HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE FORMATION OF ISRAEL

[CHAPTER ONE]
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE FORMATION OF ISRAEL

1.1 GEO – STRATEGIC AND RELIGIOUS SIGNIFICANCE OF PALESTINE

THE LAND OF PALESTINE

Palestine is the name of the area located in the south – western part of Asia. It is bordered by Syria Northeast, Lebanon in the north, the Red Sea south, Jordan east, Sinai in Egypt southwest and from the west by the Mediterranean Sea. Palestine obtained its name from the Mediterranean migrants who came from the Southern Greek Islands in the 12th century B.C., and known as the “people of the sea”. In the old Egyptian writings, they were referred to as the Philistines. The land, previously known as the Land of Canaan, acquired the name of the new settlers and came to be known as Palestine. Throughout the centuries of Muslim rule, Palestine had been an integral part of a larger geographical unit, Bilad Al-Sham or Greater Syria, as a sub-district of “Jund” in the language of that time. The sub-district of Palestine had a larger area than the present one. It could then be defined as an area with the Mediterranean Sea to the west, the desert of Arabia to the east, Egypt to the south, and Mesopotamia to the north. It existed between the Nile and Euphrates river valleys,

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between the great civilizations and cultures of Egypt and Mesopotamia. The new boundaries were set during the time of British Colonization (1918 – 1948), and on the basis of the Sykes – Picot Agreement between Britain and France that separated the territories of the disintegrated Ottoman Empire. The final borders with Lebanon and Syria were set following a Franco – British agreement in 1920, while the borders with Trans – Jordan were fixed by the British High Commissioner in 1922, and those with Egypt were set in 1908 by the Ottomans and Egyptian Khedive. Since then, Palestine has comprised areas were South of the Mount Lebanon and West of the Jordan River.

The total area of Palestine is 27,009 square km, including 704 square km of water surface that is composed of Tiberius Lake, Al-Hula Lake and half of the Dead Sea. Palestine is normally divided into four geographical zones:

**1) The Coastal Area:** It is a plain land put along the Mediterranean from north to south; its highest altitude is 180 meters above sea level. This is the most productive part of Palestine because it enjoys a Mediterranean climate with full four seasons. It is most useful for growing flowers and fruits for which it is known till today.

**2) The Mountainous Area:** It is situated to the east of the coastal areas and stands parallel to it; the highest altitude reaches 1208 meters in Mount Al-Jarmaq (Meron) in northern Palestine. This area is colder in compared to the coastal one, but it also enjoys a Mediterranean climate. Although it has a rough topography, this area is ideal for producing grains, figs, beans, olives and grapes: and is extensively used for herding.

**3) Al-Ghour (the Rift Valley):** It is also known as the Jordan Valley, as the Jordan River separates it into Western and Eastern parts, in Jordan and Palestine consecutively. Al-Ghour is a fertile land and most suitable for growing vegetables, fruits and dates. This valley is the lowest dry point on earth: it reaches 395 meters below sea level to the point where the Jordan River influxes into the Dead Sea with a total length of 460 squares Km. The Dead Sea is the saltiest sea on the earth and

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doesn’t contain any marine life. Al-Ghour is usually hot and comparatively dry all year round.4

(4) The Desert Area: It occupies Southern Palestine, and is known as Al-Naqab (Negev) Desert with Beer Al-Sabi’ (Beersheba) as its main oasis. Al-Naqab comprises almost half of the Palestinian area: it embraces the area between Al-Khalil (Hebron) East and Gaza West and extends to the northern coast of the Red Sea. Al-Naqab is hot and dry with some wind-driven sands and few oases.

Palestine is thus unique geographically with four different climates, with the lowest point on earth and mountains of 1200m altitude above sea level, with lakes and seas among which one is known for its highest salt concentration that left it with no marine life. All these features are assembled in a small piece of land.5

THE HOLY LAND

Approximately three billion people around the world, i.e., more than half of the world’s population, accepts that Palestine, or at least some part of it, is holy; no other land on the earth is considered holy by such a large number of people. For all three important religions (Christianity, Islam, and Judaism), and to some other sects as well, Palestine is a holy land that keeps some of the holy shrines.

For Jews: Palestine is the land in which Prophet Jacob (ya’quob), the grandfather of the tribes of Israel, inhabited with his children; it is the land which they fled with Moses (Musa) from the Pharon, and in which they resided under the virtuous rule of Prophet David (Dowd) and his son Solomon (Suleiman). In this land they founded their kingdoms, Judah and Israel, which were later on destroyed by the Babylonians and Assyrians.6

For Christians: Palestine is the land where Jesus of Nazareth (Isa) was born, around it, he conveyed and preached his message to the world, and in it, according to the


5 Ibid.,

Christians faith he died on the cross for the salvation of mankind and was resurrected. Christian holy places narrate this story from the beginning to the end in their names: church of Al-Mahd in Bethlehem, his birth place “The Church of nativity”, and Church of Qeyamah “The Church of Holy Sepulcher (Resurrection)” mentioning to Christ’s assumed resurrection.

**For Muslims:** Islam and Palestine have been intimately linked for centuries. As the Muslims believe in the Prophets of the Christian and Judaic religions, all above are among the causes why Muslims hold Palestine as Holy. Ya’qoub (Jacob), Yusuf (Joseph), Dowd (David), Suleiman (Solomon), Yusha’ and Isa’ (Jesus) are all Prophets who directed their struggle of good against evil, and Islam is the complete and final form of what they preached.

