co-operate with it—for example by giving evidence—unless Jewish immigration is suspended. What next? What is there to be done? Where do we go from here?

On 5 November, as the Peel Commission was leaving for Palestine, the British government announced that 1,800 entry permits had been issued to Jews for the half-year ending March 1937. Less than 24 hours later, on 6 November, without consulting any member of the Arab

²⁰ Kerr to Eden in FO 371/40674, 8 October 1936.

²¹ Personal conversation with Awni Abd al-Hadi in Cairo in 1954 when he was Jordanian Ambassador in Egypt.

Higher Committee, the Mufti declared (in the name of the Committee) a boycott of the Commission's proceedings. When the Commission arrived in Palestine and Lord Peel appealed to the Arabs of Palestine to come forward and co-operate with it, the Mufti made a statement to the effect that he would find it difficult to co-operate with the Commission as long as the British government was the 'judge and jury'.

When the High Commissioner gave a party in honour of the Commission on 11 November 1936, the Mufti boycotted it, while Ragheb attended.²²

Not long afterwards, the Mufti began to review his attitude regarding the boycott of the Royal Commission's proceedings. He knew the attitude of the Arab leaders towards the Commission, especially that of Prince Abdullah. Abdullah disapproved of the boycott and was prepared to visit Jerusalem to make contact with it personally. King Abd al-Aziz of Saudi Arabia and King Ghazi of Iraq shared the same attitude. Izzat Darwaza, one of the Mufti's closest friends (who later became director of the religious Waqfs by order of the Mufti), wrote in his memoirs that King Abd al-Aziz had threatened to stop all his efforts in support of the Palestinian cause and sever all relations with the Arab Higher Committee if the Arab Higher Committee did not reconsider the boycott decision and go forward to meet the Royal Commission.²³ When Awni Abd al-Hadi and Izzat Darwaza went to see him on behalf of the Mufti to convince him of the merits of the boycott, the Saudi king handed them a letter in which he said:

The Arab interest calls on you to start contacts with the British Commission and appear before its members with your demands, because we see in that a guarantee for your rights and more help for your friends in defending you.²⁴

Moreover, certain prominent British friends of the Arabs in Britain, such as Frances Newton and Colonel Newcombe, cabled the Mufti in Jerusalem requesting him not to boycott the Royal Commission. Arthur Wauchope described the Arab boycott of the Commission as 'crazy and foolish'.²⁵

So Ragheb Nashashibi also believed that the Arab boycott of Lord Peel's Commission was a mistake and was actually harmful to Arab

²² *Falastin*, 12 November 1936.

²³ Izzat Darwaza, *Hawla al-haraka: al-qadiyya al-falastinia* (Beirut, 1950), p. 152.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ FO 371/20018, 8 November 1936.

interests. It only needed some personal courage to make that view public. So before the end of November 1936, the National Defence Party declared that it would not be bound by the decision regarding the boycott,²⁶ and that the Secretary General of the party, Hasan Sidqi Dajani would appear before the Commission.

This touched off a new wave of hatred and hostility towards Ragheb Nashashibi. His Arab rivals accused him of falling into the arms of Emir Abdullah, and claimed that his decision to appear before the Commission stemmed from his strategic alliance with the Emir. Those same critics conveniently forgot that the Arab leaders and many members of the Arab Higher Committee shared the same view. They saw no other reason for Ragheb to take that line except his blind attachment to the Emir of Transjordan and his fear that the boycott of the Commission might lead to a resumption of the rebellion. A resumption of the rebellion, so the reasoning went, was anathema to Ragheb for it would confer more power on the Mufti. Such convoluted reasoning was common in these quarters, because to them all political actions were invariably motivated by personal considerations. On 21 November, however, the Mufti himself started retreating. He declared that he would review the decision to boycott the Commission if he was asked to do so by the Arab monarchs. Then he expressed his willingness to make contact with the Commission on an informal basis, whilst maintaining the official boycott. The Commission declined the offer.

Finally, on 6 January 1937, when the Royal Commission had finished hearing all the statements made by the leading Jewish personalities in Palestine, the Arab Higher Committee lifted the boycott and announced its decision to give evidence before the Peel Commission.

Even the closest friends of the Mufti could not stop themselves from questioning their initial decision. Al-Khalidi publicly asked:

Were we right in our decision to boycott the Commission?
My answer is no, because we have lost several months in which we could have prepared our case properly. But since we decided to boycott, we should have stuck to that decision and not gone back on it.²⁷

From January 1937, after the Arab Higher Committee including the Mufti in person had given evidence to the Peel Commission, until July when the Commission's report was published, rumours were abroad in

²⁶ FO 371/20018, 20 November 1936.

²⁷ Private Information.

Palestine of a British intention to partition the country into separate Arab and Jewish states. Feelings were running high in the Mufti camp which suspected the Nashashibis of supporting partition. A vicious campaign of hate and terror was launched against Ragheb and his supporters. Ragheb's integrity and honour were attacked. He was accused of being a traitor to his people and to his religion, a stooge of Emir Abdullah, a tool of the British imperialists and of the Zionists. Without restraint the Mufti's men perpetrated acts of terrorism against Ragheb's supporters including arson and murder. They forgot their professed enemies, the British and the Jews, and trained their rifles on the Nashashibis to the exclusion of everything else.

On Saturday 3 July 1937, the Executive Committee of the National Defence Party met and decided to withdraw its two delegates from the Arab Higher Committee in order to 'enable the party to act alone in serving the interests of the Palestinian Arabs'. This was not accepted at its face value by the Mufti. His entourage accused Ragheb of withdrawing from the Committee on the orders of the British and the Emir of Transjordan, so that when Palestine was partitioned, Ragheb's party would be free to participate in the governance of the Arab part.

In September 1937, Lewis Andrews, the District Commissioner of Galilee, 'and perhaps the ablest man in the Palestine service'²⁸ was murdered along with his escort outside the Anglican church in Nazareth. In the same month Arthur Wauchope was replaced by Sir Harold MacMichael who came to Palestine determined to suppress the so-called second phase of the rebellion. He was convinced that the Mufti and the remaining members of the Arab Higher Committee were responsible for the assassination of Lewis Andrews. He ordered the disbandment of the Arab Higher Committee and prohibited all nationalist gatherings. Five of the Mufti's men in the Arab Higher Committee were arrested and deported. But the Mufti, who was also to be arrested, managed to escape.

Ragheb Nashashibi, who was no longer a member of the Committee, was not arrested. But, predictably, he was accused by Husain al-Khalidi (the man who had replaced him as mayor of Jerusalem two years earlier) of having advised the British government to disband the Arab Higher Committee and deport its members. Among al-Khalidi's private papers there is one containing a mystifying story. In it he wrote that he was invited to dinner at the King David Hotel by Gen who asked him, 'What would you say if we arrest the Mufti?'

²⁸ Christopher Sykes, *Crossroads to Israel* (Cleveland and New York, 1965), p. 177.

Al-Khalidi answered, 'You can try, but the consequences would be bad.' Dill then said, 'But this is not the opinion of everyone I have met, because I have met a respectable, responsible person and the head of a large party, who assured me with great confidence that the arrest of the Mufti and members of the Arab Higher Committee would terminate the revolution in a few days.'²⁹

Needless to say that for many months prior to the decision to arrest the Mufti there were numerous exchanges within the British colonial apparatus regarding the feasibility, advisability and, latterly, the urgency of arresting the Mufti. The extent to which it was felt desirable in British circles to arrest the Mufti is amply illustrated by a message sent on 8 September 1937 by the Colonial Secretary, Ormsby-Gore:

I still feel that we shall never get on top of this murder campaign . . . until we have eliminated the Mufti and his gang . . . and as long as we appear to funk dealing with this black-hearted villain and allow him to . . . organize terrorism of any Arabs in Palestine not subservient to him . . . we cannot hope to maintain law and order or even be the *de facto* government of Palestine.³⁰

The Mufti's men were well aware of Britain's attitude towards the Mufti and so continued their campaign against Ragheb, trying to persuade the Arabs in Palestine that there was a secret agreement between him and Abdullah to accept partition.³¹ Other supporters of the Mufti said that as long as Ragheb was a moderate politician, he would not refuse a moderate solution such as the partitioning of Palestine. Others in the Mufti camp said that Ragheb accepted partition in order to regain his lost political power and become the future prime minister of the Arab part of Palestine. All these accusations, which were designed to intimidate and defame, did not deter Ragheb from expressing his view publicly and from informing the High Commissioner that 'in principle' he would support partition. He was immediately accused of ingratiating himself with the British and with Emir Abdullah.

Then the assassins struck. In the summer of 1937, Dr Taha Hasan Hanun and Abd al-Salam Barkawi, from the town of Jenin, were assassinated on the ground that they were members of the National Defence Party. Ragheb received personal letters of threats from the

²⁹ Private Information.

³⁰ Ormsby-Gore to Battershill in CO 733/352, 2 September 1937.

³¹ Private Information.

Mufti.³² Hundreds of Ragheb's supporters in Jerusalem, Nablus and Hebron were either threatened or physically attacked.

As it happened the British themselves came to oppose partition.³³ Even Herbert Samuel, was critical of the scheme. Emir Abdullah himself rejected it on 24 July and added that 'no one had asked him to give his opinion on the partition of Palestine.' The prime minister of Iraq, Hikmat Sulaiman, declared on 9 July that he would 'break the head of anyone who would accept partition of Palestine'. The British Parliament did not receive the partition scheme with enthusiasm. What grounds then did the Mufti's men have to accuse Ragheb of trying to please the British and Abdullah by accepting partition. Events showed that it was his own personal view and that of his party that, given the circumstances, partition would save the interests of the Arab Palestinians in the long term. The Mufti's wrath was unremitting. At the Arab conference in Bludan on 8 September 1937 near Damascus, it was secretly decided at the instigation of the Mufti to intensify the campaign against the moderates and the 'pacifist' elements in Palestine.³⁴

The decision to dissolve the Arab Higher Committee and to arrest the Mufti came as no surprise to anyone. On 12 July Wauchope had recommended the arrest and deportation of the Mufti and London had agreed.³⁵ The assassination of the District Commissioner, Andrews, was the last straw and provided the British with a good enough reason to crack down on the Arab Higher Committee. On 19 July a British force from the Palestine police went to the headquarters of the Arab Higher Committee with warrants to arrest the Mufti along with other members in attendance, but the Mufti managed to escape through the back door and took refuge in his own home in the al-Haram area adjoining the al-Aqsa Mosque.³⁶ The police were loth to enter the area and waited for him to come out.

The Mufti, dressed as an old woman, left the al-Haram area and fled to Lebanon. His cousin Jamal escaped to Damascus. Dr al-Khalidi, who had vociferously accused the National Defence Party of being responsible for the dissolution of the Arab Higher Committee and for the decision to arrest the Mufti, must have been amazed by a public statement issued by the National Defence Party and signed by Ragheb Nashashibi, that the party declared 'its complete disapproval of the

32 CO 733/351, July 1927.

33 Wauchope to Parkinson in CO 733/322, 19 July 1937.

34 CO 733/353, September 1937.

35 Al-Ghuri, p. 140.

36 CO 733/352, 28 July 1937.

latest measures taken by the government against the Arab Higher Committee'. The statement went on to say:

Such measures exceed in their nature any requirements to solve the present crisis. The National Defence Party is always ready to carry out its national duty towards the Arabs of Palestine now that the political field has been vacated by the dissolution of the Arab Higher Committee and the local national councils.³⁷

For many years after the collapse of the 1936 rebellion the Arabs of Palestine kept asking themselves: who was to blame for the inglorious end of the general strike and the failure of the revolution? Did the Palestinian cause benefit from the intervention of the Arab leaders during the crucial period or did it not? To what extent did the interests of the local political parties inside Palestine take precedence over the wider interests of the national Palestinian cause?

It was no secret that the Mufti was responsible for inviting the non-Palestinian Arab kings and rulers to interfere in the affairs of the country. Neither was it a secret that the general strike came to an end when the Mufti received telegrams from the Arab kings of Iraq, Saudi Arabia and the Yemen and the Emir of Transjordan calling on him to put an end to the general strike. It was on 10 October that the Mufti received the following 'appeal', from Abd al-Aziz Ibn Saud, addressed to the Palestinian Arabs. It read:

To our Sons, Arabs of Palestine. We have been much distressed by the present situation in Palestine. In agreement with our brothers, the Arab kings and Emir Abdullah, we appeal to you to restore tranquility in order to prevent further bloodshed, relying on the good intentions of our friend, the British Government, and their declared desire to see that justice is done. Be assured that we shall continue our endeavour to help you.³⁸

On 12 November 1936 Fawzi al-Qawuqji announced the cessation of all military activities 'in response to the Arab King's appeal and in compliance with the request of the Arab Higher Committee'.³⁹

It was no secret that the Mufti had sent letters appealing to all the publishers of the Egyptian, Lebanese, Syrian, and Iraqi newspapers for

37 Darwaza, p. 184.

38 Porath, p. 214.

39 A. Khadr and A. Mahfuz, *Taht rayat al-Qawuqji* (Damascus, 1938), pp. 25-38.

support. He also appealed to all the political parties in Iraq, Syria and Transjordan to back him. He relied perhaps too much on the non-Palestinian Arabs for much of his support: moral, political, and financial.

Basically, the Arab rulers were powerless to influence events effectively and, in the final analysis, could and would not defy their British friends. So the strike and the revolt were bound to end without compensation. It was indeed an error of judgement to rely so heavily on non-Palestinians—who were in fact the traditional allies of Britain. When defeat seemed inevitable, the Mufti asked the same Arab leaders to save his face by appealing to him to call off the strike. On 12 October 1936 his reply addressed to King Abd al-Aziz was as follows:

Obeying Your Majesty's orders, your sons, the Arabs of Palestine, have gone into complete peace and returned to work. They thank Your Majesty for your paternal kindness, hoping that you will give them support for their national demands.⁴⁰

There is indeed a crucial difference between being a politician and a statesman. Ragheb Nashashibi, while supporting the Arab revolt of 1936, felt uneasy about the direction it was taking. He could not overlook the harmful side-effects it was having on the Palestinian cause. He felt that there would naturally be closer co-operation between the British and Jews, and that continued violence would strengthen the Zionists' hands inside and outside Palestine. His views in 1936 were vindicated by what Golda Meir and Moshe Dayan revealed forty years later in their respective autobiographies. Dayan wrote:

Since the Jews and the British were both targets of Arab terrorism, the mandatory government and the Jewish authorities found themselves working together. The first measure of co-operation followed a British army request for Jewish guides who knew the country and who spoke Arabic. It developed into the establishment of 'a Jewish settlement police force' as an auxiliary to the army and regular police. I became a *ghaffir*, a member of supernumerary police.

Dayan added: 'The Jewish settlement police force grew, served most the kibbutzim and other farmer villages, and included some one thousand three hundred members of the Hagana by the end of 1936.'⁴¹

⁴⁰ Akram Zu'ayter, *Wathā'iq al-muqawama* (Cairo, 1955), p. 261.

⁴¹ Moshe Dayan, *Story of my Life* (London, 1976), pp. 24, 25.

On the same subject, Golda Meir wrote in her autobiography:

Then we—the Jews—decided to step into the economic vacuum that was created when the Arab Higher Committee, headed by the Mufti, declared a general strike in the hope of paralysing the 'Yishuv' altogether. No Arab anywhere in Palestine was to go to work, the Mufti ordered, until all Jewish immigration ended and all land purchases by Jews came to a stop. To this we, also, had a simple reply. If the port of Jaffa no longer operated, we would open a port of our own in Tel Aviv. Arab farmers no longer marketed their crops, then Jewish farmers would double and triple their efforts. If all Arab transport ceased on the roads of Palestine, then Jewish trucks and bus drivers would work extra shifts and armour plate their vehicles. Whatever the Arabs refused to do, we would get done—somehow or other.⁴²

Since 1936 the Nashashibis were aware of those negative aspects of the rebellion which brought benefit to the Jews, but a rebellion which they nonetheless supported and defended until they decided to take a different and independent direction. The Jews for their part took advantage of the situation and began to build up an army. Yehuda Bauer wrote:

The passivity line had been the child of an effort for cooperation with the British that had seemed at once possible and vital. One markedly positive result of this policy was the Supernumerary Police Force (starting in May of 1936). In July 1936 approximately 22,000 Supernumeraries were appointed (including city and village special policemen) organized in legal formations. The Supernumerary Police Force served as a legal cover for the activities of the Hagana, and with the assistance of the British instructors of the Supernumeraries, the level of training of Hagana members was also raised. The Supernumerary Police Force represented to some extent the idea of the 'legal Hagana' which Jabotinsky had preached.⁴³

That sort of development was precisely what Ragheb Nashashibi and his friends were trying their hardest to prevent or match.

42 Golda Meir, *My Life* (London, 1975), p. 120.

43 Yehuda Bauer, *From Diplomacy to Resistance; A History of Jewish Palestine, 1939-1945* (New York, 1973), pp. 11, 12.

The Adversaries

The Palestine of the mandate may well be described as a vast arena in which different games—baseball, football, and cricket—were being played simultaneously. The Jews had their political factions, vying with each other, the Arabs were divided among themselves and the great powers, Britain, the United States, the Soviet Union, and the West Europeans were by no means of the same mind. There were conflicts within conflicts, so to speak, such as an Arab baseball player stumbling over a Jewish footballer, or a British cricketer tripping over an Arab baseball player. Palestine had a unique political life with a unique pattern not known in normal democratic countries. Too many enemies and too many allies. And the cycle went on, enemies becoming allies and allies becoming enemies: a sort of game of musical chairs.

Ragheb's political story has never received a balanced treatment because of his political enemies on the three basic fronts in Palestine: the British, the Arabs and the Jews. The British thought of Ragheb as a feudal aristocrat, an arrogant Ottoman deputy, whose policy of moderation and understanding could upset the traditional imperial policy of divide and rule. The Mufti and his followers regarded Ragheb and his party as a challenge to their political and religious influence in the country. Many historians and writers on the Palestine problem made a habit of referring to Ragheb and his party as the *Mu'aridin*, the 'opposers' (Opposition) and to the Mufti and his party as the *Majlesin*, or the People of the Supreme Muslim Council. In a real sense, however, the term *Mu'aridin* should have applied to the Mufti and his followers because of their fierce opposition to any proposal for a solution to the Palestine problem. The al-Husaini leadership was pan-Arabist in nature deriving a precarious, perhaps an illusory kind of strength from the Arab countries. Ragheb's leadership was genuinely Palestinian in character and orientation as opposed to the pan-Arabist nature of the al-Husaini leadership. It is in this crucial sense that Ragheb's party was the only party of the Palestinian nation. One historian, Philip Mattar, executive director of the Institute for Palestinian Studies in Washington

DC, wrote that those opposition people, *Mu'aridin* (meaning the Nashashibi party), had always been suspected of opportunism and collaboration,¹ an accusation which only the Mufti followers made in their writings about the history of Palestine. People like Izzat Darwaza of Nablus, who was the Mufti's man as Ma'mur Awqaf of Nablus and then director of the Muslim Waqfs in Jerusalem.

The Jews were the third hostile camp fighting Ragheb. They saw his moderation towards the British, and his policy of gradualism, as providing a favourable climate for a solution to the problem. This conciliatory attitude represented an effective countercheck to Zionist ambitions whose realization was largely governed by the rate of Jewish immigration.

Ragheb Nashashibi was aware that the Jews sought to exploit any rift between him and his political rivals and use him as a pawn against their own enemies in the Arab camp. But Ragheb never let himself be used in this way.

In 1920 he succeeded Musa Kazem Pasha al-Husaini as mayor of Jerusalem, and from then on the two became the best of friends. 'We worked together in public life to defend the Arab rights in Palestine,' he said to me many years later. 'Together we met the High Commissioner in 1926 and on subsequent occasions. Together we travelled in one delegation to London. We never stopped visiting each other, loving each other and respecting each other. The Pasha was a great man.' Ragheb continued: 'I have no enemies. I try not to have enemies. My enemies are the creators of their own enmity towards me. They wanted to be my enemies, without my co-operation or consent.'

Wealthy, well-liked and confident of his abilities, Ragheb was alert to Jewish conspiracies and kept well out of them, clinging resolutely to his aspirations for his Palestinian Arab nation. If he was moderate in his political policies, he was so because of his own political convictions, and not because of a need to placate others or curry favour. This applied equally to the Jews, the British officials in the local administration, and to the Colonial Office in London. As he told me several times, his policy of moderation stemmed from his realization that the Arabs were powerless to put a swift end to the British mandate in the 1920s. Given their limited resources they were equally powerless to fly in the face of world opinion—in particular, British public opinion—judging from the debates of the day in both houses of parliament about the Balfour Declaration or independence for Palestine. So Ragheb took the course

¹ Philip Mattar, 'The Mufti of Jerusalem and the politics of Palestine', *Middle East Journal*, vol. 42, no. 2 (Spring 1988).

of moderation, seeking co-operation with the British in his struggle against the Zionists and keeping the door open for British initiatives to contain mass immigration into Palestine. He aspired after any kind of democratic institutions in which the Arabs of Palestine with the advantage of a majority could exercise their right to determine their own destiny. He was aware of the fact that the legislative council, proposed by Arthur Wauchope in December 1935, fell short of Palestinian demands for it was conceived as little more than 'a debating chamber' without the power to challenge the legitimacy of the Balfour Declaration and the ascendancy of the British mandate. Yet he accepted the proposal.

He was told of the composition of such a legislative council before it was officially announced by the High Commissioner. And he accepted it in private before it was made public. He was privately informed that such a legislative council would be composed of twelve elected members—eight Muslims, three Jews and one Christian—plus nine members nominated by the High Commissioner. The nominated members would comprise three Muslims, four Jews, and two Christians. There would also be five officials appointed by the High Commissioner. The president of the chamber would be appointed from outside Palestine.

Ragheb immediately announced his support for the proposal provided that Wauchope amended the powers of the British High Commissioner as envisaged in the plan. The Jews were already unhappy with Wauchope because of his hesitation in dealing firmly with the current unrest in Palestine; his plan for a legislative council only worsened relations between him and the Jews—an opportunity which Ragheb wanted to exploit. But again Ragheb was let down by the rest of the Arab leaders and, anyway, the scheme was defeated in Westminster in March 1936.

In 1937, he accepted in principle the partition plan, because he judged it to be in the Arabs' long-term interest in that they would control a large part of Palestine with a much smaller area going to the Jews. The Arab extremists labelled Ragheb's realism as high treason, and launched a terror campaign against him and his family and supporters.

His sense of realism is well illustrated by the telephone conversation he had in 1937 with Moshe Shertok of the Jewish Agency. Shertok requested to have a meeting with him; Ragheb asked him what he wanted to discuss, to which Shertok replied laughingly, 'The Problem'.

Ragheb said:

If you have something to tell me, please tell it to the High

Commissioner, who will undoubtedly relay it to me. For if I meet with you alone, the British will say we are doing business without their intermediary, and I don't think this is fair. Also the Jewish press would come to know of such a meeting and would put words into my mouth which I never uttered, a tradition for which the Jewish press is very famous. Besides, the Arabs—my respectable rivals—if they hear of such a meeting, and undoubtedly they will, are bound to say that we met to cook up a new conspiracy against God-only-knows-who.

The meeting never took place.

Although Ragheb had no predilection for the British, he nevertheless did not want to deprive the Arabs of a 'potential' ally against the Jews. He had clearly identified the Zionists as the real enemy, and believed that there was a possibility that the British might one day try to redress the wrong done to the Palestinian Arabs. He was therefore careful not to prejudice their potential support by giving them cause to think that the Arabs had given up on them favouring direct negotiations with the Jews.

Eliahu Elath, a prominent Jewish Arabist in the Jewish Agency always regarded Ragheb Nashashibi as the real enemy of the Jews preferring the open enmity of the Mufti to the dangerous poison of Ragheb. On the other hand, the socialist Zionists of Palestine hated what they saw as the 'bourgeois' Ragheb, together with his supporters from the notable Arab families of Palestine. Even the Jewish intellectual writers did not attempt to research into his personality or his political principles, or his struggle for his country. To illustrate, one such writer commented: 'Ragheb Bey was likeable . . . He was more Turk than Arab and looked rich—richly composed, that is, as if behind him were many years of good eating, opulent divans to rest upon, deferential servants to attend him . . . He belonged to the old Ottoman order. It was not surprising that the nationalist Arab hotheads of Jerusalem, Hebron and Nablus, looked to the Husseinis rather than the Nashashibis for leadership.'²

Maxim Ghilan in his book *How Israel Lost its Soul* described Ragheb Nashashibi simply as a 'member of the Levantinized "land-bourgeoisie" and an opponent of the Mufti's fanatics.'³

Still, Ragheb was no less fanatical in the eyes of the ultra-radical and

² Quoted in D. R. Elston, *No Alternative: Israel Observed* (London, 1960), p. 12.

³ Maxim Ghilan, *How Israel Lost its Soul* (London, 1974), p. 74.

extremist Israeli politicians. The intemperate Rabbi Meir Kahane who is at the time of writing a member of the Knesset and founder of the Jewish Defence League, who preaches that all the Arabs living in Israel must leave their homes and go, referred to Ragheb's election to the Turkish parliament in 1914, quoting him as saying: 'If elected I will dedicate my efforts, night and day, to eliminate the damage and danger of the Zionists and Zionism.'⁴ Indeed, Ragheb was fiercely opposed to Zionist ambitions but accepted benign coexistence with the Jews of Palestine.

Some four and a half decades before Kahane made this statement, Ragheb had told Moshe Shertok who had been born and raised in the Old City of Jerusalem at the beginning of this century:

Moshe, I know what you really think of me. And you know what I really think of you. At least we are both intelligent enough to know where each of us stands, and how each of us feels towards the other. Thank God we have the courage to admit this, not only to each other, but also to everyone.'

A man who was both unswerving in purpose and moderate in approach posed a subtle threat to Jewish ambitions. To some British officials in Palestine, his imperious manner and aristocratic aloofness were most irritating; he had to be cut down to size. So the Jews and it seems also the British resolved to get rid of him as mayor of Jerusalem (the revision of the municipal election laws was a contributory factor). It became imperative for the Jews and desirable for the British that a more malleable personality replaced him as mayor of Jerusalem: an Arab who was less outspoken, less intelligent, less confident, less wealthy than Ragheb Nashashibi. So the Jews voted for his opponent in the municipal election—ironically, a man supported by a leader well-known for his extremism and hatred for all moderates, whether Arabs or Jews.

When war broke out in September 1939, Ragheb went straight to the High Commissioner to tell him that the National Defence Party of Palestine would stand firmly behind Britain. In 1940 he confirmed this sentiment in writing.

Such an expression of solidarity with the British by an Arab leader at a critical time for Britain was of course most annoying for the Jews who were at pains to portray all the Arabs in Palestine and elsewhere as pro-Nazi. In fact, not only Ragheb's party stood by the British but also all the (Arab) mayors of all the principal cities of Palestine declared

4 Meir Kahane, *They Must Go* (New York, 1981), p. 182.

their firm support for Britain. Though such sentiments were welcomed by the British, these were not thought to be widespread enough to offset the hostility of a considerable section of the Arab Palestinian population towards Britain following the Mufti's rejection of the 1939 White Paper and his exile. British anxieties were understandably exaggerated given Britain's military reverses in the Western Desert and her long-standing distaste for the Mufti's strong-arm tactics. To the

Palestinian politicians led by the Nashashibi family . . . Britain offered only polite noises by way of response [to their expressions of support]. Presumably, they sought to keep open the door for the much more influential Hajj Amin to come to terms or at least stay on the sidelines.⁵

Ragheb never saw himself as a professional politician, and never tried to win support by appealing to popular sentiment. In his political life he was a purist, handling specific problems, fighting for his nation, not for an exalted position for himself. He knew the capabilities and the limitations of both the Arabs and their adversaries, and acted accordingly.

When today's historians try to research the political history of Palestine from the Arabs' perspective, they can find ample material on Ragheb consisting of hostile articles in Arabic newspapers, magazines and pamphlets—written by his adversaries. It was not in his nature to attack people, not even his foes; nor did he have time to do so. He worked quietly and purposefully, and would not engage in intrigue; he believed that a man's public character is one and the same as his private character, and just as he would not allow wrongdoing in his own home, so he would not allow it to mar his actions in public. It was also not in his nature to malign others or envy them or bear grudges against them; he would listen to what people said about him, would smile, reach for one of his Jockey Club Turkish cigarettes, light it, put it in his gold and ivory cigarette holder, and silently watch the smoke rise to the ceiling of his room.

A major source of Jewish antipathy to Ragheb was the fact that he always kept the door open to all the political offers and proposals that came in from London. The Jews had no wish to solve the problem until they had secured numerical superiority in Palestine and had thus become the principal decision makers. Any settlement arrived at before that time would have left them in a minority, a situation they greatly

⁵ Leon Carl Brown, *International Politics and the Middle East: Old Rules, Dangerous Game* (Princeton and London, 1984), p. 126.

feared. Any person likely to accept a solution then was their enemy.

But Ragheb's problems did not stem entirely from the Jewish side. He encountered a great deal of opposition from the Arabs themselves—notably as a result of his politics, his style of leadership and his personality. He never permitted himself to be swayed by plaudits or public outbursts of fervour from his supporters for he believed that the course he had taken would ultimately lead to self-determination. Among his political opponents some perceived him to be a sort of sphinx, a silent and tireless figure drawing strength not from public demonstrations of loyalty but from an inner strength that he sensed within him—an unusual phenomenon among his political peers at the time. Thus it was that when friends of the Arabs in the House of Commons and in the British Cabinet proposed in 1923 the establishment of an Arab Agency to match the growing power of the Jewish Agency, Ragheb accepted the idea right away while his political opponents rejected it; the same thing happened with proposals for a legislative council in 1935, the partition plan in 1937 and those the White Paper in 1939.

He was in a number of other respects extraordinary among the leaders of his day. Jealousy of other Arab leaders, for example, was alien to his nature. When it was first suggested in 1945 that Musa Alami should go to represent the political parties in Palestine on the Arab League Council in Cairo, Ragheb was the first to endorse his candidacy; when a few months later the original nominees of Musa Alami came to Ragheb saying that their candidate was no longer a suitable representative, he refused to entertain them. He argued that it was unacceptable to withdraw authority from Musa Alami after so short a time, and that those who sought to drop him were merely jealous of the ability he had shown and the popularity he had commanded during his Cairo mission. Musa's opponents, like Dr al-Khalidi and Awni Abd al-Hadi, did not want him to become a pan-Arab leader.

I was with him when he went to Ragheb to thank him for not deserting him as the others had done. Ragheb—typically—made no comment, but went on to ask Musa, whom he looked upon as a younger brother, about the difficulties he had suffered during his mission to the Arab League in Cairo.⁶ Ragheb asked Musa, with a forced smile on his face, whether it was true that he had expressed in his inaugural speech to the Arab delegates in Cairo his regret at the absence of the Mufti from that session. Musa replied that he had only expressed his regret at the absence of the 'real' leaders of Palestine without mentioning any

6 I recorded the conversation that ensued immediately I was alone.

names, and that he had been forced to say so to lessen the acrimony which had started to build up against him on the part of certain members of the Arab Higher Committee, who were then writing articles, signed by Husain al-Khalidi, on the front page of *al-Wihdah* Arab weekly, accusing Musa of failure and treason. Ragheb then asked Musa whether it was true that Egypt was not willing to accept him as a full member at the League meetings. Musa said: 'Yes; and when they did accept me as a full member, they warned me not to speak, not to open my mouth, except on the subject of Palestine and only when I am asked to do so.' Ragheb asked: 'Did you say that the Arabs of Palestine were blamed by non-Palestinian Arabs for not accepting the White Paper of 1939?' Musa said:

I only wanted to put the blame on all the Arabs, Palestinians and non-Palestinians, and not only on the Palestinian leaders for rejecting the White Paper. I reminded the delegates that the whole conference, which was held in Cairo for that purpose had unanimously rejected it, and that the Egyptian government had informed the British authorities, without consulting the Palestinians, that they could not advise the Palestinians to accept the White Paper without amendment of the condition requiring consultation with the Jews on the question of independence.

With a hint of sarcasm in his voice, Ragheb asked his old friend Musa: 'And what do you think of the White Paper now? Do you still insist on rejecting it?' Musa answered, with a deep sigh, 'Where is the White Paper? Dare we dream of getting it back?' Ragheb asked, 'Is it true that Nahas Pasha [the prime minister of Egypt] visited the British Embassy in Cairo to ask the British Ambassador about the real British feeling towards you and your mission to the Arab League?' Musa nodded and said, 'It was Amin Osman Pasha who was sent by Nahas Pasha to ask the British Ambassador about me and my mission. Osman Pasha told the British Ambassador that there was no question of me being recognized as representing the Palestine government in any way, or as a delegate at the meetings of the committee of the Arab League and that Nahas Pasha himself would not do anything that would embarrass the British government in any way but pointed out that I was a well-known moderate and had been chosen by the Arab parties in Palestine to represent their point of view.'

When Ragheb heard Musa being described by the Egyptian ministers as a 'moderate' he burst out laughing and said, 'Now Musa,

you can happily join my party as a moderate Arab "traitor" or an old traitor who is now a moderate. Choose and decide.'

Ragheb, being a genuine moderate, could never be deceived by a fake moderate, whether Arab or Jew. He was never taken in by the so-called moderation advocated by leaders like Weizmann or Ben-Gurion. He never tried to win them over as friends, whether it was Weizmann or Ben-Gurion, Shertok or Shiloah, Golda Meir or Gruenbaum. Their personalities were contrary to his own. Ben-Gurion was, in Ragheb's eyes, a professional politician, who would not hesitate, for instance, to accuse his political enemies, the revisionists, of killing the Mapai leader Chaim Arlosoroff in 1933 to exploit the event to his benefit and get a firm grip on the Zionist organization at that time.⁷ If this was what Ben-Gurion did to his own people, mused Ragheb, what would he do to the Arabs?

Ragheb always doubted the genuineness of Ben-Gurion's promises and public statements. During the Second World War, Ragheb was the only Palestinian Arab leader who stayed in Jerusalem, waiting in vain for the implementation of the White Paper or any forward movement on the basis of its recommendations. No positive steps were taken by the mandatory government nor was there any attempt by the Jewish Agency to find grounds for compromise therein. All he saw was a bewildering exercise in procrastination and manoeuvring on the part of the Jews. Ben-Gurion would vehemently attack the White Paper. Then the Jewish Agency, with Ben-Gurion at the helm, would swing like a pendulum from radicalism to moderation. Inside Palestine, Ben-Gurion used to speak of mutual understanding between Arabs and Jews. He used to visit Musa Alami in his house and in his office and talk about the 'small sofa which could seat two people at the same time, meaning Arabs and Jews'.⁸ When he was outside Palestine, Ben-Gurion spoke with a different tongue. At the American Zionist conference held in May 1942 at the Biltmore Hotel in New York, Ben-Gurion was one of the main speakers with Chaim Weizmann and Nahum Goldmann. The pronouncements of Ben-Gurion were of particular importance. He was then the Chairman of the Executive of the Jewish Agency in Palestine. His main demands were that the Jewish Agency be vested with full control of immigration into Palestine and that the concept of bi-nationalism be discarded if it entailed offering Palestinian Arabs equal representation with the Jews in the governmental departments. The realization of these demands would lead to

⁷ Ben Hecht, *Perfidy* (New York, 1961), p. 256.

⁸ Story related to Ragheb Nashashibi by Musa Alami.

only one outcome—the creation of a Jewish state. The Biltmore Programme, adopted by the conference contained a set of provisions, one of which was that after the war Palestine was to be established as a Jewish Commonwealth.⁹

Ragheb's impression of Chaim Weizmann was no better than that of Ben-Gurion. Both were unscrupulous and hypocritical, qualities that Ragheb found particularly distasteful. He recalled how Weizmann complimented Emir Faisal when he met him describing him as 'the first real Arab nationalist . . . a leader . . . a very honest man . . . handsome, as in a picture . . . he is not interested in Palestine'. This he thought was utter hypocrisy designed to flatter the Arabs and perhaps dampen their concern for Palestine. In a speech he gave in 1925, Weizmann said:

Palestine must be built up without violating the legitimate interests of the Arabs . . . The Zionist Congress must learn the truth that Palestine is not Rhodesia and that 600,000 Arabs live there, who before the sense of justice of the world have exactly the same right to their homes as we have to our National Home.¹⁰

When, however, thirteen years later the Jews had made enormous strides towards the realization of their dream, the same Weizmann described Arab nationalism as 'totalitarian in nature, shallow, aggressive and arrogant.'¹¹

As for Vladimir Jabotinsky, the artist-soldier who wrote novels, essays and poems, he was perhaps more to Ragheb's liking than people like Weizmann or Ben-Gurion. At least Jabotinsky, in his extreme hostility to the Arabs, was open. He also had remarkable artistic qualities which he retained until the end of his life. Jabotinsky's opinion of Chaim Weizmann, 'Zionist deluxe', was no better than Ragheb's opinion of Weizmann.

Ragheb believed that if the Jewish leaders had been true moderates as they used to profess, there would have been a real chance for co-operation between them and the Arab moderates. Extremists on both sides might have been overshadowed, and a just and permanent settlement of the Palestine problem could have been reached. The trouble was that none of the Jewish leaders were moderate as the following examples will show.

On 13 November 1947, the 'moderate' Moshe Shertok told the

⁹ Alan R. Taylor, *Prelude to Israel* (New York, 1959), pp. 59, 60.

¹⁰ Quoted in Sykes, p. 95.

¹¹ Quoted in Norman Rose, *Chaim Weizmann: a Biography* (London, 1986), p. 332.



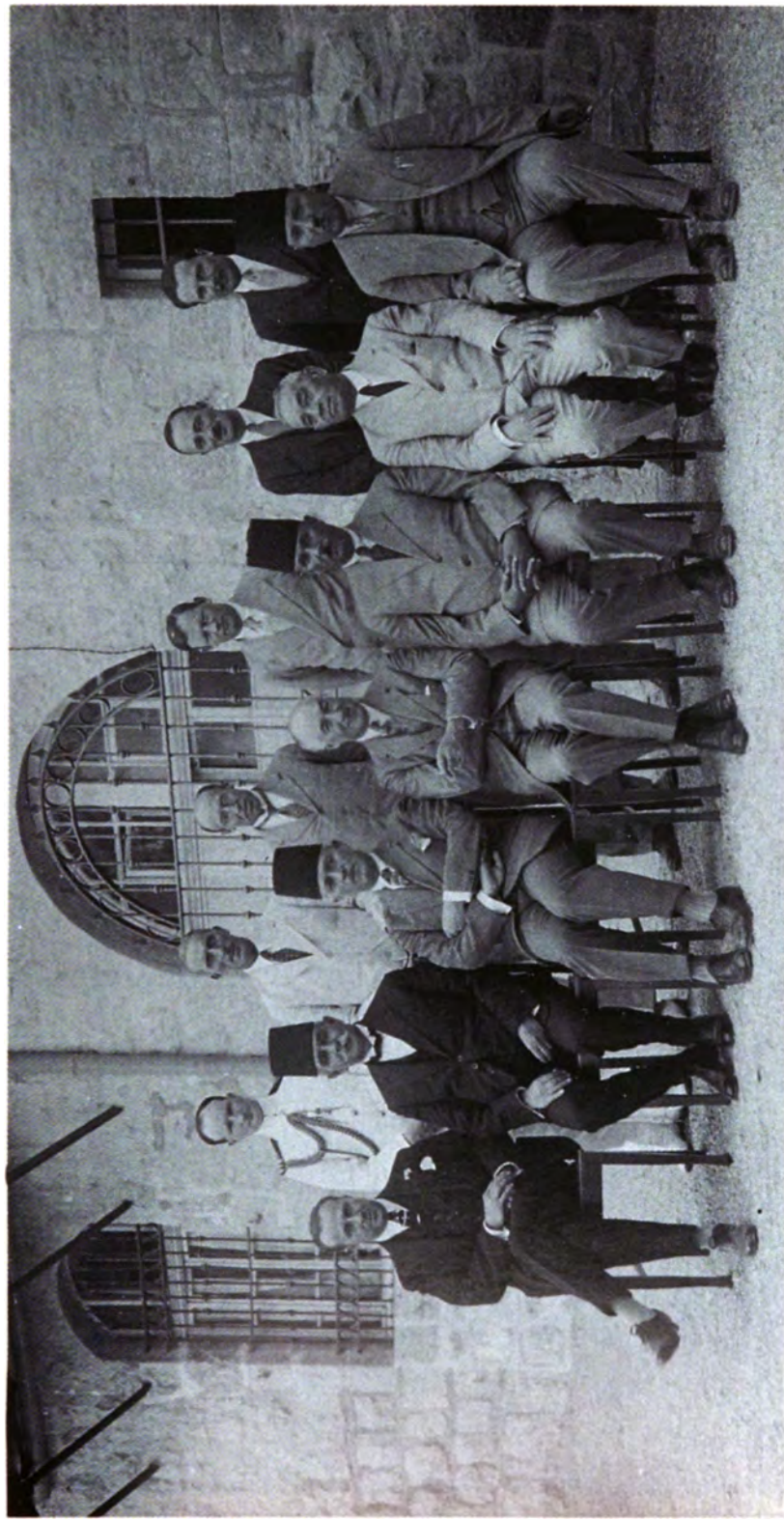
1.1 At the railway station in Jerusalem. Mayor Ragheb Nashashibi (wearing a tarbush), with his wife beside him, welcomes the new High Commissioner, Sir John Chancellor, in 1929. Sir John, in the foreground, is holding his daughter's hand.



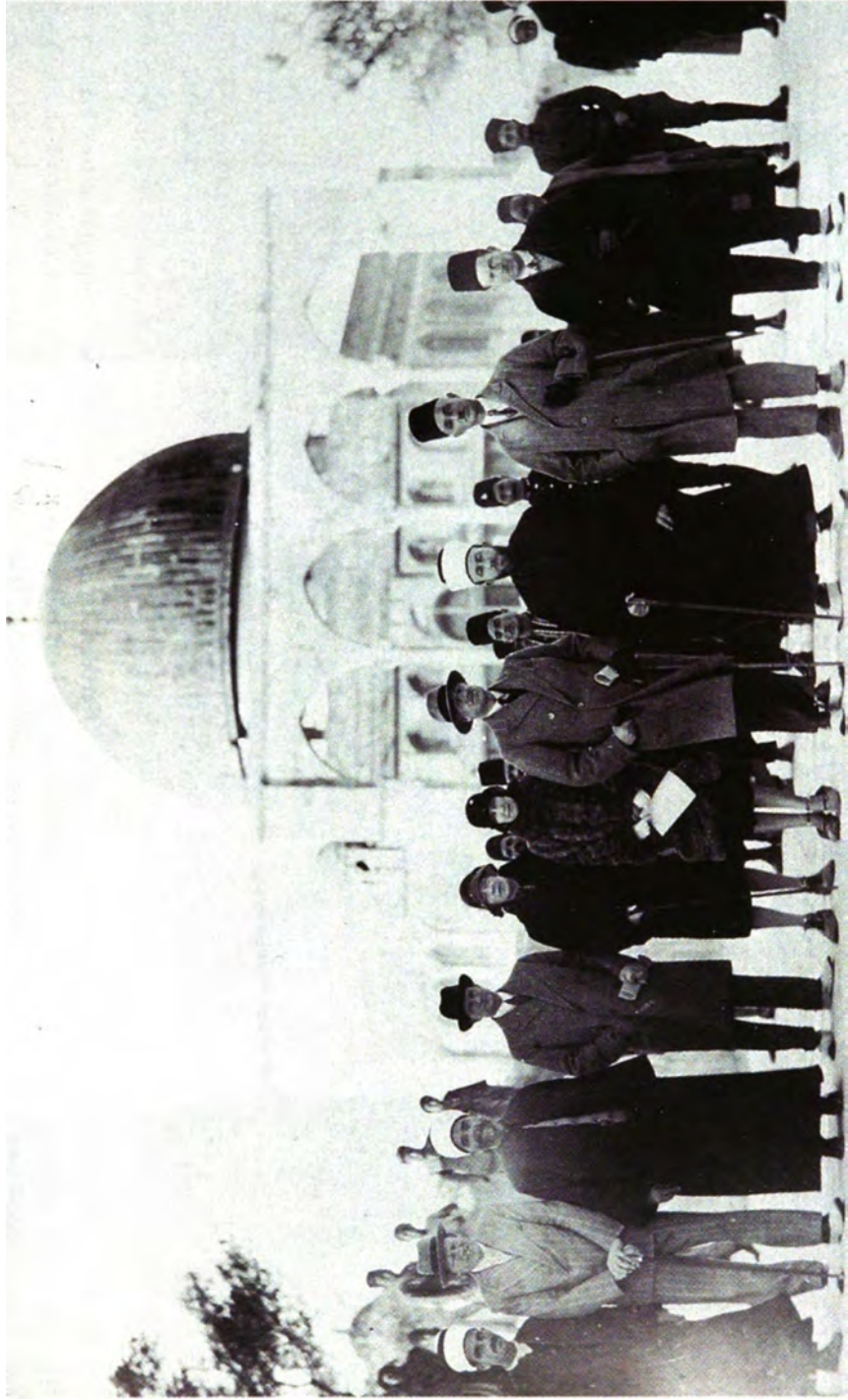
1.2 At the opening ceremony in 1931 of a new water well near Jerusalem, dubbed al-Fawwar, Ragheb Nashashibi, centre, poses with Sir John Chancellor. Behind them in the middle stands the deputy mayor of Jerusalem, Ya'qub Farraj.



1.3 Standing in front of a rest-house after a visit to a drainage works in 1931 are from left (foreground): John Chancellor, Ya'qub Farraj, Fakhri Nashashibi, and Ragheb Nashashibi.



1.4 The High Commissioner, John Chancellor, centre, flanked by the mayors of the principal cities and towns of Palestine, 1931. Sitting on his right is Ragheb Nashashibi, and on his left are, respectively, the mayor of Jaffa, Asem al-Sa'id, and the mayor of Nablus, Sulaiman Tuqan.



1.5 After a visit to al-Aqsa Mosque in 1931, Sir John Chancellor, centre, poses beside the Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin al-Husaini.



1.6 Picture taken at the farewell party given by the Municipality of Jerusalem to the departing High Commissioner and Lady Chancellor. Standing from left to right are: Ragheb Nashashibi, Lady Chancellor, Madame Nashashibi, Sir John, Ya'qub Farraj, Husam al-Din Abu al-Sa'ud, and Isma'il al-Husaini.



1.7 Ragheb Nashashibi, centre, handing out prizes in June 1933. On the far left, looking up, is H. Bowman, Director of the Department of Education of the Palestine Government.



1.8 Ragheb Nashashibi, centre, with members of the executive committee of his newly founded party, the National Defence Party, Jaffa, December 1935. On his left is Shaikh As'ad al-Shuqairi (father of Ahmad al-Shuqairi, the first chairman of the PLO), and sitting on the ground is the joint secretary of the party, Hasan Sidqi Dajani.



1.9 Sir Arthur Wauchope, British High Commissioner for Palestine, 1931 -8.



1.10 Members of the Arab Higher Committee, Jerusalem 1936. Front row, left to right, are: Ragheb Nashashibi, Haj Amin al-Husaini, Ahmad Hilmi, Abd al-Latif Salah, and Alfred Rock. Back row, left to right, are: Jamal al-Husaini, Husain al-Khalidi, Ya'qub al-Ghusaini, and Fu'ad Saba.



1.11 A view of the Palace Hotel in Jerusalem, a project financed by the Muslim Waqf which was controlled by the Mufti. It was alleged that the hotel was built on top of a Muslim cemetery.

United Nations General Assembly that the Jewish Agency had agreed to the exclusion of the whole municipal area of Jaffa from the boundaries of a future Jewish state. As he spoke, Menachem Begin and his commander of military operations, Gideon (Jidi), were storming Jaffa with their armed forces. In August 1960, Yitzhak Gruenbaum, a member of the first Israeli government, stated that the attitude of the Israeli government during the 'War of Independence' was not to take Jerusalem from the Arabs in order not to hurt the Christians and the Muslim world.¹² Ben-Gurion assured the General Assembly that his new government—the first in Israel—did not want Jerusalem at all, and agreed to the internationalization of the Old City.¹³

The moderation of Ragheb Nashashibi and the so-called moderation of the Jewish leaders were in no way comparable. The hearts stayed apart, so did the minds. The Jews knew that, and so did Ragheb. He was acting as a statesman while they were acting as politicians. He was honest and paid the price for his honesty with his career, property and reputation. But he had no regrets.

Ragheb showed insouciance even when his own life was at risk. I remember him at his house in Jerusalem one evening in early 1938, at the time of the internecine strife between rival Arab factions. Suddenly bullets raked his house. Ragheb did not stir from his chair. He reached over to open the window to see from which direction the shots were being fired (as it happened they were coming from the flanks of the hills on the way to Ramallah to the north side of the dining-room). As darkness fell and no more could be seen, and the shooting ceased, he closed the window and resumed his meal. Next morning, when he was told of an assassination plot against his life, he asked in amazement: 'Why? Have I ever sold a piece of my land to foreigners? Have I ever asked anyone to take over Palestine from us? Have I ever flinched from my duty in any battle with the Zionists? Have I ever made a compromise with respect to Arab rights that could be called unsound or unnecessary? So why should they want to kill me?'

A born fighter, impervious to threats and not easily moved by his political opponents, he was a man often more imposing in silence than in speech. When invited in 1939 by the British government to attend the St James's Conference, he went at the head of his own delegation, a move that was vehemently resisted by his Arab political opponents headed by Jamal al-Husaini. Before he took the plane from Cairo to fly to London, Ragheb cabled his cousin Fakhri in Jerusalem and other

12 *Yaad*, August 1960 (Israeli weekly magazine).

13 Hecht, p. 39.

supporters, that the chairmanship of the Palestine Arab delegation to the conference should be shared by the Mufti and himself, otherwise neither of them would be chairman. He also told the British government that he would either be received and recognized as an independent Arab Palestinian delegate, or he would send three members of his political party to represent him. If neither of these two options were accepted, he would not join the conference. Nuri al-Sa'id, Ali Maher, Musa Alami, and other Arab dignitaries interceded, and Ragheb was invited to join the Palestine Arab delegation, together with his deputy, Ya'qub Farraj, the Christian deputy leader of the National Defence Party.

Ragheb never permitted his friendship with so many leading figures in the government of Palestine to inhibit his right to speak out against policies and attitudes whenever he thought it necessary. As late as the 1920s, he strongly criticized the policies advocated by Ernest Richmond, whom Ronald Storrs had invited to report on the Muslim Holy Places in Palestine in 1918 (he was appointed the following year to the political office of Assistant Civil Secretary, and later to the position of Expert on Arab Affairs by Herbert Samuel). Both Storrs and Samuel were personal friends of Ragheb, but—as recorded by Colonel Frederick Kisch on 21 February 1923 in his *Palestine Diary*—Ragheb had misgivings about Ernest Richmond's advice to Samuel. Kisch wrote: 'Nashashibi . . . told me, apropos of the Legislative Council elections, that in matters affecting Arab participation the High Commissioner is guided by the advice of Richmond "who makes all cooperation with the Jews impossible."¹⁴ Richmond was then Assistant Civil Secretary and was Samuel's official expert on Arab affairs.