Jerusalem or (Bait al-Maqdes) is the third holiest place in Islam after Mecca and Medina in Arabia. The Prophet Muhammad said once that a prayer in Al-Aqsa Mosque is equal to 500 prayers. It is the second Mosque built on earth after Al-Ka’ba in Mecca. It is also mentioned in the Holy Quran, there are numerous mentions in the sayings *(Hadith)* of the Prophet.\(^7\)

The Quran has specific geographical references to Palestine about most of the stories of God’s messengers. Sura al-Isra in Holy Quran (A full chapter), is dedicated to the Prophet Muhammad’s journey from Mecca to Jerusalem, and his ascensions there to heaven to meet God. The Dome of Rock was built on the very rock from where Prophet Muhammad set off on his journey to heaven, adjacent to the spot where the Jews say the Old Temple of Solomon (Suleiman) was built. Palestine has been field of war and invasion due to its geo-strategic and religious significance.\(^8\)

### 1.2 THE PALESTINE – ISRAEL CONFLICT

**A BRIEF HISTORY OF PALESTINE**

Over a period of many centuries, Arabs and Jews have developed deep historical roots in Palestine and strong emotional attachments to it. In the nineteenth century, out of these entangled roots and attachments, there emerged two

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nationalisms; Arab Nationalism and Political Zionism – both laying claims to the same land. It resulted in the bitter Arab – Israel antagonism, disputes, hatred, and wars of more recent years.\(^9\)

A wave of migration of Semitic Tribes from the Arabian Peninsula to surrounding territories took place around 3500 B.C. Amongst those tribes were the Canaanites who migrated to Palestine and settled there around 2500 B.C. They were the first people known to have inhabited Palestine and that land became known as the “Land of Canaan”. The Canaanites inhabited the area for most of the third millennium – nearly fifteen hundred years. They controlled Palestine from West of the Jordan River to the Parts of Phoenicia (Coastal Lebanon) and Southern Syria.\(^10\)

The Jews had their first contact with their “Promised Land” about 1800 B.C., when Abraham led his Bedouin followers to the outskirts of the Palestine area, much of which was controlled by the Canaanites. Later Abraham’s descendants migrated to Egypt, where they multiplied and lived for several centuries before Moses (Musa) led them out again. The Jews returned to Palestine around the twelfth century B.C., but they remained weak and divided until Soul united them into one kingdom. It was under Prophet David (Dowd) that the Jews triumphed. His rule lasted for forty years and followed by his son Prophet Solomon (Suleiman). Prophet Solomon (Suleiman) built the first Temple in the city of Jerusalem during Tenth Century B.C. He established first United Kingdom, which lasted less than 200 years. Following the death of Solomon (Suleiman) in 922 B.C., his Kingdom was split into Judah in the South and Israel in the North. The two Kingdoms were almost continuously engaged in war between themselves or neighboring countries.

The Kingdom of Israel survived until 721 B.C., when it was conquered by the Assyrians; thousands of its habitants were forcibly resettled in Mesopotamia, and other peoples subject to the Assyrian domination were transferred Northern Palestine to replace them. The small Southern Kingdom of Judah continued to exist until the Babylonian attacked Jerusalem in 586 B.C., destroyed the first Temple, and scattered the people. Fifty years later the Persian Empire, Cyrus II conquered Palestine and allowed the Jews who were deported to Babylon to return to Palestine and rebuild the


Temple. A second Temple was built in the early part of the 6th century B.C. Only 42,000 returned; the majority chooses to remain in Babylon.\textsuperscript{11}

Alexander the Great conquered Palestine in 332 B.C., and in 300 B.C., the Nabatones, whose capital was Petra east of the River of Jordan, conquered the country. In 168 B.C., the Macabees revolted against their Greek rulers who prohibited the practice of the Jewish faith. The Romans conquered Palestine in 63 B.C. Two major Jewish revolts in 70 A.D., and 135 A.D., led to the leveling of the second Temple, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the expulsion of all Jews from Jerusalem “forever”.

However, few Jews remained in Palestine after that date. Palestine as the birthplace of Christianity became politically significant with the conversion to Christianity of the Emperor Constantine, who moved his capital from Rome to Constantinople. When the Empire divided in 395 A.D., Palestine became part of the Eastern, or Byzantine, Emperor. In 614 A.D., Chosros II, King of Persia, sent an army to conquer Jerusalem. When they captured the city they massacred the inhabitants and destroyed the Churches. The Romans re-conquered Palestine in 627 A.D., but their rule not lasted long as the Muslims conquered Palestine in 639 A.D., during the Caliphate of Omar Bin al-Khattab.\textsuperscript{12}

Most of the inhabitants of Palestine converted to Islam out of their own free will, though a small minority of Christians and Jews remained unconverted; were protected under Islamic law to keep their religion and allowed to do so. From then the Palestine had been the subject to various attacks i.e., Seljuk Turks (1071 – 1099), the Crusaders (twelfth and thirteenth century), the Tartars and Mongols (1244 – 1260), the Mamlukes of Egypt (1260 – 1517), and the Ottoman Turks (1517 to the World War I), the majority of inhabitants remained Arab and Muslim.\textsuperscript{13}


\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.,

The hope of returning one day to the Promised Land of the Old Testament never died among Jews. Actually, for two thousand years, Jews prayers and rituals were built around the theme of the eventual coming of the Messiah to unite the Jews in Israel and rule over them.

Jewish interest in Palestine was basically religious and humanitarian, until the larger part of the nineteenth century. Most of the Jews, who settled in Palestine with the financial help of the wealthy European Jews, were inspired by religious grounds. But later on, some European Jews began to take a political interest in Palestine. Jews had greatly improved their financial and political position in Western Europe and the process of assimilation was well advanced among them. But in the undemocratic semi-feudal systems characteristic of Eastern Europe, Jews had long been perceived as a separate and alien ethnic group. The Jews in these countries were divided in their reactions to this categorizing. Most Jews were resigned to it, while some sought to alter their inferior status by pressing for social and political reforms.

However, the intensification of anti-Semitism during 1880’s in Russia, at a time when nationalism was on the rise in the Europe, finally led a number of them to the conclusion that a just and lasting solution to the problem of the Jews could never be attained until the Jews would achieve their own national home in which they could manage their own affairs and decide their own destiny. The concept of a Jewish Nationalism was first expounded by Leon Pinsker, a Russian Jew, in 1882. However, it was Theodor Herzl, an Austrian Jew and journalist, who provided political Zionism with its most effective leadership.