On 11 October Kisch reported in the same diary that he had called on Mayor Ragheb Nashashibi and found him, 'as usual outspoken and friendly'. Ragheb spoke of his desire for one government, not three, namely a British administration, the Jewish Agency and the now proposed Arab Agency. On 14 October 1923, Kisch wrote that Hasan Sidqi Dajani had come to see him. 'I expressed my profound disappointment at Ragheb Bey's resignation from the Advisory Council last month, and incidentally at his attitude as Mayor towards perfectly proper Jewish demands upon the Municipality. Moreover, Ragheb is taking part in the negotiations between the New Party [that he was heading], and the Moslem-Christian Association.'¹⁵ Again, Ragheb

¹⁴ Frederick H. Kisch, *Palestine Diary* (London, 1938), p. 34. Lt-Colonel Kisch was chairman of the Palestine Zionist Executive from 1923 until 1931.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 74-5.

was following his instinct in opposing what he felt harmful to the national interest of his countrymen, whilst continuing the struggle and protecting himself against his political foes in the Arab camp.

It was ironical that in the three years of the 1936 rebellion the greatest number of casualties were Arabs, and that about a quarter of the Arabs who lost their lives were murdered by their own people. Although Ragheb was only too aware of these distressing facts, he would not change his policies—not at gunpoint anyway—and dismissed his opponents' notion that political pragmatism meant ignoble compromise, or that to use diplomacy was tantamount to treason. He was aware that his Arab opponents in Palestine drew comfort from the fact that all the Arab leaders outside Palestine were, without exception, in agreement with the principle that any foreign domination in Palestine should give way to independence, and that the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine should not be realized as by right.

But there were big differences of opinion between Ragheb and the Mufti as to how this was to be brought about. For his part, Ragheb believed—and continued to believe until the last days of the British mandate—that it was in the interest of the Arabs not to antagonize the British or lose their support while continuing the struggle against Zionism. By contrast, his political opponents always believed that no fight against Zionism was complete without fighting the British as well. Ragheb never accused his rivals of naivety or self-deception and never labelled them as self-seeking opportunists. But his opponents denounced him as a traitor.

Ragheb was saddened to see the collapse of the 'united' Palestinian front under one cohesive, powerful Arab leadership and the emergence of widening differences of opinion between former friends and colleagues—all of which merely weakened the effectiveness of the Arabs in their fight against the Zionists. But there was little he could do. He remained cool-headed, and felt that he had no alternative but to withdraw from the Arab Higher Committee, when the Mufti had set aside his concern with the Zionists, the British, and the revolution, and concentrated his efforts on fighting Ragheb to get rid of him.

In his memoirs, Emir Adel Arslan, the famous Syrian Arab minister and ambassador, who took part in most, if not all, of the conferences on Palestine in London, Damascus, Bludan and the United Nations, wrote:

I met George Wadsworth, the Ambassador of the United States in Baghdad on 18 August 1947. The Ambassador told me that I should go to Geneva to meet the members of the

United Nations Special Committee on Palestine, and that the Committee would not be happy if I refused their invitation to go, especially that the suggestion of having an Arab delegate meet the Committee in Geneva had come from the Committee itself. But the leader of Palestine, Haj Amin al-Husseini, believed that the deportation of Musa Alami—his political enemy—from Geneva, was much more important than anything else. To have Musa Alami leave Geneva and not meet the international Committee seemed much more important to the Mufti than the independence of Palestine.¹⁶

Ragheb believed in mutual co-operation and collective effort. He gained enough experience during his days in the Turkish parliament to appreciate the advantages of unity. There he met tens of Arab deputies who came from different parts of the Arab world to work for the Arab cause against Turkish domination. Alone, he could not fight the British and the Jews. Alone, he could not secure the national rights of the Palestinian Arabs. He wanted the Arabs in Palestine to unite and form a democratic government which would face the ever-growing threat of the Jews, who were then still a small minority—forming only 8 per cent of the total population at the time of the Balfour Declaration. He remarked to many people during some of the meetings I happened to attend in his house in Jerusalem or in his office at the National Defence Party in Mamillah Road, how in the first year that military rule came to the city in 1920, the Jews elected a provisional committee which they called 'Havat Hazmani', and how just a year after the occupation they gathered in a Constituent Assembly which they called 'Asefat Ha-Nivharim', with more than 300 delegates in attendance to elect the national council of the Jews, known as 'Vaad Leumi', and how this body was recognized by the government of Palestine and the world at large as the representative body of the Jews of Palestine.

He was lecturing like a professional teacher in a classroom. In stark contrast, the Arabs, he said, had no representation or disciplinary council to speak on their behalf. They had resisted every proposal to unite, were divided among themselves while the Jews were establishing themselves firmly on Palestinian soil. For Ragheb, this was the beginning of a catastrophe.

It was difficult for an engineer, schooled in the precise discipline of his profession, where one plus one always makes two, to grasp that

¹⁶ Adel Arslan, *Muzakerat al-amir Adel Arslan* (Beirut, 1980), vol. 2, p. 694.

politics—and especially the politics of Palestine—were not governed by neat formulas and rules. He once told Fu'ad Saba, an accountant, appointed by the Mufti as Secretary General of the Arab Higher Committee:

Fu'ad, in your office one and one makes two, but with our colleagues in the Arab Higher Committee, one and one makes five and sometimes ten. So don't try to argue otherwise, just let things pass, and when you go back to your office, stick to what you have learned—stick to your profession.

Perhaps Ragheb's training coupled with a temperate personality may have partly accounted for his unhappy relationship with the Mufti. They were of different personalities and backgrounds. Ragheb studied engineering in Istanbul, the great city of the Ottoman Empire, while Haj Amin was a man of religion who studied the shari'a, partly in Jerusalem and partly in Cairo. Ragheb started public life as a deputy in the Ottoman parliament and then as mayor of Jerusalem when he was nearly forty. Haj Amin became 'Grand Mufti of Jerusalem' when he was not yet twenty-five. Ragheb was European-minded, married to a non-Muslim; his first wife was French and his second wife was Turkish. The Mufti's experience of life was limited to what he saw in Jerusalem, Izmir and Cairo. While Ragheb was a man of the world who enjoyed his work as much as he enjoyed his holidays, the Mufti's leisure time was spent in his office. Both men had a sense of humour and were known for their good manners and refined language, but Ragheb often enjoyed the use of blunt and even coarse expressions for amusement whereas the Mufti never did.

Both men loved their country, and were fully alert to the growing danger their country was facing. The big difference between the two lay in the fact that while the Mufti struggled to make out of the Palestine problem a pan-Arab or a pan-Muslim problem, hoping to see the final salvation coming through the efforts of the Muslims of India or the Arabs in the Yemen, Ragheb in contrast insisted that only the Arabs of Palestine could solve their own problem and that to pin any hopes on the Arab or Muslim world in this respect would be naive. I still remember the special smile that would appear on Ragheb's face whenever the name of a distinguished Arab or Muslim personality came up in any discussion concerning the salvation of Palestine. Now I can imagine the despair and frustration that the Mufti must have suffered at the hands of those Arab and Muslim 'brothers' who simply watched the dismemberment of Palestine in 1948 and 1949 and its total occupation, including Jerusalem, in 1967.

Ragheb, in emphasizing the fact that the Palestinians alone—and not the rest of the Arabs outside Palestine—could save Palestine from the Zionist invasion, always made reference to the political changes occurring in the rest of the Arab world in support of the view that the Arabs were too preoccupied with their own national interests to accord the high priority that the Palestinian problem deserved. Political events were developing in Syria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Iraq. There was a revolution in Syria in 1925-27. The Anglo-Iraqi treaty guaranteeing special British interests was not ratified until 1924. In 1927 Britain recognized the kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the Treaty of Jeddah. In Transjordan it was not until 1928 that the British government had negotiated a treaty recognizing the country's independence (with military and financial powers reserved to Britain). The Arab nations near Palestine were thus busy with their own national problems and not with Palestine. Things around Palestine were moving fast, but not so in Palestine. All the Arabs were on the move, while in Palestine the Jews alone were moving forward fast.

While not counting too much on outside Arab support for the Palestinian cause, Ragheb Nashashibi was anxious not to commit or let his followers commit political mistakes which might profit the Zionist movement in its attempt to deprive Palestine of any pan-Arab support, potential or otherwise. If he could not win enough support from non-Palestine Arabs, he would fight tooth and nail to foil any attempt by the Zionists to win over, say, a Lebanese leader or an Egyptian politician. He was well aware of the continuous Zionist endeavours to isolate Palestine from the Arab body or from any of its constituent parts, whether it be Egypt, Syria or Lebanon. He was also aware of the standard Zionist strategy of carefully monitoring the slightest Arab mistake and using it to the advantage of the Jews.

When the Mufti fled from Jerusalem in 1937 and was granted refuge in a small village outside Beirut, the Zionists at once revived all their old contacts with the Lebanese Maronite leaders who were always known for their leanings towards the Jews and their fear of the Muslims. Since 1933, there was much correspondence being exchanged between Zionist leaders in Palestine and Lebanese Maronite leaders, notably between Chaim Weizmann and the Maronite patriarch Monseigneur Antoine Arida.¹⁷ In the spring of 1933 Dr Victor Jacobson, the official emissary of the Zionist movement before and after the First World War, visited Beirut and was assured 'of the frank and far-reaching words he heard from the Maronite leaders of mutual harmony of

¹⁷ Eliahu Elath, *Zionism and the Arabs* (Tel Aviv, 1974, in Hebrew), p. 303.

interests—commercial, political, and even military—between themselves and the future Jewish Palestine'.¹⁸ On a political level both groups saw themselves in almost identical situations *vis-à-vis* growing Muslim and pan-Arab forces in the region.¹⁹

With the outbreak of the Arab revolt in 1936 in Palestine, and the sympathy and support it received from the Lebanese and Syrian press, the Jews of Palestine began to seek out their old friends, especially Emile Edde, who was president of the Lebanese Republic in 1936.²⁰ Moshe Shertok, the head of the Jewish Agency's political department, estimated that Edde would see the Palestinian rebellion as a vindication of Maronite fears of Muslim domination. 'The experience of the present disturbance in Palestine', Shertok wrote to Weizmann, 'has been grist to our mill as far as our relations with the Maronites are concerned.'²¹

Edde's relationship with the Zionists remained cordial and helpful throughout his tenure. On 22 June 1937 a secret meeting took place between him and Chaim Weizmann in Paris. It was first reported in an article published in Hebrew in 1969 and later reproduced in English in a book by Eliahu Elath who was at the meeting. The following is an extract from Elath's report.

The meeting took place in the Hotel Lutetia, where Edde and his entourage were staying. Participating in the meeting were President Edde, Dr Weizmann, Edde's private secretary, and myself. After the customary exchange of courtesies—the conversation was conducted in French—Dr Weizmann took out his watch and said that in about half an hour's time the Peel Commission's report would be signed: it would include a provision for the partition of Palestine and the establishment of a Jewish state in parts of the Mandate territory . . . [Edde] declared to Dr Weizmann: 'Now that the Peel Commission's report is an official document, it is my privilege to salute the first president of the coming Jewish state.' Edde went on to say that since he was the first to congratulate Dr Weizmann on the historic decision for

¹⁸ Neil Caplan and Ian Black, 'Israel and Lebanon: origins of a relationship', *The Jerusalem Quarterly Magazine* (Spring 1983), p. 48.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Ian Black, 'Zionism and the Arabs, 1936–1939', unpublished PhD thesis for the University of London (1978), chapter 6, pp. 302–8.

²¹ Letter from Shertok to Weizmann, 2 October 1936 in Central Zionist Archives, S.25—1716.

which the Zionist movement had fought so hard, he requested of the Jewish state's future president that its first international friendship treaty be with its good neighbour, Lebanon!²²

The Mufti of Jerusalem was then in his refuge in that small village outside Beirut. No doubt his presence there greatly disconcerted the Lebanese Maronites and this threw them further into the arms of the Zionists. The Muslim Prime Minister, Khair al-Din al-Ahdab, under the presidency of Emile Edde, was forced to collaborate with the Zionists in their war against the Mufti. The *Palestine Post* in concert with the entire Jewish press, mounted a full-scale attack on Lebanon as a country 'which permits the chief agent of terrorism and intimidation to be free to continue his activities'. In an effort to maintain the nominal goodwill of the Lebanese Maronites and their token support for the Palestine cause, Fakhri Nashashibi wrote several letters to the prime minister of Lebanon and to his successor, Amir Khalid Shihab, as well as to Lebanese newspaper editors, pointing out that the Palestine question was not one that centred on one individual but was a question that bore upon a whole nation. When the Mufti got wind of these letters he shifted his attack in the Lebanese press from the Jews and the Maronites to Fakhri and the Nashashibis in general. Tens of articles, editorials and news items appeared daily in the newspapers *al-Sharq* and *al-Yawm* against Fakhri, his family and his party, and the campaign of defamation did not cease until the end of 1939 with the outbreak of the Second World War. Neither the Palestinian cause nor the Mufti, nor the Lebanese, nor the Arabs as a whole benefited in any way from such open vilification of fellow Palestinians. These watacks did not foster the friendship between the Lebanese Maronites and the Palestinian Arabs. They only encouraged the Zionists to infiltrate into Lebanese politics. Now the political battles between the Arab leaders of Palestine were no longer confined to the territory of Palestine but were now extended to a neighbouring country.

When Jamal al-Husaini, the Mufti's cousin, returned from his exile in Rhodesia at the end of 1945, he declared publicly in Beirut that he would 'change the negative kind of policy' which he had been following since the beginning of the British mandate in Palestine.²³ One of those present asked Jamal who for thirty years had rigidly followed a

22 Eliahu Elath, *Zionism at the UN* (Philadelphia, 1976), p. 240.

23 Bayan Nuweihed al-Hut, *Al-qiyadat wa al-mu'assasat al-siyasiyyah fi falastin* (Beirut, 1981), p. 470.

rejectionist policy, 'Aren't you one of the main leaders of the Palestine Arab Party responsible for that kind of negative policy?' Jamal answered bluntly: 'I was aware of the shortcomings of our traditional policy which we adopted and followed, but none of us was allowed to state his opinion publicly.' Jamal al-Husaini was in effect saying that the Mufti was solely responsible for designing the negative policy in Palestine.²⁴

The Mufti's burning ambition left him with few friends. Even his relationship with his cousin and right-hand man, Jamal al-Husaini was not always warm. Indeed, there was evidence that they were intensely jealous of each other. This was partly due to their different personalities, cultural differences and way of thinking. The Mufti was a born leader, with innate ambition and a love of adventure, qualities that manifested themselves quite clearly when he was still in his early twenties. Jamal was more withdrawn, devoting three years quietly to his studies at the university in Beirut, and it was not until he was asked by his uncle, Musa Kazem al-Husaini, to act as an interpreter at one of the political conferences held in Jerusalem in 1921 that he started his political career.²⁵

Despite the acrimony that existed between Haj Amin and Ragheb, the latter would not permit an outsider to fan the flame of discord by rumour, gossip or innuendo. On one occasion in the early thirties Ragheb heard a disturbing story about the construction of a hotel on top of the Mamillah cemetery in Jerusalem.

Baruch Katinka, a Jerusalemite engineer, was excavating land next to the cemetery to lay the foundations for the Palace Hotel, a project financed by the Muslim Waqf, of whose fund committee the Mufti was chairman. After digging three metres down, Katinka found human bones. He later wrote: 'I was very worried that the Arab labourers would find them and report to the Mufti, who was in charge of the project.' To him it was sacrilege to build a hotel on top of a Muslim cemetery. 'I spoke to the Mufti about my discovery, and his reaction was surprising—he told me to continue the excavation in spite of what was there.' Katinka added, 'the Mufti told me this should remain a secret between him and me, that I should keep it to myself.'

Katinka thought that the relationship was so tense between the Nashashibis and the al-Husainis that if Ragheb got wind of this affair, he would immediately have put a stop to the project and used the story to undermine the Mufti's position and that Haj Amin would have lost

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid., p. 478.

the confidence of the people. But when Ragheb heard the allegation and, as there was no corroborative evidence, he decided that this was another malicious fabrication. So he refused to believe it and told the bearer of this piece of information to leave his house forthwith. He said: 'A great man like the Mufti would not do such things.'

Fakhri Nashashibi: Adventurer and Politician

Fakhri Nashashibi was one who believed that the genuine phase of the Arab rebellion of 1936 collapsed as a result of the policies of the Arab kings and rulers. When the Mufti was no longer able to run operations against the Jews or the British, he turned his guns against his fellow Arabs. Among them was Fakhri, who had to hide in his house unable to earn any money. For months he depended on contributions from his friends and supporters. His wife was Shafiqah Riyashi of the well-known Christian Riyashi family of Lebanon. She had a boutique in Jaffa where they had first met and fallen in love when he was working there for the Arab Chamber of Commerce. She was forced to sell her jewellery to support her husband in hiding.

In 1940, the British-financed Arab broadcasting station, with studios in Jerusalem and Jaffa, used to invite men of letters from every Arab capital to come and speak against the Nazis for which they were well paid. Amongst those invited were the great Egyptian writers Abbas Mahmud al-Aqad, his colleague Abd al-Qadir al-Mazni, and the great musician Sami al-Shawwa. They came to Jerusalem and stayed at the King David Hotel. Fakhri Nashashibi invited them to dinner, and afterwards, as they were leaving about ten, they came face to face with a young man who fired a pistol at them and then ran off. Some of them fell to the ground for cover, others fled, but Fakhri just stood there and watched the gunman run away. The next morning, these eminent Egyptians called their offices in Cairo claiming to have been the target of Nazi retaliation. In all likelihood the only target of the gunman's bullet was Fakhri alone.

Fakhri was a good friend of Nuri Pasha al-Sa'id and prince Abd al-Ilah, the regent of Iraq. When they fled their country in 1941 after the coup of Rashid Ali al-Kilani, they arrived penniless in Jerusalem, with nothing but the clothes they were wearing. Fakhri gave them shelter and bought them clothes. When he later visited them in Baghdad to enjoy their hospitality he was shot dead in front of the

Semiramis Hotel on the main street of Baghdad. He was buried in Jerusalem. One suspect was a Palestinian who used to work as a porter in an Iraqi government hospital. But the killer, whoever he was, was never arrested. Those who planned and financed the crime were never identified. Some people believed that Fakhri was the victim of a Nazi conspiracy, carried out by Nazi agents still in Iraq. Others said he was assassinated because he knew too much. Some pointed a finger at the British Intelligence Service, others at the Mufti.

Fakhri loved adventure. His British friends among the generals in the British army in Palestine and Transjordan knew of this particular trait in him. He would go on dangerous missions anywhere in the world for the sheer fun of it. He would pay for them from his own pocket. One day in 1941 when Fakhri was visiting his Arab friend Wahbe Tamari—the head of the Arab Chamber of Commerce in Jaffa—the telephone rang: it was Emir Abdullah on the line from Amman. The Emir was talking to Fakhri in Turkish. Wahbe Tamari was listening. Abdullah told Fakhri that he had been trying to find him since the early hours of the morning, and that he had been told by someone in his household in Jerusalem that he had gone to Jaffa. The Emir then asked Fakhri enigmatically whether he would be happy if somebody could save the life of a friend of his. Without waiting to hear Fakhri's answer, Emir Abdullah asked: 'Wouldn't you be happy if the lives of your friends in Syria were saved?' 'Whose friends? Where, in Syria? I can't understand you, Your Highness.' Abdullah replied:

The blood of your friends in Jabal Druze. They are not happy about the possibility that the Transjordan army—my army—would enter Syria with the Allied forces to liberate it from the forces of the Vichy government. We have already contacted Shaikh Hasan al-Atrash, the governor of the Druze capital, but he is very obstinate. He doesn't want to co-operate. He doesn't want to show any goodwill towards the Allies, and nobody is capable of bringing him back to his senses except his ex-wife, Amal, who lives now in Cairo and is known by her stage name of Asmahan. You know her, don't you? You know her too well, I should say?

Fakhri answered laughingly, still speaking in Turkish, 'Of course I know her. Who doesn't know Asmahan?' Abdullah said that he thought—together with the British High Command in Egypt—that somebody should persuade her to leave Cairo and go to her ex-husband for the purpose of convincing him to co-operate with the Allies, a task for which she would be paid a small fortune.

Abdullah ended the telephone conversation by saying: 'I suggest that you take the first train to Cairo this evening. You will find Brigadier Broadhurst from the British High Command waiting to receive you at the Cairo railway station, and from there you will be taken to the British Minister Resident.'¹

Fakhri could not resist the prospect of a little adventure. Besides, he was on friendly terms with a number of high-ranking British officers and did not mind doing them and Emir Abdullah a good turn; anyway, he was not going to accept any financial reward.

He went to Cairo, met the beautiful Amal al-Atrash (Asmahan), and brought her back with him to Jerusalem and then arranged safe passage for her to the capital of Jabal Druze where she was to wait for him. Twenty-four hours later, Fakhri, together with a high-ranking official from the Transjordanian army, crossed into Syria from the Transjordanian border, with a car loaded with hand luggage stuffed with bank notes, and went to meet Shaikh Hasan al-Atrash, who was anxiously waiting for him. On his way Fakhri picked up Amal from her hiding place and took her to the house of her ex-husband. Shaikh Hasan was delighted by this most unexpected surprise. He warmly welcomed his former wife, kissed her hand, and invited her to meet the rest of the family. Amal went on this mission for the love of money, and not for the love of her ex-husband.

Apparently Asmahan would do anything for money and fame. She first had an affair with the well-heeled Egyptian journalist Muhammad al-Tabi, reportedly because of his income and his popular weekly magazine. Later she married a famous Egyptian actor presumably to rise to stardom even faster. Now famous, glamorous and rich, she mixed easily with Egyptian Cabinet ministers, moved in Cairo's high society, and was at the centre of more than one juicy scandal. Now she was back with her former husband, Hasan al-Atrash, in Jabal Druze and accepted being reunited with him. She soon convinced him to co-operate with the Allies and offer no resistance to the military forces that were due to enter from Transjordan to 'liberate' Syria from Vichy rule. So Fakhri's mission turned out to be a great success and the British forces entered Syria without a shot being fired by the Druze.

Fakhri returned to Jerusalem and Amal al-Atrash, after having accomplished her own mission, also went to Jerusalem where she stayed at the King David Hotel. When Fakhri was killed in Baghdad soon after, on 8 November 1941, Amal wore black clothes for forty days as a

¹ Wahbe Tamari, Fakhri's host in Jaffa, related the conversation to me after Fakhri's death in November 1941.

sign of mourning. The British, for some reason, told her to leave Palestine. She returned to Cairo, where she struck up a relationship with Ahmad Hasanain Pasha, the Chief Chamberlain and mentor of King Farouk. One day Hasanain Pasha whilst riding in his official car was hit and killed by a British military vehicle on Qasr al-Nil Bridge in the heart of Cairo. It was after these strange coincidences that people linked Fakhri's murder with these mysterious events and concluded that those who knew too much were more accident-prone than others, and Fakhri was one of them. (So was Asmahan who soon died in a car accident.) Fakhri's death came as a huge blow to his cousin, Ragheb. Ragheb was the founder and leader of the National Defence Party but Fakhri, with all his vitality and talent, had been of immense support to him, despite their differences in opinion and temperament.

Fakhri was a political animal, a fighter with a touch of the machiavellian in him, who believed that the end always justified the means. His cousin, Ragheb, was of a different mind. In 1934, during the election campaign for the municipality of Jerusalem, when Ragheb was challenged by his old friend and supporter, Dr Husain al-Khalidi, Fakhri disclosed to the press the story of the Huleh land concession in Palestine which was—according to press reports—sold to the Jews by the well-known Salam family of the Lebanon. The Salam family was related to the al-Khalidis by marriage, and the implication of the story was that the money which the al-Khalidis were spending on the election campaign had come from the proceeds of the Huleh sale. The story which Fakhri successfully used to create a most embarrassing scandal for the al-Khalidis was over-simplified, lacking in factual content. I also knew that Ragheb Nashashibi disapproved of his cousin Fakhri's idea of dragging this story into the election campaign. Ragheb told me that Fakhri had promised not to raise this subject in the press but that he had not kept his promise. I knew that Ragheb was a very good friend of Abu-Ali Salam, the head of the Salam family, and the man to whom the concession of the Huleh land project had been granted by the Ottoman sultan. Moreover, I also knew that the Salam family had been facing innumerable difficulties. Obstacles were put in their way by both the mandatory power and influential Jewish capitalists to bring them to their knees and so force them to forfeit their right to the project. Taxes were being demanded constantly. Demands for reclamation were made intermittently.

The story of the Huleh project is a typical example of how the British mandatory authorities in Palestine sometimes applied pressure on Arab landowners to bring about the transfer of Arab land to the Jewish newcomers. It goes without saying that the rich Zionist land companies

took advantage of every difficulty that were encountered by Arab landowners to buy their land. In fact Abu-Ali Salam had approached several Arab governments to help fund the various reclamation projects, but was turned down. He explored every avenue to save the concession but the pressure was overpowering. The Huleh basin, which required massive investments, was described in a handbook² prepared by the British Naval Intelligence Division of the Admiralty extracts of which are reproduced below:

The Huleh valley, including Lake Huleh, is about 15 miles long and nearly 5 miles wide. For the first 6 miles the floor is a fertile alluvial plain; the remainder is mainly marshland and lake, the most considerable margin of dry land being slightly higher ground to the west of the lake, where rich wheat lands come close to the shore . . . On the south-west there are plantations of eucalyptus trees . . .

The Huleh basin covers about 44 square miles or 28,160 acres. Of this, Lake Huleh may be said to extend over 8,825 acres, of which 4,934 are swamp and marsh . . . and is a principal source of malaria in Palestine, the Arabs of the neighbourhood being riddled with it. For this reason draining of the swamp has long been desirable. Moreover, the reclamation of land would provide especially fertile land for cultivation, a fact already recognized by the Ottoman Government in 1914, when they granted the first concession to two merchants of Beirut. Little was done, however, for many years, and it is only recently that any progress has been made with a new project . . .

Drainage and irrigation schemes for these areas have been prepared; their execution will make valuable additions to the agricultural wealth of the country.

This is a brief description of the Huleh basin in Palestine which ultimately fell into the hands of the Jews. The forced sale of the concession and the attendant publicity caused much distress and embarrassment for the Salam family, including Sa'eb Salam, the notable Lebanese politician and future prime minister, and, of course, for the al-Khalidis of Jerusalem.

Fakhri was aware that enormous government pressure had been brought to bear on the Salam family to sell, but he was also receiving hundreds of letters from Arab peasants appealing to him for help

² Naval Intelligence Division, *Palestine and Jordan*, pp. 22, 30, 230.

against eviction. He told Ragheb that his action to expose the disposal of the Huleh basin concession was not merely motivated by electoral considerations, but also by a desire to help the Palestinian Arab peasants. History may one day exonerate the Salam family on this issue but will it exonerate Fakhri? Sa'eb Salam told me that he and his family were victims of the traditional enmity between the al-Husainis and the Nashashibis in Jerusalem and were dragged into a conflict that did not concern them. However, it was impossible for Ragheb to sack Fakhri or denounce him publicly. Besides, he needed Fakhri's abilities, his strength and his diverse contacts.

Having led such an active and adventurous life, one might have expected Fakhri to have made a fortune. In fact when he died he left nothing behind, neither property nor money. He died penniless—and childless.

Fakhri's main role in Palestinian politics centred on his long and gladiatorial fight with the Mufti and his men. After the first attempt on Fakhri's life in Jaffa in the summer of 1937, and his treatment at Dr Dajani's hospital of a bullet wound in his right arm, Fakhri decided to challenge the wave of the Mufti's terror. By 1938 Ragheb had gone to Egypt, and Fakhri took over the leadership of the National Defence Party.

He submitted a memorandum to the British High Commissioner on 14 November 1938, stating that blame must rest upon the High Commissioner for failing in his responsibility of protecting the Arabs from terrorism. Since that moment Fakhri became a prime target of the Mufti's attentions. The Mufti was then in exile but his henchmen went on the offensive. They condemned his memorandum for the insinuation contained in it and forced people, by intimidation and threats, to malign Fakhri in memoranda of their own which they submitted to the government. A death sentence was pronounced on Fakhri by a minor gang leader called Aref Abd al-Razeq from his hiding-place in the region of Ramallah. Fakhri responded by writing letters to tens of Palestinian leaders inside and outside Palestine, drawing their attention to the anarchic and internecine turn the conflict was taking and warning them of the damaging consequences that such a change in direction and purpose was bound to provoke. He then produced a pamphlet which he called *Voice from the Graves of Arab Palestine*, in which he published his correspondence with leaders like Nabih al-Azmeh of Damascus (19 October 1938), the Egyptian minister, Ali Alluba Pasha (17 November 1938), Asad Dagher, the Middle East editor of the Egyptian newspaper *al-Ahram*, and others. Many of Fakhri's letters were inspired by the assassination on 13 October of his personal friend, Hasan Sidqi Dajani,

joint secretary of the National Defence Party and a prominent lawyer from Jerusalem. Fakhri also reiterated the points he made in his memorandum to the High Commissioner of 14 November 1938 to correct the distortions put about by his Arab rivals in Damascus and Beirut. The memorandum³ made the following points:

- 1 The Arabs welcomed the decision of the British government to abandon the partition scheme proposed by the Peel Commission.
- 2 The Arabs looked forward to a new conference on Palestine to be convened as quickly as possible.
- 3 He and the National Defence Party did not want to answer the acts of terrorism directed at them by their Arab political opponents with similar acts.
- 4 On the question of who represented the Arabs of Palestine, the National Defence Party together with the independent Arab personalities in Palestine (opposing the policies of the Mufti), represented more than 75 per cent of the country's economic interests, and with their supporters represented more than half the Arab population of Palestine.
- 5 He regretted the statements made by members of the British parliament alleging that the Mufti was the only representative of the people of Palestine. The National Defence Party represented more than 50 per cent of Arab opinion.
- 6 The solution of the Palestine problem should emanate from co-operation and understanding between the Palestinian Arabs and the mandatory power on a basis of justice. He hoped that the Arabs' demands, which had been deemed justified by various commissions in the past, would be met.

Fakhri's memorandum intensified the campaign of terror and hatred against him. He was accused of being a British agent and a founder of a special 'peace legion' to fight the Arab rebellion. Fakhri dismissed the allegation and said that the rebellion had ended by order of the Arab monarchs and rulers. In any event the rebellion was no longer relevant following the abandonment of the partition plan, nor was it appropriate at a time when the British government was inviting the Arabs and the Jews to another conference in London. He added that he expected the Arabs to show unity and solidarity before the world.

These arguments did not make the slightest difference. Fakhri's Arab opponents continued denouncing him as a traitor and a British

³ Fakhri Nashashibi Papers kept with his cousin, Amal Ghaleb Nashashibi in Jerusalem.

agent. The Arab camp was divided, and Arab blood was being spilt by Arabs. On 23 November 1938 the Colonial Secretary announced in the House of Commons that he had instructed the British High Commissioner in Palestine to arrange for the formation of a Palestinian Arab delegation representing all the leading groups in the country, and that facilities would be given for the deportees in the Seychelles to attend the conference. Were the extremists being invited back on to the centre stage? Would the moderates be in a minority?

On 19 December, Fakhri Nashashibi, speaking at a rally of his supporters, welcomed the British government's decision to release the Arab deportees who were 'not responsible for any destructive policy'. Yet, when those deportees arrived in Cario, Ragheb who was still in Cairo tried to be conciliatory but was shunned. Ragheb passed by the hotel where the released deportees were staying and left each one of them his visiting card, but none cared to return the courtesy. Ragheb at once contacted his cousin Fakhri in Jerusalem and stated his conditions for attending the proposed London conference. Ragheb now knew where he stood with these men and acted accordingly. When he and Fakhri had made their conciliatory gestures, he truly thought that a new chapter of co-operation and mutual respect would begin. It did not take him long to realize that he was sadly mistaken, and that nothing had changed.

A similar situation prevailed among the Jews of Palestine in 1944. The Jewish Agency could not tolerate independent armed organizations to run operations of their own. But despite the severe measures taken by the Jewish Agency against the terrorist gangs, these did not retaliate. On 22 November 1944 David Ben-Gurion addressing the Histadrut Convention in Tel Aviv, attacked the various terrorist gangs especially the Irgun Zwei Leumi and the Stern Gang by saying: 'The time for action has arrived . . . The demand to vomit them [the terrorists] out of our midst must be translated into a language of deeds by every one of us.'⁴

Ben-Gurion backed up his address by sending out special Haganah units to kidnap Irgunists. The Haganah forcibly extracted information from some of their Jewish captives and handed the others over directly to the British. Ben-Gurion's men also supplied the British with the names of hundreds of other Irgun fighters, and tipped off the British to the secret hiding places of the Irgun's hard-won stores of weapons. Ben-Gurion's men were extremely ruthless and despite the anger among the Irgunists at the brutality of the Haganah, Begin refused to

4 Hecht, p. 29.

allow retaliation and declared in the Irgun underground organ, *Herut* on 3 December 1944: 'War among brothers—never.'⁵

This was not so with the Arabs. Fakhri Nashashibi was assassinated in Baghdad in November 1941 most probably because he had become a menace to his political adversaries. I was shocked to hear the news of my uncle's death, especially as I had spent a most enjoyable evening with him shortly before he had left for Baghdad. He had arrived in Beirut—where I was residing as a student at the American University (AUB)—and had sent for me to join him at the Normandy Hotel. He had chatted to me about his adventure with Amal al-Atrash (Asmahan) and at the end of a fascinating evening he had given me the princely sum of L150 as pocket money.

The killings of earlier days had not hardened me enough. Four years earlier in 1937 when I was fifteen and had just joined AUB, Mahmud al-Karmi, a well-known writer, was murdered outside his home in Beirut. His son, Zuhair, was also at AUB studying medicine. That day my cousin Azmi Nashashibi, the Arab consul at the British Consulate in Beirut, telephoned me to give me the news and asked me to tell Zuhair. I found Zuhair, and together we went to the Hotel Dieu Hospital to identify the body. We saw him, with bullet wounds all over his body and face, lying on wooden boards in the mortuary. We attended his funeral virtually alone as most of his relatives were too frightened to pay their last respects.

Shortly afterwards, Azmi rang me again and asked me to tell another student, Omar Dajani, that his father, Hasan Sidqi Dajani, had been killed in Palestine. Again I was forced to be the harbinger of sorrow. The same year even I was approached in a Beirut restaurant near the American University by some thugs who wanted to kidnap me, probably to finish me off at the 'Rawshi' place by the seaside. But I told the restaurant owner quite audibly where I was going and with whom, so they must have thought better of it and let me go. I feel indebted to the restaurant owner for unwittingly saving my life. I have no doubt in my mind that this abortive attempt on my life was politically motivated.

So, for Jerusalemites, political killings and political exile were common occurrences. Even the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin al-Husaini, for many the symbol of Arab nationalism and of anti-Zionism in mandated Palestine, had to spend two-thirds of his life outside the city. In 1937 he escaped to the Lebanon, and from there he fled to Syria, from Syria to Iraq, from there to Iran, then on to Turkey, then to Germany, and finally, after the war he came back to the Middle

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 257, n. 14.

East, staying in different capitals except Jerusalem. When he died he was buried in Beirut. Other eminent Palestinian Arabs, educationalists, musicians, composers, artists and painters were forced to leave Jerusalem, and when they died they were buried elsewhere, far from the city they loved. The conflict left nothing intact.

Not only people were destroyed amid this insanity. Even the Old City's monuments, the old synagogues, mosques and places of historical interest were not safe from human desecration. Under Jordanian rule in 1948, some of its synagogues were demolished. And since the Israeli occupation of Jerusalem in 1967, hundreds of Arab houses, huge monuments and historical buildings have been erased from the map for political and sectarian religious reasons. Even the Muslim cemeteries were destroyed, such as the Mamillah cemetery in West Jerusalem. The bulldozers thundered along and a vast area in the northern part of the cemetery was turned into a public park.

Moderation v. Extremism, 1935–48

In the winter of 1943, some time after I had graduated from the American University of Beirut, I whiled away many an evening in the quiet and peace of Jerusalem discussing with Ragheb Nashashibi his conviction that moderation was the most practical way likely to resolve the Palestinian problem.

Why had he accepted most, if not all, of the proposals put forward by the British on the Palestinian issue? Ragheb's answers were always down to earth and penetrating:

I am a moderate because I know my enemies as much as I know my people and friends. I also know the limitations of the Palestinian Arabs and the extent to which they can effectively resist the pressures from world Jewry and the Western powers, especially Great Britain.

He reminded me that the Arabs had been under Ottoman rule for more than 400 years during which time they had been isolated from the rest of the world.

We did not know how to tackle the Western powers and enlist the help of Western leaders. We were ill-equipped compared with the Jews who were well established in the US, Europe and Britain and carried influence with the media, the financial sector and national parliaments.

We, the Palestinians, had no representatives anywhere and we should have realized that our power was limited, while that of our enemies, the Jews, was almost unlimited. So whatever 'reasonable' solutions were offered to us in those early days we had to accept them.

I also asked Ragheb why he was accused of being such a loyal 'servant' of the British mandatory power. He replied without hesitation:

Because, with the little power we have, the only rational line to take is to be friendly and conciliatory with the British. If

we don't try to win the British over as allies, who will take our side against world Jewry? We have to try to count on the friendship of the Palestine government and the British people in order to counterbalance the power of the Jews.

I knew that Ragheb's moderation in politics entailed strenuous efforts to win the friendship of the British in Palestine not to secure privileges for himself but to be in a position to impress upon them that Palestinian Arab nationalism had always existed and not to dismiss it simply because at times family feuds seemed to overshadow the popular desire for nationhood. It was true that sometimes family rivalries seemed to take precedence over the national interest but this interpretation ignored the very real nationalist sentiment of the people and most political and intellectual leaders. Ragheb hoped to dispel such a misconception as a necessary first step towards British recognition of Palestinian Arab rights.

For some twenty-five years reports on Palestine had almost always insisted that the Arab leaders in Palestine had not succeeded in creating a solid nationalist movement—such as had existed in Egypt and other Arab countries. This view is succinctly expressed in a study by the Royal Institute of International Affairs:

the old feuds between the leading families of the old Arab aristocracy still persisted; they were often waged so bitterly as to transcend all other political issues. For instance, during the period when representatives of the two leading families—the Huseini and the Nashashibi—were Mufti and mayor of Jerusalem respectively, family considerations often took precedence over national interests . . . The Arab community has never been organized on a basis comparable to that of the Jews. The mandatory power is often blamed for this, in the mandate's commission and elsewhere. But it is not altogether for lack of effort on its part that there is no Arab agency to match the Jewish agency. The Arabs do not enjoy any equivalent of a Jewish General Council (Vaad Leumi).¹

This ignored the fact that Ragheb Nashashibi as mayor of Jerusalem, and later as head of the National Defence Party had always accepted proposals raised by the British government that were likely to advance the national interest of the Palestinian Arabs.

¹ Royal Institute of International Affairs, *Great Britain and Palestine, 1915-1936* (Oxford, 1937), pp. 28-30.

Ragheb often reminded his visitors that people like Winston Churchill had opposed any proposal for a solution to the Palestine problem which would not guarantee a Jewish majority in any future ruling body. Ragheb often said that Churchill kept telling the world, in his speeches in the House of Commons, that the British government should not be in a hurry to find a solution, as the mandate in Palestine was functioning well. In Ragheb's opinion, Churchill did not want a solution until Jewish immigration to Palestine had secured a Jewish majority and achieved all the criteria necessary for statehood.

British politicians believed that Palestinian Arabs were incapable of carrying out the responsibilities of democracy. Ragheb learned of these British attitudes by reading translations of most foreign newspapers and by speaking to his British friends in Jerusalem who would inform him of some of their confidential reports. He was always fully informed of the extent of Jewish influence in London and of the long-term aims of the Zionists.

He feared that one day Palestinian Arabs would be got rid of just as had happened to other indigenous peoples of the US, Mexico and elsewhere. It was this possibility which from the outset had most frightened Ragheb and prompted him to accept most of the proposals of the British mandatory power so that gradually the Palestinians—through recognized institutions—could legitimately exercise pressure for self-determination.

Ever since 1923 the Muslim National Society, a group controlled by the Nashashibi family, publicly accepted the British offer to establish a national council in Palestine. Haj Amin rejected the idea. The Nashashibis were later accused of treason while their opponents were hailed by the Palestinian masses as heroes and patriots.

Ragheb believed that Arabs and moderate Jews could not only coexist in Palestine but could also co-operate with one another. This view was corroborated by his own observation of the few genuinely moderate Jews living in Palestine. Inside his country most Jews of Palestine were for twenty years not only peaceful and unobtrusive, but also opposed to Zionism. They continued to express their opposition until they were submerged by the tide of Zionist immigrants in the thirties.² Furthermore, Ragheb had no reason to doubt the declaration made by the British government with regard to the Balfour Declaration. In June 1922, in an effort to dispel Arab fears of Zionism, Britain's Colonial Secretary, Winston Churchill, issued a

² Frank Sakran, *Palestine Dilemma: Arab Rights Versus Zionist Aspirations* (Washington DC, 1948), p. 123.

White Paper which contained the following elaboration of British policy:

The tension which has prevailed from time to time in Palestine is mainly due to apprehensions . . . partly based upon exaggerated interpretations of the meaning of the Declaration favouring the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine. Unauthorized statements have been made to the effect that the purpose in view is to create a wholly Jewish Palestine . . . His Majesty's Government regard any such expectations as impracticable and have no such aim in view. Nor have they at any time contemplated the disappearance or the subordination of the Arab population, language, or culture in Palestine. They would draw attention to the fact that the terms of the Declaration referred to do not contemplate that Palestine as a whole should be converted into a Jewish National Home, but that such a Home should be founded in Palestine. In this connection it has been observed with satisfaction that at the meeting of the Zionist Congress, the supreme governing body of the Zionist Organization, held at Carlsbad in September, 1921, a resolution was passed expressing as the official Statement of Zionist aims 'the determination of the Jewish people to live with the Arab people on terms of unity and mutual respect, and together with them to make the common home into a flourishing community, the upbuilding of which may assure to each of its peoples an undisturbed national development.'³

Ragheb knew that Zionism, which was born in Vienna, nurtured during its infancy in Berlin and grew to manhood in London, had, among the Jews themselves, strong and powerful opponents who could pave the way for a peaceful coexistence between the Jews and the Arabs.

In Palestine Dr Judah Magnes, President of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and his 'Ihud' party advocated that Jewish immigration should be so controlled that the numbers of Jews in Palestine would never exceed 40 per cent of the total population.

Ragheb, like a poet, believed in miracles. He was most gratified when the British Foreign Secretary told the League of Nations on 14 September 1937:

³ The text of the 1922 White Paper on Palestine, Cmd 1700, may be found in J. C. Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East* (Princeton, 1956).

I am anxious to avoid overstatement, but I do wish to say with all the emphasis in my power, that new factors, which no one could have foreseen when the mandate was drawn up and approved by the Council, have transformed the whole situation and have created a set of conditions under which the policy which was contemplated some two decades ago, and which we have done our utmost to carry out ever since, has become definitely unworkable.⁴

Earlier, when in 1930 John Hope Simpson visited Palestine to write a situation report, some Arab Palestinian leaders responded by boycotting the mandatory government and the Jewish leaders in Palestine. Ragheb was once again out of step. He refused to support the boycott. Such moderation, however, failed to convince the British government in London of the desirability of closer contacts with Arab moderates.

On 18 December 1934 the National Defence Party submitted a memorandum to the High Commissioner demanding that the government ban the transfer of Arab lands to Jews and accused the government of attempting to create a Jewish majority in Palestine by encouraging Jewish immigration. On 30 May 1935 a delegation from Ragheb's party held a long meeting with the High Commissioner in which it repeated its demands for the complete ban on land sales and a cessation of Jewish immigration.

By 1935 Ragheb had accepted the proposal for establishing a legislative council for Palestine which, in his opinion, would permit the Arab majority to be translated into Arab rule in Palestine in the longer term. The Jews promptly rejected it. Again another British proposal was aborted. Thus the traditional British view that the Palestinian Arabs were not interested in organizing themselves within institutions was not true. There were strong voices clamouring for progress in that direction but these were silenced either by the Zionists or their extremist Arab compatriots.

The obstructionist policies of the Zionists disappointed and angered Ragheb. He saw the legislative council as an important organ for the Arab majority to decide their own fate, in their own country. Mughanam Mughanam, the advocate and joint Secretary General of the National Defence Party, was one of the finest jurists of Arab Palestine. An educated and cultured man who came from Ramallah near Jerusalem, and had lived and studied in the US, he regularly supplied Ragheb with extracts from the international press about the

⁴ League of Nations Assembly, *Records, 1920-1928* (Geneva).

attitudes of the leaders of the Western powers towards the Palestine problem, and the current political trends inside the country.

It was Mughanam who told Ragheb about Churchill's declaration in London, that the proposed legislative council for Palestine would hinder Jewish immigration to Palestine and would ultimately obstruct the evolution of a Jewish national home in Palestine. Ragheb replied that he was aware of Churchill's pro-Zionist tendencies but that the other Arab leaders and friends of Palestine should be made aware of this. Ragheb imagined that if his Arab rivals knew of Churchill's and other British politicians' support for Zionism they would understand the urgency of accepting the proposals for a quick solution to the problem. To Ragheb, Churchill's reassuring words in his White Paper were a thing of the past.

All British proposals for legislative councils, or any form of Palestinian self-rule were defeated, not only in Jerusalem by the radical Arab Palestinian leaders, but in the British parliament which habitually came under intense pressure from the Zionist lobby. The same could be said of the partition plan of 1937, the White Paper of 1939, and several other British proposals.

It was the policy of the National Defence Party to realize the aims of Arab nationalism through quiet diplomacy. Its members believed in 'gradual' change and in the maxim: 'advance, weigh up and negotiate, take some and demand some more'. Unfortunately for Palestine, other Arab Palestinian leaders did not follow the same procedure. They looked at the National Defence Party's gradualism and moderation as treasonous. The Zionist Jews advanced their ambitions by a policy of 'gradualism' advocated by Chaim Weizmann who fostered Zionist interest in Britain and became the chief architect of modern Zionism. This policy was hailed as patriotic by world Jewry. In contrast, Ragheb's moderation was bitterly attacked, distorted and maliciously used by his Arab opponents to undermine his political stature. His call for a legislative council in which the Arab majority would predominate and so further its case within a legal framework, was interpreted by the Mufti's supporters as a bid for acquiring a new post in public life after he had lost his position as mayor of Jerusalem.⁵ Ragheb's call to accept, with reservations, the Peel Commission's proposal for the partition of Palestine, was bitterly fought by the Mufti, Jamal al-Husaini, and their supporters and colleagues in the Arab Higher Committee such as Dr Husain al-Khalidi. They charged that Ragheb was conniving at forming a

⁵ See for example, Atiyya, *Al-hizb al-arabi*.

strategic alliance with Emir Abdullah to rule a part of Palestine, he as Prime Minister, and Abdullah as King.⁶

Arab disunity was a boon to the other side. Any proposal which did not advance the long-term interests of the Jews was of course strongly attacked by the Jews of Palestine and the Zionist lobby abroad. The British institutional set-up was ideal for thwarting proposals that seemed detrimental to the Zionist cause. For example, the High Commissioner would put forward a proposal to which Whitehall would accede but would then be quashed by Westminster. Variations on this scenario were many, but in its essential form it prevailed throughout the thirty years of British governance of Palestine. All the same, there was a possibility to break the mould. After all, there were divisions in the British administration. The Foreign Office and the Colonial Office did not always see eye to eye. Ministers of the crown often disagreed with one another and members of parliament were not all of like mind, nor were they all susceptible to Zionist lobbying.

Ragheb's desire for peace and for negotiations with the other parties, whether Arab, Jewish or British, prompted him to adopt a moderate and realistic position. He hoped that in this way the opportunity for procrastination by the British might be minimized, Jewish ambitions modified, Arab extremism tempered. In such circumstances, he thought, the impasse might be broken. But it was a policy for which he would pay dearly with his reputation and his personal safety.

During the rebellion of April 1936, Ragheb and his National Defence Party joined the Arab Higher Committee. Ragheb told me that when the Committee came to choose its president, the Mufti courteously offered the post to Ragheb insisting that the 'eldest' Palestinian leader should be the president of them all. Ragheb declined the offer and insisted that he would nominate and vote for Haj Amin.

Although political opponents, the Mufti and Ragheb enjoyed warm and cordial relations on a personal level; Ragheb was related to al-Husaini family by blood, a fact that was always cherished by the Mufti. On 1 February 1935, Ragheb was invited to visit an Arab village near the city of Hebron, and was received by the Arab notable of that village, Bashir Amr. He was welcomed by a huge Arab crowd, with photographs of him held high, and chanting wishes for a long life. He seized the opportunity to deliver a speech in which he said:

I am now a free man. I am no longer tied down with the

⁶ Muhammad Amin al-Husaini, *Haqa'iq an qadiyyat falastin* (Cairo, 1956). See also Darwaza, p. 159.

responsibilities of the mayor of Jerusalem. I shall come to you whenever you ask me to come. I tell you now, publicly and frankly, that there is no difference of opinion between myself and any of this country's citizens. We all work for the good of our country. As for the other Arab leaders, I pledge to continue my co-operation with them, and the more they try to distance themselves from me, the more I shall try to come closer to them. There is no room in my heart for hatred.⁷

On a personal level, both Ragheb and the Mufti respected each other and treated each other with the traditional decorum and courtesy of upper class conservative families. Musa Alami once told me that they treated each other as 'princes in the Ottoman courts'. In the political arenas, however, they fought bitterly.

Ragheb participated in all the activities of the Arab Higher Committee since his first day of joining. He co-operated by adding his signature to each memorandum submitted to the British government through the High Commissioner, by condemning British policy and supporting the Arab rebellion unreservedly. When it was called off, ostensibly at the request of the Arab rulers in October 1936, such co-operation between the Arab leaders evaporated. The uprising, which started as a protest against British rule and Zionist incursions into Palestine, was transformed during the so-called second phase of the rebellion into an internal conflict between the Arabs themselves. The Palestinian moderates became the prime victims of the new wave of violence. The British complained that there was no united Arab Palestinian front to negotiate with, that on the contrary, the Arabs were deeply divided among themselves. However, much blame must rest upon the British themselves for causing such a split to develop. The unity achieved in early 1936 collapsed because of British intransigence which encouraged extremism and violence on the one hand and weakened the case for moderation on the other. It was then that Ragheb, with sorrow, anger and deep regret, withdrew from the Arab Higher Committee. That signalled the end of all co-operation between the Arab leaders in Palestine. The British themselves were also the losers. They had lost a moderate, reasonable and friendly partner. So on 3 July 1937 Ragheb withdrew from the centre stage, leaving the Mufti alone to take the leading role.

Again, Ragheb's real reasons for withdrawing from the Arab Committee were distorted and twisted by his political rivals. They

⁷ *Falastin*, 2 February 1935.

insisted that Abdullah of Jordan was behind the withdrawal. Abdullah happened to visit Palestine early in April 1937 on his way to attend the coronation festivals in London. While in Palestine, he was greeted by Ragheb and members of the National Defence Party. The Mufti saw in such an event a 'secret co-operation and alliance between the two'. At his meetings with his supporters he asked:

Why should Sulaiman Tuqan [the mayor of Nablus], a notable member of the National Defence Party, give a big lunch in Nablus for the Jordanian Emir? Is it not a sign that treason is being committed, that the leaders of the Defence Party and the Emir are conniving at the dismemberment of Palestine?