In response to Herzl’s book, The Jewish State, and his other efforts, the first Zionist Congress met in 1897 in Basle, Switzerland, and created the World Zionist Organization. Most of the delegates were from Eastern Europe, and many desired to set up a Jewish State, but caution and practical considerations caused the Congress to pass a resolution favoring only a “Home in Palestine” for the Jewish people. Herzl first endeavor to obtain permission from the Ottoman Government to establish a Jewish Company for the settlement of Jews in Palestine was unsuccessful. In 1903,

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Pogroms of Russian Jews and the feeling that anti-Semitism could never be fully eradicated led him to seek British aid in acquiring, “Homeland” and Britain offered the East African Protectorate (later Kenya and often erroneously referred to as Uganda). Herzl was willing to accept it, at least as a temporary measure, but the Russian Zionist majority in the Seventh Zionist Congress refused to consider an alternative to Palestine.15

Herzl thought in term of mass migration of Jews to Palestine, but failed to consider the matter of future Arab – Jewish relations. He seemed to feel that since the Arabs allegedly would benefit economically from the Jewish settlements, they would not object to the Jews taking control. Initially, the Zionist Organization was strongest among the Jews of Eastern Europe, where most Jews of the world lived and persecution was greatest. Zionist movement spread slowly to Western Europe and the United States, mainly as a result of the large-scale migration of Eastern European Jews in that area. With that effect, opposition to the Political Zionism also developed there and remained for several years. The orthodox Jews were against the political aspects of Zionism because of their belief that a return to Zion should be brought about only by divine intervention, as indicated in the Torah, and not by a temporal political movement. Other Jews opposed the nationalist aspects because they felt Judaism was a religion, not a nationality, and that the mission of Judaism, being universal and religious, could best be performed in the Diaspora. Many also feared that the Jewish nationalism would complicate the status of Jews in countries outside any Jewish State. Marxists Jews considered Zionism a reactionary bourgeois movement. Regardless of these entire objection, the World Zionist movement gained momentum. Jewish settlement in Palestine increased and by the outbreak of World War I, there were some 80,000 Jews there. Dr. Chaim Weizmann, a distinguished

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British Chemist, and Nahum Sokolow, Russian member of the Zionist Executive, led the efforts in Britain to achieve Zionist goals in Palestine.

During 1906, Weizmann began communicating with such important British leaders as Lords Balfour and Melner, Lloyd George, Sir Mark Sykes and the editor of the influential Manchester Guardian. These endeavors proved unpredictably helpful, especially in 1917, when Weizmann began to press the British government for specific action to implement the Zionist Program.16 At that time, Weizmann’s main opposition came from prominent Anti-Zionist Jews in Britain who feared that demands for nationality rights in Palestine for Jewish people would be incompatible with the desires of Jews residing in other parts of the world for equal rights as citizens of the nation in which they lived.

The spring of 1917 brought developments which accelerated the Zionist cause. In March the Kensky Government put a number of Jews in key positions in the new Russian Duma. Britain hoped that by placating the advocates of Zionism, she could encourage the Russian Jewish leadership to keep Russia into war. After the United States entered into the war, Britain was concerned about the continued alienation of American Jewish towards the war. When the German Government began to seek support of German and World Jewry, Britain felt the urgent need to outbid Germany and to show internal dissatisfaction among the Jews in the Central Powers so as to weaken the enemy. Inspired by the Zionist argument that a Jewish-dominated Palestine would strengthen the British strategic position in the Middle East, some British officials gave increasing consideration in developing Palestine as a major outpost which covered the approaches to the Suez Canal. The other weapon was that Britain tried to use Zionist support to block the internationalization of Palestine, which was arranged in the secret Sykes – Picot Agreements with France, and thus to control Palestine for Britain alone.17

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Christians in Britain and the United States, particularly the Protestants were sympathetic towards Jews because of the difficult situation of Jews in Europe and elsewhere in the world. As a consequence of these factors, on 2 November 1917, British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour wrote an official letter to a private British subject, Lord Lionel Walter Rothschild, which came to be known as the Balfour Declaration. A previous text approved by the Prime Minister and the Foreign Office stated, “Palestine shall be reconstituted as the National Home of the Jewish people.”

However, the final text referred merely to “the establishment of National Home in Palestine for Jewish people.” It was further stated that “nothing shall be done, which shall prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by the Jews in any country.” The Balfour Declaration was not a legally binding document; it did not give the Zionist all they wanted but it eventually strengthened their cause immensely. The ultimate goal of Zionists was to establish a “Jewish State” but they were cautious in putting their demands directly and willing to take one step at a time and achieve their objective piecemeal; they were even willing to make tactical retreats when necessary.18

ARAB NATIONALISM AND BRITISH WARTIME PROMISES

In the nineteenth century, French and American missionary and educational activities in the Levant provided the stimulus of new ideas and encouraged the study

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of Arab history and language. This provided eagerness among Arabs to know about their own heritage and a sense of pride emerged among them, thus giving birth to Arab Nationalism. Initially, this nationalism was basically cultural and inspired only a handful of Syrian and Lebanese intellectuals, but later, it became politically oriented and spread to other Arab areas also. Arab Nationalism had to work underground during the despotic rule of Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid. The Young Turk revolted in 1908 against the Sultan and his regime was overthrown by them, which aroused hopes among the Arab Nationalist for greater autonomy.

When World War I began, Arab Nationalists had two choices; either favor the Turks in hope of achieving greater autonomy and some self-government as an ultimate reward, or support Allies in the hope of attaining complete independence. Turkish ruthlessness in dealing with Arab nationalist soon drove even the moderate Arabs into anti-Turkish camp. Once the Ottoman Empire joined the Central Powers in War, Britain quickly saw the advantage of an Arab revolt and supported it. It not only weakened the Turkey militarily by depriving her Arab manpower, but also provided an opportunity to the Britain that Arab forces could be used to augment the Allied armies in the Near East. It denied the Sultan to proclaim “Jihad” (Holy War) which could bring all Muslims of the world against the Allies.

While the main intellectual centers of Arab Nationalism were located in the principle cities of the Levant, because of that the most effective military leadership arose in the Hejaz section of the Arab peninsula. The quick action taken by the Ottoman Administration suppressed the nationalist movement in the Levant, but the Ottoman control in Arabia was so weak that a nationalist revolt could easily develop. Britain had the support of Sharif Hussein of the Hejaz but there were some Arabs, especially in Syria and Mesopotamia which were doubtful about British diplomacy. They decided to not join the Allies unless Britain made satisfactory promises to the Arabs. Syrian nationalist agreed to accept Hussein as their spokesperson in any negotiations with Britain, provided he espoused their political platform, commonly known as Damascus Protocol as the essential condition for their Alliance. Hussein accepted the terms of the Protocol, and they were incorporated in his negotiations with the British.

The Arab demands and British concessions were contained in an exchange of ten letters between the Sharif and Sir Henry Mc Mohan, British High Commissioner of Egypt. Sharif Hussein’s first note on 14 July 1945, presented the main Arab demands. He requested British recognition of Arab independence in an area bound North by a line from Mersin – Adana to the Persian border, on the East by Persia and the Persian Gulf, on the South by Indian Ocean, and on the West by the Red and Mediterranean Seas. Only Aden was excluded. In his letters of October 24 and 13 December 1915, Sir Henry agreed, “to recognize and uphold the independence of the Arabs in all the regions lying within the frontiers proposed by the Sharif of Mecca” with certain exceptions. The British excluded the “districts of Mersin and Alexandretta and portions of Syria lying to the West of the districts of Damascus, Homs, Hama, and Aleppo,” all of which lie well to the north of Palestine. Britain also referred to the need for special administrative arrangements for Baghdad and Basra Vilayets because of her allies’ interests that was France. Hussein accepted the exclusions of the districts of Mersin – Adana and agreed to a temporary British occupation of the Vilayets of Baghdad and Basra. He had a great faith in the British integrity that he felt sure that Britain would not betray the Arabs when the war was over.

As a result of British promises, the Arab revolt started on 5 June 1916. However, the Arabs didn’t play a major role throughout the war, but their revolt was of great military significance because it diverted a considerable number of Turkish reinforcements and supplies to the Hejaz, protected the right flank of the British army’s as they advanced through Palestine, removed any danger of the establishment of a German submarine base on the Red Sea, and prevented the proclamation of *Jihad* by the Sultan from having any serious consequences in Allied controlled areas.  

**SYKES – PICOT AGREEMENT**

The French and British Governments had already signed the secret Sykes – Picot Agreement on 16 May 1916, which divided many Arab territories into French

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and British administered areas as well as zones of influence and provided for the internationalization of Palestine. But Hussein was unaware about that treaty and became familiar after a year later when the Russian revolutionary government published this secret agreement in December 1917. In early 1918, Sir Reginald Wingate, the newly appointed High Commissioner of Egypt, sent Hussein two telegrams which reaffirmed Britain’s former promises to the Arabs and advocate that the Sykes – Picot Agreement was not an official treaty. The telegrams, which deliberately misrepresented the reality, were ostensibly designed to reassure Hussein and they were successful in doing that. Hussein continued to trust Britain even the publication of the Balfour Declaration on 2 November 1917. This time Britain sent Commander David George Hogarth to explain the declaration to Hussein.21

**PARIS PEACE CONFERENCE AND ITS EFFECT**

The Zionist delegation at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference included prominent and capable persons from various countries, well versed in western diplomacy and psychology; they received a friendly and sympathetic reception from the delegates of Allied States. This certainly provided them major advantages over Arab delegation.

When Conference started, Zionist claims to Palestine rested on British wartime promises to the Jews as contained in the Balfour Declaration, as well on the various historical, religious and human rights mentioned earlier. Zionist further argued that a Jewish – Palestine could give a new hope and inspiration to Jews everywhere and that Jewish capital and practical abilities could help to develop the backward Palestine area for the benefit of the Arabs too.

The Zionist delegates put their demand as; (1) add the Balfour Declaration in the peace treaty; (2) disregard, since the Jews then 10 percent of the population of Palestine, the principles of the rights of self determination, at least until the Jews became a majority there; (3) contest making Palestine into either an Arab State or an internationalized one, but to setup a British Mandate; (4) demand for unlimited Jewish immigration into Palestine and “close settlement” by Jewish on the land there; and

(5) provide for formation of a Jewish Council for Palestine, representing the Jews in Palestine and elsewhere, with legal status and considerable powers. The Zionist continued to use the term Jewish “National Home” rather than “State”.

The Zionist didn’t have all their demands at the Paris Peace Conference, but they put themselves in strong position for achieving greater success when the Palestine Mandate was established.22

PALESTINE UNDER BRITISH MANDATE (1922 – 1948)

At the end of World War I, a few seeds of the future Arab – Israel conflict had already been implanted but the serious one have their roots during the Mandate period. The Palestine Mandate as Britain received it in 1922, included Trans – Jordan, despite strong Zionist objection, and was made into separate Mandate in 1922. The Zionist political claims strengthened due to the signing of Palestine Mandate Agreement between Britain and League of Nations with Balfour Declaration incorporated into it. It was the first internationally binding pledge and was framed largely in the interest of Jews.

The Zionist were delighted with the mandatory agreement, the Arabs were dissatisfied because they considered its provisions unjust, undemocratic, and contrary to the all promises which had been made to them. They denied mandate legal validity on the grounds that, it is contrary to the terms of the League Covenant, Palestine was not “provisionally recognized” as independent and the wishes of the resident were the “principle consideration in the selection of the mandatory” power as required by the League Covenant. The Arabs were especially aroused because, where as numerous articles of the Mandatory agreement referred to the Jewish community by name, the Arabs, 90 percent of the population, referred to merely as the “other sections” of the population.

Despite the mandate’s failure to provide specifically for an independent Jewish State, the Zionist regarded this as its main purpose. Zionist leaders wanted to

retain mandate until large scale immigration put Jews in the majority. Only then the Zionist would press for independent state.23

JEWISH IMMIGRATION

At the end of First World War, the entire Jewish population was about 55,000 in Palestine and due to Jewish immigration steadily promoted by Zionist Organization, it reached about 450,000 till 1939, which was about the 30 percent of the total population. From 1919 to 1936, $400 million was invested by Jews in Palestine. As a result new industries were setup and Arab land was purchased by the Jewish National Fund. The total amount of Jewish-owned land increased from 594,000 dunums (1dunum = 1/4 acre) in 1922 to 1,533,000 dunums in 1939. Some of these acreage had been what Britain considered state-owned land (on the basis of Ottoman land registries) which the “fund rented” nominal sums under ninety-nine-year leases. Other lands were brought from absentee owners living in Syria and Lebanon who had been isolated from their properties by the British and French Mandate boundaries. Arab tenants and workers were evicted from all this acreage. The land brought by the Jewish National Fund became the inalienable property of the Jewish people. Neither it could be resold to Arabs nor could Arabs be employed in it.24