When Ragheb withdrew from the Arab Higher Committee he declared that he only wanted to be 'free, independent, unbound by politics imposed upon him by the Committee and its president, the Mufti, and wanted to work in his own way for the interests of the Arabs of Palestine'.⁸ The Mufti's camp insisted, however, that the withdrawal of the National Defence Party from the Committee was a necessary first step towards co-operation with Abdullah over the partitioning of Palestine.⁹

In the summer of 1937 the British Royal Commission headed by Lord Peel with a brief to examine the crisis in Palestine stated:

Intimidation at the point of a revolver has become a not infrequent feature of Arab politics. Attacks by Arabs on Jews, unhappily, are no new thing. The novelty in the present situation is attacks by Arabs on Arabs. For an Arab to be suspected of a lukewarm adherence to the nationalist cause is to invite a visit from a body of gunmen. Such a visit was paid to the editor of one of the Arab newspapers last August shortly after he had published articles in favour of calling off the strike. Similar visits were paid during our stay in Palestine to wealthy Arab landowners or businessmen who were believed to have made inadequate contributions to the fund which the Arab Higher Committee were raising to compensate Arabs for damage suffered during the disturbances.

⁸ Statement by the National Defence Party published in the Arabic press of Palestine and Transjordan, 8 July 1937.

⁹ Private Information.

Nor do the gunmen stop at intimidation. It is not known who murdered the acting mayor of Hebron last August, but no one doubts that he lost his life because he had dared to differ from the extremist policy of the Higher Committee. The attempt to murder the mayor of Haifa, which took place a few days after we left Palestine, is also, we are told, regarded as political. It is not surprising that a number of Arabs have asked for government protection.¹⁰

Before the end of 1937 and after Ragheb's withdrawal from the Arab Higher Committee, the situation in Palestine further deteriorated. There were clashes between the mandatory power, the Jews and the Arabs. The conflict between the Arabs themselves escalated. Arab was pitted against Arab. The rebellion had turned on its own people. Disgusted, Ragheb turned his back on the carnage and left Palestine for Cairo.

The Jews did not like the idea that the British government had appointed a Commission to look into Arab grievances. The Mufti and his colleagues in the Arab Higher Committee decided to boycott the Peel Commission. Ragheb, however, challenged the Mufti and, together with his party, decided to appear before the Commission to give evidence.¹¹

The Peel Commission's Report, published on 7 July 1937, whilst favouring the partition of Palestine, contained strong criticism of the British mandate, and recommended that it be abolished, or at least radically amended. If the mandate were to continue in its present form, then Jewish purchases of Arab land should be limited and Jewish immigration should be restricted to 12,000 a year. However, the Peel Commission felt it would be better to change the situation radically by partitioning the county. The Holy City was not to be incorporated in the proposed Jewish state under the partition scheme. After examining the Commission's findings the British Cabinet announced its approval of the recommendations and issued a White Paper as a prelude to partition. The Zionist lobby responded vehemently against partition though deep down, leaders like Weizmann and even Ben-Gurion approved of it. But they thought it politic to deprecate it on specific issues. The London based *Jewish Chronicle* condemned the report as a nightmare, while Jewish protesters took to the streets of London carrying banners with slogans such as 'No Jewish State without Zion [Jerusalem]'

¹⁰ Peel Report, p. 135.

¹¹ FO 371/20018, 20 November 1936.

Ormsby-Gore, the Colonial Secretary, stoutly defended his government's partition plan in the House of Commons but parliament still withheld its support. In fact, the Foreign Office opposed partition as being impracticable.

At a time when the Palestinian issue was being argued over, discussed and scrutinized by the British government and world Jewry, the Arab leadership in Palestine was still unable to produce a reasoned response to the Peel plan and, predictably, issued an outright rejection. On 22 June 1937 the Mufti of Jerusalem travelled to Damascus and told Syria's nationalist leaders that the proposed partition plan would entail the installation respectively of Emir Abdullah as king and Ragheb Nashashibi as head of government of the Arab part of a dismembered Palestine. While in Damascus he also announced his intention of declaring war against the British after the planned publication of the Commission's report on 7 July.¹²

The same week the report was published an attempt was made on Fakhri Nashashibi's life in Jaffa, and the National Defence Party announced its withdrawal from the Arab Higher Committee. Meanwhile, the Jews and the Mufti rounded on the Peel Commission, with Chaim Weizmann threatening to impede any proposal which did not find favour with the Jews.

Surprisingly, the Arabs outside Palestine also denounced the Peel proposals. The first Arab State to react was Britain's ally, Iraq, whose Prime Minister appealed to the Palestinian Arabs to reject them. Iraq's opposition to partition conformed with the attitude of the Foreign Office whose view in the end triumphed over the Colonial Office.¹³

Ragheb and the National Defence Party were alone in informing the British High Commissioner of their acceptance of the report.

The Mufti stayed in Damascus for ten days, trying to mobilize all the financial and popular support he could muster to fight, not only the partition plan, but also to eliminate Ragheb Nashashibi and the National Defence Party from the political scene. He held numerous meetings, made fiery speeches and many threats. The British Consul General in Damascus, Colonel Mackereth, followed these proceedings with interest and attended one of the conferences on 8 September held at the summer resort of Bludan, near the Syrian capital. He then

¹² Philip S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate: the Politics of Arab Nationalism, 1920-1945* (London, 1987), pp. 555-69. See also Mackereth to Wauchope in CO 733/326, 5 July 1937.

¹³ Michael J. Cohen, *Palestine: Ret:eat from the Mandate: the Making of British Policy, 1936-45* (London, 1978), p. 38.

reported to his government in London that the only proposition unanimously approved by the conference was one which called for the suppression of the Palestinian moderates as well as all of Britain's friends in Palestine.¹⁴ As for the other issues causing deep concern for the Palestinian Arabs, the conference did not see the need for addressing itself to them.

The Jews disapproved of some of the Commission's proposals especially of anything that curtailed Jewish immigration, and were busy trying to obtain for themselves extra advantages. But they accepted partition in principle. The Mufti and the other five members of the Arab Higher Committee however had rejected partition outright. So had all the Arab states. The British government in London, especially the Foreign Office, was quite glad to make a public statement issued to the High Commissioner in Jerusalem to the effect that the British government no longer considered itself bound by the proposal for partition. The abandonment of the policy of partition was officially announced on 9 November 1938.

Arthur Wauchoppe who had been aware for some time of the general retreat from the Peel proposals had returned to London, a disappointed, sad and frustrated administrator. He was replaced by Sir Harold MacMichael in March 1938. In London, Ormsby-Gore resigned from his office and was replaced by Malcolm MacDonald in May of that year.

Meanwhile in Palestine the wave of violence especially against the Arab moderates was gathering momentum. The British authorities threatened to declare martial law and, as mentioned earlier, issued a warrant for the arrest of the Mufti; but on 14 October he fled to Lebanon and conducted his campaign through a network of agents. Meanwhile the moderation of the Nashashibi camp had lost to the extremism of both the Mufti and the Zionists thanks partly to British inconsistency.

In the Egyptian capital Ragheb established his base at the Heliopolis Palace Hotel, from where he monitored the bloody events in Palestine. He heard news of reprisals and counter-reprisals, followed by acts of vengeance and cold-blooded murder. The rebellion in its original form degenerated into an internecine conflict. Ragheb was saddened to hear that neighbouring Arab villages were fighting each other, that Arab commanders were killing each other. The bloodletting between Arab factions had taken hold and it was a development which was to bedevil the Arabs for decades. Traditional Arab head-dress such as the *tarbush*

¹⁴ CO 733/353, 14 September 1937.

(*fez*) or the *kefiyya* became potent symbols of the great divide between the Arabs. Those who wore the *tarbush* were identified as moderates of the Nashashibi camp while those who donned the *kefiyya* were seen as part of the nationalist group. Street clashes would often occur when the two antagonists came face to face in everyday life.

On 21 November 1938, a leader in *The Times* of London commented: 'many of the leaders of the National Defence Party have been murdered; others have been compelled by threats to leave the country.' A Jerusalem dispatch in *The Times* of 29 December 1938 said: 'The attacks on Arabs by Arabs arise from party feuds and the determination of extremists to crush any signs of opposition to the leadership of the Mufti in Jerusalem.' In the same issue the leading article reported:

Many Arab prisoners have been shot without trial or question by the rebel leaders. More have been cruelly beaten and otherwise maltreated in order to extort ransoms or contributions to the rebel fund, and fear that the terrorists have inspired is still so great that few indeed of their victims have dared to give the authorities evidence about their experiences.

Documentary evidence of the nature of the terror was found by the British after an engagement with 'rebel' forces. Kenneth Waring described it in *The Times* of 18 January 1939:

Rebel Arab documents seized by the troops in some recent engagements . . . provide sensational proof that even the rebels themselves are disgusted and alarmed at the terrorism of Arabs by Arabs which has marked the latest stage of the campaign.

Still more tragic in many ways is the picture of the suffering the rebellion has caused through setting brother against brother, party against party, and through honeycombing the life of the people with spying and burdensome extractions.

The reputable Egyptian daily newspaper *al-Muqattam* owned by Faris Nimr Pasha (whose daughter Katy was married to the Arab scholar George Antonius, and whose other daughter Amy was married to Sir Walter Smart, the oriental Counsellor at the British Embassy in Cairo), wrote on 2 March 1937 that 'the Palestine problem could not and should not be solved in such a bloody way . . . the way of assassination, terrorism and revenge'.

At that time Ragheb had financial difficulties largely because of his

leaving home in Jerusalem to come to Cairo to live in a hotel. One day, quite by accident, he met his rich nephew, Azmi, in the Egyptian capital. Ragheb asked him for a loan but Azmi, a frugal man, apologized and said he had no money on him. So Ragheb asked him to find a buyer for his small collection of antique Ottoman gold coins which had been in his possession since his days as a deputy in Istanbul. Azmi sold the coins, gave the money to his uncle who duly used it to pay off the Heliopolis Palace Hotel.

Elsewhere, misfortunes of a political rather than financial nature were disturbing Ragheb. He was distressed to see that his policy of moderation in Palestine had been consistently ignored and misunderstood. But he also felt that the Arab revolt, while falling a long way short of what it had originally aspired to achieve, had nonetheless served as a lesson to the British mandatory power and to world Jewry. It taught them that unless moderation was encouraged, extremism would prevail; unless a compromise was reached, dogmatism would thrive, and unless peace was sought and encouraged bloodshed would ensue. Ragheb dwelt on these disturbing thoughts during his long exile in Cairo.

By the beginning of 1939, the Palestinian Arabs had tired of the constant rounds of killings, of hunger, intimidation and exploitation by a leadership which had clearly failed to deliver the goods by rebellion. But anyway, how could it have succeeded in the face of the full might of the British military establishment? Modern weapons including armoured vehicles, field guns and aeroplanes had been mercilessly used against a predominantly peasant population armed with old rifles. Furthermore, under emergency regulations, introduced in 1937, hangings and demolitions of dwellings had become commonplace. The number of Arab casualties had reached alarming proportions by March 1939. The rebellion had been truly crushed.

Towards the end of 1938 the British government, headed by Neville Chamberlain with Malcolm MacDonald as Colonial Secretary, invited the Jews and the Arabs to a conference in London to try and work out a solution to the Palestinian issue. The St James's Conference was to open on 7 February 1939.

When Ragheb heard of the offer he started preparing himself in earnest for what would clearly be an important platform for himself and his National Defence Party. He would attend the conference in his capacity as head of his party. After extensive preliminary talks with British officials and Arab heads of states Ragheb departed for London. His Arab political rivals declined to include him in their delegation and many from the left and right wings of the Arab political spectrum,

including many of his own colleagues, challenged Ragheb's sincerity, loyalty and adherence to Arab nationalist principles. In the end, the Arabs were represented by a Palestinian delegation largely composed of al-Husainis with Ragheb and his deputy Ya'qub Farraj representing the moderate element, and delegates from Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Transjordan and the Yemen.

The Jewish delegation was represented by the Executive of the Jewish Agency and leaders of the Jewish communities in Britain and America. I once asked Ragheb why he accepted the invitation to attend the St James's Conference in the face of so much hostility. He replied: 'I went because I believed that my moderate political stance at the conference and my determination to accept what is good for my country publicly and without fear would truly serve my people.'

So he went to London and immediately came under fire from his old rivals, some of whom told the British press that they would not sit with a representative of the National Defence Party. Motivated by hatred, they continued to deliver verbal abuse and accusations against Raand his party. Ali Maher Pasha, the head of the Egyptian delegation to the conference, said to one of Ragheb's political opponents in a contemptuous manner: 'Save some of your attacks and bitter curses for the Jews. After all, London is not the right place to hang out your dirty washing.' But such remarks did not stem the invective heaped on Ragheb which he thought best to ignore.

At the Dorchester Hotel, where he was staying, Ragheb was visited by more than one member of the British Cabinet, including Malcolm MacDonald, with whom he held long talks. Another frequent visitor was the chief editor of *The Times*. Strengthened by these morale-boosting meetings, Ragheb set out for the St James's Conference with Ya'qub Farraj.

The Jews reacted to the British proposals made at the St James's Conference with hostility. From the outset they had intended to exploit—in the full glare of the world's press—the deep divisions in the Arab camp. One week into the conference proper, their propaganda machine declared that Arab leaders from Palestine had yet to agree among themselves on who really represented Palestine—Ragheb's National Defence Party or the radicals. The Jews pointed out that if the Palestine Arabs were incapable of agreeing on such a fundamental matter, how could they be expected to negotiate with the British and the Jews on complex issues of substance. The moment the Jewish lobby heard that the British government had promised certain concessions to the Arabs, they started making threats, both in London and Jerusalem,

warning that a campaign of violence would be launched against the British.

The so-called moderate Jews, who claimed to favour coexistence with the Arab majority, also responded with fury at the British proposals which they summarized as a sell-out by the British. According to these proposals, an independent Palestinian state would be established within ten years. Jewish immigration was not to exceed 75,000 over the next five years after which it would become subject to Arab consent. This Arab veto over Jewish immigration was to be matched by a Jewish veto on the establishment of a Palestinian state. As regards the constitutional arrangements the first step would be to appoint a few Palestinian heads of departments in the proportion of two Arabs to one Jew. These appointees would sit on the High Commissioner's Executive Council, a purely consultative body. During a five-year period beginning from the date these appointments were made, a representative body would be formed to make recommendations regarding the constitution of the Palestinian state.¹⁵

Both Arabs and Jews found much fault with the proposals, though these provided a semblance of even-handedness in the condition that the Jews would have the right of veto on the establishment of a Palestinian state, and the Arabs the right of veto on Jewish immigration. This attempt to introduce joint responsibility in the establishment of a Palestinian state, a provision much in favour of the Jews, was ignored by the Zionists whose military wing responded by unleashing an all out terror campaign of bombings and killings against the Arabs and the British in Palestine.

As for the Arabs, they objected strongly to the fact that the constitution of an independent Palestinian state would be drawn up, not by the Palestinian Arabs alone, but by a body comprising Arab, Jewish and British delegates. They also wanted a Palestinian state to be established, not in ten years' time, but after three years.

Ragheb Nashashibi on the other hand, welcomed the St James's proposals especially later when the White Paper was published on 17 May 1939. The White Paper introduced several amendments to the original proposals, the most important of which was the omission of the Jewish veto on the establishment of the independent Palestinian state.

The Arab Higher Committee, under the Mufti's leadership met on 19 May 1939 in the town of Zoq in Lebanon and resolved to reject the White Paper. At the meeting, attended by Jamal al-Husaini, Husain

¹⁵ CO 733/426; see also *Palestine: A Statement of Policy, May 1939*, Cmd 6019 (The 1939 White Paper), especially clause 10 (4).

al-Khalidi, Alfred Rock, Izzat Darwaza, Fu'ad Saba and Mu'een al-Madi, it was decided to send a delegation headed by Jamal al-Husaini to Geneva to announce the Committee's decision. However, many leaders of the rebellion—from Jaffa, Ramleh, Nablus, Tiberias and Lydda—signed a manifesto claiming that the real reason behind the rejection by the Arab Higher Committee was the provision contained in the White Paper to exclude the Mufti from Palestinian politics.¹⁶

The announcement of the rejection by the Arabs was made on the same day as Moshe Shertok declared the Jews' rejection of it. There had rarely been an instance when Arabs and Jews were so unanimous on an issue.

When Ragheb returned to Jerusalem he called for an extraordinary meeting of the executive committee of the National Defence Party to be held on 25 May 1939 in Jerusalem and asked the members to ascertain the views of the people in their respective districts on the new British proposals as set out in the White Paper. When the meeting convened, Ragheb delivered a speech in which he reviewed the different phases of the Palestine problem since the beginning of the mandate and the detrimental effect that the negative policy pursued by the Mufti had had on the position of the Palestinian Arabs. He added:

The Mufti has again refused the new proposals of the White Paper. Although the proposals are not what the Arabs of Palestine demand for the fulfilment of the national aspirations, they are, in my opinion, the best we have been offered so far. If we reject them, I fear the British government will impose partition on the country. This would undoubtedly be to the advantage of the Jews, and would represent a backward step for us.

At the end of the speech Ragheb asked the delegates to accept the White Paper.

Among the speakers arguing the case for acceptance were Sulaiman Tuqan, the mayor of Nablus, Omar al-Bitar, the prominent community leader of the city of Jaffa, and Haj Adel al-Shawwa the distinguished personality from Gaza.

The participants came from various parts of the country. Among them were Abd al-Ra'uf al-Bitar, Ali al-Mustaqim and Mas'ud Darhali, all from Jaffa, Mohyi al-Din al-Masri from Nablus, four notables from Hebron: Shaikh Tawfiq Tahbub, Rashid Arafa, Ata Nasr al-Din, the acting mayor, and Haj Rashid Maraqaqah. Among those representing

¹⁶ FO to CO in FO 371/23238, 10 July 1939.

Lifta, an important village within the municipality of Jerusalem, were: Muhammad Khalaf, Muhammad Isma'il al-Najjar, Saleh Isa al-Liftawi and Muhammad Isa al-Liftawi. Also in attendance were representatives of the following towns and districts: Bethlehem, Jenin, Rammun, al-Oja, Taiyiba, Jallud, Abu Dees, Barqah, Beit Jala, Beit Suriq, Beit Rima, Bani Malek, Bani Hasan, Bani Zeid, Bani Saleh, Deir Nizam, Deir Ghassaneh, Ain Karim, Battir and tens of other villages.

At the end of the debate, a resolution was passed unanimously accepting the White Paper. The following is an extract of the resolution:

Although the new policy as detailed in the White Paper does not meet every aspect of our national aspirations, it does provide a good basis and a major means for the ultimate fulfilment of these aspirations. The National Defence Party condemns the traditionally negative policy of other Arab leaders, and hopes that the transitional period of ten years as specified in the White Paper would be shortened as a result of mutual co-operation and understanding between the Government and the Arabs of Palestine.¹⁷

But Ragheb's policy of compromise suffered yet another blow at the hands of the Jews and his Arab critics both in and outside Palestine. His party's endorsement of the White Paper won him few friends but he continued to fly in the face of radical Arab opinion not only by accepting the White Paper but by extending his thanks and appreciation for it to the British High Commissioner. Despite the omission in the White Paper proper of the Jewish veto, the other Arab leaders inside and outside Palestine scorned Ragheb for what they considered to be a defeatist stance.

In Britain the White Paper also came under attack from all sides of the House of Commons. Churchill delivered an impassioned speech in support of the Zionist position:

The White Paper is a plain breach of solemn British obligations towards world Jewry in Palestine and in particular to the Zionist associations and that this pledge of a home of refuge, of an asylum, was not made to the Jews in Palestine, but to the Jews outside Palestine, to the vast, unhappy mass of scattered, persecuted, wandering Jews,

¹⁷ Fakhri Nashashibi Papers kept with his cousin Amal Ghaleb Nashashibi in Jerusalem. He wrote the minutes on that occasion.

whose intense, unchanging, unconquerable desire has been for a national home.¹⁸

Churchill was not alone. Prominent politicians like the Liberal leader Sir Archibald Sinclair and the eminent Labourite Herbert Morrison criticized the government and the White Paper with equal vehemence. Among other influential opponents of the proposals were Lloyd George, Josiah Wedgwood, Harold Macmillan, Tom Williams, Leopold Amery, the Earl of Lytton, Lord Snell, and the Archbishop of Canterbury, Cosmo Gordon Lang.¹⁹

Ragheb and his National Defence Party passionately believed in a distinctly Palestinian national identity but at the same time they sought Arab unity. Palestine was the focus of their attention not only because it was their country but also because, of all the countries in the Arab world, it was Palestine that was to provide a homeland for an alien people. So in that sense only, Ragheb and his party were not pan-Arabist. This so-called localistic policy of the Nashashibis and the National Defence Party was, as advocate Mughanam Mughanam joint Secretary General of the party, put it, a case of 'ideology submitting to pragmatic interests'.

In practice, this meant that the National Defence Party pursued moderation and co-operation with the mandatory power to secure benefits for the Palestinian Arabs. As it happened, the White Paper of May 1939 was an enormous step forward and, in the party's view, should have been accepted by all Arabs.

Ragheb and his followers were convinced that force would only be counter-productive and would ultimately preclude a settlement altogether. The logical outcome of this in practical policy terms was Ragheb's honest co-operation with the mandatory power, and less concern with what the other Arabs thought or said of him. His allegiance was first and foremost to his Palestinian Arab compatriots although some of his close friends and supporters were non-Palestinians such as Emir Abdullah of Transjordan. But their relationship was of a personal nature barely influenced by political considerations.

Whenever Abdullah came to Jerusalem he would call Ragheb from his suite at the King David Hotel and announce his arrival. As Ragheb said, it was only natural that he would rush to see the Emir. Both men spoke fluent Turkish and when together they always conversed in

¹⁸ Quoted in Reuben Fink, *America and Palestine* (New York, 1945), p. 513.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

Turkish, a legacy of the happy times they had spent together in Istanbul. They would recall their experiences in Istanbul which Abdullah had often visited and where Ragheb had been a deputy in the Ottoman parliament.

They respected and liked one another. I do not know of any declaration, resolution, or public statement made by Ragheb or any prominent member of the National Defence Party in which Abdullah was mentioned as the potential king or ruler of any part of Palestine. Their policies in search of a solution of the Palestine problem might have coincided on certain points and certain aspects during a period of more than thirty years. That is all. As mentioned before, Ragheb's enemies alleged that there was a secret agreement between Emir Abdullah and Ragheb's National Defence Party regarding the partition of Palestine. They charged that the two men shared dreams and made future plans and plotted together. The fact is that the number of letters exchanged between Abdullah and Ragheb during thirty years of the British mandate did not exceed four or five. Neither Abdullah nor Ragheb liked secretiveness. Ragheb never attempted to hide his admiration for the Hashemites and of Abdullah. It was obvious to all who knew them that they were bound by friendship, not mutual interest.

It was quite natural for Emir Abdullah of Jordan to concern himself with the problems of Palestine and follow developments there. Transjordan was included in the British sphere of influence under the Sykes-Picot agreement while Palestine was to be under international control, a British mandate. In 1921, Britain hived off Transjordan, created an Emirate and installed Abdullah on the throne. The League of Nations ratified the territorial partitioning in 1922 and excluded Transjordan from the provisions of the mandate which related to the establishment of a 'national home for the Jewish people'. Transjordan was lucky in this respect, but because of similar circumstances and territorial proximity, the Emir was naturally interested in the affairs of Palestine, and would tend to lean towards the genteel and moderate element in Palestinian society.

It was often said that Abdullah found Ragheb not just an agreeable companion but a natural and potential ally against the Mufti of Jerusalem. But the Emir never had any illusions about the fact that Ragheb had opposed the Mufti on purely Palestinian issues and nothing else. Ragheb once told me that the Mufti had known the truth about the nature of the relationship between him and the Emir, but that it had suited him to distort it. I once asked him point-blank whether Emir Abdullah had offered to let him in on secret aspects of British policy in

Palestine, seeing that they were good friends and that the Emir was an ally of Britain. Ragheb replied:

Abdullah's main source of information on Palestine was his nephew Prince Abd al-Ilah [the Regent of Iraq] and Nuri al-Sa'id. But the important secrets disclosed to me from time to time came from Nuri. One concerned the mission of Colonel Newcombe to Baghdad in 1940 regarding the Palestinian issue and the 1939 White Paper. Later, Abdullah told me about his negotiations with Ernest Bevin [the British Foreign Secretary, 1945-51] and the mutual understanding reached with the British government over the newly created independent state of Transjordan with him as its king.

More to the point, when Ragheb once asked Abdullah what the future held for Palestine, Abdullah replied by quoting a poignant remark made by Bevin in 1946: 'The problem is no longer a British affair. It is now an American concern. Your Majesty should ask the Americans!' This made a deep impression on Ragheb, for it reinforced an uneasy feeling he had had for some time that America might espouse the Zionist cause in the not so distant future. Hence his conciliatory attitude towards the British and his unreserved acceptance of the 1939 White Paper. Time seemed to be running out, and it is a wise statesman who can foresee the gathering of the storm before it breaks.

Ragheb had felt that world Jewry might find it more expedient and more rewarding to transfer the Palestine question from Britain to the USA. Britain, now at war with Germany, needed tranquility in the Arab countries and could not afford to yield to Zionist demands. In contrast, the USA was free from any entanglements in the Middle East, and had shown a great deal of sympathy for the Zionist dream; and quite early in the war, America was emerging as a formidable power. Washington rather than London would have the clout to impose a Zionist solution on Palestine. As time went by, Ragheb became more and more convinced that the US was poised to play a crucial role in the area. It depressed him to see the White Paper of 1939 recede into the past and Zionism gaining a firm foothold in America.

In May 1942, under the sponsorship of the emergency council of the Zionist Organization of America, the Biltmore Conference was held and resolved to implement the Basle Zionist programme of 1897. The Biltmore resolution read, in part, as follows:

The Conference calls for the fulfillment of the original purpose of the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate which

'recognizing the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine' was to afford them the opportunity, as stated by President Wilson, to found a Jewish Commonwealth.

The conference affirms its unalterable rejection of the White Paper of May 1939 and denies its moral or legal validity. The White Paper seeks to limit, and in fact to nullify Jewish rights to immigration and settlement in Palestine . . .

In the struggle against the forces of aggression and tyranny, of which the Jews were the earliest victims, and which now menace the Jewish National Home, recognition must be given to the right of the Jews of Palestine to play their full part in the war effort and in the defense of their country, through a Jewish military force fighting under its own flag and under the high command of the United Nations.

The Conference declares that the new world order that will follow victory cannot be established on foundations of peace, justice and equality, unless the problem of Jewish homelessness is finally solved.

The Conference urges that the gates of Palestine be opened; that the Jewish Agency be vested with control of immigration into Palestine and with the necessary authority for upbuilding the country, including the development of its unoccupied and uncultivated lands; and that Palestine be established as a Jewish Commonwealth integrated in the structure of the new democratic world.

Then and only then will the age-old wrong to the Jewish people be righted.²⁰

This assertive Zionist proclamation needs no elaboration. Ragheb had only to listen to such demands—declared in London, New York and Jerusalem—to understand fully the real danger that Zionist ambitions posed for the future of Palestine.

There were omens of this on earlier occasions. At the Twentieth Zionist Congress in August 1937 the much abused Peel Report had been condemned as being too little too late.

In a press interview, the chairman of the executive of the Jewish Agency, Ben-Gurion, said: 'The debate has not been for or against the indivisibility of Eretz Israel. No Zionist can

²⁰ Quoted in Richard P. Stevens, *American Zionism and U.S. Foreign Policy, 1942-1947* (New York, 1962), pp. 4-5.

forego the smallest portion of Eretz Israel' . . . The debate was over which of the two routes would lead quicker to the common goal.²¹

When Weizmann was asked about the exclusion from the proposed state of the land to the south and the Negev desert, he replied more enigmatically: 'It will not go away.'²²

When Professor Judah Magnes of the Hebrew University, who was sometimes described as a minimalist Zionist, advocated a bi-national state at a meeting of the Jewish Agency council, he was shouted down. When the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry completed its findings on Palestine in 1946 and recommended that 100,000 Jews be permitted to emigrate to Palestine without making a parallel recommendation for the establishment of an independent Jewish state in Palestine, Moshe Shertok, head of the Jewish Agency's political department, said:

Don't think our terrorist organizations are disappointed. They are delighted. The committee's recommendations didn't go half far enough for them. Now they will start killing and burning and blowing up more vigorously than ever and will probably double their membership. And Haganah won't be there to stop them. Besides, American Jewry will step up its lobbying until President Truman is forced to intervene again. And they will step up their donations too, which means that illegal immigration will be intensified. Even the Arabs know that.²³

Menachem Begin, the leader of the biggest terrorist organization in Palestine, the Irgun, joined in the chorus of extreme Zionist demands and ran terrorist operations such as sabotage, murder, kidnappings, and the blowing up of the King David Hotel in Jerusalem in 1946 in which 91 people were killed. Begin justified this extreme brand of terrorism by using the stock argument of all terrorists:

Of course terrorism has to be cruel. War is cruel. If an enemy tries to occupy your country you go to war against him. We Jews could not go to war in the conventional, professional way you went to war against the Germans. So we did it in the only way that was open to us. But it was war all the same. It

²¹ Ghilan, p. 77.

²² Ibid.

²³ Elston, p. 49.

was the kind of war the resistance movements fought against the Germans, no different at all. You called us terrorists. But that was only in a manner of speaking.²⁴

In 1948, after the creation of Israel, Ben-Gurion told a writer who was visiting Jerusalem: 'The state—Israel—has been here all the time, from 1918 onwards at the very least. It was just a question of filling up its corners with more people and formulating it in the conventional design. We did not fight in 1948 to establish the state. We fought to defend it.' The writer then asked him whether the state of Israel was brought about, in the real sense, by the United Nations. 'No,' replied the Israeli prime minister, 'The United Nations gave it international sanction and then ran away. We brought it about ourselves.'²⁵

The White Paper of 1939 had expressed Palestinian aspirations for statehood in a concrete document produced by the British mandatory government. Yet less than four months after the war the Palestinian issue had no place on the British political agenda.

The six long years of the Second World War were the most crucial in the history of the Jewish people. During that time their aim to achieve nationhood advanced immeasurably—not because of their political activities alone but also adventitiously because of the atrocities they suffered at the hands of the Nazis. These tragic events were intelligently used and eloquently described by Chaim Weizmann in the long testimony he gave to the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry. Weizmann's exposé was supplemented, endorsed and elaborated in hundreds of films, books, pamphlets and speeches made by Jewish and world leaders after the end of the war. Thus in many respects the Jewish cause was much better served in the Western world by leaders and public opinion championing the right of the Jews to establish their own state in Palestine than in Palestine by the Zionist terrorists. Western sympathy for the plight of the Jews was a formidable force which the Arabs could not possibly match.

For Palestinian Jews the conflict often presented an enormous conflict of loyalties. A Palestinian Jew, wrote Christopher Sykes,

found himself troubled by his conscience. No Jew in his right mind could possibly carry opposition to Britain so far as to serve the cause of Hitler; yet he found himself asking whether he could, in opposition to Hitler, unconditionally

²⁴ Ibid., p. 34.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 39.

serve the cause of Great Britain, the betrayer of Zion as he believed.²⁶

While the Jewish victims in Europe were winning the hearts and minds of the world, well-armed Jewish terrorist gangs in Palestine, such as the Irgun and Stern, backed by effective political skill, were stepping up their fight against the British mandatory power to force it out of Palestine once and for all.

Throughout the Second World War world Jewry was on maximum alert—at the political, diplomatic, and military levels. In contrast, the Arabs were bereft of any kind of effective leadership, quite unable to advance the Palestinian cause, primarily because of the war situation.

Meanwhile, Ragheb Nashashibi was becoming increasingly frustrated at the futility of his political endeavours. He watched the White Paper gradually fade away and could not forget Weizmann telling Churchill in December 1939 that the Zionists wished to build a Jewish state in Palestine with a Jewish population of three to four million. What shocked him most was Churchill's whole-hearted approval.²⁷ On 2 October 1940, Churchill informed his Cabinet that he wanted the 1939 White Paper scrapped. Ragheb was attending an official dinner at Government House in Jerusalem when he heard the news. He told the High Commissioner in a sarcastic tone of voice: 'Now Mr Ben-Gurion will be able to fight Hitler without worrying about the White Paper. His wish has come true. The White Paper was dead before reaching the age of seventeen months.'

Ragheb kept on knocking at the door of the High Commissioner asking for any news or developments. But there was no news for him. The High Commissioner, Harold MacMichael, who was neither popular with the Arabs nor with the Jews, did not wish to be disturbed by the Palestinian problem. Incidentally, his wife, the daughter of a clergyman of the Church of England, never got on with Ragheb's Catholic wife, who for some reason, used to refer to her as 'that French woman'.

MacMichael had always doubted the practicability of the 1939 White Paper and was therefore most reluctant to implement any of the provisions relating to local arrangements. While the Colonial Office was anxious to appoint the Palestinian heads of departments as required by the 'constitutional' clauses of the White Paper, MacMichael did nothing. He had been critical of these clauses throughout the discussions

²⁶ Sykes, p. 204.

²⁷ Chaim Weizmann, *Trial and Error* (London, 1949), pp. 418, 419.

which had preceded the White Paper, describing them as unreal and illusional.²⁸ Arguing that his first concern was the practicability of the new policy and not whether the Arab states would endorse it, he felt that no transfer of power, however limited, should be attempted until some degree of communal reconciliation between Jews and Arabs in Palestine had been achieved, and until moderate forces opposed to the Mufti and his policy of violence had emerged in local Palestinian Arab politics. In his reply to the Colonial Office's dispatch, he stated:

It is impossible for me at this stage to nominate individuals, owing to the fact that the Jews are adopting a line of complete non-acceptance of the basic principles of His Majesty's Government's statement of policy and representative Arabs are, with the exception of the Defence (Nashashibi) Party, almost a minus quantity. As soon as the position is rectified in either respect, I propose to submit names for your consideration.²⁹

Possibly Harold MacMichael deliberately played down the value of the National Defence Party in order to avoid having to implement the relevant provisions of the White Paper. When the Colonial Secretary, MacDonald, said, 'What is wanted in Palestine almost more than anything else is a really good moderate Arab leader who will rival the Mufti in ability and influence,' presumably pointing to Ragheb Nashashibi and his National Defence Party (as the only leader and party in Palestine that accepted the White Paper and demanded its implementation), MacMichael did not hesitate to spurn the National Defence Party and dismiss Ragheb Nashashibi in his dispatches to the Colonial Office. He alleged that the party 'was in the throes of an internal crisis and viewed askance by the generality of Arabs.' He added: 'Its leader is a past number, its erstwhile secretary, Fakhri Nashashibi, has gone too far in the field of politics and morality alike even for the strongest stomachs.'³⁰

The situation continued to stagnate causing much frustration. Soon enough, though, MacMichael invited Ragheb Nashashibi over and informed him of Ben-Gurion's reply to the General Officer Commanding that the Jewish Agency had no intention of taking any active steps to help end the disturbances perpetrated by the Jewish community, and

²⁸ Ronald W. Zweig, *Britain and Palestine During the Second World War* (London, 1986), p. 7.

²⁹ MacMichael to CO; see FO 371/23228, 8 March 1939.

³⁰ MacMichael to MacDonald in CO 733/410, 13 December 1939.

that Ben-Gurion had told the Jewish leaders in Palestine that there would be no co-operation between anyone trying to implement the White Paper. 'We are preparing our own plans,' Ben-Gurion had said.³¹ MacMichael had found another reason for doing nothing. Furthermore, he kept advising the Colonial Office that the only Palestinian Arab politicians who commanded popular respect were the Mufti and those associated with him in the Arab Higher Committee. This being so, he reasoned, there was nothing he could do since these men were in exile, were hostile to the mandate, and had rejected the White Paper. In effect, MacMichael was shelving the Palestine problem until the end of the war.

Meanwhile, the Zionists were relentlessly clamouring for an independent Jewish state in Palestine. In 1941 the legal adviser of the Jewish Agency, Dr Bernard Joseph, together with the participants in the conferences of the United Palestine Appeal which were held in Canada and Washington, proclaimed that 'with the termination of the war, a Jewish state should be established in Palestine.' Other Zionist voices could be heard everywhere, demanding the creation of a Jewish Commonwealth within the historic boundaries of Palestine.³²

Zionist political and diplomatic activity outside Palestine was matched by Zionist terrorism inside Palestine against the mandatory power. But whenever Ragheb Nashashibi wrote to the British High Commissioner in the name of his party asking for clarification of such statements as were being made by the Jewish leaders and for Britain's attitude towards them, he would receive the same answer every time, that the final solution of the Palestine problem would only come after the end of the war and the victory of the allies. MacMichael's letters were always polite, always to the point, and always ended with courteous words.

Ragheb would spend long evenings during the war either alone or with his brother, Fahmi, and a few neighbours, such as Isma'il Jarallah and Judge Majed Abd al-Hadi. Playing cards was a favourite pastime. Another neighbour, Ruhi Abd al-Hadi, the most senior official in the Chief Secretary's office, often dropped by to see Ragheb. Abd al-Hadi was always anxious and willing to carry news of and from Ragheb to his boss, the Chief Secretary. Ragheb's sadness and frustration at the Palestinian impasse made him think long and hard about the wisdom of returning to politics, a decision made more difficult by his failing health. Meanwhile, Ragheb's old adversary, Haj Amin, was in Hitler's

31 George F. Fink, *A Short History of The Middle East* (London, 1952), p. 307.

32 Ibid.

Germany under the protection of the Third Reich. There he hoped for much but achieved nothing.

In 1942 Ragheb's old friend, Nuri Pasha al-Sa'id, visited him in Jerusalem, and they held long discussions at the Iraqi Consulate together with Musa Alami, Dr Yusef Haikal and Shakir al-Wadi, the Iraqi Consul-General in Jerusalem. Nuri had apparently come to tell Ragheb that the British government was not ready to start implementing the terms of the White Paper.

By then the Jews had profited immeasurably from the blunders and errors of judgement of their Arab adversaries and had now begun to pave the way for the creation of a Zionist state on Palestinian soil. That had signalled a sad end to moderation and the rise of fanatical radicalism.

I remember my days at the Arab Office in Jerusalem in 1945 working under the leadership of the Palestinian statesman Musa Alami. Musa Alami had a varied and distinguished career. He had been conscripted into the Turkish army at the beginning of the First World War, then had gone to Cambridge where he had read law and had later been called to the English bar. When he had returned to Palestine he had been appointed, first, as private secretary to the High Commissioner and then had been elevated to the responsible post of Government Advocate. But his bitter resentment of British policy which he had seen as pro-Zionist on the whole, had led him to resign. Later he had become the sole representative of Palestine at the conference in Alexandria which in 1944 had laid the foundation of the Arab League. Shortly afterwards he had initiated the setting up of the Arab Offices in Jerusalem, London and Washington DC, whose purpose had been to explain the Arab point of view, particularly on the question of Palestine. Musa Alami had asked me to join him from the start at the Jerusalem Office. We had an office on the Bethlehem Road in the Jerusalem municipality area near the Allenby barracks. We used to meet in that white house and work hard to try to interest the world's media in the Palestinian viewpoint. We were, of course, grimly aware of what was taking place then in Palestine, and especially in Jerusalem where bombs were exploding everywhere. Prisons, barracks, the broadcasting station were all attacked by the Jewish gangs. We expected to be attacked too, but that never happened. What did happen though, largely as a result of Alami's disagreement with the Arab Higher Committee, was that we received a series of death threats from Arab political opponents, including a threat to blow the place up. So we stationed guards outside our offices, to protect us from the unknown Jewish enemy and from the 'well-known' Arab enemy. Musa had always more than one body-guard with him.

Our success in the Arab Office incurred the wrath of a number of Arab leaders and the envy of some of the Jewish leaders. Abba Eban wrote later in his autobiography: 'While my Zionist work was inhibited by cautious anonymity, the Arab office in Jerusalem was making free use of Albert Hourani and others who, in a certain sense, were my opposite numbers on the other side.'³³

But Albert Hourani's presence in the Arab Office was not tolerated by the Mufti, because of his critical attitude towards the Mufti's leadership, and his criticism of the Arab method of propaganda.

Some of Hourani's friends became more intransigent in their policy than the old leaders, partly because they were westernized, and so compensate for any western bias by an excess of nationalism. But even more, because they realize that the present social structure won't last long and that the new political movements will be ultra-nationalistic. Hourani is quite right to feel that if he is to represent the literate Arabs of Palestine then he must speak the same language as the Mufti, otherwise he will be rejected as a British agent, particularly since he worked so closely with Chatham House.³⁴

Jerusalem then was in chaos: the situation was unlike any other, unlike Northern Ireland, unlike India, unlike Hong Kong. But perhaps the closest comparison is with Beirut and South Lebanon of today: controlled by foreign powers which have little excuse for being there, and which have little support locally; a city torn apart by different factions which fight for a hundred different reasons—some political, some religious, many personal.

I once asked my friend Sir Gyles Isham, who was a senior figure in the military administration in Jerusalem—and an authority on Shakespearean tragedies—what he thought was the cruellest tragedy he had witnessed. He answered me:

I assure you that the tragedy of life which we experience in Palestine these days has exceeded in its cruelty and its profundity all the tragedies.

Hate was everywhere; hatred between Arab and Arab, Arab and Jew, between Jew and Jew. There were clashes everywhere. Though many were of a political nature, many were caused by religious differences.

33 Abba Eban, *An Autobiography* (London, 1977), p. 60.

34 Richard Crossman, *Palestine Mission* (London, 1946), p. 134.

Every Friday evening and Saturday morning there were clashes in the Mea-Shearim Jewish quarter in the centre of Jerusalem, between Orthodox and non-Orthodox Jews. On the other hand, there were confrontations in the Old City between the Abyssinians and the Egyptian Copts over the ownership of the building called Deir al-Sultan, the Monastery of the Sultan. During the different festivals there were many arguments over such issues as which Christian sect should be nearer the tomb of Jesus Christ during prayers. They had to give the key of the Holy Sepulchre to a Muslim to guarantee the neutrality of the guardian of the holy church, because of the unending disputes.

The Muslims were just as intolerant. My uncle, Is'af Nashashibi, for example, a great theologian, wrote a book in 1935 called *The True Islam*.³⁵ He had spent fifteen years writing it, and his research entailed reading hundreds of books and ancient texts. But not a single Shi'a Muslim leader did not attack him in Iraq, Syria, Iran and South Lebanon. I was only a young boy at the time, but I remember the ayatollahs calling it 'the Nashashibis' Islam'. Fifty-two years later when I was on a visit to Baghdad I walked into one of the city's best bookshops on al-Mutanabi Road and asked if they stocked the book. The shopkeeper replied: 'Sir, I'm a Shi'a. I wouldn't allow such a book on my shelves.'

In February 1922, the British journalist Lord Northcliffe visited Jerusalem and wrote in his book, *My Journey Round the World*, about the Holy City:

Most of the mornings were spent receiving Arabs, Christians, Zionists and Orthodox Jews. All tried hard to get me to express an opinion on their cause. I declined except to express the belief that the immigration of the new Jews and news of liberty and plenty should be viewed with great care. All lie profusely; the Muslim outrageously, the Zionist artistically, the Orthodox Jews the bitterest of all.

Elsewhere in the book he wrote:

Today, at another huge dinner party, I heard around me—from a strange assortment of bishops and patriarchs, Greeks, Armenians, Turks, and from my Christian neighbour married to a Muslim—Asiatic, French, Italian and

35 Is'af Nashashibi, *Al-Islam al-sahih* (Jerusalem, 1935).

English. Also a little Hebrew. The methods of Zionism arouse antagonism. Can Jews rule here?³⁶

He concluded his chapter on Jerusalem with the words, 'I haven't enough time to deal with Palestine, which has been the great battlefield of the religions since the time of the crusaders,' and added ominously, 'There will be trouble in Palestine.'

He made this remark in the winter of 1922. It sounded like a prophecy. Massacres are committed in the name of religion or nationalism. In 1929, Jews were massacred in 'defence' of Islam. In 1948, more than 250 Palestinians were slaughtered in the village of Deir Yasin by Jews to 'protect' the Jewish state. And in 1988, Palestinians were killed and clubbed even in front of al-Aqsa Mosque and the Noble Sanctuary because they posed a threat to Israeli security.

But such is the violence of the city of peace, it even engulfs those who are there merely as reporters. I shall never forget my English friends who came to Jerusalem in 1948 to report on the momentous events of that year.

Among them were David Woodford and Richard Wyndham. David had been private secretary to Lord Moyne who was British Minister Resident in Cairo during the war years. (Lord Moyne was later assassinated by the Stern Gang.) In 1946, David began writing for the *Daily Telegraph* and lived in Cairo not far from the British Embassy. Across the street was a building called al-Awqaf, and David rented the top floor. I used to visit him from time to time, and after the Mufti had arrived in Cairo in 1946 I took him to see Haj Amin at his house in the suburb of Hilmiiyyet al-Zaytoon.

David and I became good friends. We would travel to Jerusalem by train, and enjoy the beautiful Jerusalem evenings, the dinners at Katy Antonius, the widow of the Arab author George Antonius, whose house was in Shaikh Jarrah on Mount Scopus, not far from my house.

In 1948 David Woodford was flying in his small aeroplane heading for Jerusalem to report on the disturbances a few weeks before the end of the British mandate. The plane was hit by gun-fire from Israeli guards in a suburb of Jerusalem and caught fire. David jumped out and was killed. I lost a great friend. Richard Wyndham, a correspondent for the *News of the World*, was also flying his plane when he was shot down by Jewish guards around the airport near Jerusalem. He too was killed.

³⁶ Lord Northcliffe, *My Journey Round the World, 1921-1922* (London, 1923), pp. 273, 277.

Ironically, one of the last dispatches he wrote in the *News of the World*, on 7 October 1948, read as follows:

It is not uncommon to hear a burst of machine gun fire in Jerusalem or Tel Aviv. A short burst—perhaps only ten rounds—and then silence. There is no chance of shooting back. In England, next morning, you read that a British police constable, sergeant or officer, of the Palestine Police Force, has been shot dead. It would be wrong if I gave the impression that these men are complaining that their services are unrecognized; the day and night risk of being shot in the back is part of their contract. But there is one thing they resent—when certain British newspapers with Zionist sympathies insist that these murderers are ‘a mere fraction of the Jewish population . . . just a handful of terrorists’.

Two days later, the editorial comment in the *News of the World* read:

It is useless to tell the Arabs that Palestine is a small fraction of the Arab world—they could live elsewhere. You might as well tell a Channel Islander that his island is a small fraction of the British Empire—before handing his home back to France.

David Woodford and Richard Wyndham were among my best friends during my last years in Jerusalem. I lost them, but the Palestinian cause lost them too. They were honest and sincere; they were gentle and human; and, above all, they were faithful to their profession. No money could buy them; no temptation could make them support evil against good, nor take the side of the oppressor against the oppressed. They had clear consciences, and their deaths were, for me, another Jerusalem tragedy.

There has always been a touch of sadness in the air of Jerusalem. After sunset all is quiet, everything seems at rest except for the sound of the church bells and the call to prayer from the minarets of the Haram al-Sharif. Everything ends early. Life ends at sunset, and the wind blows, the clouds gather and people disappear into their homes, deserting the streets, as if Jerusalem demands this.

The Absence of Arab Institutional Development, 1922–39

In 1949 King Abdullah of Jordan persuaded his old friend, Ragheb Nashashibi, to leave his self-imposed exile in Alexandria and come to Amman. He offered him the opportunity of becoming the first Palestinian prime minister of what had now become the Hashemite United Kingdom of Jordan following the annexation of the Palestinian territory west of the river Jordan (the West Bank). Ragheb, however, declined the offer, and told the King that not only would his health not allow him to bear such a responsibility, but also he would not wish to afford his Palestinian political rivals—al-Husaini, al-Khalidi, Abd al-Hadi, and others—the opportunity to claim that their stock accusation, that he had all along been conniving at partition and the annexation of the Palestinian part by Transjordan, was after all true.

The irony was that many of these people jumped at the chance of serving the very same Hashemite crown that they had scorned in the thirties and forties. The Mufti's brother-in-law, Muhyeddin al-Husaini, became a deputy, a member of parliament, and then ambassador of Jordan in Kuwait and Morocco under the rule of King Abdullah's grandson, King Husain. Dr Husain al-Khalidi succeeded Ragheb Nashashibi as custodian of the Holy Places in 1951 by royal decree from King Abdullah, and later became prime minister of Jordan, albeit for a short time. Awni Abd al-Hadi, the head of the Istiqlal Party, was appointed Jordanian ambassador in Cairo by King Husain. Emile al-Ghuri, Kamel Urikat, Dr Dawud al-Husaini, and many notables from the Mufti's party and from the Istiqlal party were given posts in many departments and other public institutions in the Jordanian government—without any recriminations. Yet Ragheb would not accept the King's offer of heading the government. So the King suggested the post of Minister for Foreign Affairs, but Ragheb again declined and frankly told the King that if he was to join the Jordanian Cabinet, or to hold any high-ranking official post, he would prefer to

hold one which would keep him closely attached to his own people in Palestine. When the King asked, 'Who are your people, and where are they? We are all now one people,' Ragheb answered in a grim tone: 'Your Majesty, I mean the refugees. I think of their agony, their suffering and their lives.' The King paused for a minute and said to Ragheb: 'Listen, Ragheb Pasha . . .' Before he finished his sentence, I saw Ragheb get up from his chair, step forward towards the King, embrace him and thank him for the title he had so spontaneously bestowed on him. It was the first time the King had addressed Ragheb with the title of 'Pasha'. The King said: 'There will be a new Cabinet, and a new post in it for you to fill. It will be called the Ministry for the Refugees, and you, Ragheb Pasha, will be its Minister.' It was a very emotional moment; I could see a hint of a tear in the eyes of both men. Ragheb then duly joined the Cabinet.

One evening he was visiting his friend the prime minister, Samir Pasha al-Rifa'i, together with another guest, Samir Pasha's brother-in-law, the famous economist Haider Shukri. They were discussing the Palestinian tragedy and the creation of the state of Israel the previous year. I heard Ragheb say to his host:

I do not know who did more harm to the Palestinian people—who are now turned into refugees—the man who tried to co-operate with the mandatory power to fight Zionism, or the man who co-operated with Nazism and won the enmity of both the British and world Jewry without benefiting anything at all from either Hitler or Mussolini. I do not know which of the two tried to do more good for his country—the man who was reasonable and accepted the rule of the Arab majority with the Jews as a minority, or the Palestinian leaders who kept saying 'no' to every proposal until the British mandate ended and the Jews became the majority, and the state of Israel was created.

Ragheb Nashashibi did not need to mention names.

All the same, the Mufti was without doubt a much admired man by thousands of Arabs. Personally, I had nothing but respect and admiration for him. I stood beside him at the funeral of my uncle Is'af in Cairo in February 1948—attended by many of Egypt's intellectuals and dignitaries—and watched him receive their condolences on behalf of the Nashashibi family.