Jews in Palestine enjoyed many formidable advantages over Arabs during the Mandate. Mandate provided for a Jewish Agency empowered to serve as the official spokesman of World Jewry in connection with Jewish immigration, agriculture, education, and other interests in Palestine. The Palestinian Jews developed their own communal organization, composed of an elected assembly and general council and an administrative apparatus, which soon assumed quasi – governmental functions. The


experience gained from the considerable degree of self-governance was to be very valuable to the Jews when the time came to setup their own government. Most of the Jewish immigrants entering into Palestine during these years were relatively advanced countries of Europe; they were better educated and possessed greater political and economic maturity than Arab neighbors. At the time when most Jews in various countries were uniting to support the Zionist cause in Palestine, Arab world found itself split into many political units – mandates, protectorates, and “independent” states. The Arabs who found themselves in Palestine continued to suffer the consequences of having lived in the backward Ottoman Empire for centuries. In 1921–22 the mandate setup and provided funds for a Supreme Muslim Council with the British sponsored Al-Haj Mohammad Amin al-Husseini, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, as its lifetime head. Disagreements arose even among Arab Muslims, a bitter struggle developed between the Husseini faction and the more moderate faction led by Raghib Nashashibi, mayor of Jerusalem, who opposed the Husseini policy of non-cooperation with the mandate authorities.

However in 1936–37 an Arab general strike took place and an Arab revolt broke out, the various grouped managed to work together but it was not long lasting. Arab community failed to organize itself politically as effective as the Jewish, and this was to have harmful consequences to them. When the Arab revolt broke out, Britain arrested most of the members of the Arab Higher Committee and forced the Grand Mufti and others to escape from the country, leaving the Arab community deprived of many of its most popular leadership.25

THE PEEL COMMISSION (1937)

A large-scale Arab rebellion broke out in 1936; Britain sent yet another Royal commission to Palestine known as the Peel Commission. The Commission reported that the underlying causes of disturbances of 1936 were: (1) the desire of the Arabs for national independence; (2) their hatred and fear of the creation of the Jewish National Home. The Commission deemed the mandate unviable and ultimately suggested that the solution to the conflict was partition of Palestine into separate Arab and Jewish states. The Jews were allocated 20 percent of the country, the area

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comprised of the North and the Upper Coast. The Arabs were given the rest of the mandatory Palestine, with it becoming part of Transjordan. The Zionist leadership was not altogether pleased with this report, but it was a start and they accepted it. The Palestinian Arabs objected strongly to the idea of partition. From September 1937 to January 1939 they made that very clear by carrying out the second phase of the Arab revolt. For a year and a half Palestine became lawless. They acted violently not only against Jews but also to the British. With the lack of influential leadership, the Arab revolt became fragmented, chaotic and ultimately failed. The mandatory administration reacted vigorously to these moves. The Arab Higher Committee was declared unlawful, and many of the Arab leaders were arrested, deported, or forced to leave Palestine. The death penalty was imposed on numerous Arabs who carried bombs and other unlicensed weapons. These actions scattered the Palestine Arab leadership, at the same time the British actually assisting in the training and arming of Jewish Defense Forces. 26

THE WOODHEAD COMMISSION (1938)

In the shadow of an approaching Second World War against Fascism and Nazism – who were beginning to issue propaganda in the Middle East in an attempt to undermine the British and court Arab favor – the British needed to revise their policy toward the Arabs. Thus, in attempt to appease the Arab population, both inside and outside of Palestine the Woodhead Commission was setup to reevaluate the Peel Report’s suggestion to partition. The Commission concluded that since it would be impossible to divide Palestine in just manner acceptable to both communities, partitioning Palestine would be unworkable. The British Government decided, in November 1938, invite representative of Arab states, and the Jewish Agency to London in March 1939, to discuss a solution acceptable to all parties. Since the Arabs

and the Zionist continued to press for incompatible goals, London Conference ended in failure.\textsuperscript{27}

**THE WHITE PAPER (1939)**

After a failed attempt at resolving the conflict in a roundtable meeting in London, known as the St. James Conference, the British issued a White Paper on 17 May 1939 which provided that (1) Britain would continue to rule Palestine for a ten-year period. If the Arabs and Jews were able to work satisfactorily during this period, they would be given as increasing role in Palestine Government, and Palestine would be established as an independence state within ten years. Otherwise, independence would be postponed; (2) Seventy-five thousands Jewish immigration would be allowed to enter Palestine over a five year period. Any immigration after that would be subject to the acquisition of the Arabs. (3) Stringent restrictions would be placed on land sales to Jews in certain areas and complete prohibition in other areas.

The Zionist rejected the White Paper. They accused Britain of a breach of mandate and warned that they would never accept Palestine as an Arab State with Jews as a permanent minority. Mass demonstrations were held against the new British policy, and Jewish quasi – military forces were strengthened. Extremist Palestinian Jewish groups become increasingly convinced that violence would now be the most effective weapon against the new policy, began launching terrorist attacks on the Palestine Government. The Jewish Agency not only refused to help the British round up the terrorist, but it also supported illegal migration of Jews in Palestine. Britain realized that she had alienated the Jews without having won the trust of strongest Arab Factions in Palestine. The Jews were further angered by land transfer regulations issued in February 1940, to curtail the role of Arab – owned lands to Jews.\textsuperscript{28}


PALESTINE DURING AND AFTER WORLD WAR II

During World War II Jewish efforts were aimed both at helping Britain to defeat the Nazis and at bolstering the Zionist military and political position in and outside Palestine. It was presumed that active participation by many Jews in the war would strengthen the Zionist cause before the British Government and world public opinion. Many Zionist leaders, believing that the Jews would ultimately be compelled to fight the Arabs if not also the British to attain their National Home, realized the great value of making thousands of men with the military training and experience available after war to the Haganah (meaning Defense), the military arm of the Jewish Agency. By early 1944, the Zionist had helped British induct some 43,000 Palestinian Jews into military service; and many already belonged to the Haganah. Due to the Jewish pressures in Britain, the dominions, and United States, Britain finally agreed, in late 1944, to setup a separate Jewish Brigade Group in her army. The smuggling of arms and illegal immigrants into Palestine had begun before 1939, but it continued throughout the war and intensified after 1943. From 1939 to 1943 at least 20,000 illegal immigrants were added to the 19,000 legal ones.

At the same time, the Zionists were intensifying their propaganda campaign outside Palestine. In Britain a Parliamentary Committee with important contacts and membership promoted the Zionist cause in both Houses of Parliament. Local Committees were organized in various cities in Britain and the dominions to influence views of people there. The Zionist pressurized government to the extent that in November, 1944, Churchill privately informed Weizmann of the decision of the British Cabinet Committee on Palestine to grant ultimately full Jewish sovereignty in a divided Palestine. At the same time, the British Government reassured the Arabs that it was standing by 1939 White Paper so as not to antagonize them while war was still going on.29

The Jews population and influence decreased immensely during war in Central and Eastern Europe, but the Jewish population in the United States became largest and most influential of the Jewish communities. Before Hitler Came to power most of the American Jews were opposed to the Zionism, but when Hitler began to hunt Jews, a

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large number of Jews joined and backed the Zionist Movement. With a large membership, the American Zionist Emergency Council established state and regional branches over the nation. Through various means of mass communication, the Zionist effectively won the support of many ordinary Americans. Up to the World War II, the Zionist had deliberately avoided asking for a Jewish State and had requested merely a National Home. A Conference in May 1942, called by the American Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs adopted the Biltmore Program which was one of the milestone events that brought Jewish – American support to Zionist Organizations. The Conference maintained that Palestine should be opened for unlimited immigration under Jewish monitor, and that it also be established as Jewish Commonwealth.

At the end of war Britain was broke and beleaguered. On the other hand Zionist were growing bolder, as well as becoming more organized and determined. Things for the Arabs remained fairly constant and quit throughout the war. The leadership of surrounding Arab States, who met in Alexandria, Egypt (October 1944) and created a pact called the Alexandria Protocol. This meeting eventually led to the formation of Arab League, an organization that exists till today. The Arab League eventually helped Palestine toward something of a unified leadership, but the Protocol fell on deaf ears that world over.30

TERMINATION OF MANDATE

In 1947, at the height of Zionist acts of terrorism and sabotage, the Mandatory Government made one last attempt to settle the Palestine Problem by suggesting to both Arabs and Jews that British trusteeship over Palestine should continue for another five years with the declared object of preparing the country as a whole for independence. The Arabs presented their own proposals for independence with guarantees for Jewish minority rights which were unacceptable to the British

Government; the Jewish Agency, on the other hand rejected Government’s proposals and out-right intensified its terrorist and sabotage activities.

The British Foreign Secretary on 18 February 1947, announced in the House of Commons that His Majesty’s Government had found that “the Mandate has proved to be unworkable in practice, that the obligations undertaken to the two communities had been shown to be irreconcilable,” and therefore announced its intention of giving it up. Thus, Britain handed Palestine to the United Nations.\(^{31}\)

**PARTITION: 1947, CIVIL WAR AND ISRAELI STATEHOOD**

The United Nations formed the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP), an eleven-member panel comprised of representatives from eleven different U.N. member countries. The Committee submitted its findings in August, which consisted of a majority of seven countries (Australia abstained), and a minority report proposed by India, Iran and Yugoslavia. The majority report recommended partition of Palestine into two states, Arab and Jewish, with Jerusalem existing as an international entity. This was on the condition that each state signed a treaty establishing “the economic union of Palestine”. On the other hand, the minority report suggested an “independent federal state” composed of a Jewish state and an Arab state. These states would have autonomy but would also be part of a federation establishing “a single Palestinian nationality and citizenship.”

The Arabs rejected the UNSCOP reports altogether. The Zionists carefully approved the majority report and started a campaign to garner Truman’s support for it. Truman, however, was not willing to vote in favor of partition of Palestine but Zionist pressure from both Palestine and within U.S. government; along with Soviet support for partitioning compelled him to do so. During this period of lobbying Truman expressed his feelings on the matter thus: “I don’t think that I ever had as much

压力和宣传旨在白宫，就像我在这次事件中所做的那样。此外，在投票的前一天，必须的三分之二多数并不在场（以很小的差距），这最终导致了不那么温和的美国-犹太主义对那些计划投票反对的国家的说服。威胁援助终止和禁运通常是说服的方法。投票根据联合国特别委员会多数报告推荐的分治方案于1947年11月29日举行，33个国家投赞成票，13个国家投反对票，10个国家弃权，因此通过了联合国决议181号。

美国和苏联投赞成票，而英国缺席。该计划的分割边界是以联合国特别委员会的报告为模型的，但做了小的修改。分配给犹太人的土地占巴勒斯坦的56%，从而引发了战争。阿拉伯人对联合国的投票感到愤怒。他们无法忍受欧洲和美国将56%的巴勒斯坦土地给予一个只占总人口不到30%的外国人口。

第一阶段（从联合国投票到1948年5月14日）见证了巴勒斯坦阿拉伯人和犹太人之间的内战，都在巴勒斯坦。第二阶段是国际战争（从1948年5月15日到年底）之间新成立的以色列国和周围阿拉伯国家——约旦、埃及、叙利亚和伊拉克，以及在某种程度上与黎巴嫩。

有了一个试图解决巴勒斯坦问题的努力，联合国最终只会让事情变得更糟，这导致了阿拉伯-以色列冲突，随后是几场战争。32

THE STATE OF ISRAEL IS BORN

The general impression is that the state of Israel came into being as a result of and in conformity with, a recommendation of the United Nations General Assembly. This is not so.

The Partition Resolution of 29 November 1947 had recommended the creation of a Jewish State on 56 percent of the territory of Palestine; an Arab State on 43 percent and an International Zone of Jerusalem and Environ on the remaining 1 percent. The resolution decreed that Arabs living in the area set aside for the Jewish State were to continue to reside there and to enjoy their fundamental rights and basic human liberties under the guarantees of the United Nations. The resolution further stipulated that the Jewish and Arab states were to come into being two months after British withdrawal on May 1948.