I met the Mufti several times and found him an attractive personality with complete faith in his country, in himself and his people. I shall never forget the remark made by Freya Stark in one of her letters to her

husband, Stewart Perowne, in August 1951 where she described the Mufti's charisma: 'I have only known two people who gave this impression of making a room different—one was Gandhi and the other the Mufti and neither were saints!'¹ Undoubtedly, the Mufti had great charm and a loyal following of men—some of whom were political historians—who would happily distort the facts to exonerate him. They had no hesitation in condemning men such as Ragheb Nashashibi for the tragedy that befell Palestine and in portraying the Mufti and his followers as great national patriots without a fault or blemish. These so-called Arab chroniclers relied for their historical accounts on such sources as press cuttings and hearsay. They disseminated false rumours to undermine the integrity of many Arab patriots including Ragheb, who was repeatedly branded a British stooge and collaborator.

Historians and intellectuals are only now getting down to the task of compiling an accurate history of the Palestine struggle. In 1989 we find ourselves in a situation where Palestinian leaders are demanding small territorial concessions as the basis for a state within the land of Palestine. And they consider such a demand as an expression of true Arab nationalism. Yet when Ragheb accepted the proposal for a legislative council and when he asked for self-rule for the Palestinians in 1935 as a prelude to the establishment of a Palestinian state in which Arabs would form the majority, he was accused by his political rivals of high treason. In their view, opposition to the Mufti was tantamount to treason.

Ragheb never cared for the vendetta campaigns conducted against him in the press. He never sacrificed his political principles to gain short-term popularity. He would not engage in public relations exercises. He did not care how unpopular he might have been in the 'polls'. He was a leader who expected the people to listen to him as a faithful servant of his country and an experienced leader. He would not condescend to joining in slanging matches with the press. He had too much dignity for this vulgar display of private enmities. He came from a family which had played a significant role in the history of Jerusalem. The greatness of the city was in no small measure due to contributions made by the family and Ragheb found it natural to follow in the footsteps of his predecessors.

In 1918 Is'af Nashashibi, Fakhri and Fu'ad Nashashibi founded the Literary Club with several members of the prominent Dajani family. The Club members produced a charter which advocated the integration

1 Freya Stark, *Over the Rim of the World* (London, 1988), p. 311.

of Palestine into Syria. Palestine had formed part of southern Syria and accordingly Syria's rule should extend to Palestine. They asked for the annulment of the British mandate and a limitation on Jewish immigration into Palestine. These demands were well-documented in the many pamphlets and books produced by the Club.

Another tier in the Nashashibi family included Ragheb. In 1920 Ragheb, a prominent engineer became mayor of the Holy City. In 1928 he and his friend Musa Kazem al-Husaini joined hands in certain political activities. Musa Kazem's relatives disapproved of this friendship and distanced themselves from the existing representative body for the Arabs and set about creating a parallel group which excluded Ragheb and Musa Kazem.

As a Muslim political leader, a relative and fellow citizen of Jerusalem, Ragheb had always liked Haj Amin al-Husaini but he must have felt disappointed in him when he saw the underhand way in which he acquired the office of Mufti of Jerusalem and the ruthlessness with which he ran his work. I once asked Ragheb why he had agreed to become mayor of Jerusalem. He smiled and said: 'Why should I not agree? Who appointed Haj Amin as Mufti? It was Sir Ronald Storrs and Sir Herbert Samuel together. Who gave the title of Grand Mufti to him, a title not even known here during the Ottoman Empire? It was the British. Besides, if I did not accept the offer any British official would have accepted it.'

In the Ottoman Empire, Shaikh al-Islam was appointed by the Sultan to issue the *fatwa* on religious matters. In Jerusalem there was only a Mufti, Kamel al-Husaini, to do this. Kamel, a learned man of integrity died in March 1921, just a few days after Sir Herbert Samuel had become High Commissioner. According to the existing law, the appointment of a new Mufti was to be made by the government from a short list of candidates selected by an electoral college. The college included Imams, elected Muslim leaders and members of the administrative councils. It soon became apparent that Kamel's brother, Haj Amin, at the time aged only twenty-five and far too young to be a Mufti, wanted the post for himself and began campaigning for it. His rival for the post was Shaikh Husam Jarallah, a member of a respected family from Jerusalem. Jarallah was highly regarded for his integrity and knowledge of shari'a law but apparently this did not impress the British government whose preference was for Haj Amin.

According to their memoirs and official records in Jerusalem, Sir Herbert Samuel and Sir Ronald Storrs had interviewed the prospective Mufti who, not surprisingly, had declared his desire to co-operate with

the British government and had expressed his conviction that the British were well-disposed towards the Arabs and concerned with their welfare. In the words of the High Commissioner, 'Haj Amin declared his earnest desire to co-operate with the Government, and his belief in the good intentions of the British government towards the Arabs, and gave assurances that he and his family's influence would be devoted to maintaining tranquility in Jerusalem.'²

Haj Amin was clearly intent on getting the job. However, in the election Shaikh Husam Jarallah emerged the clear winner with Haj Amin last in the poll. But instead of admitting defeat, Haj Amin accused his political opponents—Palestinian Arabs and Jews—of tampering with the ballot. This allegation was later reported in the Palestinian press, and pamphlets distributed in the Holy City claimed that the election was rigged. 'Awake Muslims and ward off the danger that threatens! The Jews are interfering with your election of the Mufti,' screamed the pamphlets. Haj Amin accused his opponents, the Jarallah and the Nashashibi families of being traitors and of co-operating with the Jews to defeat him. The pamphlets contained some bizarre accusations against Shaikh Jarallah and his supporters who were among Jerusalem's leading families.

If Jarallah becomes the Mufti he would assist the Jews by selling to them the Waqf property and particularly the Waqf of Abu-Midian, which includes the Western Wall. If he becomes Mufti he would agree to Zionist demands to revive the Jewish nationalist spirit in the country and he would hand them the Dome of the Rock and al-Aqsa mosque so that they can pull them down and rebuild their temple. The pride of Islam is dead and God wants to punish Muslims for having opposed the Muslim government of the Ottoman Turks which protected Islam. Will you accept the shame of having a Zionist Mufti and that your religious affairs should become a plaything in their hands?

From 1922 onwards the Mufti asserted that the Zionists were behind every political move made by his Arab opponents. At first, most people disagreed with him, but eventually his ceaseless propaganda and his ability to invent bogeymen won him followers and helped him become not only the Mufti of Jerusalem but also the leader of the Arab Muslims of Palestine. This he achieved, one might add, not without the blessing

² Quoted in Norman and Helen Bentwich, *Mandate Memories, 1928-48* (New York, 1965), pp. 191-2.

of the avowed pro-Zionist (Jewish) High Commissioner, Herbert Samuel, and the British Attorney General of Palestine, Norman Bentwich, also a Zionist.³

Haj Amin's tactics worked. The results of the election were declared null and void on the grounds that the membership of the electoral college itself was unconstitutional. On 9 May 1922, Samuel told the Colonial Office that popular opinion did not support the election of Jarallah and that only technical flaws now stood in the way of Haj Amin taking up the office of Mufti. By the end of May the election coup was complete. The British got their man and Haj Amin had won his prize. Incidentally, according to the report of the Peel Commission, Haj Amin's appointment as Mufti was never gazetted⁴ and no official letter of appointment was issued to him. He was simply allowed to assume office on the strength of verbal approval.

According to Ronald Storrs, in his work *Orientalisms*, and Herbert Samuel's memoirs and other sources, it was Ernest Richmond, Samuel's assistant and a firm supporter of Haj Amin, who conferred the title of Grand Mufti on him, and it was he who wrote a memorandum to Ronald Storrs requesting an increase in salary for Haj Amin which, if agreed, would make his salary exceed the stipend of the Bishop of London. More important, it was the British government and in particular the High Commissioner that established the Supreme Muslim Council and installed Haj Amin as its president in January 1922.

Haj Amin's lightening rise to power set in motion the struggle for the leadership of Palestine. Having won the office of the Mufti, albeit with the help of the British and by means not altogether legal or constitutional, Haj Amin considered it his right not only to decide the fate of the religious institutions over which he exercised complete control together with an annual revenue of 50,000 Palestine pounds, but also the fate of the entire Palestinian people.

In early 1923, after the government announcement that elections would be held for a legislative council, Haj Amin threw in his lot with the Palestine Arab Congress, and campaigned against the elections. He persuaded Herbert Samuel to say that the British government did not regard as its duty the exercise of any pressure on Palestinians to participate in the elections, and so the idea promptly lost all credibility. Herbert Samuel had complied with the Mufti's wishes because he and Norman Bentwich had considered him a moderate man who would

³ Mattar, *Middle East Journal*.

⁴ Peel Report, p. 177.

keep his promise to co-operate with the mandatory authority. In fact Haj Amin kept up appearances to that effect for a long time to come. 'No person was in a better position to know whether El-Husseini kept his promises, than Bentwich, who felt that the Mufti maintained peace throughout the 1920s and Samuel, who considered him a moderate man.'⁵

The government then considered forming an advisory council in Palestine, and invitations were sent to Ragheb Nashashibi, Aref Dajani, Sulaiman Tuqan, Amin Abd al-Hadi and Isma'il al-Husaini to become members of the proposed council. They first accepted but then had to withdraw when they received death threats, and came under intense pressure from the Palestine Arab Congress headed by the Mufti.

On 12 October 1923, the British proposed the creation of an 'Arab Agency' which would enjoy a position exactly analogous to that accredited to the Jewish Agency on the question of immigration and public works. The Arab Agency would also enjoy the parallel right to be consulted with regard to the rights and position of the other sections of the population.⁶ The proposal was delivered to some thirty notable Palestinians who promptly rejected it. Amongst them was the highly respected Musa Kazem Pasha al-Husaini who was the president of the Arab Executive, a body representing the Palestinian community in dealings with the British authorities. He declared: 'the Arabs, never having recognized the status of the Jewish Agency, have no desire for the establishment of an Arab Agency on the same basis.'⁷

The British government's response was to the point: 'Practical considerations of any new proposal for the development of self-governing institutions would be resumed only when the Arabs themselves took the initiative and expressed their readiness to participate.'⁸

Haj Amin was the first to decry the proposal and to influence many others to follow suit. He was determined to stultify any idea of creating a representative, self-governing body for the Arabs of Palescounteract those already existing for the Jews. Ragheb, the pragmatist, did not reject the proposal. He believed that any step, however small, towards Palestinian self-expression or self-rule was a step in the right direction but his ambitious rival, by virtue of the rivalry itself, would do everything in his power to thwart any initiative that was not his own.

5 Eliahu Elath, 'Conversations with Musa Alami', *The Jerusalem Quarterly*, no. 41 (Winter 1987), p. 44.

6 Neil Caplan, *Palestine Jewry and the Arab Question* (London, 1978), p. 163.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 164.

8 Kisch, p. 128.

Haj Amin had one aspiration from which he would not deviate: to rule all of Palestine himself.

In January 1924, when Ragheb led a delegation of notable Palestinian Arabs to Amman to discuss the Palestinian problem with King Husain Bin Ali, King of the Hejaz, he was greeted with hostile cries from his political opponents. 'Here come the Jews! Here come the Jews!' they chanted. King Husain Bin Ali (the great grandfather of the present King Husain of Jordan) later apologized to Ragheb in a long letter.

The Mufti's political campaign to undermine Ragheb was ruthless and aggressive. He attacked him without mercy, inside Palestine and abroad. This antagonism started long before the Jews had built up any effective administration for themselves in Palestine. It took root in the early twenties, when the young man succeeded against all odds to wrest by sheer nerve the office of Mufti. This episode together with a burning ambition whetted his appetite for more power. It was then that he began to hunger for dominance over all Palestinians. To achieve his end he had to act the part of a moderate, a friend, and a faithful ally of the mandatory administration. He also had to destroy his political rivals and to gain absolute power. In the 1920s he co-operated fully with the British. He reassured John Chancellor, the third British High Commissioner, in October 1929, that he considered himself 'one who was in essence an officer of the state'. Chancellor reported:

The Mufti promised to help in the maintenance of order and to co-operate with the government. He had always held this attitude and he held it still and should continue to hold it even if government did not listen to his representation. He regarded this as his duty not only to the government, to God, and the people but also to his own conscience.⁹

From then on the enmity between Ragheb and Haj Amin worsened and soon found expression in personal abuse and other skirmishes run by proxies. Sometimes their rivalry showed itself in petty acts such as one recounted by Colonel Frederick Kisch in his *Palestine Diary* on 30 October 1924:

Dr Shehadeh, the editor of *Meerat esh Sharg* came to seek my help in the case of Mahmoud Farouk whose extradition the French authorities have applied for in connection with a

⁹ Chancellor to Passfield in CO 733/163—670, 12 October 1929, and Chancellor to Passfield in CO 733/175—674, 5 October 1929.

charge of brigandage. When this man was first arrested, the Mufti himself went bail, but afterwards, when Amir Mahmud had indicated his sympathy for the moderate party, the Mufti withdrew bail which Ragheb's friends then found among themselves.¹⁰

Despite the hostility and the personal attacks against Ragheb, the real Ragheb and his patriotism had been well known to many people for quite some time. In 1914, for example, on the eve of the elections to the Ottoman parliament he had declared: 'If I am elected as a representative I shall devote my strength day and night to doing away with the scourge and threat of the Zionist and Zionism.' He was elected by a large majority. Three years before the Balfour Declaration, Ragheb was acutely aware of the real dangers of Zionism.

When the Muslim-Christian Association was being formed in Jerusalem towards the end of 1918, Ragheb asked his cousin, Aref Hikmat Nashashibi, who was then the general administrator of the Waqfs, to work with the mayor, Musa Kazem al-Husaini and help organize it. The Association's aim was to oppose Zionism and to let the British and the Palestine Jews know that Jerusalem's greatest and most powerful families were united at least on one issue: their opposition to Zionism. Later, Ragheb asked other members of his family including Is'af and his cousins, Fu'ad and Fakhri, to help set up the Literary Club which, in 1918 and 1919, became one of the most active advocates of Arab nationalism and the unification of Syria and Palestine.

In February 1920, when it became clear that the British government intended to implement the Balfour Declaration, riots erupted in Jerusalem, Jaffa, Ramleh and Haifa. Ragheb Nashashibi and members of his family led the crowds.

The confirmation of the British mandate at the San Remo Conference in April 1920 and the collapse of King Faisal's rule in Damascus led to major political conflicts between the leaders of the 'Montada al-Arabi' and the 'Nadi al-Arabi', the two leading political organizations in Palestine. The Montada al-Arabi attempted to take over the Nadi al-Arabi with the result that both collapsed. This was a prelude to clashes which followed between the Nashashibis and the al-Husainis.

As the new mayor of Jerusalem, Ragheb, with the aid of the Christian-Muslim Association (headed by Aref Pasha Dajani), continued to defend the rights of the Palestinians, a task he had first initiated long before he was elected to the top civic post.

10 Kisch, p. 148.

The Nashashibi family had agreed not to oppose the Mufti's plans to remain head of the Muslim Supreme Council at the 1925 elections. But when the municipal council elections were due to take place in June 1926, the Mufti and his Muslim Supreme Council would not return the compliment and decided to try to topple Ragheb so as to prove that they were the real representatives of the Palestinian Arabs. So the Mufti proceeded to mobilize his resources and apparently tried to recruit the services of his relative, Musa Kazem, whom Ragheb had replaced as mayor. Musa Kazem apparently declined the invitation and remained neutral. The Mufti also tried to split up the opposition by striking a deal with Aref Pasha Dajani, urging him to put himself up as candidate. Haj Amin was determined to prevent his enemy being re-elected at all costs. His collusion with the Jews became public knowledge, and the press had a field day. In the election, held in June 1926, six of the eight Nashashibi candidates were elected, three Christian and three Muslim. Ragheb himself received the largest number of votes from among the Arab voters. His Christian ally Ya'qub Farraj came second followed by another Nashashibi supporter, Zaki Nuseibeh.

In June 1929 the High Commissioner expressed the view of the incoming Colonial Secretary, Sidney Webb (later Lord Passfield), that the Palestinians should be given a legislative council with powers similar to those proposed in 1922. He said the body should comprise ten Muslims, three Jews and two Christians plus fourteen officials including the High Commissioner. Ragheb and Musa Kazem accepted the proposal but the riots in 1929 over the Western Wall and Jewish rights to worship there postponed any discussion on the merits of a legislative council. The idea was finally killed when the Mufti and his supporters came out against it. The Mufti seized this opportunity to attack Ragheb for what he described as 'making concessions to the Jews' and to the British because both were in favour of a legislative council.

But this episode brought Ragheb and Musa Kazem closer together. They had been on friendly terms for some time. Ragheb's distaste for the Mufti, especially for his tactics, contrasted sharply with his warm feeling for his relative, Musa Kazem Pasha. He once said to me:

I succeeded Musa Pasha when he was advanced in years, and we both agreed that members of one family in Jerusalem should not hold the two key posts of mayor and Mufti. He is a true patriot, even if I sometimes disagree with his lack of moderation; I cannot fault his personality and his integrity.

While Haj Amin was rejecting all British proposals, the British High

Commissioner, Sir John Chancellor was trying in 1929 to establish self-governing institutions in Palestine which might have been of incalculable service to the Arabs, and might have ended the Zionist character of the mandate.¹¹

Instead the Mufti sent his cousin Jamal to London to establish direct contacts with the Colonial Office. Jamal stayed for a short time in London, where he met the Colonial Secretary, distributed some pamphlets to British MPs, and had an article published in the *Daily Mail*, which hardly made any impact on public opinion¹² and then came back. The Mufti considered Jamal's visit a great success and suggested sending another delegation to London for the same purpose, especially after receiving letters from three pro-Arab English women in the organization of the national Political League urging him to come to London.¹³

On 9 January 1930, the Arab Executive held a special meeting to elect the members of a new delegation due to visit London for talks with the Colonial Office. At that meeting the Mufti managed to debar his cousin, Musa Kazem al-Husaini from his candidature for membership of the delegation but Musa Kazem succeeded later in reversing the decision and in getting himself elected as president of the delegation. The inclusion of Musa Kazem in the delegation as its president was a victory for Ragheb Nashashibi and his supporters.¹⁴ Ragheb who had declared his refusal to be a member under the leadership of Haj Amin, was personally gratified.

But before Musa Kazem succeeded in reversing the Mufti's decision he had a long meeting with John Chancellor, at which Musa put his cards on the table and told him what he really thought of his cousin, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, as a man, as President of the Supreme Muslim Council, and as a political leader.

Following are the minutes of the meeting held between John Chancellor and Musa Kazem al-Husaini, as recorded by the High Commissioner's secretary.¹⁵

Box 14/3, ff. 10-15

Confidential [in ink]

Delegation to London [in pencil]

Notes of interview with Musa Kazem Pasha held in His

11 Porath, p. 29.

12 Ibid.

13 Musa Alami described these women to me as 'equal to nothing'.

14 Porath, p. 14.

15 Chancellor Papers.

Excellency's office on the 14th of January at 11.45 a.m. 1930
[in pencil]

Present:

His Excellency
Musa Kazem Pasha
The Private Secretary [to translate]

Kazem Pasha stated he had come to see His Excellency to tell him the facts regarding the recent meeting of the Arab Executive at which his candidature for membership of the first delegation to England had been rejected by a large vote.

This was entirely due to the machinations of the Mufti, who is now following a policy entirely for his own advancement and the maintenance of his position as head of the Supreme Muslim Council; it is his object to be head of everybody and everything and entirely subordinates the good of the national movement to his personal interests.

Although there are 46 members altogether of the Executive, Haj Amin had, by money payments, secured the attendance of 28, those persons who were ready to co-operate with him in his evil designs, such as the likes of Subhi el Khadra, Ishaq Darwish, Izzat Darwazeh, etc. The reason why (p. 2, ff. 11 begins) Haj Amin was determined that he would be rejected was because he [the Pasha] had made it quite clear that the delegation must consist of Ragheb Bey, Haj Amin and himself, that of this delegation he himself must be the head and that unless that was the case, Ragheb Bey would refuse to be a member, as he would never agree to a subordinate position to Haj Amin. It was essential in his mind that Ragheb Bey should go to England and Haj Amin as well; for if Haj Amin remained behind it would only mean he would intrigue in their absence. But Haj Amin insists on being the leader himself and everybody else subordinate to him. In fact he wants to be another Mustapha Kemal.

The Pasha went on to say that the meeting of the Executive had been summoned in a manner which was contrary to the regulation of constitution; whereas a meeting should be summoned by the President or Secretaries, the notice had been issued in the name of Subhi al Khadra. The whole affair, the Pasha repeated, was indicative of Haj Amin's inability to think of anything except himself and the maintenance of his position with the wide resources it commands.

His Excellency said that he much regretted these events because they brought disunity among the Arabs at the moment when it was most important there should be a united (p. 3, ff. 12 begins) front.

The Pasha said he and Ragheb Bey as well fully appreciated this: His Excellency might ask why he had not told him before of the machinations of Haj Amin; it was precisely because he wanted to avoid any rift that he had not done so before. But now that the evil actions of Haj Amin were apparent, he had felt constrained to do so.

His Excellency said he was much obliged to the Pasha for having come to give him this information and enquired what his proposals were.

The Pasha said that, whereas he and Ragheb Bey were fully aware of the necessity of preserving a united front, still if Haj Amin insisted on following his methods they would be compelled to form another party of reasonable opinion and they would break the head of Haj Amin. Haj Amin was working the whole time for further trouble and he pointed out what a danger that constituted to His Excellency inst himself, as the good relations would be held responsible in the event of their breaking out. He maintained that the actions of Haj Amin were directed against His Excellency no less than against himself, as the good relations between His Excellency and himself were well known. For this reason (p. 4, ff. 13 begins) Haj Amin had published lies about him and Ragheb Bey, insinuating that they had become English or even Jews; but they would show that their politics came from their heart and they did not follow personal ends, and that they worked not as Englishmen, but for their national cause. It was a lie Haj Amin had told to the Commission that he had rejected an offer of a very large bribe from the Jews, so that he could be acclaimed as a hero.

Kazem Pasha then made reference to the meeting between Haj Amin and Mr Philby.

His Excellency said he had heard Mr Philby had been here, but not till about a week after he had gone.

Kazem Pasha said the matter had been kept secret by Haj Amin because, as Mr Philby's antecedents were well known, it would have been damaging if the news had got out. But a regular programme of action had been drawn up between them.

His Excellency mentioned that Mr Philby had also had a meeting with Dr Magnes.

Kasem Pasha said that he had heard that too. Meanwhile, Haj Amin felt in terror of his life and never went out without 5 or 6 Moorish attendants, although in the Bab Hutta quarter people were paid to clap him as he went by (p. 5, ff. 14 begins). There is an Arab saying that those who do wrong are afraid. He himself had no fear and walked freely as he chose. It was his intention now to summon a proper meeting of the Executive: the evening before Haj Amin had sent to him at his house to say that it had all been a mistake, but he had replied that he must deal himself with the situation which he had brought about.

Kazem Pasha then referred to the misappropriation of funds which were subscribed for the relief of sufferers on account of the disturbances and came to Haj Amin's hands. Some LP18,000 had been received of which at the most LP4,000 had been devoted to their proper purpose. The balance had been used for the personal ends of Haj Amin—thus large sums had been given to Jemal and if the Awqaf Treasury were now to be opened it would be found quite empty. He suggested His Excellency should enquire from Amin Bey Abdul Hadi about the position.

His Excellency said that he would arrange to see Amin Bey. He asked the Pasha what he thought would be the effect if Government withdrew from the control of Haj Amin the Sharia Court and Waqf Administration. *The Pasha* said with emphasis that this would give rise to no popular (p. 6, ff. 15 begins) opposition. The country was certainly at present behind the Mufti, but only because of his position, and the large resources at his disposal. If these were removed, no one would think anything of him. He reminded His Excellency of the fact that the British government had removed from the control of Saad Zaghlul Pasha the large resources he once commanded but there had been no popular resentment: again the Naqib was formerly the overlord of all Baghdad and again there had been no opposition to the action of the British government in altering that state of affairs. The whole of Haj Amin's efforts were now directed to maintaining his position, for he knew that government was not satisfied with the present position regarding the Awqaf Administration. He asked His Excellency from what source

Haj Amin obtained such intimation as to the government intentions; and he suggested that it came from Mr Antonius.

Finally Haj Amin *the Pasha* said was really against any proper delegation, but wanted to go himself with perhaps one other to join Jemal in London and to work for his own interests without regard to the good of his country.

The British government was advising the Palestinian leaders in Palestine to send moderate delegates to London and to be ready to accept less than their official demands. George Antonius, who had resigned his post in the government, was of the same view, which he expressed to his friends:¹⁶

This pressure of moderation from the government and from the Arab friends made a leader like Husseini Pasha explain to H. M. Kalvariski—the director of the joint bureau which had been established in the fall of 1929 by the JA and the Jewish National Council in Palestine to deal with the Arab affairs—that he had always been moderate and was still ready to be instrumental in reaching an agreement with a Zionist organization through negotiation. Musa Pasha El-Husseini added that beside him, Ragheb El-Nashashibi and Awni Abdul Hadi formed a moderate faction in the delegation.¹⁷

This co-operation between Ragheb and Musa Kazem exacerbated the rift between Haj Amin and Ragheb. For many years Ragheb and Haj Amin were at daggers drawn, but neither had got the better of the other until 1934 when Ragheb lost his post as mayor in the municipal council elections to the Mufti's nominee Husain al-Khalidi. That was a severe blow but Ragheb soon recovered. Less than a year later Ragheb formed the National Defence Party of Palestine. Clause 3 of its constitution defined its aim as follows: 'To fight for the full independence of Palestine with guaranteed sovereignty over all of Palestine and without acknowledgement of any international guarantees that might lessen, influence or damage that Arab sovereignty.' It also stated that the party would take all necessary action to form a national government in Palestine deriving its authority from the will of the people that the party would strive for progress in all fields including the economic, social and agricultural sectors, and to improve the condition of Arab farmers and workers.

¹⁶ Porath, p. 24.

¹⁷ Ibid.

The party central committee was first elected in Jaffa on 2 December 1934. Ragheb was elected chairman and Ya'qub Farraj, was elected deputy chairman. Haj Nimr al-Nabulsi, a landowner from Nablus was elected treasurer. Other members of the central committee included Mughanam Mughanam and Hasan Sidqi Dajani, both elected joint secretaries; Omar Bitar, Asem al-Sa'id, the mayor of Jaffa, Sulaiman Tuqan, Haj Adel al-Shawwa, the deputy mayor of Gaza, and Isa al-Isa, the owner of the Arabic daily *Falastin*. The twelve members of the central committee, together with the thirty-five members of the general committee, represented a substantial section of the Palestinian Arab population. Besides Ragheb Nashashibi's personal background, influence and prestige, his party deputy, Ya'qub Farraj, was also the elected deputy mayor of Jerusalem. The treasurer, Haj Nimr al-Nabulsi, was a notable merchant and a wealthy owner of orange groves in the Nablus district. He was known for his philanthropic deeds and had a considerable following. The others were the local leaders in their towns and cities. Asem al-Sa'id was the elected mayor of the city of Jaffa, and a prominent member of the distinguished al-Sa'id family, of which Hafez Pasha al-Sa'id was a member. Hafez Pasha was a great Arab nationalist during the Ottoman rule who was arrested by the Turkish despotic ruler, Jamal Pasha, and tried before a military court in Damascus. He was sentenced to death but the sentence was commuted to life imprisonment. When a typhus epidemic swept Damascus before the First World War, Hafez fell victim to it and died in prison. He was a legendary figure, and his family profited from the fact in prestige and popularity.

Another member of the National Defence Party was the famous theologian, orator and Mufti of the city of Acre, Shaikh Asad al-Shuqairi (the father of Ahmad al-Shuqairi, the first chairman of the PLO) and formerly a notable Mufti to the fourth corps of the Ottoman army under the command of Jamal Pasha. He was an authority on shari'a law and was based in Damascus; after the war he returned to his native town, the city of Acre in Palestine.

Shaikh Sa'id al-Karmi, another member of the National Defence Party, was equally well known as an authority on Arabic literature and poetry. He was the Mufti of the city of Tulkarm in Palestine, and had been an Arab activist during the Ottoman rule. In 1915, he was arrested and taken under Turkish military guard from his house in Tulkarm to Damascus, where he was sentenced to death. Later, the sentence was commuted to life imprisonment. After the war Shaikh al-Karmi returned to his native town and entered public life and politics as a member of the National Defence Party. They used to call him the

Mufti of Bani Sa'b as a sign of respect. He was a graduate of al-Azhar University in Cairo.¹⁸

Other notable members of the National Defence Party were the leaders of the Tuqan family of the city of Nablus. During Ottoman rule, the Tuqans were tribal and feudal leaders in the Nablus district. They used to represent the Turkish authorities in various administrative matters, together with other local families such as the Abd al-Hadis and the al-Qasems. The leader of the Tuqans was a Bashir Tuqan, who was succeeded during the mandatory regime by Sulaiman Tuqan, the mayor of Nablus, and a stout supporter of the Nashashibis and the National Defence Party.

One must not forget to mention Rida Pasha al-Rikabi. Rida Pasha—known at that time as Ali Rida Bey—was a high-ranking Turkish officer stationed in the city of Acre during Ottoman rule. He was of Syrian origin. He succeeded the despotic Jamal Pasha to become the General Commander of Damascus. After the war, Rida Pasha al-Rikabi became mayor of Damascus and was then elevated to the position of head of the first Arab national government in Syria. He was a close friend of Shaikh Sa'id al-Karmi, who introduced him to Ragheb Nashashibi, and the two became and remained great friends. Rida Pasha later went to Amman to become prime minister under Emir Abdullah. The two secretaries of the party were among the best known advocates in Palestine: Hasan Sidqi Dajani and Mughanam Mughanam. (Dajani was shot dead by Aref Abd al-Razeq, his Arab political opponent in Ramallah in October 1938.) In other Palestinian cities the National Defence Party had members and supporters who enjoyed wealth and prominence. Among them, was Farid Irshaid and his family from the city of Jenin. He was a personal friend and supporter of Ragheb Nashashibi. He paid a heavy price for this support and his stand against the Mufti: a number of his relatives were massacred during the wave of violence in 1937 and 1938. In the fifties, Farid Irshaid became a member of the Jordanian parliament, and his eldest daughter married one of King Husain's brothers.

The mayor of Tulkarm, Hashem al-Jayusi, was also a member of the National Defence Party and a personal friend of Ragheb. When the West Bank was annexed to Transjordan in 1950, al-Jayusi became a member of the Jordan Cabinet.

The notable mayor of the city of Ramleh in Palestine, Shaikh Mustafa al-Khairi, was also a member of the National Defence

¹⁸ Interview with Hasan S. al-Karmi, the Arab scholar and commentator for the BBC. His father was Shaikh Sa'id al-Karmi.

Party. In 1938 he had to flee his city because of mounting Arab terror.

Other notables were people like advocate Omar Salah al-Barghuti of Jerusalem, Ajaj Nuweihed, Nasir Nasir al-Din of Hebron, Ahmad al-Shak'a of Nablus, Zaki Nuseibeh of Jerusalem, who was a prominent member of the Jerusalem municipal council and a wealthy landowner with a large following. There were hundreds of others known for their staunch support of the National Defence Party and its leader Ragheb Nashashibi.

They were all men of importance in their communities—representing a large part of the Palestinian Arab population, including the intellectual elite, and much of the country's economic activity. In terms of geographical coverage, the party could boast a wide spread. One of its important characteristics was the absence of sectarianism, religious fanaticism or racialism. The party's leader, for instance, had many Jewish friends of all political persuasions inside the country and throughout the Arab world. One such friend was Dr Judah Magnes, then president of the Hebrew University and head of his own political movement, Ihud. As mentioned earlier, Dr Magnes had produced a peace plan which provided for controlled Jewish immigration so that the number of Jews in Palestine would at no time exceed 40 per cent of the population. This, he said, would satisfy the Arabs and allow for peaceful coexistence. Several Jewish personalities from Cairo frequently visited Ragheb while they were in Jerusalem. Among these, I recall, was the Jewish journalist and lawyer, Maitre Castro, the editor of the Egyptian newspaper *La Liberté* which supported the Wafd Party of which Castro himself was a member. Other Egyptian Jewish visitors to Ragheb's home included many journalists from the Cairo-based publications, *al-Ahram* and *al-Moqattam*, *La Bourse Egyptienne* and *Le Journal d'Egypte*.

The party's deputy leader, Ya'qub Farraj, deserves special mention. He was a member of the Orthodox Church with strong ties with the Russian elite in Jerusalem. (He even baptised his children with Russian names—Rurik, Vladimir and Nicola.) His extensive friendships gained him the right to supervise the Christian churches in the Russian compound in Jerusalem. Russian ministers and ambassadors in Cairo, Beirut and elsewhere in the region would often stay at the Farraj household whenever they visited the Holy City. As a Christian nationalist he took it upon himself to spread the spirit of Arab nationalism among fellow Christians. One can safely say that the commitment of many Christians to the Palestinian cause was in no small part due to the efforts of Ya'qub Farraj.

Despite this high-calibre composition of the National Defence Party, the British government in Palestine did not detect any special talents in any of the members. After war broke out, with the Mufti in Germany and the 1939 White Paper in limbo, one would have thought that the British government would have found it desirable and opportune to fill the comparative vacuum by encouraging the moderate leaders to consolidate their political position in Palestine. Not only was nothing done, but British intelligence had nothing positive to say about the existing Arab leaders and the National Defence Party. In fact it sometimes sent rather trivial and inaccurate reports about them. In one such report, for instance, Sulaiman Tuqan, the mayor of Nablus, was mentioned as being a member of the 'now schismatic National Defence Party'.¹⁹ The report added, perhaps to support the allegation that the party was 'schismatic', that Shukri al-Taji 'was related to the Husseinis by marriage'.²⁰ Sometimes the reportage was bland, such as this extract on Ahmad Hilmi Pasha:

He was the son of an Albanian, and became manager of the Hejaz railway from Amman to Medina . . . and in 1936, he became a member of the Arab Higher Committee until 1937, when he was exiled to the Seychelles . . . he was the first of the members of the former Arab Higher Committee to seek re-admission to Palestine and return early in February 1940 . . . and it was said that he was in stagnant financial circumstances.²¹

As for Rashed al-Haj Ibrahim, he was 'not of a good family and was an agitator type with a bad character . . .' About Musa Alami, the eminent Arab personality, all that British intelligence had to say was:

His instinct is all for a quiet life in his pleasant country house outside Jerusalem, or near Jericho. Musa is not the stuff of which leaders are made. He has an element of pessimistic fatalism in him which leads him to accept things as they are and he has neither the strength of character, nor perhaps the desire, to consolidate the Arab politicians behind him.²²

The Safad leader, Subhi al-Khadra, was described as follows:

¹⁹ FO 371/24563, p. 256.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² FO 371/39990, p. 73.

He was a dangerous agitator . . . kept in internment since September 1937 until after representations on his behalf by the Amir Abdullah, his release was granted in May 1940 on LP500 bond paid by Ahmed Helmi Pasha, supporting an undertaking that Khadra will reside in Jerusalem and abstain from all political activities.²³

In Jaffa, the famous Arab orator, Shaikh Abd al-Qader al-Muzaffar, was pictured as someone who 'featured prominently in all the agitation and disturbances up to 1933 . . . and that he was a man of wealth, acquired by his genius for turning patriotic activity to his own material benefit . . . at one time a supporter of Haj Amin, but now his bitter enemy.'²⁴

Earlier reports were even more damning. Following are extracts from one sample.²⁵ On the Arab leader Awni Abd al-Hadi, 'He is not anti-British, but anti-British policy.' About Ya'qub Farraj, 'A man much respected for probity, but not a leader'. On Akram Zu'ayter:

Formerly a schoolmaster, but dismissed for disseminating political propaganda amongst pupils. A good orator, who has a considerable following of the better educated youth. Believed to be in the pay of Italy. An unscrupulous agitator who has, on more than one occasion, fallen foul of the law.

On Salim Abd al-Rahman, 'he is the son of the mayor of Tulkarm. A mischievous agitator and intriguer.' About the educator, writer and historian, George Antonius, he was 'a Christian Arab of Jerusalem who permitted his house to be used for secret meetings of the Arab Higher Committee. An agent of Mr Crane, an American millionaire.' Rashid al-Haj Ibrahim, 'was a Muslim of Haifa who had a varied career as a servant, a merchant, and now a manager of the Arab Bank of Haifa'. Dr Izzat Tannus was 'of a very humble extraction'. About Hasan Sidqi Dajani, 'a young, politically minded Muslim lawyer of Jerusalem, who is somewhat unprincipled . . . acted as secretary of the National Defence Party . . . and has been employed as a French agent'. Who, one wonders, supplied British intelligence with such misinformation?

For a long time the British had been impressed by the single-mindedness and ambition of Haj Amin and the power he wielded through the Supreme Muslim Council, a fact that may perhaps explain

²³ FO 371/24563, p. 257.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ FO 371/20824, Appendix B, p. 181.

why they tended to dismiss his moderate opponents as not truly representing a significant proportion of the Palestinian Arab population. He was described as follows:

a man who, if given rope, was quite capable of putting it to other uses than hanging himself. He is one of the ablest politicians that the Near East has produced in recent years. There is very little of the Arab in him, either in mind or appearance. He is of middle height, of a reddish countenance, and with somewhat foxy features. There is in him none of the stridency of a demagogue. He can provoke fanaticism without himself being a fanatic. By oriental standards, he is sincere in that he is not motivated by financial self-interest. He is one of those uncomfortable people who love power for its own sake; for whom power is not a means to an end, but an end in itself. He is an ascetic in that lust for power leaves no room for other and pleasanter lusts. He is very able and a very dangerous man, who the British made the mistake of underestimating until it was too late. He was not primarily interested in national independence; he was interested in his own personal ascendancy. He was prepared to work in collaboration with other Arab parties just as much as, and just as long as it suited him. The hold he gained on the masses as a result of his manipulation of religious prejudices, combined with judicious use of Awqaf funds under his control, enabled him to take advantage of the grievances resulting from the mandate and to direct these grievances into the channel of rebellion which, under his leadership, assumed the formidable and fanatical quality of a Holy War.²⁶

Another report commented:

Haj Amin has always been the leader of the strongest party; he is also president of the Moslem Supreme Council and Chairman of the Wakfs. He controls all schools and religious institutions, and also an important newspaper (*Gama Al Arabia*). His aspirations for the Arabs are well-known and he has just returned from an extensive tour in Moslem countries where he has voiced them in no uncertain terms. Through the Ulama, he is able to influence enormously the fanatical

²⁶ Quoted in Marlowe, p. 75.

Fellaheen. He has at his disposal more funds than any other Arab political organisation in Palestine. He has returned to find the eyes of the Arab leaders turned to him for guidance. The future attitude of the Arab Executive would therefore appear to depend largely on his lead.²⁷

Meanwhile, Ragheb Nashashibi and his party were briefly described in the following passage: 'a member of a large and distinguished family, and was once Mayor of Jerusalem. His party appears, for the time being, to have been overshadowed by that of his more influential rival, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem.'²⁸

Perhaps because Ragheb's political moderation did not pose a threat to the country's tranquility, the British did not consider its encouragement a matter for urgent action nor did they appreciate its potential importance as a vehicle for a political settlement.

This attitude by the British was somewhat surprising because Ragheb Nashashibi had repeatedly over the years demonstrated singular courage and leadership qualities in times of national tension. For example, in April 1936 when at the beginning of the general strike a delegation of Arab leaders which was due to visit London for talks with the British government had decided to postpone the visit, Ragheb met a number of these Arab leaders in Jerusalem and spoke up against postponement in a public speech. The Palestinian press reported his meeting with Sami Sarraj, Jamil Wahbe, Shawkat Asali, Shaikh Abd al-Bari Barakat, Fa'iz Haddad and Hasan Sidqi Dajani. His speech was reported as follows:

The British government has invited a Palestinian delegation to go to London to be the guest of the British government. This means a lot and it is of great benefit to the Arabs of Palestine as it will bring their problems to the fore. But certain Palestinian leaders believe that the delegation . . . should not go and that the visit date should be postponed. I disagree with them. I believe that the delegation should go to London and that it should have left a long time ago. There is no advantage in postponing its departure now.²⁹

Ragheb told the assembled Arab dignitaries that for the sake of maintaining a united front, he had agreed to postpone his departure too since that was the majority view of the delegation. But he added:

²⁷ CO 733/257, pp. 61, 62.

²⁸ FO 371/20824.

²⁹ First published in *Falastin*, reprinted many years later in *Al-Quds* on 11 August 1982.

If the Arabs of Palestine believe in their leaders they should not interfere with their work. But if they do not have that confidence in them then they should withdraw it and stop their leaders from representing them. I told my friends, the Palestinians, not to be deceived by rhetoric and grand declarations. Rather they should address themselves to the question of what action should be taken that would bring good to the country. I have heard from some of my brothers in Jerusalem that the present strike will continue until our national demands are met. I say this is a difficult matter and that we should think long and hard. I believe that we may reach a stage where the strike may hurt our national interest. I ask the people to control the actions of the Palestinian political parties, and I say control, not interfere, because if you on the street interfere with every action we will have anarchy.

If you see any of your leaders act with tolerance and accept minor measures declared by the British government in Palestine, do not think that we would be doing so in order to secure for ourselves a chair in one of the government offices or be invited to tea by the High Commissioner.

Ragheb supported the strike but insisted that it should have a strategy and be properly planned so that obstacles could be foreseen and obviated; in this way the strike could withstand opposition and pressures. He said:

I hope that the Arab people will not be aggressive towards Arab merchants who are unable to join the strike. Beating them or throwing bombs at them will not make them patriots. It will only bring dismay and confusion to the Palestinians. We have to help each other; we have to depend on each other. We must work quietly and wisely and when we hear rumours we must pause and use our intelligence before deciding whether they are true.³⁰

We should be aware of the kind of leaders who try to fish in troubled waters. We should not encourage young students to enter politics and turn away from their classes. The best thing children can do for their country is to study and learn.

³⁰ Ragheb Nashashibi was accused by his political enemies of opposing the strike because it was harming the economic interests of the wealthy members of his party. Private Information, and Darwaza.

Their nationalist goals will be better served by their success in their classrooms than in demonstrations in the streets.

Three years later on 12 April 1939, Ragheb stopped over in Port Said on his way home from London after attending the St James's Conference. There, Ragheb told the Egyptian press that the conference had been a success. He believed that if the Arabs were to accept the recommendations of the British government then there would soon be an independent Palestine. He praised the Arab states for their backing of the Palestinians. He said: 'About a month ago I passed through here on my way to the conference and I now see something positive in the British proposals. I do not want to say that we have accepted them simply because the Jews have refused them. I have accepted them because they can lead to the attainment of independence for my country.'³¹ He added that unfortunately the Egyptian, Iraqi and Saudi governments as well as the press would not persuade the other Palestinian leaders to support the proposals, and that the Zionists were delighted at the Arab rejection of them. He added that this meant that the proposals would be buried, possibly for good.

In the event, Ragheb was right. His age-old efforts to establish self-governing institutions for the Palestinian Arabs had come to nothing. He knew how difficult it was to attain independence and sovereignty for an Arab Palestine by sheer force of arms or mere rhetoric. The Balfour Declaration was incorporated in the mandate itself and was therefore an integral part of it; it recognized the 'historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine and the grounds for reconstituting their national home in that country.' Repudiating the Balfour Declaration was tantamount to repudiating the mandate itself (an argument often used by the Jewish Zionists and the pro-Zionists in Westminster). The way forward, Ragheb believed since the early twenties, was to work through legal institutions. For that reason the Jews had always regarded Ragheb as a real threat, for had the Palestinian Arabs accepted the British proposals for self-governing bodies, they might have become impregnable—given their numerical superiority.

The Jews had their own institutions, their legislature (Vaad Leumi), their executive (the Jewish Agency), a trade union system (the Histadrut) and were building up a military establishment (the Haganah). For them, it would have been a real misfortune if the Palestinian Arabs had emulated them, and Ragheb Nashashibi had

31 Quoted by Sabri Abu al-Majd in *Al-Musawwar*, January 1989, p. 79.

been urging his compatriots to do just that. But thanks to the extremists and the radicals, the development of Palestinian self-governing institutions had been thwarted. The White Paper of 1939 had effectively deleted the text of the Balfour Declaration from the mandate but this too had been quashed.

The Frivolous Inter-Arab Conflict, 1939

A question mark hangs over Britain's relations with the Arab Palestinians from the early days of the mandate to the founding of the state of Israel. To what extent was the inter-Arab disharmony the result of sheer bungling and ignorance, or did the British exploit—indeed exacerbate—the feud between the al-Husainis and the Nashashibis to 'divide and rule'?

What was happening between the Nashashibis and the al-Husainis in Palestine during the British mandate was actually happening between the al-Mirghanis and the al-Mahdis in the Sudan, between King Farouk and Nahas Pasha in Egypt, between the Iraqi Court and the opposition in Iraq, and among the political parties and factions in India.

In Palestine, one wonders why the British so readily appointed Ragheb Nashashibi in the place of Musa Kazem Pasha al-Husaini in 1920 (removed for his implication in the riots of the same year), and why they appointed Haj Amin al-Husaini to the post of Mufti, despite his having lost the election for that post. One wonders why the British promoted Haj Amin to the rank of 'Grand Mufti', although there was no precedent for it during Ottoman rule, and indeed why they paved the way for Ragheb Nashashibi to remain as the strong notable mayor of Jerusalem for some fourteen years. As the two most prominent families were allowed to hold the two most important posts in Palestine, the stage was set for a sense of rivalry—even antagonism—to develop between them. Encouraging such rivalry—playing one off against the other—would virtually guarantee the failure of every conference that was arranged for the stated purpose of tackling the Palestine problem, and the rejection of every proposal for a settlement. Malice aforethought cannot altogether be ruled out, but blame must primarily rest upon the Arabs themselves. As the mandate stipulated that the mandatory should put into effect the Balfour Declaration—the establishment of a Jewish National Home—British policy in Palestine had to serve that end as a matter of principle. Whenever it seemed to falter like

it did in the 1939 White Paper, there were strong forces about—the Zionists and the immoderate Arabs—to put it firmly back on its track.

The wasteful and frivolous war between the two leading families in Jerusalem—the al-Husainis and the Nashashibis—undoubtedly helped to consolidate the mandate and the Zionists to realize their programme. It should be mentioned however that where non-Palestinians were concerned, Ragheb Nashashibi kept up appearances of solidarity, that all Palestinian Arabs without exception were united in their desire to attain national sovereignty.

For example, on 2 November 1937, the anniversary of the Balfour Declaration, Ragheb Nashashibi, in his capacity as the leader of the National Defence Party, sent the following memorandum¹ to W. D. Battershill, the Chief Secretary of the Palestine government (the officer administering the government in Jerusalem):

2nd November 1937

His Excellency

The Officer Administering the Government

Government Offices

Jerusalem

Your Excellency

On the occasion of the anniversary of the 2nd day of November, the National Defence Party finds it necessary to assure the British Government that the policy which has been adopted in this country, during the last twenty years, and the administrative and economic conditions which were created by the mandatory government for the purpose of governing Palestine in a manner inconsistent with the national aspirations of the Arabs, who form the overwhelming majority of the population, have, after this long period of experience, confirmed the view, which has always been declared by the Arabs, that the unfavourable position in which they were placed in their country and which is detrimental to their national existence, is neither compatible with their natural rights to which they are fully entitled, nor with human justice, and is, above all, inconsistent with the pledges given to them by the British Government during the World War, under which the

¹ Battershill to Ormsby-Gore in FO 371/20828, 2 November 1937.

British Government undertook to assist them to reap the fruits for the part which they played in that war, namely to stand alone.

Experience has shown that the longer this policy, which is based upon the establishment of the Jewish National Home is pursued, the more this country is subjected to new calamities and afflictions, and the more it becomes clear that it would be impossible to convert this Arab country, irrespective of the methods which may be adopted, into a national home for non-Arabs.

The National Defence Party is of the confident opinion that it is high time now for the enlightened British statesmanship, and the British Government, who has intimate and close relations and established traditions with the Arab and Moslem world, in view of the alarming events which took place in Palestine, as a result of the abnormal position in which the country was forcibly placed, to change this policy by adopting, at a non-distant date, proper methods in settling the problem of this Holy Land in a manner which will enable its inhabitants to exercise their right in national government and national sovereignty, on a representative and constitutional basis, which are familiar throughout the world.

The Arabs have been persistently putting forward their just demand which has been admitted to them, as a people fully qualified to govern themselves. The Arabs were, and still are, united in their endeavour to obtain this demand, which has always been unanimously adopted by their congresses and confirmed by their delegations, and in the memoranda which they submitted to the British Government on all occasions.

As long as the policy, of which the Arabs complain, continues to be applied in spirit and letter, and so long as the Arabs continue to be deprived of their national right to govern their country, that policy will be the source of their strong protest and will increase their persistent demand for the settlement of their problem in a manner which will enable them to obtain their objective: liberty and independence.

The National Defence Party will be grateful if copies of this memorandum may be forwarded to the Right Honourable Secretary of State for the Colonies, and the Permanent Mandates Commission.

With highest respects,
 [signed] Ragheb al-Nashashibi
 President, National Defence Party

Battershill seemed rather annoyed by this discourse, for it came at a time when the British had taken vigorous action against the members of the Arab Higher Committee and, if anything, had expected Ragheb grateful rather than awkward. He forwarded the memorandum to London with a covering letter² alleging that due to the passive attitude of the National Defence Party and its leader, the party had 'now very little influence in the country'.

This was at the height of the terror campaign against the moderate voices, and Battershill was well aware that no one could do anything positive short of taking up arms and plunging the country further into chaos. All Ragheb Nashashibi could do was to show solidarity with all Palestinian Arabs in their struggle for their cause, that in this respect there were no 'moderate' and no 'extremist' Arabs. He gave interviews to this effect, one of which was quoted by a Mrs A. J. Brooks in her letter to the editor of the *Manchester Guardian* of 2 December 1937. Mrs Brooks had earlier written about the Palestinian question and had referred to the British mandate as 'the Balfour mandate'—an apt fusion! Her letter quotes Ragheb's statement as follows:

'In fact, there is not among them [the Arabs] any one Arab who can be described as "extremist" and another as "moderate", for our cause is that of a whole nation, and our entire nation is in agreement—in all societies and in all parties. If those who use the words "extremist" and "moderate" believe that there are Arabs who could accept what the whole nation refuses, the only thing one can say about them is that their belief is without foundation.'

This statement was published in all Egyptian newspapers and in the Sudan (in Arabic), during the first week of November 1937.

Ragheb's putting on a brave front about inter-Arab relations was for the benefit of the general public or a common enemy, but he would not keep up the pretence in private with people who knew better. Before going to London to attend the proposed London conference, possibly to be held early in 1939, Ragheb Nashashibi had a meeting with Nuri Pasha al-Sa'id in Cairo on 29 November 1938 to exchange opinions as to the conditions affecting that conference. The British Ambassador Sir

² Ibid.