However, instead of waiting until the United Nations Palestine Commission prescribed in the Partition Resolution took over authority from the British mandatory, and in turn handed over such authority progressively to the leaders of the Arab and Jewish states, the Zionist proclaimed the State of Israel on 14 May 1948 and faced the world with a *fait accompli*. By this date they had already seized territory beyond that assigned to the Jewish state. Instead of having jurisdiction over 56 percent of the territory of Palestine, the Israelis occupied 77 percent; instead of Jerusalem being internationalized, the greater part of the Holy City has been Israeliized and declared the ‘capital’ of the Jewish state; instead of Arabs permitted to remain in their homes and country to lead a normal life, nearly one million men, women and children – Muslims and Christians – were forcibly expelled and dispossessed.

Therefore, what actually emerged as the Jewish state on 14 May 1948 was anything but the ‘State’ planned for under the partition plan. The new ‘State of Israel’ was the product of brute force, created in violation of the principles of the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the very resolution under which the Israelis now claim sovereignty.  

THE 1967 WAR (The Six – Day War)

The Six – Day War of June 1967 was a major watershed in the history of Israel, of the Arab – Israeli conflict, and of the Middle East. It altered the geography of the region, changed military and political perceptions, and triggered an intensified international effort to resolve the Arab – Israeli conflict with expanded U.S. involvement.\(^{34}\)

During May 1967 Israel, Egypt and Syria mobilized and deployed their troops as open warfare loomed, waiting only for one side to fire the first shot. Soviet intelligence reports transmitted to both Egypt and Syria indicated that Israel was amassing troops on the Syrian border with the aim of invading Syria.\(^{35}\) These Russian reports accelerated the tension and consequently placed Nasser on high alert. In a diversionary effort to threaten Israel’s southern flank, Nasser moved more troops into Sinai. Egypt and Syria, under Russian command, signed a defense pact that would facilitate to secure Soviet interests in the region. However, the reports of massing Israeli troops were not authentic. The conclusive photos provided by Syrian reconnaissance flights denied such troop concentration which was later confirmed by U.N. observers also as falsified claim. Nasser subsequently requested UNEF to withdraw from Egyptian border and Sinai, as it was his lawful right according to the agreement after the Suez crisis.

U.N. Secretary General U Thant accepted the request without hesitation and ordered the UNEF troops to withdraw from the region.\(^{36}\) Nasser immediately closed the Strait of Tiran on 23 May 1967 to ships heading for or belonging to Israel and further militarized Sinai. Syria, Jordan, and Iraq all began to mobilize in the event of hostility; Jordan’s Hussein even flew to Cairo on 30\(^{th}\) May to sign a defense pact with Egypt.\(^{37}\)

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\(^{37}\) Ibid.,
In a surprise attack on the morning at 7:45 am of 5 June 1967, Israeli fighter jets destroyed Egyptian air bases while it was still on the ground. The IDF tanks and troops advanced into Gaza and Sinai Peninsula, occupying eventually the entire Sinai and Gaza over the next couple of days. As bound by a recently signed defense pact and its army placed under Egyptian military command, Jordan opened fire on Israeli positions in and around Jerusalem, leading Israel to expand their fighting into two fronts. Israel offered a ceasefire during the first day on the condition that Jordan would be responsible for its reins and not engage in the war. King Hussein, who had already signed a pact with Egypt, and whose country already witnessing the bulk of Palestinian refugees had a little choice but to attack and began shelling Israel. The IDF responded in full force and destroyed air forces of Jordan, and achieved victory after victory against Egyptian and Jordanian ground forces.\(^\text{38}\)

Over the course of June 6 and 7, Hussein sought a ceasefire. The U.N. reacted with a Security Council Resolution (233), but Israel continued its drive toward the Jordan River, ignoring the Resolution, and by the end of June 7 had occupied all of the West Bank along with Jerusalem. After that only Israel acknowledged the ceasefire.\(^\text{39}\) On 8 June, Egypt also accepted the ceasefire, along with Syria whose involvement in the conflict had been insignificant. On 9 June, Israel began a full-fledged invasion of Syria in violation of another U.N. ceasefire to which it had already been agreed. By June 10 Israel stopped its offensive, having occupied a portion of southwestern Syria of the Israeli border and the Golan Heights. The war ended and Israel was in control of Gaza Strip, the West Bank (including entire Jerusalem), the Golan Heights and Sinai Peninsula. Egypt, Syria and Jordan had been pulverized. Israel had tripled its size.\(^\text{40}\)

After six-day of war, Israeli causalities totaled approximately 780 dead and 2500 wounded: Egypt lost perhaps 10,000 to 15,000 killed and over 500 were taken


\(^{40}\) Ibid., pp. 110-111.
prisoners; Jordan lost 800 killed and over 600 were taken prisoners; Syria lost 500 dead, with 2500 wounded and almost 600 taken prisoners. More noteworthy are some of the effects and consequences of Israeli victory, which changed the geopolitical balance and map of the Middle East. The IDF’s rapid conquest of the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, the Golan Heights and Sinai Peninsula added 430,000 square km to Israel’s territory – an area three and a half times larger than Israel proper.

The occupation of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank brought 1.1 million Palestinians under Israeli control: 600,000 in the West Bank, 70,000 in East Jerusalem, and 350,000 in the Gaza Strip. At least 200,000 West Bank Palestinians had become refugee and fled or were expelled into Jordan. Homes and villages of fleeing Palestinians were frequently demolished. In the Maghrabi Quarter facing the Western Wall in the Old City of Jerusalem, is one example, 135 homes were bulldozed and 650 people were forced to leave the area to make way for a plaza for Jewish prayer in front of the wall. This type of actions became routine throughout the occupied territories.

Thus, although U.N. Partition Plan allocated 56 percent of the territory of Palestine to the State of Israel but when the Zionist proclaimed the State of Israel on 14 May 1948, they had already occupied 77 percent of the territory of Palestine and remaining territory were also occupied in June 1967 six-day war.