Miles Lampson also attended. Ragheb was pessimistic and could not see any possibility for anything fruitful to come out of it. Nuri Pasha had earlier called him by telephone at the Heliopolis Palace Hotel and had asked to meet him in the house of the former Egyptian prime minister, Isma'il Sidqi Pasha, in Zamalek (an elegant quarter in Cairo). On arrival, Ragheb and Nuri Pasha greeted each other warmly, but it soon became apparent as the conversation proceeded that they were by no means of similar opinion on the various aspects of the Palestine problem. This was particularly apparent when Ragheb Nashashibi launched into a bitter and outspoken attack against the Mufti and his party and made very sarcastic comments as to the use to which the Mufti and his administrators had put the charitable funds collected from Iraq, Egypt and others on behalf of the poor folk and peasantry of Palestine.

Ragheb expressed grave doubts about a successful outcome of the proposed London conference, unless Palestine itself became governable.

Next morning the British Ambassador in Cairo sent the following telegram to his government:³

On 29th November I met Ragheb Bey Nashashibi and General Nuri Pasha as-Said at the house of a mutual Egyptian friend in Zamalek. Nuri Pasha, and Ragheb Bey, had apparently met mainly with a view to exchanging opinions as to conditions affecting the possible conference, which is proposed to be held in London for the discussion of the Palestine problem.

The report quoted Ragheb telling Nuri:

'Amongst other things, I hope you will note, my dear Pasha, while you are in Egypt, what pleasant good cheer the funds which you helped to collect in Iraq are giving to the Palestinian leaders in Cairo, so that they can sit comfortably in Cairo hotels and sip their cocktails in new suits while they plan charity in the form of murdering the British in Palestine, and of crushing, without mercy, any Arab who dares to express an individual opinion, or any peasant who will not give lodging and protection in his house to their terrorist friends.'

It was very obvious—the report concluded—that this subject was not at all congenial to Nuri Pasha.

³ FO 371/21869, 30 November 1938.

Ragheb Bey continued to speak further very caustically of the weakness of the British government in Palestine. He said, 'I have never before heard of any part of the great British Empire where the British administrators are quite without authority and quite unable to control their administration. Even the High Commissioner himself appears to have no authority to make any decision which he may think right, and every outrage and misery which we moderates in Palestine have to suffer remains unchecked by the Palestine government, while countless references and counter references are made to the Colonial Office and while the damage to us grows beyond repair. Meantime, consideration has often been given to the opinions and wishes of the Mufti who is allowed to be a real dictator from his Lebanon Headquarters, is allowed to organise assassinations, the smuggling of arms into Palestine by sea from Syria, and from Egypt, and friendly contacts with German and Italian propagandists who are continually active in Palestine on his behalf.'

When Ragheb Bey had grown somewhat calmer he and the Pasha discussed at great length the actual possibilities of the conference in London serving a useful purpose. The conversation, though lengthy, seemed to bring no very constructive proposal. Ragheb Bey, himself, expressed great doubt as to its serving any useful purpose unless Palestine, itself, first came under proper administrative control. He expressed his conditional willingness to represent his own party in such a conference.

Two months passed.

On 1 February 1939 Sir Miles Lampson sent the following telegram to the Foreign Office:⁴

Refers to Cairo Telegram No. 91 of 31st January 1939, (E 792/6/31.) 'Ragheb' states that his party will be represented—to London Conference—by a separate delegation composed of himself, Suleiman Toukan, and Dr Fuad al-Dajany or Abdul Rauf Al-Bitar as delegates; Fakhri Nashashibi as councillor and Mohammed Younis Effendi as Secretary. Gives details of available airliners and requests advice from High Commission as to the day on which passages should be reserved. Have thought it inadvisable to acquaint Ragheb

⁴ FO 371/23221, 1 February 1939.

with substance of Foreign Office Telegram No. 89 of 31st January. END

On 2 February 1939 the following telegram⁵ was sent by the Colonial Secretary to Sir Miles Lampson concerning the participation of Fakhri Nashashibi in the proposed London conference:

We positively make the suggestion that Fakhri's arrival in London should be postponed. Only if some convenient opportunity presents itself for arranging this should H. Commissioner or you tactfully seize it. Perhaps it is impossible to get four seats on Imperial Airways plane of Feb. 5th or perhaps Fakhri would prefer to come by sea . . . In any case, best thing is for Ragheb to proceed to London with his colleagues *excluding* Fakhri if possible, by Imperial Airways leaving Alexandria on Sunday Feb. 5th. Above is for your information only. Repeated Jerusalem 8o. END

The British were clearly following a policy of appeasement towards the Arab radicals. These carried the gun, whilst the moderate voice of Ragheb was hardly audible in the circumstances. Fakhri, on the other hand, was leading an aggressive counter-terrorist campaign, and was anathema to the Mufti and his followers. To keep Fakhri out of London, the British thought, would keep the temperature down at the conference, and appease the Arab extremists.

Meanwhile in Palestine the general situation had been deteriorating. On 29 December 1938 W. D. Battershill had sent dispatches to all the District Commissioners in the main towns of Palestine in which he stated that many so-called moderate Arabs had been murdered and many leading men belonging to the National Defence Party and others not necessarily connected with that party, but not being whole-hearted supporters of Haj Amin, had had to leave the country hurriedly to save their lives. The elimination by Arabs of Arab opponents to the Mufti was continuing. But nothing drastic was done to stem this rising tide of violence.

In fact, the extremists were becoming even more intransigent. On 20 January 1939 the newly resuscitated Arab Higher Committee, under the leadership of the Mufti, declared its refusal to accept Ragheb Nashashibi as part of the Arab delegation attending the London conference on Palestine. The Arab potentates—King Farouk, Prince Abd al-Ilah and the Imam of the Yemen—supported the Mufti's

⁵ Ibid., 2 February 1939.

decision; and in a dispatch to London, the High Commissioner for Palestine remarked: 'Ragheb himself is unlikely to be able to proceed to London in a private capacity as he is bankrupt and his wife has been selling the family effects to keep affairs going.'⁶

On 25 January 1939 Sir Miles Lampson in Cairo reported to London that Ragheb Nashashibi refused to select himself and only two members of the delegation, because he claimed the right of a 50 per cent representation therein, and that there should be no head of the delegation.⁷

As the date of the London conference approached, the clashes between the two main political parties in Palestine intensified. On 26 January 1939 Lampson cabled London as follows:

Failing to agree with Ragheb Nashashibi on the number of his party's representatives in the conference, there is no alternative to holding the conference without Defence Party representatives. Nuri Pasha El Said, claims to possess a statement signed by Ragheb Nashashibi regarding the policy of his party on Palestine. As this statement of Nashashibi is similar to that of the Mufti—Haj Amin—concludes that it is a question of a feud between the two families rather than anything else.⁸

On 30 January 1939, Lampson again sent a telegram to London reporting that Ragheb Nashashibi insisted on the following points concerning his participation at the London conference:

1. He will go to London conference with three delegates from the National Defence Party.
2. He desires these delegates should be included in a single Palestinian delegation which, however, should be without a President.
3. If such inclusion should prove impracticable, he would acquiesce in a separate delegation of his party, composed as above. But Ragheb Bey repeated his objection to two delegations.⁹

On 2 February 1939 Malcolm MacDonald, the Colonial Secretary, had a meeting with the Palestinian Arab delegation at St James's Palace regarding the proposed representation of the National Defence Party and confirmed the report which had appeared in *The Times* that Ragheb Nashashibi had selected as his three delegates himself, Sulaiman

6 Ibid., 20 January 1939.

7 Ibid., 25 January 1939.

8 Ibid., 26 January 1939.

9 Ibid., 30 January 1939.

Tuqan, and, for the third place either Fu'ad Dajani or Abd al-Ra'uf al-Bitar, with Fakhri Nashashibi as counsellor and Muhammad Yunis as secretary. The Palestine Arab delegation—according to the minutes of the conference on 2 February 1939¹⁰—were obviously greatly upset by the news. Jamal al-Husaini took the line that it was anomalous that the National Defence Party should have three representatives whereas none of the other parties were represented by more than one member of the existing delegation. Jamal explained that Alfred Rock had been appointed to the delegation not as a member of the Palestine Arab Party, but as the representative of the Roman Catholic Christians.

The Secretary of State—according to the same minutes—pointed out that when he saw the Palestinian Arab leaders on 30 January at the Park Lane Hotel he had made it quite clear that the government had offered Ragheb Nashashibi the right freely to select two or, if necessary, three delegates, with an adviser and a secretary. On the point of numbers, there was no change in the situation.

Here, Jamal al-Husaini interrupted angrily in a loud voice, raising particular objection to the inclusion of Fakhri Nashashibi as adviser and Abd al-Ra'uf al-Bitar as a delegate. These two men were, he alleged in an excitable manner, 'hand in glove with the British Military Intelligence Service and with the Zionists and were regarded by the people of Palestine as having stabbed the nation in the back.'

MacDonald said the government had taken no responsibility for selecting the National Defence Party delegates and having offered Ragheb Nashashibi the right to select his own men, it was not in a position to reject the names which had now been put forward. He repeated his assurance that the government was anxious that the Arab case should be presented by a united Arab Front representing all sections of Palestinian public opinion. It had no desire to play off one side against the other. He thought that it was a great pity that this matter of the representation of the National Defence Party had not been settled before the Egyptian and Arab delegations had left Cairo.

According to these minutes, MacDonald added that a

telegram had been sent to the British Ambassador in Cairo strongly urging that their departure should be delayed for a few days in order to settle the question, but a reply had been received that General Nuri Said and Fouad Hamza had already left Cairo and that it was too late to alter the arrangements of the others. In the circumstances, the British

10 Minutes of the Conferences on Palestine 1939 in FO 371/23223, 2 February 1939.

Government had been compelled to continue the negotiations through the British Ambassador and to arrange for the appointment of Defence Party delegates in the hope of securing their acceptance by the Palestinian Arab delegation on their arrival in London.

It was virtually impossible for the British government to adhere to a policy of appeasement without losing face. MacDonal simply had to defend its position *vis-à-vis* the National Defence Party.

Jamal al-Husaini then asked whether the departure of the Defence Party delegates could not be postponed for a few days in order to give time for further consideration. He said that the Palestinian Arab delegation would have to consult their friends in Syria and Lebanon—meaning the Mufti—before deciding finally on their course of action and they would telegraph that evening. Alfred Rock of the delegation suggested that if the British government was unable to recede from their offer to Ragheb Nashashibi that he could freely select three delegates, it might be possible for it to use its influence with Nashashibi to induce him at least to remove some personalities from his delegation. But the Colonial Secretary informed the delegates quite definitely that his government could not withdraw the offer that had been made to Ragheb Nashashibi and the National Defence Party. He said that whether suggestions could be made to him on the lines proposed by Alfred Rock was a matter for consideration, but he thought that this might be difficult at the present.

Later that evening MacDonal had a private discussion with Nuri al-Sa'id, Ali Maher and Fu'ad Hamza. They agreed that the Arab cause would best be served if a united Arab delegation could be secured. They thought that two delegates would adequately represent the National Defence Party seeing that the party only had two members on the old Arab Higher Committee. Nuri believed that the Mufti might be persuaded to accept Ragheb Nashashibi and Ya'qub Farraj as delegates and suggested that a telegram be sent to Miles Lampson in Cairo asking him to urge Ragheb to modify his position on these lines. A telegram was then drafted to Miles Lampson, and later on the same evening the four men, together with Prince Abd al-Mon'em of Egypt, met again at the Dorchester. Nuri said that he, Ali Maher and Fu'ad Hamza had talked to the Palestinian Arab delegation and that the situation could now be summed up as follows.

If the Mufti could not be persuaded to accept Ragheb and Farraj, and the British government decided that it must invite a separate Arab delegation headed by Ragheb, it might be possible to persuade the

Palestinian Arab delegation not to withdraw from the conference provided that a statement were issued by the Egyptian, Iraqi and Saudi Arabian representatives to the following effect:

Representatives of Egypt, Iraq and Saudi Arabia have used their best endeavours to secure agreement on the constitution of a united Palestinian Arab delegation including representatives of the Defence Party. These efforts having failed, His Majesty's Government have decided, entirely of their own responsibility, to accord recognition to a separate delegation representing the National Defence Party. In such circumstances, the delegations of the neighbouring Arab states would continue to recognise and support the Palestinian Arab delegation and would sit with them at the conference. They would not however be able to accord any official recognition or support to the National Defence Party delegation and would not attend the meetings of that delegation with the Government. They would, however, maintain informal contact with the Defence Party delegates.¹¹

The draft telegram to Lampson was then revised on these lines before dispatch. Ragheb Nashashibi and his delegation including Ya'qub Farraj arrived in London and were met by a senior Foreign Office official who told them that they were welcome to attend the London Conference on Palestine and that the British government had been doing its best to get their party incorporated in the existing Palestinian Arab delegation to form a united Arab front. The delegates of the Defence Party replied that the question was not whether the other delegates agreed to sit down with them, but whether their party would consent to sit at the same table with abettors in and accessories to murder.

The St James's Conference was formally opened on 7 February 1939. But Ragheb Nashashibi, having heard of the bitter resistance put up by the other Arabs to his nominees' inclusion in the Arab delegation, decided to boycott the conference, citing ill-health as an excuse. He felt angry and disgusted. The Arab delegates understood why he had withdrawn and requested Malcolm MacDonald to send him a letter conveying their regret. It ran as follows:¹²

Dear Ragheb Bey,

At the Conference meeting this evening the Secretary

¹¹ Ibid., 3 February 1939.

¹² Ibid., 9 February 1939.

General of the Palestinian Arab Delegation reported to the Conference that all members of the Delegation in London were present except yourself and that you had sent a message to say that you were prevented from coming owing to ill-health.

On the motion of Ali Maher Pasha the Conference unanimously requested me to convey to you an expression of the great regret with which they had learnt of your illness, coupled with their best wishes for your speedy recovery.

May I add how much I personally hope that a short rest will quickly and entirely restore your strength.

Yours sincerely,

[signed] Malcolm MacDonald

Next morning, from the Carlton Hotel, Ragheb Nashashibi answered with the following letter:¹³

Dear Mr MacDonald,

Thank you for your letter in which you kindly conveyed to me your wishes together with the unanimous wish of the Conference for my recovery.

You can rest assured that I regretted, very much, not to have been able to attend the meeting yesterday.

I hope that you and all Delegates to the Conference would be kind as to accept my best wishes for attaining favourable results, which would secure peace in Palestine.

Thanking you again.

Yours sincerely

[signed] Ragheb Nashashibi

While the conference was in session, and 'an agreed solution between representatives of the National Defence Party and the rest of the Delegation' was out of the question, Ragheb saw no point in weakening the Arab case by carrying dissension any further. However, the latest clash on the diplomatic front though initiated in public and seemingly won by the Mufti's men, provoked further acts of terrorism in Palestine against the Nashashibi family, the Nashashibi party, and moderates generally, one of the victims being a schoolboy belonging to the Nashashibi family.¹⁴

¹³ Ibid., 10 February 1939.

¹⁴ Marlowe, p. 215. The victim was Adnan Mahmud Nameq Nashashibi. He was shot while watching a football match between his school and another in the Arab quarter of Jerusalem.

All the same, Ragheb and Ya'qub Farraj decided to attend the last few sessions. Circumstances had changed. Malcolm MacDonald and other political figures, including Nuri al-Sa'id, had been to see Ragheb several times, the latter every day. Nuri had succeeded in lessening the tension between Ragheb and the other members of the Arab Palestinian delegation so that it had now become feasible for Ragheb to attend without loss of face on either side.

The outcome of the London Conference on Palestine was the White Paper of 17 May 1939. The National Defence Party officially accepted the terms of the White Paper. The Jews, who opposed it and pledged to fight it until the end, mounted a campaign of denigration against the only Arab leader who accepted it, Ragheb Nashashibi. They said that he was but an old man—he was then only 57 years old—and that his party was small, corrupt and insignificant.

Jewish vilification of Ragheb and his party found an echo in the High Commissioner's confidential reports to his government. The following is the text of Harold MacMichael's communication of 27 June 1940 to Lord Lloyd of Dolobran, the new Colonial Secretary.¹⁵ The text is remarkably consistent with an earlier communication, dated 31 December 1939, to Lloyd's predecessor.

The report read as follows:

My Lord,

Ever since the publication of the White Paper, there have of course been various local stirrings in Arab political circles. Until the end of the disturbances in the autumn of last year these were little noticeable, except for the formal acceptance of His Majesty's Government's policy by the leaders of the Defence Party. That party, however, commanded little respect and its following was small. Its figurehead, Ragheb Bey Nashashibi, is a past number; its Secretary and most energetic member, Fakhri Nashashibi, is a young blackguard whose energies are chiefly devoted to self interest and who is believed to be in Jewish pay. The best man in the party is Suleiman Bey Tuqan, the Mayor of Nablus, who will have no truck with Fakhri but is too loyal to Ragheb Bey to break away from him; the next most influential members are the Bitar brothers of Jaffa, who appear at present to be steering a more or less independent course.

With the gradual return of the 'exiles', Hilmi Pasha and

¹⁵ FO 371/24563, 27 June 1940, p. 242.

others, the stirrings have become more marked and there have been many discussions here and there regarding the possibility of forming a new party, either independent of the Defence Party or by its whole or partial absorption. None of these discussions have so far resulted in anything concrete.

The Right Honourable The Lord Lloyd of Dolobran, P.C., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., D.S.O.

His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies

His statement about the only man and party to accept British policy as enshrined in the 1939 White Paper, quite apart from being defamatory, described them as a spent force. With the outbreak of the war in Europe the Palestine question was put on the shelf, and the frivolous war between the Arab leaders came to an end, to be resumed in a milder form for a brief period in 1947.

The events leading up to the creation of the Jewish state in Palestine are described in detail in countless publications: how since 1941 the Zionists in the United States campaigned for a Jewish state in Palestine; how American sympathy for the Jews began to grow when reports of Nazi mass exterminations of Jews began to filter through to America; how for compelling electoral considerations in the United States the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry in early 1946, while recommending bi-nationalism, tended to focus on the question of how far Palestine could absorb Jewish refugees. Events moved fast from then on. In February 1947 the British government, which had come under intense pressure from the United States to admit 100,000 Jews into Palestine, decided to refer the Palestinian question to the UN. Then in April 1947 the UN Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) devised two partition plans, and on 29 November the Zionists succeeded, with the help of President Truman and his administration, in securing a UN resolution recommending to the mandatory the partitioning of Palestine. The British immediately began to plan for their withdrawal and announced their intention to do so in the middle of May 1948. On 15 May the Jews in Palestine proclaimed the state of Israel, whose provisional government was instantly recognized by the United States and three days later by the Soviet Union. Five Arab states—Egypt, Transjordan, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq—misjudging the strength of the Israeli armed forces and overestimating their own, advanced into Palestine and stepped into a quagmire. The UN Mediator, Count Folke Bernadotte, managed to secure a month's truce during which the Israelis obtained substantial quantities of military hardware from several sources, particularly from Czechoslovakia.

Fighting was resumed on 8 July, ended on 18 July, and resumed again until well into 1949 when the Arabs signed separate armistice agreements with Israel of indefinite duration.¹⁶

The war ended with nearly 80 per cent of Palestine under Israeli control and the forcible displacement of nearly one million Palestinian Arabs, their lands and possessions confiscated. This was achieved by Jewish terrorist operations such as had been run with outstanding savagery against the village of Deir Yasin on 9 April 1948. One other victim of Jewish terror was the UN Mediator himself, Count Bernadotte.

¹⁶ Egypt signed on 24 February; Jordan's armistice agreement which also covered Iraqi troop withdrawal, was signed on 3 April; Lebanon signed on 23 March, and Syria on 29 July 1949.

Musa Alami: Another Moderate, Another Victim

The convening of the London Conference on Palestine in 1939 was very much a personal tribute to the diplomatic genius of the independent Palestinian personality, Musa Alami. The role he played was, in my view, one of the greatest ever performed by an Arab in search of a solution to the Palestinian problem. I relate the story here in the way he told it to me. He was kind enough to let me record his words on tape and let me use the information in my book (in Arabic)¹ about the high moments in his life. As the conversations were conducted in Arabic, Musa's quoting of Englishmen, like Malcolm MacDonald and Ernest Bevin, was in Arabic (and not verbatim). In retranslating back into English much of the actual language used by these men has lost its lustre, but the substance of what they said has remained intact.

Musa was my friend and, as described in Chapter 8, I was privileged to work with him in the Arab Office in Jerusalem during the turbulent days of the mid-forties.

A high point in his career occurred in 1939 in the days leading up to the St James's Conference. The story began in Geneva where he was undergoing medical treatment. He was staying at the charming Hotel Victoria overlooking the lake when the peace and tranquility was broken by an unexpected telephone call from his brother-in-law, Jamal al-Husaini, in Cairo.

Jamal told him that the Arab Higher Committee had decided to send a delegation to Britain to explain to the British government why it was boycotting the proposed London conference. The British government had invited a full delegation from among the Arabs and, as Jamal explained to Musa, it had been his intention to head such a team but for the British government's refusal to grant him an entry visa.

Jamal told Musa that he would be travelling to Europe to meet his

¹ Nasser Eddin Nashashibi, *Akher al-amaleqa ja'a min al-Quds: qessat al-za'im al-falastini Musa al-Alami* (Madrid, 1986).

Arab friends and to try to muster support for his application for a British entry visa. Jamal asked Musa whether he would be able to meet him in Paris but suddenly remembered that the French authorities had also imposed entry restrictions on him. Germany was the next suggestion. 'What do you think if we met in Hamburg? I could take a boat any time and would be there shortly. Yes, let's meet in Hamburg.' Musa Alami agreed.

Musa travelled by train from Geneva to Hamburg where he booked in at the Four Seasons Hotel awaiting the arrival of his relative. Several days later Jamal turned up at Hamburg port where Musa was waiting to greet him. Without wasting any time, Jamal set about contacting his friends in London to urge them to support his application for a visa to the UK.

One of those Jamal contacted was Izzat Tannus, a personal friend of the Mufti, who was then working in London as a representative of the Arab Higher Committee. In spite of his position, Tannus was unable to secure a visa for Jamal. None of the other so-called influential people Jamal contacted were any more successful. Musa and Jamal were now totally frustrated with the British government's uncompromising attitude towards Jamal. Faced with a dead end, Jamal abandoned all hope of going to London and decided to return to Cairo. Before leaving Jamal asked Musa what his plans were now that he had decided to go back to Egypt. Musa replied that he would continue with his medical treatment in Geneva and, of course, await events in Palestine. He also said that he might try to go to London if the British authorities granted him a visa. Musa recalled how he saw a twinkle in Jamal's eyes, which suggested that his resourceful brother-in-law had just come up with an idea. Sure enough, Jamal said:

Musa, why don't you go to London in my place? I'm sure you can get a visa, so why don't you go in my place? You always told me that you love London, and that it was in your plans to visit the great city after your treatment. We are not involving you in high politics. I know politics is something you have always refused to get involved in. You have always told me that you were not born to be a politician. The purpose of your visit would only be to generate publicity; you would merely play a semi-political role. I want you to explain to the people who matter in London why the Arabs are refusing to accept the invitation to a new conference and you, Musa, have many friends and I'm sure you would succeed in this mission.

This impassioned plea, Musa later revealed to me, only made him

angrier and feel more distressed. However, he finally agreed on condition that he would not be required to meet any senior British government official and that he would confine his meetings to friends and personal acquaintances. If he was to go he would go as his own man free of any political affiliations. The two men agreed and went their separate ways: Jamal to Cairo and Musa to London.

Musa enjoyed the friendship of many senior and influential people in the political, literary and intellectual circles in London. One was the Conservative politician R. A. Butler (RAB), who was then a parliamentary Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office and later came within a whisker of leading his party and his country. Musa often reflected that it was political acrimony that cost Butler the leadership of the Conservative Party, a state of affairs not lost on Musa who had long lamented the bitter in-fighting among Arab leaders which ultimately cost them their country.

His lifelong friend was the gentleman scholar Harold Bowen, who enjoyed an enviable reputation for his intellect and his rigorous debating skills. They were at Trinity Hall, Cambridge, at the same time and became close friends. Bowen wrote a book on the brilliant Arab statesman Ali Bin Isa in which he proved conclusively that Isa was the first man to devise and highlight the importance of the concept of a financial budget in the management of a society. He collaborated with H. A. R. Gibb in producing the authoritative treatise, *Islamic Society and the West*. Bowen was a man of means, and his hospitality was warm and gracious. It came as no surprise to Musa when Bowen suggested that he used his home as his base while in London.

Bowen went out of his way to invite some of the most illustrious names in London society so that Musa could mix with the capital's most influential people from all walks of life. Musa made the most of these occasions. He lost no opportunity explaining Arab thinking on the Palestinian question and especially on the British government's initiative for a fresh conference on the Palestine issue. Musa also explained why the Arabs had lost faith in British policy after suffering gravely from the effects of it in Palestine. Honesty and integrity were no longer prized assets in British diplomacy, he said.

Harold Bowen's wife was a glittering figure on London's social circuit. She came from one of the most noble families of Tsarist Russia and often hosted parties from some of that country's greatest ballerinas and singers. It was at one such gathering that Musa met Madame Lopokova, the great Russian dancer who later became the wife of the celebrated economist John Maynard Keynes.

Musa spent a whirlwind month in London after which he felt he had

accomplished his duty and could therefore leave for Geneva and the Middle East. Musa believed he had presented the Palestinian case in its true light to the cream of London society. He had told the British that the Arabs of Palestine did not dislike the British as a people; they merely detested the hypocrisy, the lying, the double-dealing which characterized Britain's political conduct. He had also relayed to the important people he had met the urgent need for Britain to act decisively and to state its position on the Palestinian issue in advance of the proposed London conference. Musa had also tried to impress upon them that their government needed to do something quickly to convince the Arabs of Palestine that they genuinely sought a fair and peaceful settlement.

Safe in the knowledge that he had translated Jamal's wishes before a potentially influential English audience, Musa set about arranging his departure. But all planes and trains from London to Geneva were fully booked, and Musa was left hanging about, frustrated. Eventually he managed to book his return trip. A day before his departure, Musa was having tea with some English friends at a hotel in London when a stranger approached the table at which they were seated and said something to one of the Englishmen, obviously referring to Musa. The man was then introduced to Musa and without a moment's delay he announced that he was carrying a message from Malcolm MacDonald inviting Musa Alami for talks on the Palestine issue.

Musa promptly declined the offer. He told the messenger it would be impossible to accept the offer because he was scheduled to leave for Geneva the following day. He added that if the invitation was a social invitation then he apologized for not being able to accept; if it was political in nature then he regretted that it had been offered in the first place because he was in no position to take political initiatives.

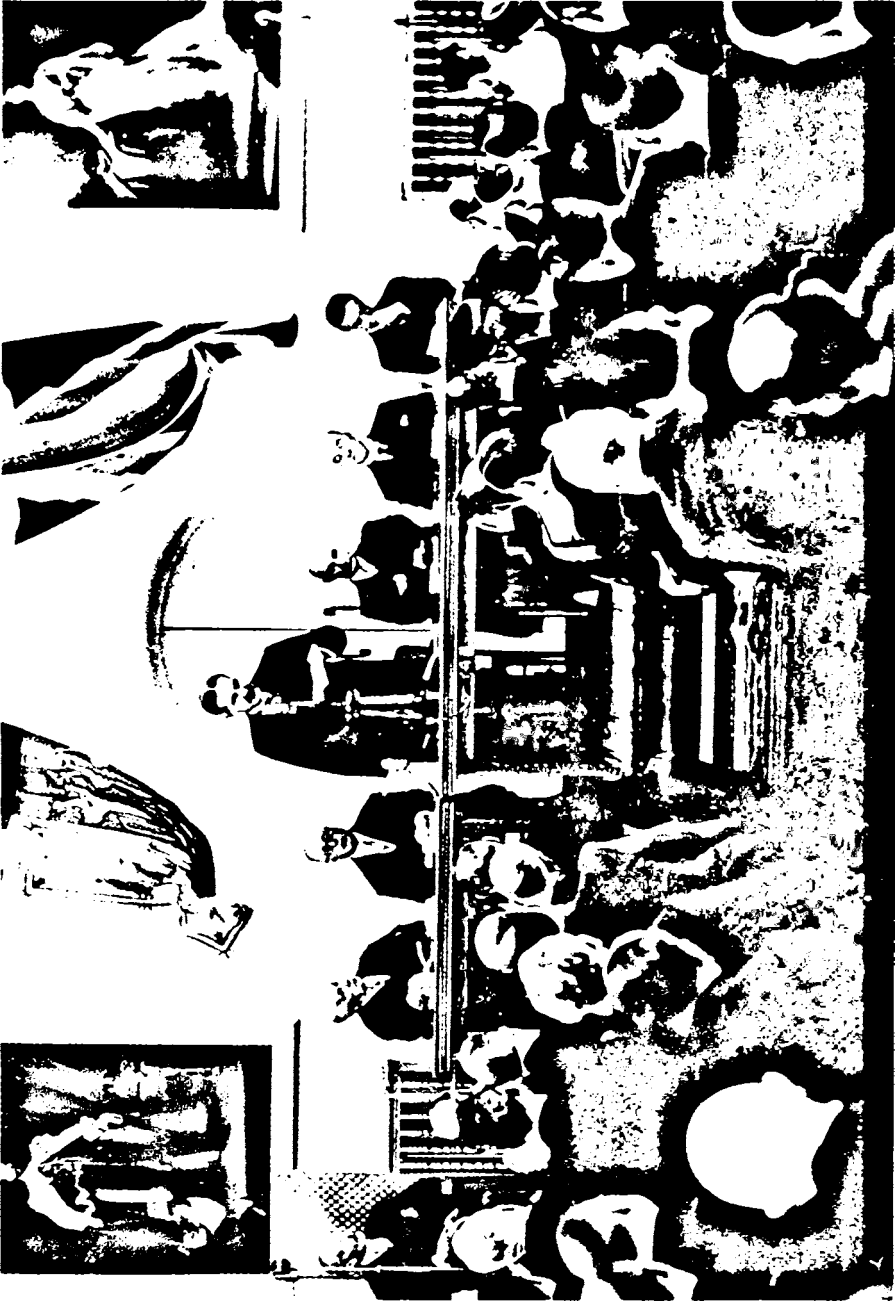
I am not a politician and I am not a leader. I have nothing to offer and no one to represent. I am a simple Palestinian belonging to no party and I do not deserve the honour of meeting a minister of the crown.

The messenger was persistent. He told Musa that the Colonial Secretary was anxious to discuss a number of subjects of crucial importance but Musa would not be swayed. He finished his tea and returned to Bowen's house. There, to his surprise, the messenger was waiting, still eager to press the minister's invitation on him.

The messenger said that the Secretary of State was most anxious to meet him and that he should not concern himself with the disruption this would cause to his travel arrangements, that the British government



2.1 Fakhri Nashashibi, Ragheb's right-hand man, was assassinated in Baghdad in November 1941. He wrote a 'De Profundis' about the reign of terror imposed on the moderate Palestinian Arabs by the Arab extremists.



2.2 The Peel Commission in session, 1937.



2.3 At the time of the St James's Conference in 1939, this picture was taken of a private round-table meeting between the Colonial Secretary, far right, and Ali Maher Pasha of Egypt on his right and Nuri al-Sa'id Pasha on his left.



2.4 The author, left, with Musa Alami in Geneva in 1974. In 1938 Musa Alami had separate talks with the Colonial Secretary which resulted in a protocol in which it was agreed that the forthcoming London Conference (1939) would find ways and means of achieving the independence of Palestine.

would rearrange everything with the utmost urgency. When Musa again declined the invitation, Bowen intervened and suggested he changed his mind. Bowen said that by meeting MacDonald he might perhaps render a service to the Palestinians—the very purpose for which he had come to England.

Musa Alami accepted his host's advice and the next day he arrived at the office of the Colonial Secretary in Whitehall. He was greeted at the door in a particularly warm and friendly manner by MacDonald himself. This show of courtesy made Musa forget the disagreement the two men had had on the terrace of the House of Commons several years earlier after Ramsay MacDonald had buckled under Zionist pressure and repudiated the findings of a report written by Sir John Hope Simpson in 1929. The report had been favourable to the Palestinian Arabs in that it had urged drastic curtailment of Jewish immigration and land settlement. Ramsay MacDonald had gone as far as to write a letter to Weizmann assuring him that immigration and land settlement would continue. This had made Musa furious and had provoked the argument with Malcolm MacDonald.

Musa recalled to me in considerable detail his bitter exchange with MacDonald at the time. MacDonald had spoken harshly to Musa about the Arab Palestinians. 'You are a nation without use,' he had scoffed. 'Do you think that you are able to cancel the Balfour Declaration in which we promised to establish in Palestine a national home for the Jews? Do you think you can tamper with our pledges?'

Musa's retort had been equally scathing:

You have no understanding of our country. You are arrogant and conceited, and this attitude is the poison which will isolate the British from the rest of the world. Do you think that because of your empire you are different from the rest of the world? We Arabs have ruled much of the world long before you. You are talking to me now, Mr MacDonald, in the language of the dark ages and with the same arrogance shown by the rulers of the dark ages. Your remarks have no logic and are devoid of any sense of justice.

Musa had spoken with passion and anger. 'I gave him a lecture on how he should treat and address respectable people.'

But how people change with time, Musa now reflected. For here, over a decade later, was the formerly bumptious, self-assured and swaggering politician extending an olive branch to Musa Alami. Now MacDonald was a Secretary of State with the power to translate into reality the words he had uttered several years before, and Musa the

reluctant leader of a people determined to resist the liquidation of their country in favour of the Zionists.

Musa recalled:

After a long time I met him again. Now it was he who invited me to a meeting and even insisted that I postpone my departure. He himself came to greet me at the door of his office and shook my hand with warmth and politeness.

'I am very pleased to meet you after such a long time, Mr Alami. I hope this time we meet as friends and depart as friends because since our last meeting several years ago I have learnt a great deal, discovered a lot of new facts and have learnt to understand what is useful for Palestine.'

I listened carefully to my old adversary. He went on:

'I wanted to meet you because the Cabinet has delegated to me the authority to discuss with you the Palestine issue. I am meeting you on behalf of the British government and anything we agree now means that it will have the backing of the British government.'

He continued:

'I know, Mr Alami, in your country you do not represent any party or any organization and I also know you do not want to represent any party or political organization. But we here in the government have decided that if we are to plan for a reasonable settlement we have to seek the advice of a man who is known for his clear thinking, and I know, Mr Alami, that there is no one who has clearer thoughts and a clearer conscience than yourself.'

Musa told me that throughout the meeting he sensed that MacDonald wanted to impress upon him that he was not just speaking for himself but for the British government. MacDonald had stressed this several times. He wanted Musa to understand the facts as they were. He knew that Musa was non-partisan and he knew that anything that Musa said was strictly his own opinion and not binding on any other Arab leader or party. MacDonald continued: 'If, Mr Alami, we are able to agree on a solution for the Palestine problem I will put it in the form of a protocol. I will sign it on behalf of the British Cabinet and I will leave it to you to sign in your personal capacity and nothing more.'

The prospect of signing such an important document in a personal capacity with the British government was naturally a matter of grave concern to Musa. He later told me:

I was surprised [at the offer] and anxious. I thought that my colleagues [the other Arab and Palestinian leaders] would be furious once they heard of my meeting with MacDonald. Sure enough they reacted with predictable hostility and attacked me, especially since my meetings with MacDonald had gone on for two and a half weeks. I used to go to his office every day and we eventually agreed on a mutually acceptable protocol.

Three copies of the document were made. One went to the British prime minister's office, another to MacDonald and the third to Musa Alami. He then took the document to Beirut, handed it to the Mufti, Haj Amin, and never saw it again. On subsequent visits to London Musa even asked Harold Beeley, an old friend at the Foreign Office, to use his contacts and try to find a copy of the document but to no avail. Despite the disappearance of his copy, Musa never forgot what it contained. He recalled the text in his own words for my benefit:

The Secretary of State for the Colonies on behalf of the British government, and Musa Alami, on behalf of himself, met at the request of the British government in order that the Secretary of State may acquaint himself more fully with the complexities of the Palestine problem. The parties have agreed that it would be desirable to convene a comprehensive political conference in London to discuss the Palestinian problem on the basis of the following conditions:

1 The aim of the conference would be to find a way for the attainment of independence for Palestine.

Musa commented that this was the first time that such a statement was ever used by a British minister.

2 The Arab Higher Committee would be free to choose its own representatives for the conference with the exception of the Mufti.

Musa remarked that, anyway, the Mufti had told him and Jamal that he was not keen on attending such a conference.

3 All Palestine leaders in exile would be freed once the protocol was signed.

The credit for the release of the Palestinians in exile—though clearly the work of Musa's quiet diplomacy—was later claimed by the Palestinian exiles themselves. Their release, they said, was due to their repeated protestations against British high-handedness. But Musa affirmed that the Palestinian deportees were released through his efforts. 'I was the one to include this condition in the protocol before MacDonald and I signed it,' he said. The fourth and fifth condition of the protocol were as follows, Musa continued.

4 The British delegation to the conference would have separate sessions with the Arab and Jewish delegations to avoid bringing the Jews and the Arabs together.

5 The British government would welcome any subject or proposal submitted by the Arabs and this would not in any way prejudice the policy of the British government at the conference which would remain committed to work for the independence of Palestine.

After the signing of this potentially explosive protocol, MacDonald offered his new-won friend a standing invitation to attend the conference as a delegate. Musa Alami replied: 'Thank you, but I do not think I would like to come.' They said goodbye, and Musa took the train to the coast, crossed the channel and then travelled aboard the luxurious Orient Express across Europe. His companion on that journey was Izzat Tannus who had already informed the Mufti of Musa's date of arrival in Lebanon.

When the pair arrived at Tripoli station in Lebanon, a driver was waiting to whisk them off to see the Mufti in the nearby village of Zoq. Musa said he was tired and anxious to see his family in Beirut and would be unable to accept the Mufti's invitation. But the driver insisted, and Musa gave in. When Musa stepped into the Mufti's home, he was confronted with all the members of the Arab Higher Committee, including many who had recently been released from exile—through his diplomatic efforts, I might add. They all embraced him and talked about London, the political atmosphere there and current British thinking on the Palestinian issue. Most important, Musa discussed with his colleagues the proposed London conference for the Arabs and Jews.

Tannus was eagerly listening and punctuating the conversation as often as possible with his observations of events in London. He clearly intent on making his presence felt by answering the questions of the Mufti and other Arab leaders. On several occasions Tannus intervened in a manner which suggested that it was he and not Musa who had been having talks with MacDonald and had signed the

protocol himself. Indeed Tannus would interrupt Musa so often that it was almost impossible for Musa to speak. By then he was too exasperated and tired to contend with Tannus's claims of how he had met various politicians and had convinced the British government of the merits of a sovereign Palestinian state. The various leaders around the table were soon congratulating Tannus on his accomplishments. When Tannus had finished with his self-aggrandizement one of the members, Amin Tamimi, asked Musa: 'And you, Musa, were you not in London? Did you not work for us?' Musa looked at the Mufti and replied: 'Yes, I was in London and I met MacDonald, the Colonial Secretary, and I reached an agreement with him on a protocol which states that the aim of the proposed London conference would be to discuss the independence of Palestine.' Musa then approached the Mufti, put his hand in his pocket, took out the protocol document and said: 'This, my uncle, is the copy of the protocol which I signed with the British government.' Another Palestinian present, Izzat Darwaza, rose from his seat and rushed towards Musa and embraced him. 'Musa, this means independence for Palestine,' he exclaimed. 'You have this "treasure" in your pocket and you let us listen for two hours to this nonsense [from Tannus].' The Mufti listened, unfolded the document and told Musa to read it aloud.

The following morning certain members of the Arab Higher Committee who were present at the Mufti's house the previous evening travelled to Cairo for a meeting with Ali Maher Pasha, and members of the Egyptian government. Ali Maher Pasha told the delegates that he still did not know exactly what the Palestinians wanted as a final solution to their problem.

We in Egypt support and attend all the conferences for your sake. Tell us what your broad lines are for the solution of your problem so that we know how to proceed. Give us your opinion in writing now that Britain has invited us to go to London to discuss your problem. We are going to attend along with Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Transjordan and the Yemen; so it is our right to know where the Palestinian leaders stand and what you want us to ask of the British.

Jamal al-Husaini, who had by now received his UK visa and had become spokesman of the Arab Palestinian delegation, said to the Egyptian prime minister:

We have with us an official document given to us by our brother Musa Alami which he and Mr Malcolm MacDonald

had signed at the end of several meetings a few weeks ago. He gave this paper to the Mufti, read it out to us in the Lebanon and gave us a full explanation of its text. So what do you think Your Excellency?

Jamal handed Ali Maher Pasha a copy of the protocol and moments after reading it the Egyptian leader exclaimed:

Why do you hide this paper from me? Any leader, nation or responsible minister who is able to get such a paper from the British government should be very happy indeed. He should thank God for what he has achieved. My brothers, your problem is solved. You have a declaration of independence from the British government. God has helped you reach that stage.

Again Ali Maher asked Jamal why he had not informed him of the protocol immediately. 'Did you read what the protocol says? It says the aim of the conference is to realize the independence of Palestine. What more do you want?' The Egyptian leader then asked where Musa Alami was. He was told that Musa had returned to Switzerland. Ali Maher Pasha said: 'In the name of Egypt I ask that you add the name of this man to the Arab delegation going to London.'

When the Arab delegation finally reached London, Ali Maher told Musa what he had said to the Mufti about his remarkable achievement: 'The only person who succeeded in extracting such a protocol from the British should be with us in the negotiations and you [the Mufti] should not object to his participation in the talks.' So Musa was invited to join the Arab delegation in London. At first he was staying at the Dorchester but later moved to the Park Lane Hotel to avoid certain Arab adversaries. He insisted on paying his own bills and refused to be the guest of the government.

It was on his first evening in London when he was dining with Jamal al-Husaini that Musa met Ali Maher Pasha for the first time. The Egyptian prime minister thanked Musa for his success in securing such a valuable commitment from the British government on Palestinian independence. Later, when Ali Maher heard that Musa had moved to the Park Lane Hotel, he immediately insisted that he packed his bags and join him at the Dorchester. 'I need you, Musa Alami, because we have a battle ahead of us. So please remain next to me.'

At the start of the St James's Conference Musa was optimistic about the outcome but at the end, when the proposals were finally drawn up, the Arabs felt disappointed with what they had been offered. Musa

however believed that the mere fact that such a gathering had taken place at the initiative of the British and with the publicly stated aim of establishing a Palestinian state was itself to be considered as something of a diplomatic breakthrough for the Arabs. But the initial euphoria prevailing at the outset gradually petered out as the conference proceeded, he added. The Arabs had expected more.

The conference resolutions, Musa said, were in substance less than what he alone had achieved in his talks with Malcolm MacDonald long before the conference proper was opened. The reasons behind this difference, he said, were clear. When the conference started all the age-old Arab weaknesses and divisions emerged and were of course exploited to the full by the other side. The ignorance of the Arab delegates, their public clashes over who should represent whom, who should speak for whom weakened their position to the obvious satisfaction of the Jews.

But the White Paper, published after the conference, contained further concessions to the Arabs, and remained, at least on paper, official British policy towards Palestine. Yet the Arabs failed to take advantage of the positive elements in it. Musa identified five main factors behind this failure.

1 The Jews had dismissed with contempt MacDonald's warning to them at the start of the conference that the Arabs would not remain quiet if the conference failed to support Palestinian statehood. The Arabs, he said, would fight to which the Zionists responded with undisguised sarcasm: 'You do not know the Arabs. They will not do anything.' There was no attempt by the Arabs to dissipate Zionist presumptions. It was Musa's view that the Arabs should have picked out MacDonald's warning of potential Arab disquiet and given it unequivocal emphasis. This would have added credibility to his warning and may have dampened Jewish arrogance. Furthermore, the non-Palestinian Arabs who had constantly threatened to act in a way which would demonstrate to the British and the Jews that they were unquestionably behind the Palestinians, remained tight-lipped and non-committal.

2 When war broke out soon after, and Arab military help, however meagre, was requested, not a single Arab state considered offering any such assistance to the Allied forces as a *quid pro quo* for future concessions to the Palestinian Arabs. The Arabs simply fell into line with what was otherwise required of them by the British without exploiting their strategic geographical position especially at the beginning of the war—unlike the Zionists for whom the war effectively paved the way for the creation of a Zionist state in Palestine.

3 Musa also pointed out that the Jews had been on the diplomatic offensive during the conference and throughout the entire period of the war. Ben-Gurion, for example, had said in a typically trenchant fashion in one of the working sessions of the conference: 'I am a Jew and I respect the laws but I will not respect any law that would give the Mufti of Palestine the right to deprive any Jew from entering or living in Palestine.' The Arabs had heard such proclamations but had seldom responded with the same vigour during their sessions with the British.

4 Throughout the conference and thereafter professional Zionist lobbyists applied intense pressure on the British government and parliament where there was a strong pro-Zionist element anyway. This helped to put the White Paper on the shelf for the duration of the war, and by then it had become to all intents and purposes a dead letter.

5 Musa concluded that the Arabs could neither fully grasp the realities of British domestic politics nor those of the international political situation. They did not realize how deeply committed many of the British political figures were to the Balfour Declaration and how those pro-Zionists made sure that the government did not swerve from it. But the government did in fact swerve from it both at the St James's Conference and in the White Paper because war in Europe seemed inevitable, and Arab goodwill seemed, on balance, to outweigh Zionist displeasure. The Arabs let the opportunity slip by.

So Ragheb Nashashibi was not the only moderate leader in the modern history of Palestine. Others followed in his footsteps; others admired his courage. But others, like him, became victims of their own political moderation.

Among those was Musa Alami.

There were eighteen attempts on his life! his Arab political enemies tried to assassinate him in Jerusalem, in Geneva and in London. He lived in fear and solitude. He never spoke much, but I was able to encourage him to talk and disclose much of what he kept to himself before he died. He spoke to me for hours and days on end. I had his words recorded on tapes which I left afterwards in the custody of St Antony's College in Oxford. Following are some extracts of my interviews with Musa Alami, about his meetings with Ernest Bevin, David Ben-Gurion, and the Arab leaders; his recollections of secret political meetings; and the golden opportunities which were missed. Musa had several meetings with Ernest Bevin, British Foreign Secretary (from 1945 to 1951) and described one of those meetings in the first days of 1947 as follows:

The staff were continuously coming in to tell him this and

that person had arrived for their appointment. Ambassador Madame someone-or-other was on her way . . . 'let them wait', he would say. He was talking about the Palestine problem and he was saying 'Suppose we send a commission of inquiry to Palestine'. And I said, 'You can't make a commission of inquiry create Arabs where there are no Arabs and Jews where there are no Jews to make things equal.' He wanted partition to mean division in half with one part populated mostly with Jews together with a few Arabs, and one part with lots of Arabs and a few Jews—and this was to be partition. That was not possible; out of the question . . .

Musa went on:

And after discussing this aspect for more than half an hour I said: 'You understand I have said nothing against the Jews nor against the national home or against the Zionists. I am only dealing with your suggestions for the partition of Palestine following a line where the Jews will have half the country and the Arabs will have the other half and where the numbers on either side will be equal, composed of both. There is no such line. I am not discussing the validity of the Balfour Declaration or promises made or the White Paper. I am not considering that at all. I am just considering your statements during the election campaign.' He paused a little, clasping his hands, thinking; but he was frequently interrupted by his staff. 'Let them wait,' he told them repeatedly, and more than an hour passed and then he said: 'Well, it looks as if there is no such line, and if there is no such line, there will be no partition. I promise you that,' he said, 'there will be no partition. First, there is no line that can demarcate equality between the two peoples.'

I said, 'Well, I appreciate so much the fact that you have taken this matter into consideration.' Bevin stressed, 'I repeat, I have not gone into the merits of the case and I am just speaking about the actual partition of the country. But as long as I am responsible in this matter there will be no partition.' And I said, 'Thank you very much. I have taken too much of your time and I hope you are not tired.' He said: 'I would like to see more of you. What about these offices of yours? I would like to see more of your offices, more of your people.' Then I left, but whenever we used to have reunions and receptions where we would invite ambassadors and

ministers, and sometimes prime ministers, most but not all would come, but he would never miss any of these functions. The invitation cards would always specify 'six to eight' for instance, but he would always stay until midnight. They would all go and he would stay and talk with us. We really came to understand each other, and he was an extremely amusing person at any party, in spite of the fact that he looked rather fierce. He did everything possible to gain our confidence—by showing how friendly he was to us, by staying on late and talking about personal matters and things like that.

At this point I asked Musa Alami how he explained the sudden shift in Ernest Bevin's thinking. He answered:

I think that we have always been negligent in keeping in touch with politicians, whether in power or out of power. They were completely out of touch with the true facts as they only heard one side. Bevin and his party were bombarded with Zionist propaganda and they mostly heard one side . . . they were briefed by their advisers, and by the only side which was feeding them with information. Blame must rest upon us, the Arabs, because we never went out of our way to explain our case. The first time we did so was when the Arab Offices were started, when these became a central place for journalists, for the people who were interested in the Middle East to come and read whatever literature we had, and ask questions and attend our discussions and meetings. It was only then that some people started to learn what Palestine was about. He was one of the innocent people who for the most part heard one side. There were many people like him, but he was a fair-minded person who was prepared to change his mind. No question of pride about that; when he discovered the truth he changed his mind.

Musa was emphatic on that point. He paused a little and said:

Then, after two years there were various congresses, or meetings in London, where the British tried to get the Jews and Arabs together. He tried to get representatives from all the Arab countries here, again under his auspices, to see whether something could be done, but the Arabs didn't know how to deal with such a situation, didn't know at all how to deal with it, and he was extremely upset because he

was really and genuinely working for a just solution for the Palestine problem, for a cause which would safeguard the interests of the Palestinian Arabs.

It may perhaps be useful at this juncture to remind the reader of the context in which this was happening. Following the rejection in 1946 of the Morrison–Grady Plan (named after Herbert Morrison and Henry Grady, the heads of the British and American delegations) the British invited Arabs and Jews to a conference in London in January 1947. Both the Arab and Jewish delegations put forward proposals, but of course neither was acceptable to either party. To save the situation, the British then raised a counter-proposal, the so-called ‘Provincial Autonomy Scheme’, quickly drawn up by Harold Beeley, then First Secretary at the Foreign Office and an expert on Palestine affairs. Britain would retain the mandate under the UN Trusteeship Council for a period of five years and the country would be divided into several self-governing Arab and Jewish provinces. To placate the Americans, who were persistently harrying the British to admit 100,000 Jews into Palestine, Bevin proposed that for two years Jewish immigration would proceed at a rate of 4,000 a month, that is, a total of 96,000. Further immigration would subsequently be subject to consultation with the Arabs. At the end of the trusteeship period, all parties concerned would re-negotiate. In effect, Bevin was playing for time. He hoped that the Americans would be satisfied, that Palestine would not be partitioned, and that the whole issue would remain in British hands for some time. But both the Arab and Jewish delegations rejected the scheme out of hand. According to Sir Harold Beeley, whom I consulted on 25 May 1989, the British government would have carried on negotiations with the Arabs along the lines proposed, if the Arabs had not rejected the plan.

Sir Harold suspected that it was Musa Alami, fearing partition, who had suggested the idea of the ‘Provincial Autonomy Scheme’ to Bevin very early in 1947. Sir Harold made the interesting point that Churchill, who had been greatly shocked by the assassination of Lord Moyne² in November 1944, had as a result given up attempts to have influence on a solution for the Palestine problem and had advocated referring the whole matter to the UN. Bevin’s scheme,

² In a speech to the House on 17 November 1944, Churchill expressed his outrage in these words: ‘If our dreams for Zionism are to end in the smoke of assassins’ pistols and our labours for its future produce only a new set of gangsters worthy of Nazi Germany, many like myself will have to reconsider the position we have maintained so consistently in the past.’ The full text may be found in Bauer, p. 328.

Sir Harold Beeley added, was designed to pre-empt that possibility as well.

Musa Alami continued:

But all the Arabs could say was, 'We denounce the Balfour Declaration and all that it implies. We reject . . . We refuse . . . etc., etc.' They would be asked 'What do you want? What are your questions? What are your suggestions?' Whatever compromise solution Bevin came up with—which was in our favour—the Arabs rejected it. Towards the end of the conference Bevin gave a big dinner where he invited all the Arab diplomats and a great number of British diplomats and others.

Musa smiled faintly and said:

At that time I was in the bad books of the Arab Higher Committee. So I wasn't part of a delegation or anything, in fact quite the contrary; but he invited me as an individual. I was the only person who was invited as an independent; they all came, the whole delegation from the Arab Higher Committee, and many distinguished British people, including the press. But Bevin was extremely disappointed with the Arabs and the way they discussed the various suggestions he had come up with. So he got up towards the end of the last meeting to make his final speech and said how hard he had tried to solve this problem, but the harder he tried, the harder the Arabs became in their negative attitude. They would not negotiate, they would not give any alternatives which could be negotiated. He had done everything, he had taken risks and, as he said before in public statements in the House, he was risking his prestige and his future by attempting to solve the Palestine problem.

Musa remembered how angry and profoundly disappointed he was with the Arab delegation. Musa could not blame him, and much deplored the fact that the Arabs themselves were about to shut down the Arab Offices for which he had worked so hard. Musa Alami paused for what seemed a long time and then said:

One night, at around midnight when I was alone in my apartment, I heard a knock at the door. I put my gown on and opened the door to find three members from the Arab delegation. Two of them were Egyptians, Allubah Pasha and

a lawyer—I forget his name. The third man was from another Arab country, I forget which—not Palestine. All three were lawyers—that much I remember. They came in and said: ‘Now there is a deadlock in the conference and it seems that our negotiations are going to fail.’ I asked why and they said: ‘We have come to the final stage where the British are suggesting the following solution. They are suggesting the setting up of a parliament in Palestine and a semi-autonomous state. They will only be there for a number of years until things settle down. All the powers will be vested in this government and the government will represent the people of Palestine, Arabs and Jews, according to their respective numbers. We feel that this is detrimental to the Palestinian Arabs. There are now 600,000 Jews in Palestine, and there were only 60,000 at the beginning of the mandate. So Jewish representation in the government would be unfairly high. This is a bad proposal, and we don’t know what to do.’ I said, ‘Why are you worried?’ They said, ‘Because the British are determined to push this through. They say this is final. We either take it or leave it and then they will do what they like.’ ‘Why?’ I asked. ‘You are all lawyers and you should accept it on the grounds that if democracy is to be applied, then we should be all for it since democracy entitles all nationals of a certain age to vote for parliament.’ They said, ‘But this is just what frightens us.’ I said, ‘No, don’t be afraid. There are only 10 per cent of all Jews in Palestine who are Palestinian nationals. The others never became Palestinians. You just stick to that line of reasoning. And show generosity: say yes, we will accept all genuine Palestinians as voters, according to their numbers. We don’t mind.’

Musa told me that he had emphasized that point by saying:

‘I know for sure that what I’m telling you is true because I have studied the matter. If you don’t believe me, try to find another solution, but I know what I’m telling you is absolutely true.’ They said: ‘Won’t you come and join us?’ I said, ‘I have been kicked out. And what authority have you to invite me to join?’ They said, ‘We are entitled to invite you to join us as we are advisers. But if you don’t want to be a member, all right. Be our adviser.’ I said, ‘I can’t. You may ask me questions and I will answer, but after being kicked

out and vilified in the press and being threatened—after all these attempts on my life—I couldn't join the delegation in any capacity.' They said, 'We'll consult the British government and get it to invite you. Not only will we ask you to come as a citizen of Palestine who knows this subject well, but also as a political and legal adviser; remember, you worked in the law office too.' I weakened and sort of agreed.

Without drawing breath, almost, Musa continued his story as if it had happened the day before:

The following day, another group of them came to urge me to attend the meeting at four o'clock and they said: 'We have told the British you are coming as our consultant, and they said, "That's very nice—we have no objection".' So I went, although they had kicked me out many times before. Yes, I went and I found them all sitting there thinking. I sat and listened. The British asked them whether they had decided to build their final decision on democracy. They then stated that democracy definitely required that there be elections where all the nationals of that country participate—all the 'legal' inhabitants of that country. They should have equal rights if they are over the age of consent. The results will reflect the size of each community. The British understood the point at once because they knew exactly what the figures were. They asked, 'You insist on that?' They replied, 'Yes, we have thought it over. We can only accept it on democratic lines. That's the justification that we have, but to accept it just to solve a difficulty—no. But if you want to apply democracy, and you do it along those lines, we accept.' And they stuck to their guns. The British said, 'All right, give us time to think.' They left, but they had an inkling that I was behind the idea because some of them came to me and remarked, 'What is this advice you have given them?' I said, 'What advice? I am out of it all. They told me that they didn't even consider me a loyal Palestinian but they invited me to come along as one of the spectators, so I came.' But the conference didn't fail on that score. The British accepted the principle that elections should be democratic and lawful. It failed on another issue. That was a big mistake by the Arabs and their leaders. The Arabs quarrelled with the British about another issue. And that is why Bevin was so furious and was driven to say to the Arabs: 'I have done all that for

you and then you make me out to be a failure at the end. I am already quarrelling with all your enemies over this, and you made me fail.' Bevin was right, nobody could blame him.

When the 'Bevin scheme' was rejected by both Arabs and Jews, Bevin decided in April 1947 to submit the whole Palestine question to the United Nations. I asked Musa Alami why in his personal opinion had the British decided to put the whole problem in the hands of the UN. He answered,

Well, Prince Abd al-Ilah was in London at the time the UN was meeting in 1947. Nuri Pasha was representing Iraq at the UN and the Regent was here in London. I was then in the habit of calling on him at Claridges because it was Iraq alone that supported the Arab Offices. We never got any money from anywhere else, and they continued to support us until the very end. I have nothing but gratitude for the way he himself used to support the Arab Offices, no matter what government was in power. He was referring to the UN meetings and we had already heard that Bevin was going to the UN to surrender the mandate, and he and I were considering whether this was good or bad for Palestine and we definitely came to the conclusion that with the emphatically pro-Zionist attitude of America the surrender of the mandate would be a disaster for the Arabs. So the longer Britain remained, the better. I then said, 'How can we convince the man who is leaving in two days time to change his views?' The Regent simply said, 'I don't know. I think *you can*. I'll ask him to come to dinner tomorrow, the day before he leaves, and I won't ask anybody else, and you will come and we'll have a small dinner first, a small table, with only our Ambassador present, and I'll tell him that we want to have a private talk and that there would only be Musa with us, whom he knows, and with whom he might like to talk.'

Musa continued:

So Bevin came next evening accompanied by only the head of the Foreign Office, Sir somebody-or-other, I forget his name. The Regent brought with him the Ambassador, Prince Zaid. We were five: the Regent, the Ambassador, Bevin, the head of the Foreign Office and myself—five. I was sitting beside Bevin, and as soon as we had settled in I took the liberty of starting the conversation. He turned to me and

said: 'We haven't met for a long time.' I replied, 'Yes. I am out of business now. They don't want me to do anything. They have their own delegations.' He said, 'But you don't mean to say that you are not interested?' I answered, 'Of course not. How can I be uninterested in my country and my home? I can't be uninterested; actually I'm worried, extremely worried about the proposed step that you are planning to take, to go and surrender the mandate.' He said, 'Why are you worried? Tell me . . . We have been there for all these years and you have put all these difficulties in our way. Whenever we suggest a solution you always reject it. You would never come up with a better solution, never with a counter-proposal. But we have tried and tried, and you know how much I have personally tried, and we fail the whole time. What else can we do but surrender the mandate? We can't quarrel with America. We can't possibly stand up to her. The president with all the weight of the United States behind him insists that we admit 100,000 Jews into Palestine and we keep on turning him down. [A few months earlier, in October 1946, President Truman issued a statement on the eve of Yom Kippur calling for the admission of 100,000 Jews to Palestine.] There is therefore nothing we can do except withdraw from the mandate—rather than accept the American demand. We would then ask the US to take over responsibility for the Palestine question—and it may well be that the US would think better of it and stop putting pressure on us for the admission of these 100,000 Jews. These steps on our part may lead to some change in the US position.'

I asked Bevin: 'What would happen if America does not change her position and continues to insist on the admission of 100,000 Jews?' Bevin replied, 'The Americans would much rather have us remain in Palestine and take the flak. We are accused of being anti-Semitic and of replacing Hitler. So the best course for us to take to maintain friendly relations with America is to withdraw from Palestine. It is only then that the Americans will realize how difficult the Palestinian problem is.' Musa then told me that he felt he had to press on: 'But suppose the Americans don't appreciate the consequences of your leaving and keep on applying pressure on you regarding Jewish immigration, what will your position be then?' Bevin banged his fist on the table and said: 'We don't wish to become employees of the American administration and

receive orders from it . . . The Americans are already treating us with arrogance. President Truman has decided to bow to Jewish pressure and is trying to force us to bow to the same pressure, but we categorically refuse to do so. We don't seem to have any choice but to leave.'

Musa elaborated: 'Nobody was talking except him and me, and the others were listening, and it just happened that I was not in an amiable mood. Normally I am, but I was not well and I had got out of bed especially for this dinner and afterwards went straight back to bed again. The following day, the Iraqi Ambassador rang and said: 'I have a message from the Regent. He would like to have a written report on all the conversation of last night, because he wants to send it to Nuri al-Sa'id for guidance. Nuri must know what happened.' I said, 'You were there—can't you do it?' But they were after me for a whole week until I felt a bit better and sat down to write it. The delay didn't do any damage because there was a postponement at the UN. I wrote a whole procès-verbal which they sent to Nuri in New York, and he used the same arguments.

Musa then added:

I'll tell you now very briefly what happened. Bevin was really forced to submit the Palestine problem to the UN because he didn't find any co-operation from the Arabs for whom he was risking his position and everything else. After that he left, and a few years later, in 1951, he died.

That was the last word Musa said about Bevin in my interview with him.

It is worth remembering how hard Bevin tried to be impartial against the overwhelming pressure from America. After the war, he rejected the Biltmore demand for an 'undiminished and undivided' Jewish state; all Zionist demands for increased immigration; he would not depart from the 1939 White Paper despite much pressure, resisted Truman's repeated demands in late 1946 for the admission of 100,000 Jews into Palestine and tried to win acceptance for some form of Palestine state which Jews and Arabs could share on the basis of equality. He was constantly being denounced as an anti-Semite, which after the Holocaust was indeed a damaging epithet.

I asked Musa Alami at this juncture about his meeting with David Ben-Gurion, when the latter said that he was willing to negotiate. I

asked: 'When he was willing to give this, give that—in return for what, exactly?'

Musa replied: 'The first time I met Ben-Gurion after the 1967 War, his idea was that in return for acceptance of Israel, as an independent state within the boundaries demarcated by the partition plan, he would be prepared to surrender all the territories, including Jerusalem and the Golan Heights.'

'Did he say that?' I interjected. 'Yes,' replied Musa. 'From whom did he want recognition?' I asked. 'Recognition of Israel by the Arab states or by the Palestinians?'

'By the Palestinians,' he replied. 'He was speaking of the Palestinians. He imagined that I—Musa Alami—was so influential that I could do it. I couldn't do it. I told him that it would be out of the question. I said to him: this isn't my business, this is the business of the Palestinian people—you must go to them. You must arrange with the great powers, with America in particular, to let them have some kind of representative government, and let them decide. I can't do it. No individual can do it, and if anyone says he can do it, he would be exaggerating.'

Musa continued: 'Then the next year Ben-Gurion said "I'm sorry, I've had pressure put on me, and what I told you last year does now. We cannot return all of the Golan. We have to keep part of it. And Jerusalem—I told you last year that you could have it, now I tell you we can negotiate it—it is negotiable. So these are the two things that we can't do this year, as I promised that we would last year."'

As this point Musa sighed and said: 'The third time I saw Ben-Gurion was in 1969. He said quite emphatically: "We won't withdraw an inch from any place—neither from the Golan, nor from Jerusalem, nor from anything that we took, and if you want to do anything, come and do it. We are not leaving." These were the three stages. He continued, "And it's your fault because you never accepted when I made these offers to you. I was extremely serious, and everyone in Israel was with me."'

I asked Musa Alami if he thought that Ben-Gurion was in a position of command and able to act. He replied that he really thought he was serious. I further asked if he thought that he was not only serious but also able to deliver the goods. 'In the first year,' he replied, 'yes. And then when he was less able he came and said so. I remember him saying, "Now I am not as able as I was last year. Things are moving fast. I don't know whether I'll be as able next year as I am this year." But every year, when items for bargaining diminished, he would tell me. But in the first year he was prepared to return everything almost without conditions,

only in exchange for a peace treaty—that would constitute recognition—between Palestine and Israel. But everything would be returned—everything: Sinai, the Golan, Jerusalem—everything.’

Musa went on:

But the last time he came, he was very impertinent in the way he spoke; he said: ‘Well, now I realize that you’re not a leader and that I asked things of you that you couldn’t do.’ Words of that kind. He was very nasty to me. So I let him talk for an hour and a half and when I stood up I wouldn’t let him get away with this sort of behaviour and gave him a piece of my mind. I was pretty aggressive and all those present were nodding their heads in support of what I was saying.

I told him: ‘I don’t have to wait all this time, at my age, for someone like you to come and tell me that I am not a leader, because I never claimed to be a leader. And anyway it is not for you to decide whether I am a leader or not. It is for the Arabs only. I have never claimed this, so I consider your remark as being completely unwarranted.’

Then Ben-Gurion went on to talk about Gamal Abdel Nasser. He exclaimed: ‘I want to see Abdel Nasser. You must arrange this for me. Nobody can arrange it but you. I’ll convince him, I know how to convince him.’

I asked Musa at this stage what in the conduct of Arab politics were the death-blows delivered to the Palestine nation. Could he enumerate them?

‘You know them,’ he told me. ‘No use repeating the same old story again.’ Then he said:

I personally believe that we didn’t appreciate the Western mind sufficiently to know how to deal with the West; we dealt with the West emotionally and not rationally, and emotions in politics do not work. And in the West, or anywhere in the world—but our relations were with the West—unless you spoke rationally to people, not emotionally, you got nowhere. I think that was one of our major faults. We just were not sufficiently familiar with the Western mentality and attitude. We are not part of the West like the Jews are. The Jews are everywhere, in all the political societies and political quarters, and we are out of all that. We are ignorant of their thoughts and their way of thinking, and they are equally ignorant of our attitude. I think that was a

major factor. We tried to remedy that a little bit by creating the Arab Offices but the Arab League forced us [in 1948], under pressure from certain Arab quarters, to close down.

I suggested that I thought it was also a bit late, after the war of 1948. He agreed with me, and said:

It was a bit late, but still the offices could have served a useful purpose. They took a resolution and saw to it that the Iraqi prime minister, Saleh Jabr, personally gave the order in London to close down the Office because it was only Iraq that was paying, and I told them, 'All right, don't pay, but you can't force me not to work the way I want to work.' So I carried on for eighteen months, alone, without Egypt or Iraq, or any other country helping me. There was nobody.

I asked him, 'Who persuaded Saleh Jabr to force you to close down the Arab Offices?' Musa replied:

The members of the Arab League reasoned that the only country which had the clout in that respect was Iraq because it was providing the money. Saleh Jabr was coming to London. So he came straight up to me and said: 'We don't want any Arab Offices. We don't want anything like that. We have now decided to use force and we are going to form a huge army in Iraq, with the latest equipment, to travel by train through Syria to the sea in the Lebanon and then march along the sea-shore from Beirut right down to Galilee. And we'll trap the Israelis inside, and those who want to run away from us will have to run to the sea and will drown. We'll catch them like fish.' That's what he said. He then added, 'And so this idea of having Arab Offices is nonsense. That's not good enough. It'll take one hundred years before you influence people. But now we have decided to take action. It's quicker, more effective . . .'

I asked, 'Who influenced the Iraqis and the Arab League against you?' Musa paused for a moment and replied:

Well, the existing Arab representatives of Palestine. All of the members of the Arab League sided with them and they went against me. I said, 'All right, I will never mention the Arab League, and never say that it is supporting me. I will say that this is a private enterprise, mine alone, and I will close down everything and keep only one or two people,

whom I can pay.' I kept Edward Atiyah and another one only. This is how things usually happen in my life. I had decided to go it alone.

Musa went on to explain:

The reason why I decided to go it alone was that I knew Edward Atiyah would stay, although he never wanted to sever relations with Abd al-Rahman Azzam. Eventually Azzam Pasha found out. When I realized that I gave the staff a year's salary in advance and let them go.

What, I asked Musa, was his bequest to the Palestinian people? He replied:

I ask them to stand firm, to remain on their land and in their country for the alternative would be wandering in the wilderness, getting lost. However harsh the conditions, it is our duty to remain in our homeland. Before we can demand that our country be returned to us we must remain on our soil. Our continued existence on our land is half the battle won. Leaving it is a prelude to failure. In politics there is no such thing as eternal continuance. The victory of this state [Israel] today does not mean victory forever. Countries that win today may lose tomorrow . . . No Arab should contemplate submission. No Arab has the right to abandon the struggle and say to himself or to his relations that all is lost. No, nothing is lost. Everything will be returned if we are patient, use our intelligence, our knowledge, see things as they really are without fooling ourselves or others. A just cause never perishes.

This last interview took place in London on 17 July 1976. Musa was a man of moderation, knowledge and integrity. He was not a professional politician. His great achievements in the international field outside his country did not save him from incurring the enmity of the Mufti and other members of the Arab Higher Committee, nor prevent numerous attempts on his life.

Ragheb Nashashibi was not the only victim of political reasoning and diplomatic moderation in Palestine. Musa Alami also paid a price and the Palestinian Arabs paid the heaviest price of all.

Arab Leadership in Decline, 1939–1947

One hot, dusty day in the early summer of 1947, I was sitting on the terrace of the old Shepherd Hotel in Ibrahim Pasha Street in Cairo, when I was approached by Haidar al-Husaini, the nephew of the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem. He told me the Mufti wished to see me urgently at his house in the Helmeyyet al-Zaytun area of the city. Haidar did not tell me the reason for this request, but emphasized that he was ready to take me there immediately; he said it would have to be within the next twenty-four hours.

Next morning, Haidar al-Husaini came to my hotel and took me to his uncle, Haj Amin. As usual, Haj Amin was very courteous and hospitable, but also extremely alert. I could sense the presence of the bodyguards standing with the rifles behind the red velvet screens. He told me he wanted me to convey a message from him to the other Arab leaders in Palestine. He said that all the news he had received from his agents and assistants in the United States, and especially in the United Nations circles in New York, confirmed that the new UN Committee, which was planning to visit Palestine to discuss the Palestinian problem, was a 'conspiracy' and that all its members were pro-Zionist, 'who would be deciding only what the Jews of New York and Palestine wanted. This committee would only abide by the orders of the Zionist Jews against all the national interests of the Arabs of Palestine,' he said.

The Mufti told me categorically, 'Therefore I have decided to boycott this committee and will ask my brothers and colleagues, the Arab leaders in Palestine, to do the same. I ask them now not to give evidence before this committee and to ignore it completely.'

I told the Mufti that this committee was not a British or an Anglo-American committee like the previous ones, but a committee of the United Nations, with all that this implied, and a boycott may not be one hundred per cent to the advantage of the Arabs.

But he was adamant. 'No! There is no point in appearing before a committee which is completely pro-Zionist. It makes no difference

whether it is international or not.' He had no wish to lend legitimacy to a committee which was going to betray the Arabs.

I politely told the Mufti that many of my friends and colleagues in the political press circles in Cairo saw in the UN Special Committee on Palestine the new international child of an international father, coming to visit us in the most critical period of our history. This child I told His Eminence, belonged to the General Assembly of the United Nations and was more qualified than anyone else to decide the fate of our people, and that the eleven members of this new committee, though professional diplomats belonging to small states—in terms of population (except India)—could not be but neutral people. The states which they came from had no interest in the Middle East.¹

But the Mufti interrupted me and said:

I have been asked by the United Nations to appoint Arab liaison officers attached to the new committee, but I refused, because a Zionist called Horowitz was selected by the Jewish Agency to represent the Jews in that committee, and this, in my opinion, only means an open recognition by the United Nations of the Jewish Agency in Palestine.

Later, Abba Eban wrote in his autobiography: 'We benefited greatly from Arab errors in those days. Their doctrine was that the end of the British mandate could be followed by nothing except the establishment of an Arab Palestine, that the UN had no jurisdiction; there was, therefore, nothing to talk about and no need for liaison.'²

I remarked to the Mufti that if we boycotted this committee, then the Jews would make use of its members' utter ignorance of the Palestine problem and cause them to impose a solution inimical to us.

The Mufti kept on repeating, 'No use, no use.' Then added,

How do you expect me to allow a Swedish second-rate diplomat [he meant Emil Sandström, the chairman of the Committee] to decide my fate or my country's fate for me? Who is he? Nothing but a Swedish judge. His other colleagues are only secondary judges from Canada and Holland, and so on. Would Holland accept that an Arab Palestinian judge like al-Muhtadi, or al-Baradi, decide the fate of the Dutch nation?

¹ The members were drawn from Australia, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Guatemala, Holland, India, Iran, Peru, Sweden, Uruguay and Yugoslavia.

² Eban, p. 76.

I politely interrupted the Mufti and said, 'But we have some important Muslim members on this committee like Sir Abd al-Rahman of India and his colleague the Iranian statesman, Nasrollah Entezam, and we can depend on their sympathy for our cause.' The Mufti clearly lost his patience with me and said, 'I ask you to proceed now to Palestine and deliver my message to my brothers there.' He then asked me, in a nervous tone, 'Can you leave today?' I asked, 'What exactly does your Eminence want me to do?' He said, 'I repeat, listen well. I want you to go to Jerusalem today and convey this message to our friends there, like Ragheb Bey, Ya'qub al-Ghusain, Abd al-Latif Salah and Sulaiman Tuqan, together with anyone else you feel should be aware of this message.' 'Why should I go personally?' I asked. 'We can telephone some of them from here.' 'I don't want to talk on the telephone myself,' he replied. 'I want you to convey this message as if you were speaking from somewhere else and not from my house.'

'As you wish, but allow me to speak from here without saying so', I said, and he agreed. I booked the call to Ragheb Nashashibi in Jerusalem. I knew that I would find him at home at that hour. When he answered, I told him bluntly: 'the Mufti wants you to have nothing to do with the UN Special Committee on Palestine which is visiting us very soon. The Mufti wants you to announce your public boycott as well.' In a bitter tone, Ragheb replied, 'Well, tell His Eminence that since he returned from Europe after the war, we have voluntarily delegated to him all our authority. And as far as I am concerned, I am not interested in any UN efforts in our country. We have had enough of committees visiting our country for investigation and study.' He added sarcastically, 'Now we have full confidence in His Eminence and I will abide by his wise decisions concerning this problem.'

When the Mufti heard Ragheb's answer, he was very pleased and suddenly asked me about the others. I replied, 'Well, for the others, you must find another to deliver the message.' 'I think I should send someone who can use the kind of language I would choose to use with them,' he said. 'And what language is that?' I asked politely. 'I wish to tell them that no one is allowed to appear before the UN Committee, and anyone who disobeys will be considered a traitor. And those we consider as traitors will deserve our punishment.' He looked straight into my eyes and said: 'And they will understand what this means.'

Our meeting ended. The Mufti's order was conveyed to all the Arab leaders in Palestine, and all of them boycotted the Committee. In fact, black flags were raised in all the cities and villages of Palestine which the committee was visiting.

In contrast to the Arab boycott, the Jews organized a massive

propaganda campaign, mobilizing all their supporters in the media and government circles to influence the UN committee. Abba Eban, describing those days in his autobiography, said:

Between tours, conversations and hearings, the liaison officers were required to fill the minds of the committee members with some ideas on a future solution. The public hearings were held in the Y.M.C.A. hall with the committee on the platform, and what were called 'Arab and Jewish notables in the auditorium'. I was charged by Sharett with the effort to make the best use of Weizmann's prestige and experience . . . He produced a poignantly moving account of the hopes and ideals that had illuminated Zionism in the past three decades. He still saw a vision of Arab-Jewish coexistence, but only on a basis of sovereign equality. This could only be achieved by a plan for partition. Once again, he surpassed all the Jewish speakers in the depth of his impact on his hearers.

Ben-Gurion was resolute and emphatic in his defence of official Zionist positions, but the collective discipline of the Zionist leadership did not yet permit him to come out clearly for the partition idea, which I knew he supported strongly in the depth of his heart.

July and August 1947 were feverish but exhilarating. Horowitz and I spent eighteen hours a day in a campaign of intellectual attrition directed to the eleven-man committee and the influential members of the Secretariat, Bunche, Robles and Vigier . . . Sharett once visited Belgrade in an effort to win the Yugoslavs over to the support of Jewish statehood. Apart from Horowitz and myself, who had official status, the Jewish agency maintained a large team in Geneva to follow up.³

The Mufti's negative attitude was typical of his traditional approach to politics and public life from the early 1920s onwards. But this particular boycott was also the beginning of despair and the first public sign of weakness among the Arabs.

I know of one Palestinian Arab personality who did not obey the Mufti's orders after the UN Committee had left Palestine without having heard an Arab voice. He went to Geneva and sent the members a letter indicating his willingness to appear before them and put forward

³ Ibid., p. 79.

the Arab point of view. But he received no response. This person was Musa Alami. Later, when the Committee's recommendations were announced they were worse than what the Mufti had anticipated. The Committee proposed the partition of Palestine with an Arab state and a Jewish state in economic union with each other. This was the beginning of the end. On 29 November 1947 the UN General Assembly approved the plan.

The end, which came sooner than any Arab had expected, was a direct result of the Arab leadership's naive, head-in-the-sand attitude between 1920 and 1947, even as Arab land was being led into the market place for sale to the highest bidder—a slave to international diplomatic expedience, to ignorance, arrogance and greed. The Arab boycott policy was not only negative but hypocritical if one were to compare the public pronouncements of the Arab leaders with their private dealings. I knew many Jerusalemite leaders who portrayed themselves as anti-British radicals in their writings, interviews and speeches, while at the same time they would engage in secret talks with British government representatives at cocktail parties; some would go in the dead of the night for private, clandestine meetings with the British. Many notable public figures were on the official invitation list of the British High Commissioner. The Mufti would not attend official ceremonies to which high-ranking Arab and Jewish personalities were invited, say, to meet a new High Commissioner or bid farewell to a departing one. But the Mufti, while shunning all the ceremonies held in Jerusalem for such occasions, used to fulfil his social obligations towards the High Commissioners by seeing them discreetly at Haifa seaport or Lydda airport either to bid them farewell or to welcome them, whatever the case may be.

I can name many Arab Jerusalemites whose social and personal way of life, as well as their professional standing contrasted sharply with their apparent political extremism. People like Yusef Albina, George Antonius and his wife Katy, Shukri Harami, Shibli Jamal, Shawqi Sa'd, Sulaiman Tannus, advocate Abkarius, educationalist Habib al-Khourri, and many others spring readily to mind. Musa Alami told me a story which—as usual—he asked me to keep to myself until after his death. He said that when he was working as private secretary to the British High Commissioner, Sir Arthur Wauchope, they were invited to a garden party by Ragheb Nashashibi, then mayor of Jerusalem. Towards the end of the party at about nine in the evening, Musa and Wauchope were standing together ready to leave when Ragheb approached them to bid them goodnight. Ragheb told Sir Arthur that he would see him later at eleven as previously agreed. Wauchope whispered, 'Yes, Ragheb Bey,

but I wanted to ask you to postpone the meeting until tomorrow because, at half past eleven His Eminence the Mufti is coming to see me.' Musa observed: 'They all used to come at midnight! They all used to come in the dark, but at daybreak they would appear in the guise that suited them.'

This did not mean lack of character, lack of integrity or lack of courage. It was simply that the Palestinian leaders could not see the contradiction in their own position. When they were confronted with all the political sophistication of the British and all the intrigues and pressures of world Jewry, they found themselves forced into playing a double role, to appear in more than one guise. It was quite natural that a radical nationalist of a small, underdeveloped country, who had never before come face to face with an imposing-looking British diplomat with a vast empire behind him, would succumb to his charm and flattery, and be persuaded that the 'evil empire' was not so evil after all. Gradually he would be drawn to the British establishment, and would be admitted as a guest—though never as a member.

This attitude may have contributed to the disarray within the Palestinian ranks then and since. Count Folke Bernadotte, the head of the Swedish Red Cross, who was appointed Mediator by the United Nations on 14 May 1948 'to promote a peaceful adjustment of the future situation of Palestine', said that no solution of the Palestine problem could satisfy both Jews and Arabs. 'But it is equally true that no solution could satisfy all the Arabs!' With a tangled problem such as existed in Palestine, differences arose not only among the Arab leaders, the Arab states and the big powers but also among the Arabs of Palestine themselves. Obviously the main dispute centred on the question of how to find a just and practical solution to the increasinintractable problem of Palestine. The stakes were being raised higher

and higher, and the Palestinian Arabs were becoming aware of the frightful prospect that their nation was now being seriously threatened.

It was natural then that differences would exist among Palestine's leading personalities, parties, and families, and especially between the Nashashibis and the al-Husainis. While many Palestinian leaders believed that they could work out their salvation by bloodshed and revolution, others disagreed. Many businessmen and mayors who represented almost all Palestinian cities did not like bloodshed. They were moderates. Their leader was Ragheb Nashashibi who believed that Britain could become an ally of the Arabs through positive co-operation, goodwill and support for British proposals that were fair and likely to bring about a solution to the Palestine problem. Though the Palestinians understandably concentrated their attention almost

exclusively on the question of how to establish their own state, they also held dear the dream of Arab unity. Many felt that it was only through Arab unity that a pro-Arab settlement of the Palestinian question could be won. Others believed that strengthening the home base should be accorded the highest priority. The National Defence Party was of the latter opinion.

Despite the long-standing acrimony between the moderates and the militant pan-Arabists, the adversaries, Ragheb and Haj Amin, treated each other with courtesy. Ragheb's grandmother, Fatima, was from the al-Husaini family and her brother was mayor of Jerusalem in the early nineteenth century. It was for this reason that Haj Amin used to call Ragheb 'my uncle' as a sign of respect. Similarly, but more formally, Ragheb reciprocated by calling Haj Amin 'affandina'—our effendi—a Turkish title of respect and courtesy prevailing at the time. Not so in the case of Haj Amin and Musa Alami. The Mufti saw in Musa a dangerous political enemy possibly because of the respect he commanded at home and abroad especially in Britain. Despite the fact that Musa was the brother-in-law of Jamal al-Husaini, the Mufti's cousin, chief ally and deputy, he was always afraid of the Mufti's long arm, and lived in fear of his life. He always insisted that he was neither a leader nor a politician, that he challenged no one and wished to fight no one. When Sir Geoffrey Furlonge, the late British ambassador to Jordan, wrote a book about Musa Alami entitled *Palestine is My Country*, he expected Musa to appreciate his endeavour for the account was most complimentary to him. But when the book came out Musa turned his back on his old friend. Asked why he was so angry with Sir Geoffrey, he answered: 'Because in the book he says that I hate the Mufti. This I don't like. It would prove that the Mufti was right not to trust me! Besides the Mufti might seek revenge—and, who knows, he might have me killed.'⁴

In 1974 I told Musa that I was planning to write a book about him. Again, Musa was not happy with the idea, arguing that he was not a leader and did not deserve to have a book written about him. When he realized I was serious, he wrote me a long letter, emphasizing the same points and adding that 'his involvement in politics was accidental, a result of circumstances that he had tried to avoid'. In the event, I wrote the book which was published in 1986, after his death.

That was in 1974. Back in 1946, I went with Musa Alami to the Iraqi Embassy in Cairo to obtain new Iraqi passports to send to Rhodesia to Jamal al-Husaini and other Palestinian leaders. They were waiting to return to Jerusalem after several years of exile. After the Iraqi charg 

4 Personal interview with Musa Alami recorded on tape.

d'affaires had given us passports, Musa asked me not to mention to anyone that he was involved in this enterprise because if the Mufti found out that he had secured an Iraqi passport for his cousin Jamal to return to Jerusalem, he would consider it a hostile act and a conspiracy—especially if Jamal was to appear before the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry which had already arrived in the city. When Jamal al-Husaini appeared before the Committee to give evidence, Musa advised him, in a modest and discreet way, to say that Haj Amin was still the president of the Arab Higher Committee and the representative of the Arabs of Palestine. Jamal did more than Musa had suggested and testified in a written statement that the Mufti alone could speak for the Arab people of Palestine. Richard Crossman commented in his book: 'He added nothing to what we know of the Arab case.'⁵ When taking evidence resumed after lunch, Crossman brought with him some photographs of the Mufti taking the salute of the Bosnian Muslim SS which had appeared in the Nazi illustrated papers. 'When it came to my turn, I asked Jamal a series of questions on his attitude to the Mufti and the Arab attitude to war. Jamal expressed his conviction that the Mufti had always acted in the interest of his people, and that when he was in Germany, that is just what he was doing.'⁶

Richard Crossman said that Awni Abd al-Hadi was not very impressive, and tried to deny that the Mufti had actively collaborated with the Germans until 'I challenged him with the photographs which, apparently, he had never seen before.'⁷ Richard Crossman asked Jamal: 'Do you support your leaders spending the war years with Mr Hitler in Germany?' Jamal attempted to sidestep the question, but several other members of the Committee pressed him. He became more agitated, and it was left to Albert Hourani of the Arab Office to save the Arab position with his evidence the next day. The Arab 'case was difficult to answer, especially when it turned to the familiar central argument, namely that the present plight of the Jews was not brought about by Moslem Arabs but by Christian Europeans, in spite of which the Arabs, not the Europeans, were being asked to provide relief.'⁸

In 1946 a delegation from the Arab League came to Jerusalem to meet the Arab leaders and try to unite them in one Arab Higher Committee. Haj Amin insisted, from his exile in Cairo, that there would be a twelve-member committee, half of which would be from his

5 Crossman, p. 139.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid., p. 140.

8 Sykes, p. 292.

party, and the rest would be drawn from all the other Palestinian parties, including the Nashashibi party. This did not work. Jamil Mardam, the Syrian Foreign Minister and head of the Arab League delegation, together with Taqi al-Din al Solh of the Lebanon and Khair al-Din al-Zirikli of Saudi Arabia, visited all the Palestinian Arab leaders several times in a last-ditch attempt to work out a solution, but failed. Mardam, who was a shrewd, machiavellian politician, both by Eastern and Western standards, wanted his mission in Jerusalem to be a success, regardless of whether the solution he offered was fair to all the Arab leaders.

At this juncture it might perhaps be useful to remind the reader of Jamil Mardam's long association with the Arab extremist element in Palestine. He was known for his hatred of Ragheb Nashashibi, and for his blind friendship with the Mufti since the mid-thirties, when Syria was struggling against the French mandate and the Mufti's followers, among the Arabs of Palestine, were struggling in open revolt against the British. In those days (1937), Jamil Mardam was the prime minister of Syria and was providing the Mufti of Jerusalem with volunteers and money. Mardam thought that the followers of the Mufti, who were using violence primarily against their own countrymen in different parts of Palestine then, were real patriots, not brigands as was plain to others.⁹

The Mufti visited Jamil Mardam at the end of June 1937 and sought the support of the Syrian National Bloc against his political rivals—the Nashashibis in Palestine. When the Mufti called for a pan-Arab congress in the second week of September 1937, and the congress was eventually held in the town of Bludan near Damascus, with more than four hundred nationalist leaders from different parts of the Arab world in attendance, its resolutions were surprisingly mild in their criticism of Britain, though opposed to the Peel recommendations, and vehemently anti-Zionist. The Palestinian exiles in Damascus formed 'the Central Committee of the Jihad, which took charge of the revolt's organization and had the close co-operation of the Syrian-led Palestine Defence Committee in the areas of fund-raising, arms purchases, the recruitment of Syrian volunteers, and the boycott of Jewish and British products.'¹⁰

Until the end of 1938, the popular support in Syria for the Palestine revolt—and in particular for the Mufti—remained very strong. Mardam's opponent in Syrian politics was Dr Abd al-Rahman Shahbandar

9 Khoury, p. 553.

10 Ibid.

who in the 1920s had been the leader of the People's Party, but had lost his political eminence to other nationalist figures such as Hashim al-Atasi, Jamil Mardam, Shukri al-Quwatli and Sa'dallah al-Jabri. Al-Shahbandar was pro-Hashemite and anti-Mufti and a great friend of Fakhri Nashashibi and the National Defence Party but did not have the power to influence the political direction in Syria.¹¹ Syrian money continued to flow into Palestine and line the pockets of members of the Committee for the Defence of Palestine. More Syrian volunteers were recruited and sent to fight in Palestine. But before long Syrian aid began to dry up. In his book, *Syria and the French Mandate*, Philip Khoury describes how this came about as follows:

as the revolt in Palestine lost its momentum, owing . . . above all, to a massive British counter-offensive towards the end of 1938, pro-Palestinian activities in Syria also waned. By the end of the year solidarity groups, and especially the Palestine Defence Committee, were preoccupied with local Syrian politics. Nabih Al-Azma was reported to be diverting funds earmarked for Palestine to his Syrian Istiqlali comrades . . . The arrest of Nabih Al-Azma in Damascus in the second week of March of that year spread alarm among members of the Palestine Defence Committee which quickly lost its cohesion and unity . . . The publication of evidence that Mr Azma pilfered defence committee funds sealed the fate of Palestinian activities in Syria.¹²

Now in 1946 Jamil Mardam, the Foreign Minister of independent Syria, was in Jerusalem on behalf of the Arab League to work for unity between the Arab leaders of Palestine. Ragheb never liked Mardam and did not think much of the other two members of the mission. Khair al-Din al-Zirikli was a poet of Syrian origin who spent some time in Palestine and Jordan in the early thirties and enjoyed Emir Abdullah's gifts and friendship. Then he started to attack Abdullah in his poems, an exercise which opened doors for him in Saudi Arabia. He became a Saudi diplomat and beneficiary. Taqi al-Din al-Solh, the third member of the delegation, was a careerist whose ambition was to leave his

¹¹ Dr Shahbandar was assassinated in Damascus on 7 July 1940 by a religious fanatic called Asasa. A civil action was brought by the Shahbandar family against the leaders of the National Bloc, namely, Sa'dallah al-Jabri, Jamil Mardam, Lutfi al-Haffar and Shukri al-Quwatli for engineering the assassination plot. The charge was proved false and dismissed by the court in December 1940.

¹² Khoury, p. 562.

secondary post in the Arab League and become a Lebanese deputy then a government minister, or prime minister. I was then working at the Arab Office in Jerusalem and was asked by Musa Alami, my boss, to escort the gentlemen wherever they went and to stay with them at the King David Hotel for convenience.

The delegation went to visit Ragheb at his house. Ragheb was ill. His Armenian doctor, Kalibian, was visiting him with a Jewish surgeon, Dr Professor Mandel. The doctors were discussing what to do with a sudden growth on the left side of his face.

Ragheb received us in his traditional woollen abaya and slippers. The chairman, Jamil Mardam, asked Ragheb on what terms would he be willing to join a United Arab Palestinian Committee which would represent all the Arabs of Palestine. Ragheb interrupted: 'What is the main task of such a Committee?' Mardam said, 'To serve the Palestine cause, and find a just solution to the problem.' Ragheb asked, in a tired voice: 'And where do you expect to find a just solution?' Mardam replied: 'In London, with the British government responsible for the British mandate for Palestine.' Ragheb asked: 'And do you think that the British government will give us—the Arabs of Palestine—the just and right solution that we desire and deserve?' 'Why not?' said the Saudi member, al-Zirikli. Ragheb said: 'Any just solution for the Arabs is a solution which the Jews would not accept. True or not?' 'True,' Mardam answered. 'And when the Jews refuse such a solution they will fight to have it cancelled as they have frequently done in the past, especially in the case of the White Paper. True or not?' 'True,' Mardam agreed. 'When this British government comes to face a Zionist war as a result of it offering a just solution for the Arabs, what do you think, dear brother, the position of the British will be? Will they face Zionist pressure and defeat it to please the Arabs, or withdraw their offer of a just solution to win over the Jews?'

There was no answer.

'I can imagine the answer from now,' Ragheb said. 'The British government is a kind of democracy which derives its power from the British people. Where do you think the British people stand now in the war between the Jews and the Arabs? Does the British nation stand with the victims of Hitler who was, until yesterday, bombing London, or with a collaborator of Hitler who prayed for a German victory in that war?'

Mardam said: 'We sincerely hope not to become part of this international game. The Palestine problem is a local problem between the Arabs and the Jews in Palestine.' Ragheb retorted: 'But we have already become part of this international game, my brother.' Then he

asked, 'Who are your nominees for the new Arab Higher Committee?' Taqi al-Din al-Solh answered: 'We decided that the chairman of the Committee would remain His Eminence the Grand Mufti, together with twelve other members representing all the political parties of Palestine.'

Ragheb, raising a tired hand to touch his swollen cheek, answered: 'And you think that such a committee and with such a chairman will be able to ask the British government to present the Arabs of Palestine with a just solution and to ignore all the powerful cries from the leaders of the world's Zionist movement and world Jewry—people like Weizmann and others?' Mardam asked: 'What about Weizmann?' Ragheb raised a piece of paper which was left for him with an old copy of the *Palestine Post* and read an Arab translation of what Weizmann had said at the Zionist Congress in Basle about the White Paper that year. 'Few documents in history have worse consequences for which to answer . . . It seemed incredible that anybody could be playing fast and loose with us when we were battered and exhausted. If there is antagonism directed against the British government, its sole origin is indignation at Britain's desertion of her trust . . . How can it be moderate for them [the Arabs] to claim seven states and extreme for us to claim one?'

When he finished reading, Ragheb commented: 'If this is the tone expressed by a moderate man like Weizmann, what do you expect to hear from Ben-Gurion, Shertok, Neumann, Gruenbaum?'

Neither the chairman of the Arab League delegation nor its members ventured to answer. Ragheb spoke about the Biltmore Conference which called for the transformation of Palestine into a Jewish Commonwealth. He asked Mardam to discuss with the members of the Arab League much more important topics than the comparatively trivial subject of the creation of a new Arab Higher Committee. He put the question to him as follows:

What is the Arab League going to do to help the Arabs of Palestine in the face of 70,000 fighters of the secret armed forces of the Jews of Palestine, who are waiting for the right moment to occupy as much land of Palestine as possible? Who is going to protect our houses, our properties, our orange groves, our lives? Don't you think, Your Excellency, that such questions are by far more important than how many seats His Eminence Haj Amin should have in the new Arab Higher Committee?

When Ragheb received no answer, he told the Arab League delegation,

while his doctors were still standing by his side in his study in Jerusalem: 'As far as I am concerned, there is nothing I ask for my party in the proposed new Higher Committee. I think the whole idea is not worth talking about when there are much more vital problems to be solved.'

But Jamil Mardam was pursuing his own political game. He held a press conference at the King David Hotel and announced the names of a new Arab Higher Committee for Palestine, complying with the Mufti's terms and conditions. In the event the new committee never met. The Palestinians remained literally without leadership. In 1937, when Ragheb withdrew from the Arab Higher Committee, the Mufti's camp blamed him for creating trouble and obstructing the rebellion and, consequently, delaying the independence of Palestine. In 1946, Ragheb decided, of his own free will, to stand aside. He did not interfere in any way. He did not ask for his share in any representative body of the Palestinian Arabs.

Yet the rivalry, hatred and enmity between the different Arab leaders in Palestine persisted until the end.¹³ And so the Arabs of Palestine were left without effective leadership and without that there was little hope for an Arab Palestine entity to establish itself; so the end came nearer with every ship carrying Jewish refugees to Palestine, with every Zionist propaganda offensive in the debating chambers, and around the dining tables of New York. Meanwhile, pan-Arab militancy was silenced and only the muffled cries of the Palestinian people could be heard as their country was slipping away.

In hindsight it is easy to speculate how better off the Palestinian Arabs would have been today if they had been united in a policy of self-reliance and moderation in the past. Moderation and heroics proved irreconcilable. Today Palestinians in the occupied territories have discarded heroics for civil disobedience and the Palestine National Council has opted for moderation, a combination that is proving almost irresistible. Forty years of Israeli rule, of torture, killings and mass deportations has brought home to the Palestinians the futility of relying on the Arab states to rescue them from their misery. They have also learnt that oppression cannot be thrown off if they themselves continued to be part of its machinery; hence the mass resignations of Palestinians from the police force and from the rest of the military government as part of the uprising, *intifada*. Today the ordinary Palestinians in the occupied territories rely on their own meagre resources for their deliverance. They are prepared to risk their lives

¹³ Al-Hut, *Al-qiyyadat*, pp. 536-45.

every day rather than wait to be liberated by a united Arab world—a scenario discussed with grave solemnity for years around bejewelled coffee tables in Algeria, Tunisia, Syria and the rest.

We Lived Under Zionist Terror

Since the late 1970s terrorism has become a familiar word in modern political lexicography. The word conjures up an all too familiar popular impression: Arab terrorism, the favoured target for condemnation by Western commentators. They seem to have forgotten that yesterday's Zionist terrorists are today's respectable Israeli politicians fêted and welcomed in the Western world.

Today's Zionist leaders once terrorized Palestinian Arabs to make *lebensraum*, now they do so to silence those who stayed. I have personally experienced the heavy hand of Zionist terrorism in Jerusalem during the 1940s and have recorded some of the violent acts in this chapter.

In 1943 a former British colonial officer, John Shaw, arrived in Palestine to take up his new post of chief secretary of the Palestinian government. At the time of his arrival, the *Palestine Post* and other Arab newspapers quoted him as saying: 'Since we have conquered Palestine, an insignificant country not much bigger than Wales, which was nothing under the Turkish empire, then we have the right to promise the Jews a national home in it.' Jewish terrorism which ensued, tried to make sure that promise was kept.

Since the publication of the White Paper of 1939 the Jews everywhere vowed to fight it. Diplomatic offensives were launched in the corridors of power, murder and arson were the methods used in Palestine. For nine years until 1948 we lived our lives in Jerusalem to the sound of explosions and machine-gun fire. British workers, policemen and soldiers were gunned down. Suddenly, we the Arabs and the British in Palestine were thrust in a rising tide of violence. Curfews were imposed and barbed wire fencing erected to protect us, but this hardly discouraged the Zionist terrorist gangs from going about their deadly business.

A year after his excoriation of terrorism, Ben-Gurion's Haganah forces joined the Irgun Zwei Leumi and the Lohamei Herut Israel (Lehi or Stern Gang) terrorists in a concerted effort to realize the

Jewish Commonwealth. Working side by side, the three armies blew up military and police headquarters as well as individuals. We heard of the murder in November 1944 of Lord Moyne, the British Resident Minister in the Middle East, and his driver in a street of Cairo, by two members of Lehi. On 22 July 1946 I witnessed the King David Hotel in Jerusalem being blown up, an act which was considered the indelible print of Zionist brutality against defenceless civilians. Menachem Begin, the leader of the Irgun, had designed the plan which was eventually approved by the official Zionist leaders.

I was in the north-west wing of the King David Hotel when the bombers struck. The entire south wing, which was used by the British as their military headquarters and civil administrative offices, collapsed. Ninety-one people were killed and forty-five wounded. The casualty list included Arabs, British and Jews, but the majority were Arabs. The King David Hotel was, in the eyes of the Arab Jerusalemites, more than an ordinary building, with offices in it. It was—together with the YMCA building—a symbol of new Jerusalem with all the elegance, beauty and architectural finesse, both inside and outside, which that city epitomized. It was natural that such carnage would engender a feeling of outrage and repugnance in people, but that was not always the case. Many people, Zionists and their friends saw in such acts of terrorism an expression of the heroic. One such person is the pro-Zionist Hollywood scriptwriter, Ben Hecht, whose glamorized version of such activities I reproduce below as an illustration:

A group of some ten Irgun men disguised themselves as the Sudanese who daily supplied milk to the British headquarters. They carried large milk cans on their shoulders, except that the cans were full of powerful explosives instead of milk. The explosives had a time-clock fuse.

The disguised Irgun men entered the King David Hotel without a hitch, and arrived in the basement kitchen. Instead of carrying their milk cans into the kitchen they placed them against the basement pillars.

British guards noted an oddity in the behaviour of the milkmen as they started to leave. They were ordered to halt. A basement battle erupted. Several British soldiers were shot. Two of the Jews were wounded. The entire Irgun group escaped, however. One of their wounded died in the fight. At 12.30 p.m., the whole wing was demolished . . .

The main British bastion in Jerusalem was the Goldschmidt Fortress on King George Avenue, across the street

from the Jewish Agency Headquarters building. Ramparts of sandbags and machine-gun nests protected the fortress.

At 3 p.m. on a Saturday, an Irgun truck disguised as a British lorry entered the military zone around the fortress. The Irgunists had never violated the Sabbath before. As a result, the defenders of the fortress always relaxed on the holy day of the Jews. There was no need to worry about Jewish 'terrorists' when they were busy praying in their synagogues.

The Irgun had chosen Saturday for the same reason. There would be no one but themselves at large in the streets.

Five Irgun fighters were in the disguised lorry. They killed a challenging sentry. Three of the five jumped off the truck with a hundred kilos of explosive in their arms. The three ran to the fortress and tossed their bombs accurately into its windows.

At the same time, two civilians stepped out of a taxi that had followed the disguised lorry. One of the civilians carried a Bren gun. The other had an armload of hand grenades.

The bren gun was in the hands of one of the Irgun's coolest and bravest young men, the incredible battler, Avshalom Haviv.

Haviv pumped Bren gun bullets accurately through the windows of the British fortress. Hundreds of British rifles cracked back.

Simultaneously, another few Irgunists rushed through the streets, soaking them with kerosene. The kerosene was alighted and a wall of flames rose around the fortress.

As the flames roared, a few more Irgun men came bounding out of the Jewish Agency building (unoccupied on the Sabbath). This group tossed smoke bombs on the fire-encircled barricades.

During the hullabaloo, a car carrying four British officers turned into the street. Avshalom Haviv saw them in time and killed the four officers. A few minutes later the Goldschmidt Fortress and scores of officers were blown up.

The entire Irgun force that laid low the British fortress numbered fifteen men. All fifteen escaped, untouched . . .

A full British regiment was stationed in Acre. The Irgun fighters stormed the town, blew up the ancient fortress, and released the forty-one important Irgun and Lehi prisoners.

But the Irgun lost some of their best; among them Avshalom Haviv, who was captured and hanged on the Acre gallows by the British.¹

This unabashed eulogizing of terrorist operations is a remarkable feat in itself. It seems, terrorism is in the eyes of the beholder. The Zionists' next work was the assassination of Count Folke Bernadotte, the UN Mediator in Palestine from 14 May 1948. Bernadotte, killed by the Lehi (Stern Gang) of which the Israeli Prime Minister, Yitzhak Shamir, was one of its three leaders,² was, ironically, a friend o won world-wide praise for his efforts to save thousands of Jews from the gas chambers during the Second World War. As Mediator he arranged a one-month truce during which the Israelis managed to arm themselves to the teeth. He was working on a minor revision of the boundaries envisaged by the UN Partition Plan but it was his concern for the Palestinian refugees whom he thought should return to their homes from which they had been dislodged by the war that cost him his life on 17 September 1948.³

I shall never forget Ben-Gurion's efforts to evade questions relating to the Haganah that were put to him by Sir John Singleton, the British chairman of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, at a hearing in the YMCA's theatre in Jerusalem in 1946.⁴

'Mr Ben Gurion, do you admit the existence of a Jewish armed force known as Haganah?'

'Haganah means defence. Defence—that's what the word Haganah means. Nothing else.'

'You have said that before Mr Ben Gurion. But you are not answering my question. I shall repeat it. Is Haganah an armed body of men and do you admit its existence as such. Please answer that.'

'I tell you Haganah means defence. Defence. It is a Hebrew word for defence.'

And so it went on for about 20 minutes. In the end Sir John Singleton gave up. He realized that he could get nothing out of Ben-Gurion who, I suppose was one of the

¹ Hecht, pp. 34, 35.

² The other two of the triumvirate were Israel Eldad-Scheib and Nathan Yellin-Mor.

³ The gunman who actually shot Bernadotte and Colonel Sérot who was sitting beside him in the car was Yehoshua Cohen. Cohen was never caught and lived free in Israel until his death in 1986. See *The Observer*, 18 September 1988.

⁴ His American counterpart was Judge Joseph C. Hutcheson.

most unsatisfactory of all the witnesses called before the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry.⁵

It was of course natural that he should evade questions about the Haganah. If he had admitted the existence of an underground armed Jewish militia of which he was a leader, he would have admitted to what had become one of the most serious misdemeanours in the mandatory administration's list of offences against order and security. Haganah, to him, was the one reliable safeguard of the Jews of Palestine and at the same time provided the most effective means of organizing and out illegal immigration. It is probable that, even if he had admitted to Sir John Singleton the existence of the Haganah as an armed force, not much could have been done by the government authorities to liquidate it. But it was a risk he could not be expected to take with what was, after all, one of his great achievements. Richard Crossman tried to extract some answers out of Ben-Gurion on the nature of the Haganah, but failed.

Truth and justice were at a premium at such hearings. They were not allowed to be upheld, and neither the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry nor UNSCOP which followed were able to break down the resistance of the Jewish witnesses and bring to the surface what every Palestinian knew and wanted to hear about Zionist terrorism. What emerged, however, was the fact that the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry was not much more than a symbol of the enormous US pressure that was being applied on the newly elected British Labour government to serve the interests of the Zionists.

When the original six US members of the Committee were selected by the White House, Loy Henderson, who was then chief Assistant Secretary to the US Secretary of State, had a meeting with Harold Beeley, the British secretary to the Committee, and told him that there were already two avowed and committed pro-Zionists on the Committee, Bartley C. Crum and James G. MacDonald (who later became the first ambassador to the state of Israel), and hinted that the American side was not likely to be objective and left Beeley to draw his own conclusions.⁶ When the Committee was in Jerusalem and I spoke to Bartley Crum, he quite casually told me that the American members had been appointed by President Truman and that everyone knew what the President wanted. That did not auger well for the Palestinians.

One of the ablest British members became a confirmed Zionist when

⁵ Elston, p. 38.

⁶ Conversation with Sir Harold Beeley in 1986.

he was much impressed with the socialist character of the Jewish kibbutz system in Palestine. That was Richard Crossman who was also a good friend of Chaim Weizmann.

It was common knowledge among Arabs in Palestine that the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem looked after people like Bartley Crum and James MacDonald with largesse during their stay in Palestine.

The beginning of the end for Palestine was felt with the first open round of Zionist terror. The Palestinians were outgunned and outfoxed by an enemy whose outrages the British government was impotent to stem.

I still remember the lunches and dinners given for the foreign press and British visitors by Musa Alami at his home in the village of Sharafat near Jerusalem in the months before the end of the mandate. We spoke of our bitterness and frustrations at the attitude and weakness of the British officials in the Palestine government. A number of them, however, such as Martin Charteris, Director of the Intelligence Headquarters who later became the Private Secretary to Princess Elizabeth and then to the Queen, and Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Gyles Isham of the Defence Security Office Headquarters (1945-46) and Sir Evelyn Barker, Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in Palestine in 1946 showed an understanding of our position.

The British mandate failed to protect even the British from Jewish terrorism. Zionists would place bombs in British officers' clubs in Jerusalem while thousands of miles away other British soldiers were dying on Europe's battlefields fighting the very Nazis who were trying to do away with the Jews. The irony was not lost on us.

The Zionists hanged two British sergeants from a tree and booby-trapped their bodies in retaliation for the lawful execution of a convicted Jewish killer. The attacks on the British became daily occurrences; they were gunned down on the Jaffa Road, in the Mahna-Yahuda quarter, in Talpioth at the Allenby barracks, and on the main road linking Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

As for the Holy City, it soon became divided into security zones with the main squares ringed by barbed wire. We were instructed to carry our passes at all times; body searches by the security forces were common. Curfews put an end to what normal life we tried to live. We lived like prisoners and our gaolers were the Zionist gunmen. Jerusalem became a ghost-town better known for the lives it claimed than for the joy of living it represented for millions of worshippers. The main streets were always empty, resembling the Jewish Mea Shearim quarter on a Friday evening.

All the killings and bombings were executed in the most deliberate

and ruthless fashion but propaganda required that the official Jewish bodies expressed regret, always attributing these acts of extreme violence to the excesses of an 'irresponsible fanatical minority'. The massacre of the villagers of Deir Yasin was one such excess.

The massacre is graphically described by an English writer as follows:

On 9 April 1948, soldiers of the Irgun, a particularly fanatical Zionist militia commanded by Menachem Begin, who was to be Israeli prime minister at the time of the invasion of Lebanon in 1982, entered the Palestinian village of Deir Yassin and told residents that they had 15 minutes to abandon their homes. Then the soldiers attacked. In a few hours the Irgun, in scenes which would be repeated at Shatila and Sabra in Beirut 24 years later, murdered between two and three hundred men, women and children in cold blood. Jacques de Reynier of the International Red Cross went to the village shortly afterwards:

'The first room was dark, everything was in disorder, but there was no one. In the second, amid disembowelled furniture and all sorts of debris, I found some bodies cold. Here the "cleaning up" had been done with machine guns, then hand grenades. It had been finished off with knives, anyone could see that. The same thing in the next room but as I was about to leave, I heard something like a sigh. I looked everywhere, turned over all the bodies, and eventually found a little foot, still warm. It was a little girl of ten, mutilated by a hand grenade, but still alive; everywhere it was the same horrible sight . . . there had been over 400 people in this village; about fifty had escaped. All the rest had been deliberately massacred in cold blood for, as I observed for myself, this gang was admirably disciplined and acted only under orders.'

Begin himself has described the consequences:

'Arabs throughout the country, induced to believe wild tales of "Irgun butchery", were seized with limitless panic and started to flee for their lives. This mass flight soon developed into a maddened uncontrollable stampede . . . The political and economic significance can hardly be over-estimated.'

Many other atrocities have been committed since, two of which deserve special mention. On 14 October 1953 an armed unit under Ariel Sharon entered the village of Qibya at night and blew up a dozen houses over their inhabitants. The villagers were prevented by gunfire from getting out of their homes as these were being prepared for demolition by dynamite. Sixty-six people were massacred this way.⁸ On 29 October 1956, as the villagers of Kafr Qasem were returning home at sunset in small groups or individually, they were shot in cold blood at close range. At least fifty people—men, women and children—were killed and others seriously wounded. The last group killed consisted of four men, fourteen women and one boy.⁹

When Palestinians hear contemporary historians such as the Nobel prize-winning Jewish author, Elie Wiesel, lavish their praise on the Jewish terrorists-turned-statesmen and speak about the atrocities committed by these same men as if they were acts of heroism, acts of war that were necessary for the attainment of independence for the Jewish nation in Palestine, they wonder why this same judgement does not apply to the Palestinian terrorists. When they see men like Begin and Shamir, former leaders of terrorist groups, become prime ministers of the Jewish state and are treated with deference by the leaders of the Western world, they wonder what hope they have of ever finding justice. How, they ask themselves, could the Israelis just walk into Lebanon in 1982, cause the death of some 25,000 people, supervise the massacre of Palestinian refugees in Sabra and Shatila, and pull back at their pleasure without incurring heavy penalties from the civilized world. In utter desperation the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza took to the streets and threw down the gauntlet and, true to form, the Israeli forces countered the challenge with the ruthlessness for which they have become renowned.

What is emerging today among the Zionists is a sense of racial superiority, not unlike that of the Nazis or of the right-wing white South Africans. Even the language used by some Zionists when describing the Arabs bears some resemblance to Hitler's references to the Jews. Thus the Israeli Chief of Staff speaks of the Arabs as 'scorpions in a bottle', while David Hacohen, chairman of the Israeli Knesset Foreign Affairs Committee, says: 'But they [Arabs] are not human beings. They are not people, they are Arabs.' Fortunately for the Jewish conscience, there are people in Israel who disagree. One such person is Yehoshafat Harkabi.

⁸ David Hirst, *The Gun and the Olive Branch: the Roots of Violence in the Middle East* (London, 1977), p. 181.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 185-7.

In June 1988 I was one of the many people invited to the Reform Club in London to celebrate the publication of a book by Harkabi, entitled *Israel's Fateful Decisions*. Professor Harkabi is a former head of military intelligence in Israel and now describes himself as a machiavellian dove—'a man who is dovish for logical, pragmatic reasons, not as an emotional stance.'¹⁰

We discussed his remarkable book in which he asks Israel to recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization, withdraw from the Occupied Territories and make peace with the Arabs. This represented a most extraordinary turn-about in views for Harkabi. Yesterday's militarist had evolved into a sensitive, peace-seeking and wise politician for which he deserves to be congratulated.

By the summer of 1988 Professor Harkabi no longer believed the PLO to be a terrorist organization. Indeed he praised its leader Yasir Arafat and implored Israel to deal directly with him. Harkabi went on to condemn Menachem Begin whose administration he described as a period in which 'posturing took the place of policy . . . when Sharon would manipulate the entire cabinet just by mounting the right phrases to Begin, a Rasputin to Begin's Tsar Nicholas, only far more devious.'¹¹ Not content with this missive, Harkabi believed that the idea of being a chosen people made the Jews a tribe in an enemy environment rather than a state in a community of states.

Harkabi's change had been total. He was not the same man who, sixteen years earlier, took such delight in firing salvos at me in his book *Arab Attitudes to Israel*. In it his selective use of quotations from my writings from the early 1960s made me look like a gun-wielding anti-Semitic villain.¹² Harkabi had come full circle, from a hawk to a man believing in the immediate need for peace and justice. I asked him what made him so optimistic. Why did he believe in peace? What could possibly make Israel's present right-wing leaders, headed by that model of terrorist-turned-politician, Yitzhak Shamir, change their tack? Why would Shamir, a man who has lived by the gun all his life and now rules by the gun, change his attitude?

Harkabi interrupted my questioning and said: 'Mr Shamir is no longer a terrorist. He is now an old man. He became a grandfather.' I fear that this is not enough to bring about the desired change in his stance towards Palestinian statehood.

¹⁰ Lesley Hazelton, *Jerusalem, Jerusalem: A Memoir of War and Peace, Passion and Politics* (Boston and New York, 1986), p. 230.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Harkabi, *Arab Attitudes to Israel* (London, 1972), pp. 28, 130, 308, 330, 345.

When his peace plan for Palestinian self-rule was being debated on 17 May 1989 and Likud members shouted that elections for self-rule would lead to negotiations on a Palestinian state alongside Israel, Shamir retorted: 'Whoever suggests such a thing, may his tongue cleave to the roof of his mouth', and added that Israel would not give up 'a single centimetre' of the occupied territories.¹³ Shamir Yzernitzky, who lived in Poland until he was twenty and emigrated to Palestine in 1935, refers to the Arab Palestinians as 'foreigners' and 'alien invaders'.¹⁴ How, one wonders, can Palestinians, the descendants of the Philistines, Canaanites and other tribes, who inhabited the country since the dawn of history, be expected to trust the judgement of a Polish immigrant who describes them as alien invaders?

¹³ *The Times*, 18 May 1989.

¹⁴ *The Observer*, 21 May 1989.

Exile and Return, 1948–51

During the violence in Jerusalem in 1948, Ragheb's house was hit by several mortar bombs and burned, along with most of his furniture. He cared so much about his precious collection of old Persian carpets—he owned forty-five—that he disposed of the remaining furniture in the monastery of the French school of Dames de Zion in the Old City, and moved to another house in a safer area. But such was the ferocity of the violence that in February 1948 he began to think of leaving. King Abdullah invited him to live in Amman. He called him, wrote letters, and even sent Prime Minister Samir Pasha al-Rifa'i to persuade him. Ragheb thanked him for his offer but declined.

The military clashes intensified between the Jewish guards at the Hebrew University and Hadassah Hospital on Mount Scopus, and the Arab fighters in the Shaikh Jarrah area of the city—and Ragheb's house was in the middle. He decided he had to leave. His wife suggested they accept the invitation of their old friend Dr Naqib Pasha, and move to Alexandria in Egypt. Naqib was the private surgeon to King Farouk and worked in the al-Mo'asat charity hospital.

Lydda airport, the main airport in Palestine, was closed and the railways had ground to a halt. So Ragheb and his wife drove to Amman, and from there flew to Alexandria. They rented a furnished house in the genteel Rushdi Pasha area and followed with horror the developments in their homeland, anxiously waiting for news of friends and relatives. As expected, the Arab states' military power proved to be weak and impotent.

In September 1948, the Mufti proclaimed his 'Arab Government of all Palestine' from Gaza, recognized by all the Arab governments except Transjordan. But the heart of Palestine was hanging in the air. So many Arab armies were concentrated on the eastern side, while Haifa, Acre, Jaffa, Safad and Tiberias were left undefended. The war provoked inter-Arab squabbles and recriminations. The Egyptian press attacked the 'traitor Abdullah'; the Iraqi rulers scoffed at the impotence

of the Egyptian army, the Syrian leaders derided the 'Jordan of Glubb Pasha'.¹

The Mufti, from his new headquarters in Gaza, announced a provisional constitution which contained the Declaration of Independence in Palestine.

The second article in this constitution called for the establishment of an All Palestine government, consisting of three councils: Supreme, National and Ministerial. The constitution itself consisted of seventeen articles, of which the second article called for the establishment of a Palestinian Arab government. The eighth article in the provisional constitution gave the 'All Palestine' government all the legal, constitutional and executive powers to carry its authority on every inch of Palestine within its boundaries as were known during the British mandate.

Article fourteen of the constitution stated that Jerusalem was the capital of the government, although the government had the right to choose any other place as a temporary address for its function.

At the first meeting of the new National Palestinian Council a declaration was made expressing the sincere thanks and appreciation of the Arabs of Palestine to all the Arab governments and Arab nations for what they had done and were still doing to save Palestine; it also praised all the brave Arab armies for their sincere determination to stay in Palestine until the country was fully liberated.²

The new All Palestine government could not stay in Gaza more than a few days, after which, Mahmud Nuqrashi Pasha, the Egyptian Prime Minister, ordered the Mufti to leave Gaza and come to Cairo.

Ahmad Hilmi Pasha, who had been appointed by the Mufti as the prime minister of the government of All Palestine, was invited on 30 October 1948 to attend, for the first time, the sessions of the Arab League in Cairo, and to take part in the discussions. When he asked the members of the Arab League for their financial help to enable the Palestinians to resume their fight against Zionist encroachments, he was promised an amount of 15,000 per year to be considered as the annual budget of the government of All Palestine.³

This was considered a derisory offer by many members of the new

¹ Political commentaries attacking King Abdullah were broadcast daily from Damascus.

² Akram Zu'ayter, 'Hukumat falastin', *Asharq Al Awsat* (October, 1988). Zu'ayter was Minister of Education in the All Palestine government.

³ Ibid.

Palestinian government who promptly tendered their resignation by telegram.

On 17 October 1949 the Arab League's Secretary General forgot to extend the normal invitation to Hilmi Pasha's government to attend the eleventh ordinary session of the Arab League Council. Hilmi Pasha became angry and protested vigorously to the League's Secretary General, accusing the Arab League of 'deviating from its traditional nationalist line and accepting the new status quo which puts the sovereignty of Palestine in the hands of the Zionists thus erasing the name of Palestine from the world map.'⁴

Among the many members of the National Council who declared the independence of Palestine from Gaza under the chairmanship of the Mufti, were the following: Jamal al-Husaini, Awni Abd al-Hadi, Rushdi al-Husaini, Munif al-Husaini, Raja'i al-Husaini and Hamdi al-Husaini. None of the members of the National Defence Party or the Nashashibi family or the Mufti's other political rivals were invited. With the exception of Awni Abd al-Hadi, who resigned a week after his appointment, none of the old members of the Arab Higher Committee had been invited.

Ahmad Hilmi Pasha continued to perform his duties as prime minister of the All Palestine government until he changed his address to the new premises where the Umma Bank (*bank al-umma al-arabia*) at Qasr al-Nil Street was located. Hilmi Pasha owned the bank and was its chairman, but the bank went bankrupt within a few months. The bank, which had been established to save the Arab land of the Palestinian fellah, could not save itself.

About that time, King Abdullah, who was coming to Egypt on a short visit called Ragheb to say he wished to see him. They met in Cairo, and Abdullah outlined the gloomy picture. With bitterness and despair, he told Ragheb what he thought of the ill-fated government of All Palestine, the divided Arab League, and its outspoken Secretary, Azzam Pasha. He told him of the secret meeting that Arthur Giles, General Superintendent of the Palestinian police, had had lately with the Mufti in Cairo. Abdullah said that Giles had asked the Mufti in the name of the British government whether he was willing to accept the partition of Palestine as a solution before it was too late. But as usual, the Mufti had refused partition and said that even that would not satisfy the Jews. He told Giles that agreeing to partition in 1948 was like having the British government make peace with Adolf Hitler in 1940 by giving him part of the British Isles.

4 Ibid.

Abdullah shook his head in despair and said, 'But the Arabs in 1948 are in a far worse political situation, and are much weaker militarily than the British in 1940.' He added, the Mufti had left Gaza for Cairo, then Cairo for Beirut, and that their 'beloved friend', Riad al-Solh had welcomed him at the airport; how scandalous that had been, commented the King. Even Fadil al-Jamali, the Iraqi Foreign Minister had declared that he would 'refuse to sit and negotiate with the Jews as long as they maintained their claim for a Jewish state'. Abdullah concluded: 'Does the Mufti not understand why he was ordered by Nuqrashi Pasha to leave Gaza and stay in Cairo? Is he incapable of understanding the diplomatic signals given to him, why he was not invited to the Arab League meeting last month? Can he not appreciate the gravity of the situation as it is?'

Abdullah asked Ragheb whether he had received any news from Jerusalem, and Ragheb said that all he had heard till then came from Suhayl Shukri, whose father was once the mayor of Haifa. Shukri had passed through Alexandria on his way to Europe with his American wife and had spoken with Ragheb in his house. He had told him that Jerusalem was in a horrific state, and that there was looting everywhere.

The UN Mediator, Count Folke Bernadotte, declared publicly in the press and on the radio that most of the refugees left practically all their possessions behind, and that while those who had fled in the early days of the conflict had been able to take with them some personal effects and assets, many of the latecomers were deprived of everything except the clothes in which they stood, and apart from their homes (many of which were destroyed) lost all furniture and assets, and even their tools of trade. His assistant, Ralph Bunche, said that the bulk of the Arab refugees left their homes on foot at short notice, taking little or nothing with them. The director of the UN Disaster Relief Project said: 'While a few Arabs were able to carry personal effects and some money, flight was generally disorderly and with almost no possessions.'⁵ Even Edwin Samuel, the son of Herbert Samuel, did not hesitate to remark: 'The next stage in this tragedy was widespread Jewish looting of Arab property.'⁶

Ragheb continued relating the news which he had heard about Jerusalem to the King, and said, with great sorrow, that he had heard

⁵ This fact was later verified by other UN officials. See UN General Assembly, *Official Records*, no. A-648, pp. 14-47 and no. A-689, p. 1.

⁶ Edwin Samuel, 'The government of Israel and its problems', *Middle East Journal*, vol. 3, no. 1 (January 1949), p. 14.

that the priceless personal library of his cousin, Is'af Nashashibi, which had contained a vast collection of books and rare Arab manuscripts had been looted, and valuable antiques stolen. The vehicles and equipment of the Jerusalem Municipal Fire Brigade had been spirited away. Even dangerous mental patients from the Bethlehem Mental Hospital had been released. The gates of Jerusalem's main prisons had been opened and the prisoners let out. Overall, more than 5,000 people had been killed or wounded in the violence.

Abdullah asked Ragheb if he had any idea of British plans to deal with that mess. Ragheb smiled and said, 'In London they have no further concern for our problems. They have more urgent ones now in England, the British Empire and Europe. The British economy is almost bankrupt. The German people are starving, the Soviets are challenging and winning—and these are only a few of the problems!' Abdullah talked of the plight of the Palestinian refugees who had fled in their thousands to escape the killings. They had fled to the West Bank held by Jordanian troops, or crossed over to Transjordan proper and were flooding Amman. There were already 95,000 Palestinian refugees in Transjordan. Abdullah said he had ordered his government to give Jordanian nationality to any Palestinian refugee who asked for it. 'I am not Shukri al-Quwatli of Syria; I am not Bishara al-Khouri of Lebanon. My country is Jordan. By God, I am a Muslim ruler, a Hashemite king, and my father was the king of the Arabs, of all the Arabs.'

Then he told Ragheb, in his inimitable way—of using more gesticulation than words—that he was pressing the British and the Israelis not to object to his plan of annexing the Arab part of Palestine to his kingdom. He said bluntly: 'If I don't annex the West Bank to Amman, Israel will annex it to Tel Aviv. The Jews have always had a voracious appetite.' When Ragheb asked if Abdullah would abide by a new armistice if the UN Security Council ordered it, he said, 'Of course I would—but I don't think for a second the Jews would. My information is that they would move towards the Negev and the Dead Sea to occupy as much territory as they can lay their hands on.' Then he asked: 'Why doesn't the Egyptian garrison, encircled by the Jews at Faluja, try to break out? One of my British officers in the Arab Legion went there from Hebron on foot and offered the Legion's help, but they suspected his motives and refused.'

But the Egyptians held out at Faluja until the armistice agreement was signed in February 1949. One of the young officers there was Gamal Abdel Nasser.

Abdullah continued criticizing Syria and Egypt. He said, laughingly,

that Jamil Mardam, the Syrian prime minister, had vowed that if fighting broke out again the Egyptian army would burst into Huleh and Tiberias and would occupy the heart of Palestine. 'What a charlatan this man is,' he said. He looked Ragheb in the eye and said: 'Egypt is a bigger state than Syria; the Egyptian army is far superior to that of the Syrians. Yet, only a few hours ago, the Egyptian defence minister came here and asked me to use my influence with King Farouk to persuade him to make peace with the Jews on any honourable terms.'

Time passed quickly. The King felt tired, and Ragheb wanted to catch the evening train to Alexandria. On parting, Ragheb made the traditional gesture of asking: 'Any orders Your Majesty?' 'Yes,' he replied, 'I want you to return to Amman as soon as possible.' Ragheb answered in Turkish, the language they both loved, 'If God is your pilot, you don't need a compass.'

On a hot and humid evening during that summer, I was lying in a hospital bed in Alexandria after an operation for acute appendicitis. When I finally came to, I found Ragheb standing at my bedside, holding my hand. He said to me: 'I have just come back from Cairo. I met Abdullah, and I have a lot to tell you about what he said.' There was a smile on his face which signified some good news. I could only groan with pain.

Days passed. Another ceasefire was ordered by the UN Security Council on 22 October but fighting continued. The Egyptian forces were by now scattered and cut into several sections along the front line. The government of All Palestine had moved from Gaza to Cairo. In the north, fighting spread on to Lebanese territory.

Meanwhile, on 1 December 1948 King Abdullah convened a conference of his Palestinian supporters in Jericho and had himself declared King of Palestine. Among his supporters attending the conference were Ajaj Nuweihed, Walid Salah, Muhammad Ali al-Ja'bari, the mayor of Hebron, Dr Hamdi Taji al-Faruqi, Ahmad al-Khalil, Khalusi al-Khairi, Aziz Shehadeh, Aref Pasha al-Aref, Antoine Atallah and Musa Nasir. They passed a resolution that had been prepared for them in advance. It read as follows:

- 1 The Conference thanks the Arab states for services rendered to Palestine.
- 2 It proclaims the unity between Transjordan and Palestine as a step towards complete Arab unity.
- 3 It proclaims King Abdullah to be the legitimate King of all Palestine, and salutes with gratitude his great and courageous army.

- 4 It requests His Majesty to take steps to enable the Palestinians to choose their legal representatives.⁷

None of the members of the Nashashibi National Defence Party were connected with the Preparatory Committee or the Executive Committee of the Jericho Conference. None attended the Conference. On the same day a delegation from the Conference crossed the frontier and went to meet Abdullah to hand him a copy of the resolution. Abdullah was waiting for them in his al-Mussalah Palace at al-Shuna, near Jericho. He addressed them as follows:

I consider your resolutions as a blessing from almighty God, and a heavy burden for you. When Palestinian notables visited me last April after the dreadful event of Deir Yasin, I said to them that I put myself at the disposal of the people of Palestine until victory, or until they say 'enough'. With God's help, we were able to fulfil our past promises. In the present circumstances there is no room for rhetoric but for thought and discipline. I shall pass your resolutions on to my government and hope that the rest of the Arab governments will take stock of them. I believe that this will undoubtedly help to take Palestine out of its present dilemma.⁸

The following day Weizmann lamented the fact that Jerusalem had been excluded from the state of Israel and asserted that Jerusalem belonged to the Jews. Abdullah felt confident and secure. The steps he had taken had already been approved by Ernest Bevin and the Israeli leaders in Tel Aviv. Bevin had written to Abdullah before the Conference of Jericho that Britain was behind him and that his government had 'always viewed with disfavour the establishment of a separate government for Arab Palestine.'⁹

Soon after, King Abdullah sent for Ragheb, and at dinner in his small palace in Amman he offered him the post of Governor General of the West Bank to replace the corrupt and almost illiterate Fallah al-Madadha. Abdullah told Ragheb: 'I need you to save the boat from sinking.' Ragheb accepted and a new chapter in the life of a Jerusalemite Arab leader began. This came as good news for the Palestinians who had been suffering from their traumatic experiences especially the majority of them who had now become refugees.

⁷ Abdullah al-Tall, *Karithat falastin* (Cairo, 1959).

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Bevin to Abu al-Huda in FO 371/75279, 18 October 1948.

The 'unification' of the West Bank with Transjordan dealt a fatal blow to the Mufti's Arab government of All Palestine, which had been created not just as a response to the national aspirations of the Palestinian Arabs, but also as a deterrent against Abdullah's designs on Palestine. The absorption of part of Palestine into his Kingdom was the culmination of Abdullah's efforts since the early thirties. But the British Ambassador to Jordan, Sir Alec Kirkbride, was not all that enthusiastic and repeatedly expressed his fear that the Palestinians might one day overrun Transjordan itself and endanger the Hashemite throne.

In August 1988, Abdullah's grandson, King Husain, severed all juridical and administrative ties with the occupied West Bank, thereby undoing what his grandfather had accomplished forty years earlier, and enabling the Palestine National Council to declare the State of Palestine in November 1988.

Ragheb Nashashibi's governance of the West Bank was much hampered by the constant interference and intrigues of the Prime Minister, Tawfiq Abu al-Huda who was known for his pro-Mufti tendencies. Ragheb reported his discontent to the King who then appointed him—on 5 January 1951—Servant of al-Aqsa Mosque, Custodian of the Holy Places in the city and Superintendent of the al-Haram al-Sharif (the Noble Sanctuary).

I was asked by the King to represent him at Ragheb's ceremony in Jerusalem. I arrived in the Holy City carrying an advance copy of the King's speech to help Ragheb compose a suitable reply, and conveyed to him the King's congratulations. Moments after reading the first sentence of the King's speech, Ragheb raised his head and said to me: 'I cannot answer the King in that kind of archaic Arabic, so you will write my answer for me.' So I did.

On the morning of the ceremony, when I went to collect Ragheb from the American Colony Hotel, he looked very tired, pale and sick. I helped him dress and pinned on his uniform the many decorations he had received over the years from kings, presidents and heads of governments. Then we were driven in a royal car to al-Rawda College for the ceremony. He took the chair of honour and listened to the King's speech, read by the Minister of the Court. It was a truly glittering occasion, but neither Ragheb Pasha nor I were happy. We both knew in our hearts that a leader of the Arabs of Palestine, a former mayor of Jerusalem, had, at the end of a distinguished career, been reduced to a local personality, a player on the periphery—a Jordanian administrator in a dusty corner of Jerusalem. We both wore the smiles the occasion demanded but we mourned in our hearts. For we knew

that possessing the old Arab quarter of Jerusalem was simply no compensation for the loss of the rest of the great city to the Zionists.

At the ceremony in the old conference hall of the al-Rawda College near the walls of the al-Haram al-Sharif, the Minister of the Royal Hashemite Court of Jordan, Muhammad Pasha al-Shuraiki, delivered the royal decree in the name of King Abdullah appointing Ragheb to the new office.

Following is a literal translation of the text of the Royal Order, written in the old classical Arabic style used in court decrees, during the days of the caliphs, monarchs and sultans:

From Abdullah Ben Al-Hussein, the King of the Hashemite Jordan Kingdom, by God's will, to His Excellency the pride of the dignitaries, the example of the virtuous, the greatest of the great, he who conducts the affairs of the religious communities with wisdom and superior judgement, and he who personifies the meanings of generosity, dignity and honour, my Minister who clad himself with glory, the bearer of the Jordan first Order of Renaissance, His Excellency Ragheb Pasha al-Nashashibi.

In recognition of your superb qualities and praiseworthy deeds we have hereby issued our Royal Hashemite Order, appointing you to the post of the Superintendent of al-Harem el-Shareef and the custodian of the Holy Places, hoping that you will apply your great efforts and excellent ideas for the service of al-Aksa Mosque which God has blessed all around it and has helped our faithful soldiers to restore it to its rightful state, in order that it will remain a constant blessing to all believers.

We hope that you will provide, with abundance, the necessary protection and care for the welfare of all the communities and the pilgrims of all nationalities. We want you to protect them and their freedom of action and their sacred matters and their traditions and ways and places of worship. Also, we want you to restore everything in that Holy City to its rightful place and give freedom its full and ample expression. All that must be done according to the prevailing conditions of the present times and guaranteeing the human rights of all communities and the people of the mosques and churches and sects, so that every citizen will feel secure in peace and tranquility as ordained by the great prophets of God. We want the doctrines of the various faiths

to appear within the framework of brotherhood in the holy Arab town which is respected and honoured by all the religions of the world, so that services of prayer and rites are offered and precious beliefs are protected as they were in the great days of the Caliph Omar, fulfilling our noble traditions from many generations throughout the different Islamic periods. We want Your Excellency to respect all the sultanic privileges and papers given to the different bishops and the different orders they represent. It is also important to register, in a special book, all the rights that the people enjoy so that the necessary reference can be made to it when needed. All this must be done following the excellent example rendered by our forefathers in their pursuit of honesty and adhering to lofty ideals, guided by the words of our Holy Qur'an, which says:

'Mankind. We created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes that you may know each other. Verily, the most honoured of you in the sight of God is the most righteous. May God guide your steps and endow you with strength and good fortune, and bestow on you his blessings, prosperity and success.'¹⁰

Ragheb stood up and gave his answer to the King's order in an emotional speech, expressing his sincere gratitude. He looked tired, hesitant and sick. When he finished, it was my turn to deliver a word of congratulations on behalf of the King of Jordan, and when I finished the royal band of the Arab Legion played the national anthem. With that the ceremony, which was broadcast live, ended.

The Arab sector, to which Ragheb was assigned as protector, merely served to remind us that there were other Arab quarters in Jerusalem still dear to us but which were now beyond our reach. These areas had been seized only a short time earlier by the Zionists. We were unlikely to ever see them under Arab rule during our lifetimes. It was a grim thought but those were grim days.

For the first time we felt that Jerusalem was really divided. We felt bereaved, a powerful sense of loss gripped us, a feeling which a few years before had been unimaginable. We felt that holy cities must not be divided, that what had happened was a blasphemy, a blight on civilization, that Jerusalem was for everyone, for all mankind.

¹⁰ The Royal Decree was published in the Official Gazette of Jerusalem on 5 January 1951.

On my return home I heard the Israeli reaction to Ragheb's appointment as Custodian of the Holy Places over the radio. They made it unequivocally clear that under no circumstances would they accept or recognize the unilateral decision that the King had made.

When I reached home I received several telephone calls from irate European consuls in Jerusalem protesting against the appointment of an Arab Muslim as Custodian of the Holy Places since the Custodian dealt with the holy shrines and monuments of all religions, not just Muslim ones. The French Consul told me that only France or anyone appointed by France was entitled to be Custodian. He shouted down the telephone: 'Impossible! Je n'accepte pas! Je proteste . . .'

A few minutes later the Italian Consul General called me and repeated in Italian what his colleague had told me in French. 'D'accordo! Sono arrabiato! Faccio obiezione!'

And then the Greek Consul also called to express his anger at the appointment of a Muslim. I conveyed all these protests to the King who said angrily, 'Let them go to hell! This is my will and I shall stick to it.'

A few months later, in the spring of 1951, I told Abdullah that Ragheb had been admitted to hospital. Ragheb had entered the Augusta Victoria Hospital on the Mount of Olives, suffering from cancer of the liver.

King Abdullah immediately decided to visit him, and the convoy left soon after. When we approached the Mount of Olives from the main road between Jerusalem and Jericho, the King looked up at the large building on the hill and asked, 'Is that the place?' I said it was. His face turned pale.

Abdullah, trying to control his emotions, said to me,

This place, my son, was never a hospital. It was built by the Germans before the First World War to be used as a guest house and a conference centre for meetings between the Germans and the Turks. When they were defeated, General Allenby chose to use it as a guest house for dignitaries and an official residence for the government.

Still gazing at the dark stone building, surrounded by huge pine and olive trees, Abdullah said:

In this building, in the spring of 1921, I had my first meeting with Winston Churchill. He was the Secretary of State for the Colonies at the time. My father [King Husain Bin Ali] had ordered me to come to Jerusalem to meet Churchill. On my arrival from Amman that day I was received by Sir

Herbert Samuel. He was a fanatical Jew and a clever Zionist and tried to tell me, before meeting Churchill, that the first request the British government would make and expect me to comply with would be that my father should leave Aqaba for Cyprus at once and stay there. Herbert Samuel tried his best to appear as polite and diplomatic as possible while giving me these orders.

He continued:

After we entered the building, a few minutes later Colonel Lawrence came in and told us that Mr and Mrs Churchill were waiting to receive us in their private residence. We met them for a short time and then parted with an invitation for dinner at their apartment in the building. When we met again at dinner, Churchill began talking business. He advised me that I should tell my brother Faisal to proceed to Iraq immediately and give up his rights to the Syrian throne. He also advised me to stay in Transjordan and never think of going to Damascus or of trying to challenge the French presence there. As to the subject of the Balfour Declaration, he advised me to discuss it with the High Commissioner.

He went on to say: 'I told Churchill on parting that the issue of the Iraqi throne would be decided only by the Iraqis. As to the Balfour Declaration, I emphasized that the Arab Palestinians rejected it and insisted that Palestine was an Arab country for the Palestinian Arabs.'

Churchill, according to Abdullah, was not amused by these words and left without comment.

The King entered the outside gate of the hospital and walked up the great stone staircase leading to the second floor where Ragheb was staying.

This place is a curse, my son. It is a symbol of bad luck. I have seen nothing come out of it but ill and misfortune. It was here they asked my father to go into exile. It was here they asked me to give up my rights to the Syrian throne. Here, they ordered my brother Faisal to go to Iraq and forget about Syria. Here, they imposed on the Arabs all their evils and injustices by enforcing the Balfour Declaration. This, my son, is the building of the oppressor. How could they transform it into a hospital? And why did Ragheb Pasha choose it? Who advised him to come here? Who is his doctor?

Ask and let me know. I feel sad and depressed. He who enters this place will never find any good here.

We stopped at the door of Ragheb's room where a few doctors shook hands with him and he hurried to see his friend who was sitting up in bed waiting. They embraced each other with tears in their eyes. They did not talk except when the King asked Ragheb to take off his tarbush, which he was wearing as a sign of respect. The quiet visit lasted fifteen minutes. No words, no questions, no answers, only sad faces.

The King left, and I left with him. Forty-eight hours later on Tuesday 10 April 1951 Ragheb Nashashibi died. Three months later, King Abdullah was assassinated.

If Ragheb Nashashibi were alive today and was asked by his friends in Jerusalem to return from his exile, I do not think he would want to.

The Jerusalem he knew and built and served and loved does not exist any more. His Jerusalem was peaceful, calm, romantic, poetic, friendly, and beautiful. The Jerusalem of today is just the opposite. His old Jewish friends were noble people: advocate Eliachar, Professor Magnes, and Dr Mandel and many others in the fields of literature, the arts and politics. But the new residents of Jerusalem include people like Meir Kahane, the American-born rabbi, with his fanatical supporters in the Gush Emunim movement and in the Tehiya party and other right-wing terrorists who support the most racist and reactionary ideas of modern times.

The name of Jerusalem in Hebrew is Yerushalayim, from Ir Shalem—city of peace. But there is no peace in today's Jerusalem. Nobody likes to live in a city which is full of hatred and resentment, mixed with racism and fanaticism. Nobody likes cities of despair. Any person who knew the Jews of Palestine before 1948 would not be able to recognize or live with the Jews of Israel in the 1970s and 1980s. In the old Palestine we used to share with our Jewish neighbours most of their religious festivals. We understood the real meaning of those feasts. We knew what Passover meant. We understood the meaning of reading the Haggada and understood the story of the Exodus from Egypt, and felt as if each Jew had personally gone out of Egypt. We were citizens of one country: no oppressor and no oppressed. No master and slave. No conqueror and conquered. The Jerusalem of yesterday had dignity and grace, but the Jerusalem of today has no relation whatever to the Jerusalem we loved. Although Jerusalem has never been an ordinary city like Tel Aviv, it is governed by the mentality of those who run Tel Aviv. The city had a touch of the holy. That seems to have gone. The flood of money from the world's Jews, especially from the American

Jews, has turned the city landscape into another Chicago. The peaceful and quiet evenings of the old Jerusalem exist no more. The young immigrants from East and West climb the ancient wall of Jerusalem after sunset and, without the slightest sense of reverence, smoke marijuana and sniff cocaine. An atmosphere of vulgarity is gradually enveloping the city. There is a dogged determination on the part of the Israelis to turn Jerusalem into a thoroughly Jewish city. In 1969 Abba Eban frequently tried to allay Christian and Muslim fears by affirming at the UN General Assembly that Israel claimed 'no exclusive or unilateral jurisdiction in the Holy Places of Christianity and Islam in Jerusalem'.

Perhaps Abba Eban meant what he said but he also meant to make the new conquerors appear in a good light. Yet in the same year Moshe Dayan, the Minister of Defence, ordered that the al-Haram al-Sharif area—the noble Sanctuary of the Muslims—be opened for all non-Muslims and called it, to slight Muslim susceptibilities, 'The Muslim Mosques in the Temple Mount area.' He was not trying to please the Christians. He was asserting Jewish right of access everywhere and underlining Israeli sovereignty over every inch of the Holy City.

Muslims around the world feel affronted when they hear that extremist religious Jewish groups demonstrate at the gates of the al-Haram area without compunction and that archaeological excavations are being carried out under and around the al-Aqsa Mosque. They also resent the organized tours for Israeli ministers and Knesset members of the al-Haram area where they treat the muftis and the shaikhs with arrogance and disdain. Worst of all, the sight on the television screens of Israeli troops clubbing Palestinian youths outside the al-Aqsa Mosque has shocked Muslims and civilized communities everywhere.

If Ragheb Nashashibi and his moderate friends like Dr Magnes and Professor Mandel were alive today and witnessed these scenes, they would be deeply distressed by this pervasive inhumanity of man to man, despite their past experiences of violence. I think myself that even Ben-Gurion would feel distaste for the repression that is still being employed so many years after the establishment of the Jewish state.

When I hear Israeli rulers say that they will crush the uprising, that is, kill, maim and beat Arab boys and girls who throw stones at Israeli armed soldiers, I can only quote a few lines from the Jewish American author, Lesley Hazelton, in her fascinating book about the new Jerusalem and the growing power of the orthodox Jews there. She wrote about the orthodox Jews who habitually throw stones at their

fellow citizens in the Mea Shearim quarter and compared their fate with that of the Palestinian protesters:¹¹

They [the orthodox Jews] became very good with stones. They stoned policemen trying to break up their demonstration against autopsies, and they stoned cars travelling from Shabbat to the new suburb of Ramot. They stoned archaeologists who they claimed were desecrating ancient streets . . . There were injuries from these stonings, but because the vagaries of domestic politics had given the ultra-orthodox political parties disproportionate power, the stoners were not even arrested, let alone tried. A Palestinian boy stoning cars on the West Bank was sentenced to five years imprisonment; but these zealots, as the press politely calls them, were protected. Their language of hate was archaic, a throwback to times we had thought long past. 'Infidels,' they screamed at us as the stones flew. 'Sadducees,' 'Roman quislings,' 'Lovers of Hellenic culture' . . . 'Intermarrying, swine-eating, Sabbath-breaking heretics . . . trampers on the graves of the forefathers' . . . Diners were beaten up in restaurants serving bread at Passover. Meat stores selling non-kosher meat were vandalised . . .

She added: 'Sometimes the present Jewish mayor—Teddy Kollek—made bad mistakes. The worst was the most visible—the fortress-style of the new suburbs built since 1967 to ring the city with Jewish housing—though a mere mayor could have little effect on what was essentially political architecture.'

Jerusalem has suffered countless blows over the last forty years. But perhaps the most regrettable development from the point of view of the international community has been the relentless drive to convert it to an exclusively Jewish city, gradually eroding its historical role as a city for all. The uprising has polarized the Jews even further—most of them tending to move towards the extreme right. For this reason one fears that Jerusalem will suffer for years to come before it finds peace.

11 Hazleton, pp. 221–36.

The Last Chapter

Katy Antonius, in a moment of despair that grips even the most reserved Palestinians from time to time, said to me last time I saw her before she died: 'Will there be life after death in Jerusalem? Will there be peace after war, hope after despair, love after hate, tolerance after fanaticism, and peace celebrations after violence and death?' She paused as if expecting me to answer, but when I looked at her blankly, seemingly lost for words, she went on:

Will the waves of racism and extreme right-wing Zionism ever come to an end? Will the moderates in the Arab and Israeli camps, who are now drifting into oblivion, re-emerge to rule? Will the law of return be abolished and will Israel ever be persuaded to lead a normal life and behave like a normal country? Will the psychological blocks of the two sides finally fade away?'

Ten years have elapsed since she spoke these words. Dare one be optimistic? Half the Israeli people who are now in their thirties do not confess to being Zionists, we hear. They do not want Zionism to protect them or provide for them, or give them more land and more trouble. They want to live in peace like other people.

Some twenty-three years ago I was in Geneva when the news came through from Jerusalem that my only brother had died in a car accident. I left my work as a roving ambassador for the Arab League in Europe and flew to the funeral in Jerusalem.

While walking behind the coffin in the procession near al-Aqsa Mosque, news arrived that a huge Israeli military force had crossed the frontier into the West Bank and attacked that morning the Arab village of Samu near Hebron and had withdrawn after demolishing 130 buildings, killing 20 and wounding over 130 people. Two days later, I flew to Cairo to meet President Gamal Abdel Nasser and thanked him for the condolences he had conveyed to me on my brother's death. He asked me for news of Jerusalem and the West Bank. I mentioned the

Israeli raid and told him about my fears that such massive Israeli reprisals would be repeated in the future if the Arabs from Syria or Jordan continued to cross the frontier into Israel.

To my utter amazement, the Egyptian president laughed at my concern and said:

You must be suffering from a nervous breakdown to think of such Israeli aggression as a bad thing. On the contrary, it is a good thing. I see it as a very good thing indeed. If the Jews repeat such aggressive acts in the future, they will give me the pretext to order the army to enter Israel and liberate Palestine.

I asked him whether he was sure that the state of the Egyptian army was up to defeating the Israelis and achieving victory. He answered, still laughing: 'I want you to pray to God that they will repeat what they have done two days ago, so that their hour will come soon, and the hour of your country's liberation draws nearer.'

I was alarmed by Nasser's words. I tried to suggest to him that perhaps the Israelis themselves were also waiting for an excuse to attack Egypt and complete the occupation of Palestine. I told him that when Abdullah was killed in the Old City in 1951, at a time when the military strength of Israel was inconsiderable, many influential Israelis urged the Israeli government to seize the opportunity and occupy the rest of Jerusalem. All Nasser would say was: 'I am not Abdullah.'

I tried to convince him that the Israeli government, along with world Jewry and the West, would not view the Palestinian tragedy in any way other than within the context of Zionist aspirations. I had with me at the time a copy of a study entitled, 'The Arabs of Palestine', written by a noted author and novelist Martha Gellhorn, a war correspondent and political analyst, who had visited the Middle East to see the Palestine refugee problem in terms of real life, real people. I told Nasser that the text of her article published in the *Atlantic Monthly* of October 1961, was approved and blessed by the office of Israeli Cabinet ministers before publication. It was an exposition of the well-known Israeli view of the Palestine problem. I told him every Arab and non-Arab politician interested in the conflict should read the article to understand the Israeli leaders' reasoning. He asked me to summarize the salient points, which I did. For the benefit of the reader, I reproduce a few extracts:

At present, any Arab Government which urged a quick peaceful advantageous settlement of the Palestine refugee

problem would be mobbed . . . The Arab Governments say they will not accept the existence of the State of Israel, now or ever. The logical conclusion is that, when ready, they intend to burst from their cold belligerent status into hot armed conflict and terminate Israel's existence.

Gellhorn's article went on to prescribe a solution for the Palestinian refugee problem: 'Within one generation, if civilization lasts, Palestinian refugees will merge into the Arab nations . . . For the Jews there is no other ancestral land than Israel.' The article added: 'The Palestinian refugees are a chain reaction. Arab politicians and apologists would have us believe that the explosion began with the Balfour Declaration to view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a home for the Jewish people.'

In my summing up I commented parenthetically that it was more likely that the explosion began when the Romans drove the Jews out of their biblical homeland. Nearly two thousand years later, Hitler and his henchmen committed such barbarous crimes against the Jews as had never been committed throughout the centuries of the Diaspora. The Nazis with their gas chambers secured the creation of a Jewish state, the Palestinian Arabs and the five invading Arab armies established the boundaries of Israel.

Then the article tried to explain why Israel could not stay still in a situation of no-war, no-peace with the Arabs. In fact, it foreshadowed by some six years the war of 1967. The following paragraph I had to read out to Nasser because I felt it was particularly significant.

There is no future in nagging or bullying Israel to commit suicide by the admission of a fatal locust swarm of enemies. There is no future in Nasser's solution, the Holy War against Israel; and we had better make this very clear, very quickly. Long bleak memories will recall the *Sudetendeutsch* and Czechoslovakia. In a new setting, Palestinian refugees assume the role of the *Sudetendeutsch*. Israel becomes Czechoslovakia . . . The echo of Hitler's voice is heard again in the land now speaking pure Arabic!

When I finished reading these lines I remarked briefly that this meant Israel was bent on launching a pre-emptive attack. Nasser looked at me and said:

The problem with these people in Israel is that they still live in their past. Nobody is willing to live in the present or to think of a future. In my opinion, there are no statesmen in

Israel, there are only politicians, and when I find a single statesman in Israel, then we can talk about peace. Every Jewish politician is a slave to his own ambitions. He either wants to be another Weizmann or another Ben-Gurion. Each one of them thinks of what part he can carve out for himself in history. They are not concerned with peace as they claim; they only want more power for themselves and their political parties.

Nasser concluded:

With such an attitude dominating their political thinking, I cannot see any hope for peace. I am able to make peace. I am strong enough to convince the Arabs—all the Arabs—of the benefits of peace, but I don't see any Israeli who is willing to make peace, not on Jewish terms, not on Arab terms, but on just terms.

Many reasons have been given for the Israeli offensive of 5 June 1967, including Nasser's closure of the Straits of Tiran to all Israeli ships, and ships of other countries carrying strategic materials to Eilat. This so-called blockade would have affected only 5 per cent of Israel's foreign trade if rigorously implemented—which it was not. Moreover it was perfectly legal. But it provided an excuse for the Israelis to launch all-out war. Do we really know for certain why? Was it, as Martha Gellhorn put it, to head off 'a fatal locust swarm of enemies', or was the time right to take over all of Czechoslovakia?

In 1968 I returned to Jerusalem to visit my family and attend the funeral of a dear relative. Shortly after the funeral an Israeli officer called unexpectedly and invited me to meet the Israeli Prime Minister, Levi Eshkol. I said I had visited Jerusalem to pay my last respects to a loved one and I was not interested in meeting any Israeli officials, whatever their rank. I said I had nothing to offer the Prime Minister and that I represented no one. The following morning he returned to deliver a message more in a way of an order than an invitation; my appointment with the Prime Minister was fixed for twelve noon at his office in Jerusalem, he said.

I consulted my Arab neighbours and friends, among them Judge Taysir Kan'an and Rashad al-Shawwa, mayor of Gaza, who was in Jerusalem at the time. They both advised me to go. 'We have all done so and there is nothing to lose, though there is much to benefit for after the meeting you will realize the Israelis' true position on the Israeli-Palestinian issue,' they said in near unison. They added that other

Arabs, including Shaikh Ja'bari, mayor of Hebron, and Hikmat al-Masri from Nablus, had accepted similar invitations.

When I entered the Prime Minister's office it was clear he was immersed in a working session of one of the many committees he chaired. He was surrounded by several top advisers on Arab affairs, a scene which prompted me to think that perhaps I had been invited for some secret negotiations. I felt that he may be thinking that my Jerusalem was not what it appeared to be, that somehow it had a clandestine purpose, or perhaps he detected signs of subterfuge in my initial protestations to the Israeli officer who had come to invite me to this meeting. I immediately thought of Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser and my long friendship with that Arab nationalist during my time as editor of the Egyptian daily, *al-Jumhuriyya*.

I doubted whether the Israelis could ever believe that my visit to Jerusalem, my home, was a purely personal affair. It was too straightforward for the Israeli mind to accept.

Eshkol said he would give me thirty minutes to discuss the [Arab-Israeli] situation; he would then give his views on the problems and, if I wished, I could relay these thoughts back to President Nasser. Again I denied any political motives behind my visit. Eshkol looked at his watch and suggested we talked anyway.

'I like intelligent and informative talks. I am a sick man and very tired and the time is 12.30 p.m. My wife is waiting to have lunch with me at 1 p.m. Let's talk,' he said.

We talked for a good three hours. We concentrated mainly on the question of Jerusalem. He said:

Do we prevent anyone from visiting Jerusalem? Listen my dear man, I hear from time to time King Faisal of Saudi Arabia telling the world that he wants to visit and pray at the al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem. Alright! Fine! Let him come. Tell him to come! Let him inform us when he arrives in Amman and when he wishes to cross the Jordan valley to come to Jerusalem and we will send an Israeli helicopter to carry him directly to the field of al-Haram. There he can pray as long as he wants. But after prayers the same helicopter will take him back to Amman from where he can return to his country. What do you think of that? Would you like to tell King Faisal to accept my invitation to come and pray?

I asked him: 'Is this, Mr Prime Minister, the final solution Israel has prepared for the Jerusalem problem? Is this your official solution for the occupation of the Muslim holy places? Is it as simple as that?'

'What else do you want me to do?' he replied.

I said:

You can stand up tomorrow morning in your parliament and say to the world that every Arab who left Jerusalem during or after the 1967 War is allowed to come back; that Israel is not interested in annexing an inch of the occupied territories; and that Israel is willing to pull back to its pre-1967 borders providing the Arabs sign a contract of peace with her. You can do a lot, Mr Prime Minister.

An Israeli helicopter to bring an Arab monarch to pray at al-Aqsa mosque is not an answer to the hopes and demands of a billion Muslims and 200 million Arabs regarding the status of Jerusalem.

You cannot place Jerusalem under the sovereignty of one nation or one religious community. You are annexing Jerusalem to one small state when the sovereignty of Jerusalem belongs to heaven.

When we rose to leave we both knew that neither had liked what the other had said. But we were of one mind over the question that the occupation of Jerusalem by one nation was a threat to peace and a major problem for the Jews themselves.

As I was leaving, I turned to Eshkol and said: 'If you say that the Jews will never again be far from the Wailing Wall, you may consider that this is possible only if other peoples of other religions are also not far from Jerusalem. Jerusalem should belong to everyone.'

On the third day of the 1967 War, General Moshe Dayan, speaking beside the Wailing Wall, told the world that he pledged never to surrender the control of the Wailing Wall and of Jerusalem. Dayan was not the first man to make such a pledge; there have been many others before him.

Sultan Sulaiman the Magnificent, who ruled the Ottoman Empire for over fifty years during the sixteenth century, cared intensely for Jerusalem. He built the city walls and promised to bestow on Jerusalem the glory and care it deserved. Since Sulaiman's days the city has hosted an array of world dignitaries, politicians and statesmen, including King Edward VII, King George V, the Austrian Emperor, the Caesars, the Sultans of the Mamluks and many more besides. Their names are listed in the historic books and records of churches and museums throughout the city.

The city has attracted the great, the good and the rapacious. How the present visitors are to be classified depends on personal taste. Some

have a distaste for the high-rise buildings, some for the brutality of the Israeli troops. Many monarchs coveted this jewel for their empire. The Ottomans thought they would never leave al-Quds al-Sharif, the noble Jerusalem. Many Britons thought Palestine and Jerusalem would forever remain a British mandate. Now the Israelis are digging in their heels, machine-guns at the ready.

Shaikh al-Alami, the Mufti of Jerusalem in 1968, told me: 'An Arab who willingly agrees to give the Jews sovereignty over Jerusalem is considered a traitor and any Jew who gives up sovereignty over it is also considered a traitor by his people.'¹ The two attitudes are seemingly irreconcilable unless a compromise like the UN partition resolution is revived: the coexistence of two separate states with Jerusalem as a *corpus separatum* under a special international regime. If this proves economically unfeasible, then partial territorial internationalization of one part of Jerusalem could be introduced with Israel and Palestine controlling the rest. A reasonable formula can always be found. In 1967 Israel united a divided city by force of arms, but military occupation is no solution. Perhaps one of the most rational decisions taken by the US government in the Arab-Israeli dispute was to refuse to recognize Israeli annexation of Jerusalem and to call for international supervision of the Holy Places. But nothing was done.

Today, twenty-two years later, the United States is just beginning to speak its own mind before world Jewry. On 22 May 1989 James Baker, the US Secretary of State, in a speech to the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee, a leading pro-Israeli group, said: 'Forswear nexation. Stop settlement activities. Allow schools to reopen. Reach out to the Palestinians as neighbours who deserve political rights.'²

When I read Baker's plea my mind wandered back to 1958, when I was living in Cairo, hearing my son ask me why I was always talking and writing about Jerusalem. 'Are there still Muslim or Arab buildings there?' he asked. 'Are there still Arabs in the city or have the Israelis taken everything away?' As I began to reply, my eyes turned to an old map of Jerusalem: 'Here are some of the Muslim and Arab monuments in Jerusalem,' I said. 'Remember their names, because one day you may go back and be able to brush off the dust from the walls and stones of these monuments.'

In my mind's eye I ran my fingers over some of the magnificent monuments and edifices erected by Muslim Arabs during the glorious

¹ Personal interview with Shaikh Sa'd al-Din al-Alami in his office in Jerusalem in the summer of 1968.

² *The Times*, 23 May 1989.

era of the Umayyads between 637 and 1099, such as the Qubbat al-Sakhra (Dome of the Rock), the Qubbat al-Silsila (Dome of the Chain) and the al-Aqsa Mosque.

I pointed to the many splendid schools, mosques and museums built during the rule of the Ayyubids between 1187 and 1229, whose contribution to learning and civilization has only today been accorded the praise so long denied it.

Our Arab monuments have withstood the ravages of time and they will outlive Zionist fanaticism. And, who knows, with moderation on all sides, one day their doors will reopen for the likes of my son.

Appendix

اربعین روزہ اول ۱۹۷۵

افنی ناصر الدین

عندما علمت بقرآن علی کہ تفسیر کی نئی کتاب لکھیں گے۔ الجدید مستحان
 شریعی جو انبیا سے پہلے ہی العامة سے عدت بشارت کی ہی ماخوذ کر کے جمع
 کرنے سے الزامی ہے۔ ما جمعنا کلموں کے لیے لکھنے سے پہلے ہی العامة کے لیے
 و خدمت و لکھنے کے لیے ہمہ طریقہ اللہ کے لیے ہی ہمہ انسانی عالم ۔

- ولعلہ أعلم الناس بحقیقۃ والحق لا انما یخرج تجریداً و ہی
 انہی کہن کل شیء و خود کہن شیء کم اولد کی کوئی سیبائی یا او
 زعمیا او قاتلہا ، و انہی کم أسخ للزعماء او القیادہ بظہر ما

خبرہا القدر عاتی اورا کنت اعادہ انہ الہرب من او ابتعد عنہا
 - و مع ذلک فانی کذا الناس شعوراً براهۃ الفکر و الہدوی
 الہدوی وانا استمرطی فی فیہا شریطہ ہی فی العامة الطویلۃ فذلک
 اہدینہ الیہ ما یرضی اللہ و ینجیح الرطبہ و یریح النفس ۔

- لقد شادت لی الوقدار انہ انجیس لہذا الرطبہ و انہ
 افنی العمریہ اہلہ دوسہ انہ کفکر فی عامۃ او علمہ او مال
 او جہ او منصب ، لقد کانہ الولیہ لہو کا کئی و لہو لہو و لہو
 شریعی ۔ و قد عملت فی فیہ ما یرضی اللہ الخ و انہ الہدوی و لہو لہو
 من ہلوع انہ ہلوع الرطبہ و کثرہ ۔

و فقلو اللہ فی انہ لہو لہو و فقلو علی الزمان و فی ظہر
 العالمیہ و تقبل محبتی و شریعی و تقبل فی انہ الہدوی ۔ ~~موسى القاسمی~~

A. Letter from Musa Alami to the author dated 1 December 1975 asking him not to write a book about him.

copy

THE NATIONAL DEFENCE PARTY

207

Head Office: Jerusalem.
P.O.B. 975.

205

Jerusalem, 15th May, 1940.

His Excellency,
The High Commissioner,
Government House, Jerusalem.

Your Excellency,

On the occasion of the constitution of His Majesty's new war Ministry, the National Defence Party has the honour to take this opportunity to express its growing and renewed loyalty to the British Government and to re-assure the Arabs' firm attitude of supporting the noble cause of Democracy for which Great Britain is standing as a true defender with all its Imperial, mighty and invincible forces.

The important fact that many distinguished British diplomats and leaders of wide wisdom and ripe experience are included in the present Ministry at this grave hour, is an ample proof that the prosecution of the war at the hands of a Ministry based on full national unity, will be carried on most successfully to the planned end of the war.

It is earnestly hoped that with the Allies' Forces now facing the enemy gallantly at this grave stage of the war, the hostilities will be shortened to their least possible duration, thus, if God will, saving valuable sacrifices and ending in ultimate victory for the Allies.

I have the honour to be,

Your Excellency's

most obedient servant,

(Signed) Ragheb Nashashibi

B Letter from Ragheb Nashashibi to the High Commissioner expressing his party's loyalty to the British Government.

حزب الدفاع الوطني

المركز الرئيسي : القدس

ص.ب : ١٨٨

القدس في ٢٥ / ٢ / ١٩٣٥

• حضرة الوطني الفضال المحامي عوني بك عبد الهادي المحترم

• سيدي الفضال

بمد التحية والاحترام انشرف ان اطعمكم بان في نية حزب الدفاع الوطني ان يقدم تقريراً مستمداً على ارقام صحيحة ومعلومات وثيقة عن حالة البلاد وما اصابتها من نكبات من جراء بيع الاراضي والهجرة وسوء الادارة وضاع حقوق العرب الى غير ذلك من الامور التي سببتهما الى جمعية الامم بعد الحصول عليها من انصار الصحة • ولما ان كان امتياز الحولة من المواضيع التي سيكون لها بحثنا خاصاً في

تقرير الحزب •

ولما ان كنتم ساداتكم من الذين احاطوا بالموضوع ووقفوا على تفاصيله لهذا فقد لمرت الهيئة المركزية للحزب في جلستها المنعقدة في ٢٥ / ٢ / ٣٥ ان تروجكم بالموافقة وان تعاضونا في هذه الخدمة الوطنية الحليمة وذلك بان تتفضلوا بتقديم الينا تقريراً خلاصاً عن اراضي الحولة والادوار التي مرت عليها وكيفية نقل الامتياز من يد العرب الى اليهود مع بيان الخيف والاضرار التي اصابت العرب من جراء هذا التحويل • وارجوكم بصورة خاصة ان تتفضلوا وترسلوا لنا نسخة من امتياز الحولة القديم ترغوفه مع تقريركم المذكور اعلاه •

وكد كلفت بصورة خاصة من قبل هيئة الحزب المركزية ان اطعمكم باننا نقدر لكم هذا العمل الوطني حق التقدير ولا نشك قط بانكم لا تخلصون علينا بهذه الخدمة الوطنية الحليمة التي كرستم ما همكم وستقبلكم في سبيلها • وانتظاري لهذا التقرير باقرب فرصة ممكنة ارجوكم ان تتفضلوا بقبول

• فائق الاحترام

السكرتير

السكرتير

C Copy of letter dated 9 February 1935 from the joint secretaries of the National Defence Party to the eminent advocate Awni Abd al-Hadi asking him for a detailed report on the question of the transfer of the Huleh Concession to the Jews and the repercussions of that transfer on the interest of the Palestinian Arabs. (Ragheb Nashashibi Papers)

Government of Palestine

*In case of reply
please quote the
date of this letter
and the following
number.*

Q/6/34.

*Chief Secretary's Office,
Jerusalem.*

8 March, 1935.

Sir,

I am directed to refer to my letter No.Q/6/34 of the 18th February, 1935, regarding your request to be supplied with copies of the old and new Lake Huleh Concession and with a statement of the conditions under which Government agreed to the assignment.

I am to explain that there is only one Concession Agreement in existence and that the text (translation from the Turkish) of this Agreement was published in the Official Gazette of the 16th November, 1931. As regards the conditions of consent on the part of Government to the assignment of the Concession I am to draw your attention to the information given in this connection by the High Commissioner in his official communiqué No.39/34 of the 1st December, 1934.

I am,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

Ben. Amery

ACTING CHIEF SECRETARY.

The Secretary,
The National Defence Party,
P.O.B. 186,
Jerusalem.

D Letter from the mandatory authorities dated 8 March 1935 about the Huleh Concession written in response to enquiries made by the National Defence Party on 18 February 1935 on that subject.

خزيرة الفاضل صاحب السعادة رئيس حزب الدفاع المزمع

عندم حكيم ورحمة الله وبركاته . وبعد قبل مفارقتنا القدس تقدم لعاديتكم بالشكر الجزيل بالاهماله عن
انفسنا والى اية عن جميع اهل الحولة الذين فوضونا بمفاوضة الهيئات الوطنية بالبلاد ودراسة المصلحة لنا
ان شاء فيلتم من عطف على اهل الحولة وضمان بهنا الشأن الوطنى العام وسيلم المجد لصيانة حقوقهم العرب
بارحمه الحولة .

خب ان خلفت نظر مساعدكم الى اننا نرجو ان تقوى الى معرفة وضمان جميع الهيئات السياسية منظمة
سيما لوزارات والاتصال برجالها وبناطلم قفينا ورجونا لم الصاية بهنا الشأن الوطنى العام . وقد المحدث
جميع الهيئات خيرة وهامة كبرى . فوجب علينا شكرها جميعا . وقد رجونا رجال الهيئات الوطنية جميعهم
ان شاء يتلوا فروا مع سلامهم للمؤسسة للبلولة ومن خروج ما رنة لتقبل هرونو وظفاعة عن لارة وادى الحارث .

انا يا صاحب السعادة سوف نكتب تحيين ولا نقر بغير واحد من وقتنا مطلقا بها لطفنا حفظه ونفحيات
ب ان لنا هذا على المعير الشيخ الذى اصابه عرب وادى الحارث والزيدان وسراهم من اهل الحولة
عنه مؤلفهم فذاقوا الطمان والعباب . وانا لنفضل الحوت الشريف عن البلاد عن ارضها احبها لتسلم
بنا وانا . وسوف نكتب وقتا مشرقا جاءه الطاميه ينسب على العرب عار الا سقوا اويل الحارث
والايبسات . وانا نريد ان نكتب على سنة قوى فى الهيئات الوطنية جميعا ليشر علينا .

انا يا صاحب السعادة نكرا لما لا ياه فيلتم من طبر الحولة وضمان العزيمة ووجب خدمة الحولة
عامه وحقه نبال لوممه يريد نفيها من طرف خدمة الوطنى فتمهد اليتم ونو لاكم بانقاذ الاحركات
والناجمة الى تشجونه لصيانة الحولة الوطنية بارحمه المحر الحولة . ونعلمه انا مستعدون للانفعال
فلا نعمل بافة الا ارضنا وانكم الغيبة وننفيذ نطلبا نكم وتقدم ما نلعبوه منا من اجاعات ومسندات
سواكم . وسوف نكتب تقريرك مفضلنا عن الرضية لعاديتكم باقرب وقت ممكن .

المكوا لشكر لعاديتكم خنا ما ونرجوا ان تفضلوا بقبولنا فاشهد الا هزام

٢٥ / ٨ / ١٩

محمد الياقوت

الكويتى

علاء صالح
عبدالله صالح

محمد صالح نور محمد
العزب

محمد حسن
محمد شمس

E Letter dated 19 August 1935 signed by several farmers on behalf of the Arab farming community of the Huleh basin district, appealing to the president of the National Defence Party to defend their national right to remain on the land. (Fakhri Nashashibi Papers)

طفة رئيس حزب الدفاع بمقدسalem

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته وبعد فما ارجو منكم
 ان تتفهمون بالاشكران مع رؤساء اولئك الحزب في هذه المسئلة
 التي اثارتم الى قضية الحول والاشكران في هذه المسئلة
 الموضوع على باب الحجة مع في هذه المسئلة لم يتبعه في ايدي
 من الادراخي اسر عليه هذه المسئلة التي لم يتبعه
 بقبولها فاشكر الاحترام

محمد بن النعمان

محمد بن النعمان

الكويت

عند الساعة ١٢/١٢/١٩٣٦

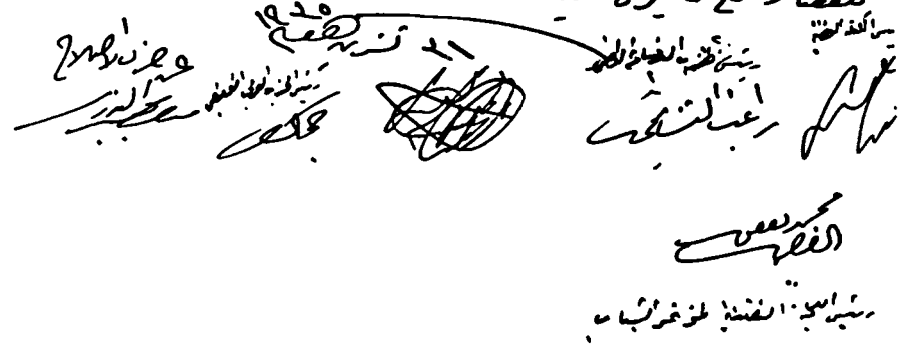
F Letter dated 3 January 1936 from a number of Palestinian Arab farmers in the Huleh basin appealing to the president of the National Defence Party to intercede on their behalf against eviction. (Ragheb Nashashibi Papers)

بيان

لجنة العربية المتحدة

تستقبل اللجنة العربية في فلسطين بين تصريح بلفور وهي التي ~~تستقبل~~
 من جهة اتحاد عربية واخرى مماثلاً في حقها الثابت في استحقاق يوردها المبررة
 بهذا التصريح مستندة الى هذه الغزبية وذمه ايمان سيوصله الى
 في الترقية الاكثف والمقدسة مما انما يتركه عن عثرات وما انتم في
 سلوة حواجز وما نزل على من كتابات فحوا وظالم على يد الحكومة
 البريطانية التي تظاهر مرأى العام بالفتح ثم عوقبه انتم الضيف
 في عهدكم الى الدولة التي ابتدعت هذا التصريح الذي يرمي الى تقوية
 وهي كيانها العربية في فلسطين من اجل اقامة وطنه قومي لغرباء اليهودية
 على كل عربي ان يذكر هذا اليوم المشؤوم وينذك ما يملكه من حمود
 للقضاء على ما يرمى اليه هذا التصريح من غايات هسيمة .

للقضاء على ما يرمى اليه هذا التصريح من غايات هسيمة .


 Ragheb Nashashibi
 Jamal al-Husaini
 محمد رشيد
 رئيس اللجنة الفلسطينية في القدس

G Declaration dated 31 October 1935 by the Palestinian Arab leaders, including Ragheb Nashashibi, denouncing the Balfour Declaration and urging the Palestinian Arabs to exert every effort to thwart the realization of its aims. Among the signatories are Ragheb Nashashibi and Jamal al-Husaini. (Ragheb Nashashibi Papers)

اجتمعت هيئة استوفان الاحزاب | ٧/١/٣٦
موضوع الدفاع المحل في المجلس التشريعي

سأهية الأذنين في سنة مذكرة الأذنين المقدم الى الحكومة سابقاً
في تاريخ ١٦/١/٣٦ وشرطت المجلس التشريعي قسراً ما يلي
التي هي الاخذة في استيعاب حديثه عن مذكرة الأذنين المذكورة
١) الأذنين في يوم الخمس الواقع في ٩ الجاري في ايام عيد الظهور في دار الحزب
٢) الأذنين في يوم تنظيم الهدايا وشرطت المجلس التشريعي نفسه
اما في الآتي في هذا الشأن وقد تم الرد عليه كالتالي يرجى تبيين الأذنين

(Handwritten signatures and names)

انه مع ليد اننا قد كانت قد تم لغاية المذكرة له فداوي ان استيف الله بنقد
مستودع المجلس التشريعي تم الوفاق مع حوضه الكور مع المنظمة المذكورة - كي اذ في ارض الله
فراة مستودع المجلس التشريعي - جو يرضه مع الله جتماع ابيرا الذي سينقد | ١٥/١/٣٦ | فنان

H Minutes of meeting of the various Palestinian parties dated 7 January 1936 resolving to meet on 9 January to debate the proposal of a Legislative Council. Among the signatories are Ragheb Nashashibi and Jamal al-Husaini. (Ragheb Nashashibi Papers)



HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR PALESTINE,
JERUSALEM.

No. CP/409/35.

9 January, 1936.

SIR,

I received yesterday your letter of the 7th January signed by representatives of the various Arab Political Parties in Palestine, including yourself, in which the request is reiterated for a reply to the memorandum which you submitted to me on the 25th November last.

2. You will recall that when I saw you on that occasion I impressed upon you that the matters raised in the memorandum would require the most careful consideration of His Majesty's Government and that it was unlikely that His Majesty's Government would be in a position to reply until after an appreciable interval of time, particularly in view of the parliamentary elections; and I mentioned that one month, which was the period you suggested, would certainly not be enough. I have now had a telegram from the Secretary of State which confirms my anticipation. In that telegram the Secretary of State has asked me to tell you that he has received your memorandum, that he is giving it very careful consideration, and that he will communicate with me on the subject as soon as possible.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your obedient servant,

Arthur Wauchope
HIGH COMMISSIONER.

Ragheb Bey Nashashibi, C.B.E.,
The President,
National Defence Party, Jerusalem.

I • Letter from the High Commissioner in response to Ragheb Nashashibi's letter of 7 January 1936 signed by him as well as by the leaders of the other Arab political parties in which they had raised matters relating to the unprecedented increase in Jewish immigration during 1933-5. Wauchope's letter was seen by the Palestinian Arabs as an example of British procrastination.

THE NATIONAL DEFENCE PARTY

Head Office : Jerusalem

P.O.B : 188

ندوة انفرادية

١٩٣٦ / ٤ / ١٨

فخامه السيد السيد

لقد هاجم البلاط ما ابراه اليهود في الودنة الرضبة في اعتداءات
 متوالية ضد جميع الارواح اليهودية في قضاء يريحا على يد اعدائهم في العرب
 العالمين في مزاولة اعمالهم العادية وذلك انتقاماً لما جرت في حارة
 خيم يهودية وجرح شخصيات منهم في حيدر ان حواره عمده اخرى
 من قطع الطرق كانه انقلق فراسه العرب من الفتنه وطمع الحكومة
 ان يحل اليهود هذا البلد ~~من يهود~~ لغرض تفرقة صهيونية وتهدد طاقم
 بقدر العرب قاطبه بمهزلة وسبكونه له احطرت ما تتر عن الامم
 انعام في البلاط . لذلك طلبنا لافعال العربية التي كل مسؤوليتها
 تقع منة ذلك على الجهات اليهودية التي تنظم هذه الاعتداءات
 وتنصب الى الحكومة ان تتخذ ^{الاجراء} الاجراء الواجب التحريم لابقاف هذه
 الجهات عند حدها رسوم

مساهمة جلاله

Handwritten signatures and stamps at the bottom right of the document.

J Draft memorandum addressed to the High Commissioner by the leaders of the various Palestinian Arab parties on 18 April 1936 protesting against the continuous assaults on Palestinian Arabs by Jews. (Ragheb Nashashibi Papers)

بيان عام الى الامت العربية الكريمة بشأن اضراب وسائل النقل

الحاقاً بقرار الاحزاب الصادر بتاريخ امس الواقع في ٢٢/٤/٣٦ الخاص
بالاضراب العام، وبناء على رغبة الامة برفع الاستثناء الوارد في القرار المذكور
اعلاه عن وسائل النقل، يقرر اتحاد الاحزاب العربية اشراك وسائل النقل
بالاضراب العام، ويحيل امر تنظيم هذا الاضراب الى لجنة اصحاب وسائل
السيارات في ٢٣/٤/١٩٣٦

عن حزب الاصلاح عن الكتلة الوطنية رئيس حزب الدفاع الوطني
شبلي جمل حسن البديري راجب النشاشيبي

رئيس الحزب العربي عن الشباب
جمال الحسيني يوسف عبده

المطبعة التجارية - القدس

K Proclamation dated 23 April 1936 by the various Palestinian Arab parties ordering the stoppage of all means of transport. The general strike thus became complete. Among the signatories are Ragheb Nashashibi and Jamal al-Husaini.



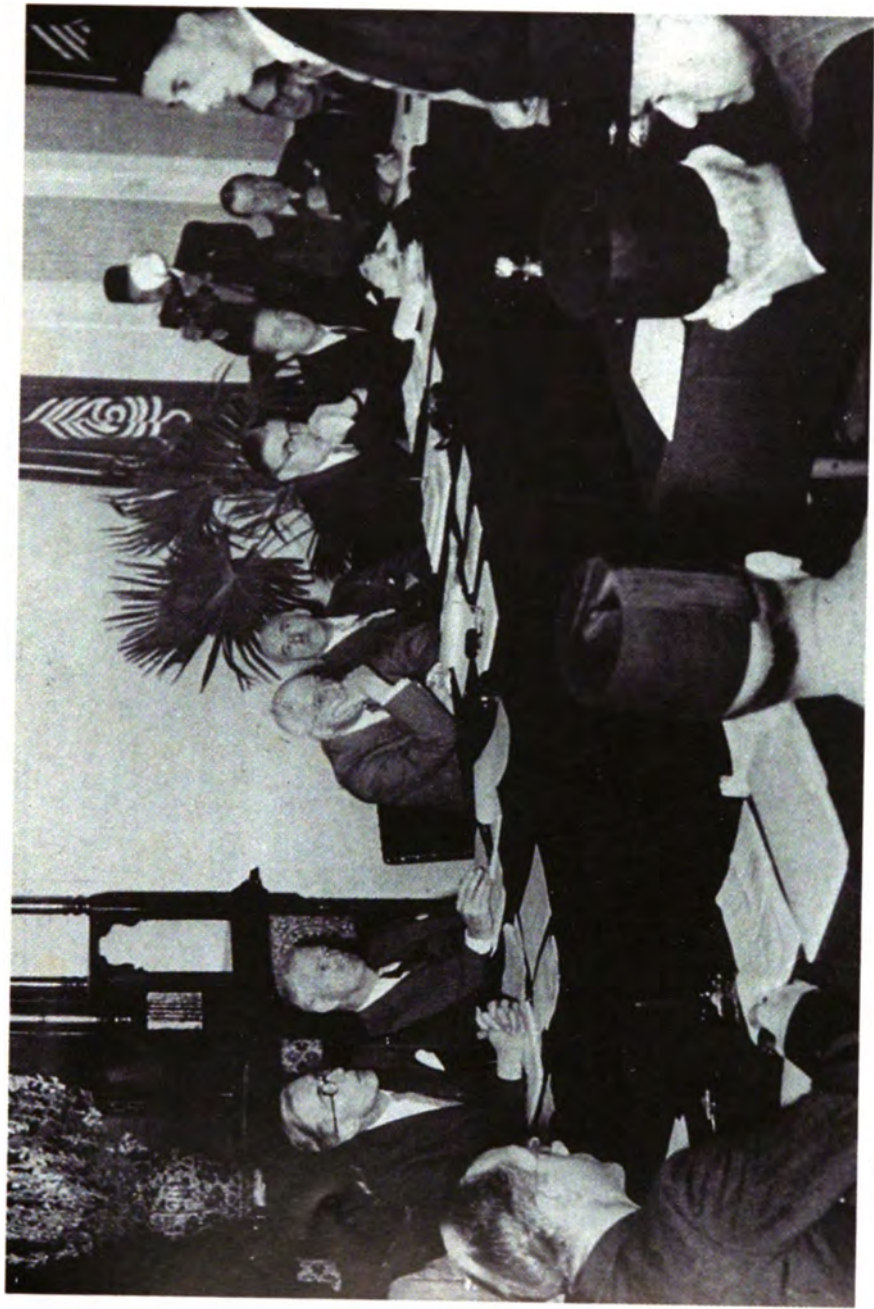
3.1 Ragheb Nashashibi with his nephew, the author, in the grounds of his house in Jerusalem during a relatively calm period, 1944.



3.2 The three members of the Arab League delegation charged with uniting the Arab Palestinian leaders in one Arab Higher Committee are (from left to right): Khair al-Din al-Zirikli representing Saudi Arabia, Taqi al-Din al-Solh of Lebanon, and Jamil Mardam-Bey, the Syrian Foreign Minister and head of the delegation, Jerusalem 1946.



3.3 In a reception room of the Arab League headquarters in Cairo in 1946 are from left to right: Jamil Mardam-Bey, Muhammad Alluba Pasha, Haj Amin al-Husaini, Husain Haikal Pasha, and Sami al-Khuri, the Lebanese Ambassador in Cairo.



3-4 Abd al-Rahman Azzam Pasha, Secretary-General of the Arab League (far left), giving evidence before the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry in Cairo, 1946.



3-5 King Abdullah of Jordan with Ernest Bevin, the British Foreign Secretary in London, 1946.



3.6 Prime Minister Clement Attlee addressing Arab leaders in London, 1946.



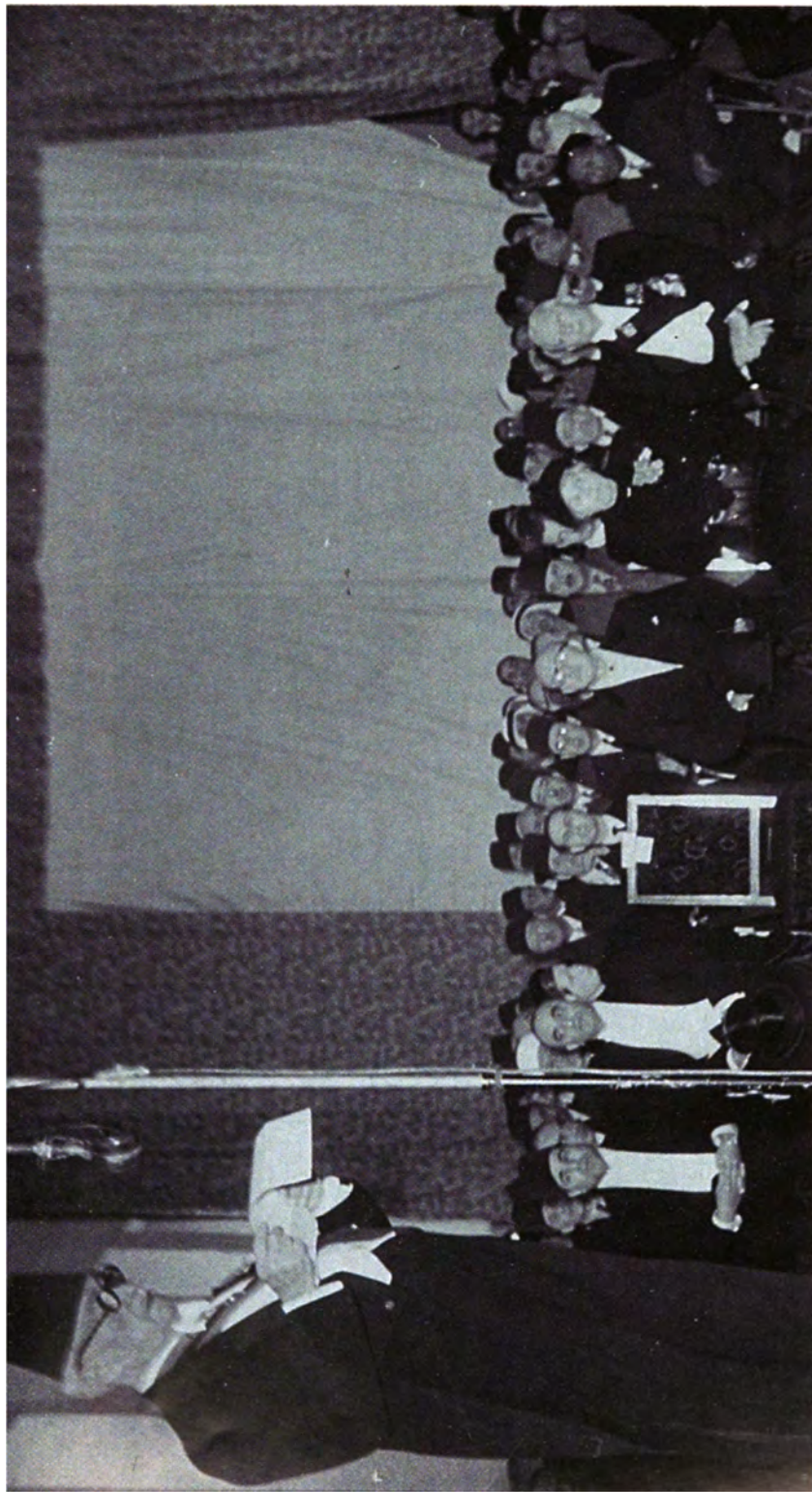
3.7 A general view of the Palestine Conference in London, January 1947.



3.8 A closer view of the Foreign Secretary, the Colonial Secretary, and the Yemeni delegate at the Palestine Conference, London, 1947.



3-9 Ragheb Pasha Nashashibi, far right, at his investiture with the office of Superintendent of al-Haram al-Sharif, Custodian of the Holy Places, and Servant of al-Aqsa Mosque on 5 January 1951 in Jerusalem.



3.10 Ragheb Pasha Nashashibi delivering his speech after his investiture, 5 January 1951.



3.11 Back from the ceremony at the American Colony Hotel are, left to right: Isma'il Nashashibi, Chief Inspector of the Jerusalem Municipality Police, Mustafa al-Ansari, Chief Administrator of al-Haram al-Sharif, a tired Ragheb Pasha, Dr Rashid Nashashibi, Director of the State Hospitals of Jerusalem, the author—representing Kind Abdullah—and the Italian Consul in Jerusalem, 5 January 1951.



3.12 King Abdullah on one of his rare visits to Jerusalem: in the foreground with Ragheb Pasha Nashashibi. Walking behind are, from left to right: Abdullah Ghoshi, Minister of Religious Affairs, Abd al-Hamid al-Sa'eh, Head of the Shari'a Courts, the Prime Minister, Samir al-Rifa'i, the author, and Fu'ad Nashashibi, the author's father.



3.13 King Abdullah on his way up to the author's house in Jerusalem, 1951. The author is on the King's right.



3.14 Sir Harold Beeley, left, in the author's drawing room in London, May 1989. This was one of several occasions on which Sir Harold and the author discussed this book.

THE NATIONAL DEFENCE PARTY

Head Office : Jerusalem

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٢٦/٤/٣٦

فخامة لخدمه السيد الخزام

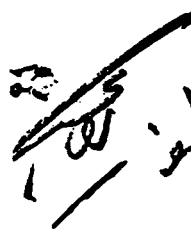

عقد اعمار الحزاب اليوم طلبت قانونية للجنة في امر ارسال

رشد الى لندن فرأى انه مع موافقة مبدئياً على ارسال وفد الى لندن

فليس من الحسنة العامة ارسال وفد المخصص في الوقت الحاضر بالنظر في

ولم حاله ^{الرجوع} ~~المخصص~~ التي نور البعده من التقدم والوقفات

وتصلو -

L Draft letter addressed to the High Commissioner by the various Palestinian Arab parties dated 22 April 1936 informing him of their decision to postpone the proposed visit of an Arab delegation to London because of the disturbances prevailing in the country. Among the signatories are Ragheb Nashashibi and Jamal al-Husaini. (Ragheb Nashashibi Papers)

- ٨٤ -

الرقم ٢٨/١٦
التاريخ ٢١ شوال ١٣٥٨
١٢ كانون اول ١٩٣٨

ديوان الثورة العربية الكبرى
فلسطين

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم -

(يريدون ان يطفئوا نور الله بانفوسهم وبانفسهم الا ان يتم نوره ولو كره الكافرون)

لقد اوصل دالينا المخلصون من رجالنا ما آلت اليه حالة البلاد من القتل والتدمير من جراء اعداءهم الخونة والذاسين الذين قاموا بحركة افساديه بين الشعب العربي اللبيل في هذه البلاد بنقطة من الزمن منتهزين فرصة تطع المواصلات وصمودية وصول رجالنا الاعداء لتربصهم والوقوف لهم بالمرصاد فبدوا يبتزون اموال الناس بالباطل ليملاؤوا بها جيوبهم لاشباع نهمهم قتلوا نفوسا بريئة للتوصل الى ما يريدون .
فانظر للملأ ان مثل هؤلاء الامة لا يتون للجهاد القدس الصحيح بهلا وان هذا الهزناج تصد به افساد شغل المخلصين من ابناء الامة الذين جادوا بانفسهم وانفسهم وغشوا بكل ما يملكون في سبيل اقالة هذه الامة من شرها ورفع نير الاستعباد عن كاهلها والوصول بها الى مصاف الامم المحضرة المستقلة لكي تتبوء مركزها اللائق بها بين الامم كافة حرة مستقلة منحدرة من اصلاب اولئك النر العيامين الاشواس الذين سبق لهم ان اعطوا للمالام اجيع درسا عظيما في الحرية والعدل . لذلك ولكي يطمئن كل شخص في هذه البلاد على حياته وماله فاني اظن للمومم باني قد قررت وعزمت واعطيت التصليحات لجميع رجالي بان يحافظوا الحانظة التامة على جميع ارواح ابناء هذه الامة واني اخذ على نفسي عهد الله والرسول باني ساحول دون اراقة دم اي انسان بري واحفظ متلكاته غير ناظر الى اي اعتبار آخر .
ولذلك اطلب من جميع اخواني المجاهدين المخلصين ومن عموم ابناء الشعب العربي الكريم في هذه البلاد ان يحافظوا على هذا المهدي بكل امانة واخلاص . هذا واني من غير ما شفقة ولا رحمة ساضرب بيد من حديد على كل من ينقض هذا المهدي والله انموثق والوطن فوق الجميع .

ديوان الثورة العربية الكبرى
خادم امته
سورية المجتهد المصنوع
محمد الرحيم الحاج محمد

M Communiqué issued on 1 December 1938 by the self-styled commander of the so-called 'Great Arab Revolution in Palestine', Abd al-Rahim al-Haj Muhammad, condemning the wanton killing of innocent Palestinian Arabs and acts of extortion by criminal Arab elements. The communiqué calls for the immediate cessation of such atrocities and acts of extortion. (Ragheb Nashashibi Papers)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ



حضرة المكرم فخرى النشاشيبي المحترم
 لي الشرف ان اخبركم بوصول كتابكم تاريخ ١٠ القعدة ١٣٥٧ لجلالة مولاي الملك
 الذي تصفون فيه الحالة في فلسطين واني امرب لكم عن اسف جلالة مولاي الملك على
 ما هو واقع بتلك البلاد العربية العزيزة وابدى لكم انه غير خاف على احد ما تجر اليه
 الفتن والويلات بضيبتها وان على المسلم ان يستعيد بالله دائما من الفتن ونتائجها
 وان افضل شيء لنجاة فلسطين ما هو واقع بها هو اجتماع كلمة اهلها والسير في الطريق
 الموصل لتخليد فلسطين ما هو واقع بها من الدمار والخراب لأن الخلاف لا يولد الاضرا
 والفتنة تزيد البلاد وحنا على وهن وجلالة مولاي الملك الأمل في ان ينجح الله السامع
 المبذولة في لندن في الوقت الحاضر فتنتهي هذه الفتنة يحفظ للمسلمين والعرب
 هذه البلاد الإسلامية العربية المقدسة . ٢٥٨ / ١ / ٢٠

وتفضلوا بقبول فائق احتراماتي

السكرتير الخاص لجلالة الملك

س

N Letter from the private secretary of the Saudi monarch in 1939 in response to Fakhri Nashashibi's letter. The letter expressed the king's regret and sorrow at the destruction and devastation that pervaded Palestine as a result of the existing schism and his hope that the efforts that were being made in London would put an end to the existing acts of sedition. (Fakhri Nashashibi Papers)

Government of Palestine.

In replying to this letter please quote the date and reference number.

*Chief Secretary's Office,
Jerusalem.*

C.S. 251.

30 January, 1939.

Sir,

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 26th January, 1939, in which you state that you have been selected by the National Defence Party to be the Secretary of the Party.

Your letter has been seen by His Excellency the High Commissioner.

I am,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,



CHIEF SECRETARY.

Fakhri Bey Nashashibi,
P.C.Box 837,

O Letter referring to the selection of Fakhri Nashashibi as secretary of the National Defence Party. Fakhri was appointed secretary following the assassination of Hasan Sidqi Dajani.



عماد في ١٥ ربيع الثاني ١٣٥٨
الموافق ٣ / حزيران ١٩٣٩

عطوفة راضب بك النشاشيبي
رئيس حزب الدفاع الوطني
المحترم

عزيزي صاحب العطوفة ا

وصلني كتابكم الكريم الموجه في ١٠ ربيع الثاني ١٣٥٨ المنوي بمودتكم الى فلسطين واستئناف العمل لخيرها ا وقد سررتني تلك العودة وابتهجت بتلك العزيمة لأن الشجاعة في مثل هذه المواقف هي الكفيلة بالنجاح وظهور القادة في المقدمة ضربة لازب عليهم .

ثم انني اشكر الحزب الذي كلّفكم توجيه الشارة اليّ لما ذكرتموه من غيرتي على قضية فلسطين واني كما تعلمون احد قادة الثورة العربية الكبرى ومؤسسي الحكومات العربية القائمة اليوم في شتى اقطار المرب ومن الذين هم على مبداهم ثابتون بأذن الله ا وان اشادتكم بما بذلنا من مونة لقضية فلسطين وجهود جبارة ومساخي قيمة فأننا نتقبله بجزيل الشكر وان كنا نعدّ ذلك واجبا مفروضا ولوجه الله وفي سبيل امتنا المنزلة ا وان الحملات الأرهامية اللغوية التي ذكرتموها وانها من تنظيم جماعة من اهل البلاد الموجودين الآن في بعض الاقطار الشقية فمن جملة الهلايا التي اصيبت بها فلسطين ولكنها ستخرج من ذلك كلّها بأذن الله سليمة من كلّ اذى وبالعلم الذي اظهرتموه لمقاومتها ووضع حدّ لها .

اني اسأل الله لكم وللمرب في فلسطين تحقيق جميع امانيهم القومية كما اشرتم الى ذلك في قراركم وخطبكم في معالجة الامور بالحكمة والبسالة والوقوف في وجه الحوادث التي تضر بمصلحة البلاد واهلها .

ولي الختام اهتّ سلاحي وتحياتي لشخصكم الجميل وحزبكم الكريم ما تلاه المولى سبحانه ان يوفق الجميع الى ما فيه مرضاته انه اكرم مسئول .

P Letter from Emir Abdullah of Transjordan dated 3 June 1939 to Ragheb Nashashibi expressing his pleasure at Ragheb's return to Palestine. He asserts that the terrorist acts perpetrated in Palestine are organized by Palestinian Arabs now living in other Arab countries. (Fakhri Nashashibi Papers)



ص ٤٧ في ٢٣ ربيع الثاني ١٣٥٨
الوفاي ١٥ حزيران ١٩٣٩

حصرة صاحب المطوفة راغب بك النشاشيبي
رئيس حزب الدفاع
المحترم

منزى صاحب المطوفة :

تلقت كتابكم المورخ في ٢٣ ربيع الثاني ١٣٥٨ شاكرا متنا لما فيه من مزكم
القاطع على السعي لخدمة فلسطين المزيزة وادخال الطمانينة الى النفوس ؛
وسرتي ما كان لنصائحي من وقع في نفسك . اما موازرتي لكم فمؤندة لأنها قائمة
على اسس متينة وهي ان ديني يأمرني بذلك ثم حبي لوطني وما نحن فيه من وحدة
في الرأي والفكرة ؛ وان اشاركتم الينا من جهة تهادتنا للحركة العربية منذ
نشأتها وما عزومت الينا من فضل فيما وصلت اليه الأقطار الشقيقة من بلوغ الأماني
القومية فلا نقبله الا بالسكر ؛ وقد فهمنا كل الفهم تخصصكم هذه النقطة بالبحث
ولذلك العهد فأطمتكم اني عند حزبي الذي تصرفونه في شد ازركم فلا خوف البتة من
هذه الناحية ؛

أما ما ذكرتموه عن البؤس والوجع في فلسطين ووجود اناس لا ضمائر لهم غشوا بمصلحتهم
بلادهم وسادة امنهم على مذبح غاياتهم الشخصية ومسالحتهم الذاتية لخدموا بذلك
مصالح اجنبية فمتدنا منه الخبر اليقين ؛ واننا ان شاء الله ساعين لرفع الهلاء عن
اولئك المنكوبين والمرب على يد هؤلاء الهاغين وان المواقفة ان شاء الله للمتقين .
ولا شك ان الخطة الأخيرة فيها كل الخير للأمة فقد نجت مما كان يهددها من المخاطر
الصهيونية وفتحت حليفتنا البريطانية الباب للمرب وأوكل انهم يحسنون الدخول فيسه
بالمزمنة التي اهرتم عنها ؛ وسرتنا كل السرور اننا لسناها في لتاهل وامنحة جليلة
وكونوا على ثقة ان فلسطين سنظل متمتعة بأقصى ما لدينا من عطف وعبارة ؛
واشكر اهل البلاد في شخصكم لما تحفتم عنهم بلسانكم من الامتنان والأخلاس . والله
بوقفا جميعا الى ما فيه الخير عزيز .

عبدالله

Q Letter from Emir Abdullah dated 15 June 1939 to Ragheb Nashashibi in which he condemns those without conscience who sacrifice the happiness of their country for their personal interests. He also approves of the latest plan (White Paper on Palestine, 1939) and adds that Britain has opened the door for the Arabs. (Ragheb Nashashibi Papers)

الرقم ١٣٦
التاريخ ٢٥٨ / ٥ / ١٣

للملك فيصل بن عبد العزيز
الملك فيصل بن عبد العزيز
الملك فيصل بن عبد العزيز

حضرة المحترم رغب بك النشاشيبي
السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته ، وبعد فقد اطلعنا على كتابكم الكرم المؤرخ في ٢٥٨ / ١ / ١٣
الموافق ٢١ مارس ١٩٣٩ واطلعنا على قرار هيئة ادارة حزب الدفاع الوطني .
اننا في الحقيقة نجد انه من الواجب على كل مسلم على كل عربي ان يسعى لاجل قضية
فلسطين وان يعمل بكل جهده لحفظها وصيانتها وتوطيد دعائم السكن والطمأنينة فيها
وسرني ان اذكر لكم ان مساعي حكومتنا في هذا السبيل لا تزال متصلة .
اما ما اشترتم اليه من حوادث الارهاب الجارية فان ذلك مما يؤسف له ومن المؤلم جدا ان
يكون بين العرب في فلسطين خلافات وتزايدات تؤدي الى مثل هذا الشقاق بينما نرى اصدا
عرب فلسطين واصداد هم اليهود لم يحصل منهم شيء من هذا على الرغم من اختلافهم في
الاراء والمذاهب ، ولهذا فاننا نشعر انه من واجبنا ان ننصح لاخرانا العرب جميعا بضرورة
الاتفاق وان نرجو منكم ان تعطوا على ازالة ما بينكم من خلافات وحزازات وترك الضغائن
والاحقاد والعمل بقا واحدة على ما فيه نصرة قضية بلادكم والسري بها في طريق الصلح
والصواب وانه ليهما جدا ان نرى الصفوف موحدة والاختلافات منبوذة لان دوام الاختلاف
والغرق مما يوجب الضعف ويقلل من قيمة الجهود ويجعل اخصام العرب يطعمون بهم .
هذا واننا نرجو من صميم افئدتنا ان تحل قضية فلسطين بين اهل فلسطين والحكومة
البريطانية بشكل يرضى عنه الجميع ويؤمن احق الحق والمعدل والله يحفظكم

صلى الله عليه وسلم

R Letter from King Faisal Bin Abd al-Aziz to Ragheb Nashashibi (September 1939) expressing deep regret that there should be so much discord among the Arabs of Palestine. (Ragheb Nashashibi Papers)

(دعوة الوحدة)

كتبت كتابة شرفاً فاضحاً عنكم
 فأقبلت وهي عجايب تجلي علماً
 يقول عادة الأمازيغ الملوك كما
 صرنا عادة باجزائى جزيرة
 أمة العروبة فعلوا يوم ودوا
 فدرعنا بمرآها وضبطها
 غربي على العرب من يوم قضاهم
 لو كان نبي يهوداً ساو طالعه
 يارب إلهاد المزمج عطية
 أمة يونانوا غاية العهد لازم
 منة من أمة كسروا دنيا ودينهم
 غاية نطقهم قام المسية لها
 يوقها الفيد العرب قوتهم
 كذا فقد ضاح عندهم ارتكهم
 يا ما منى فديهم الدهر عبير
 نذال ذلك عين منى رقة به
 واليوم اجمع الزمانى كلامهم

لفلو محمد منى عنده حيرة الخ
 عنه الواحصة أزاخا بنديهم
 ليعود لجر حادو لبيد والريم
 وسوف ترجع مع احد الى العلم
 كما تقول وانما عهدا واليهم
 بعد الذي كاتبه باسمي ومنه الم
 تشر اسماؤهم في الأهل صبر
 منهم بسيف طاهية يوم سفادوك
 زرعدو وطمنا لعهدهم
 عهد لولاك والله العهد لازم
 او امة ينادي صادق الحق الذي
 نمر العرب منة ظم ومنه ظم
 لمة منى بهم بانوم من قوم
 أمة الرسية منى الم منى الم
 ما كاتبه مختلفا عنى زى منى
 انقصد الخروج حانى العهد منى
 على اختلاف عبر انى للعهد

S One of King Abdullah's poems written in his own hand about Arab unity.

(جزية الشام)

اسبرز يا اسبرز ما رامي
 سه فخر نملك غدا حطاما
 توفك جاوا بالفرغ والاعلاما
 وانا ابصه لهم مقامنا
 لا تخدعوا ان سركن كلوما
 يا شام لا تقسمي انفسا
 اطرحي لغرضي والارهاما
 رحا رحى من بن خرا راما
 يقول قد يغوي حسا
 هيا فتوي واسبي الهاما
 سه الف اقبال والصداما
 واسبيه تلبني الراما
 وصفتيلا وحدة حراما
 نزلت الاطار والوقوما
 هيجون نيك عمرا كراما
 والفر والسود والوقوما
 انه الذي راو كنهه قد تاما
 فنه عليلك لغه ااما
 لا تبديني سه وجه الهاما (6c)

(١) يا ابا الشام هديت شاما
 يا ترى انور غدا ظلوما
 هذا ايلول غير الاعلوما
 انضم لفيضان واستاشاما
 احذر على يملك ارضنا
 نعيد سه ساك واستاشاما
 انه الذبيه يغوا ابو علوما
 قد حيدوها لصبه ارهاما
 ما استغن سه هي وهاما
 كيف ترى لخلعك قد ناما ؟
 لو تتبع الاوسال والذاما
 يا شام كان اشم يوشاما
 لو محمد روزن سه قد قاما
 ومحمد حمدان تلو هاشاما
 باليه سه نيك فق الهاما
 وشه باين احمية خداما
 لا سعي لخارج كلوما
 قد غسه دهره وحبي حراما
 ساي على اعمارم الحاشاما
 وززني الؤساس والوقوما
 واستاهي محي غزمت الاعلوما
 نياه سه بالوجه حطاشاما
 لو يقضي لربك اسلاما

T A poem by King Abdullah about the independence of Syria and Lebanon.

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