1.3 THE PALESTINIAN NATIONAL MOVEMENTS

The movements to liberate Palestine received its greatest encouragement from the Suez War. The Palestinians actively participated in guerilla raids that eventually brought the actual war in 1956. By the mid – 1950s, the Egyptian government had become a staunch supporter of the Palestinian national movements, and it denied allowing Israeli ships to use the Suez Canal. In 1951, Egypt blockaded the Strait of Tiran, Israel’s access to the Red Sea, which Israel regarded as an act of war. In July 1956, Egypt nationalized the Suez Canal Company, which had been jointly owned by Great Britain and France. In late October, Israel attacked the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula. Great Britain and France invaded Egypt a few days later. Although the fighting was brief and U.S. and Soviet pressure compelled Israel to withdraw from both the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula, the conflict further enhanced regional tensions.46

For Palestinians, the experience of taking part in this war was the push needed to inspire the emergence of an independent Palestinian militant movement. In fact, a popular resistance movement erupted in the Gaza Strip in reaction to Israel’s invasion and occupation of the territory during the Suez War. The movement was aided by the military training and technical assistance Palestinians had received from the Egyptian army. As a result, Palestinian rebels launched several successful guerrilla raids across the borders into Israel, similar to the raids Israeli terrorists launched against Great Britain prior to British withdrawal from Palestine.47

However, the Arab defeat in the war with Israel in June 1967 boosted the development of a Palestinian national movement free from control of Arab governments. The immediate lesson of the shameful defeat was that the State of Israel could not be destroyed by conventional war led by existing Arab regimes. As a result, the Palestinians realized that to achieve some of their nationalist goals they have to


47 Ibid.,
take lead in managing their own affairs. They would have to leave their dependence on the Arab states.\textsuperscript{48}

\textbf{THE CREATION OF FATAH}

After the six–day war of 1967, Palestinians in Gaza Strip and elsewhere began independent, clandestine campaigns of political organizing, military training, and creation of social institutions. The most important guerilla and fedayeen group which emerged in this period was Fatah, also known as the Palestinian National Liberation Movement. The name Fatah is an acronym of \textit{Harkat al-Tahrir al-Filistini} which means Palestinian Liberation Movement.\textsuperscript{49}

The origin of Fatah can be traced back to small number of Palestinians who lived in the Gaza Strip during the mid-1950s. Some of these young had actively participated in the war of 1948–1949, but not as prominent leaders. In early 1955, a few of Fatah’s future leaders have joined in fedayeen raids on Israel from Gaza Strip. The 1956 Suez war witnessed some of the Palestinians fighting with Egyptian troops against British, French, and Israeli soldiers.\textsuperscript{50}

Fatah was initially a loose network of Palestinian groups in refugee camps, Palestinian communities and student groups. Yasser Arafat, Salah Khalaf, Khalil al-Wazir, and Abu Jihad were among its founding members. The movement began to take shape at meetings held in Kuwait in October 1957 but did not come into its full power until several years later, especially after the six-day war in 1967. The movement’s first publication, \textit{Filastinuna}, or \textit{Our Palestine}, appeared in 1959.


Because of its subversive nature, Fatah was forced to operate underground even in Arab States that supported the Palestinian liberation movement.\(^{51}\)

In its publications Fatah argued that the liberation of Palestine was primarily a Palestinian affair and could not be entrusted to the Arab States. At best, the Arab regimes could provide aid and protection, and if needed they might also contribute their conventional armies. But the Palestinians have to take the lead in the fight with Israel. By the early 1960s, the idea of armed struggle was gaining momentum among the small number of Fatah recruits, many of whom were well educated and articulate. As the movement came in contact with Syrian government, it accelerated the development of the idea of popular armed struggle, both as means for mobilizing the Palestinians and as a way of forcing the Arab regimes to follow the lead of the Palestinians in regaining usurped homeland. In January 1965, Fatah began military operations against Israel, and numerous communiqués were issued by al-Asifah, the name given to the military forces of Fatah. The overwhelming nature of Arab defeat in June 1967 war provided opportunity for Fatah to emerge one of the few active, dynamic forces in the Arab world. By late August 1967, Fatah had already begun a campaign of armed attacks against Israel.\(^{52}\)

While Fatah and other fedayeen groups carried out clandestine warfare, al-Hajj Amin al-Husseini, the former mufti of Jerusalem and president of Arab Higher Committee, appealed to the League of Arab States to help in establishment of an independent Palestinian state.\(^{53}\)

**THE PALESTINIAN LIBERATION ORGANIZATION (PLO)**

In the meantime, members of the League of Arab States voted unanimously to create a political organization that would speak and act on behalf of Palestinian

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people. As a result, the Palestine Liberation Army came into existence, units of which would be under the jurisdiction and command of various Arab militaries.

In January 1964 the first-ever Arab summit was called to discuss Israel’s plan to divert the waters of Jordan River. During this summit, the Palestinian representative of Arab League, Ahmad al-Shuqayri, was authorized to convene a new Palestinian National Council, or legislative congress. As a result, the first Palestinian National Council met in Amman from 28 May to 2 June 1964 and founded the Palestinian Liberation Organization, or PLO, as its executive branch with Ahmad al-Shuqayri as its president.54

The PLO was founded to establish more legitimate and organized channel for Palestinian nationalism than that which was offered at the time by independent Fedayeen groups. Later, some of these groups, including Fatah, professional, labor, and student groups joined the PLO, but during the course of the organization’s evolution, it has been the guerilla faction that has garnered the most attention from foreigners.

The PLO was made up of three main bodies: (1) the 15 – member executive committee, which makes decisions and which includes representatives of the PLO’s major guerilla forces, generally well-educated professional men; (2) the 60 – member central committee, which was an advisory body; and (3) the 599 – member Palestinian National Council, which has historically been seen as an assembly of the Palestinian people.

The PLO was charged with establishing a conventional army, the Palestine Liberation Army (PLA), recruited from among the Palestinian population and stationed in Egypt, Syria and Iraq. Funds for the PLO were to be supplied by members of the Arab League.55

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In the latter part of the 1966 an internal leadership crisis arose in the PLO. Shiqayri autocratic style and his dependent on Egypt – which was held accountable among the Palestinian for his opposition to commando activities against Israel – elicited demands for a more even distribution of authority within the organization from PLO officials in Beirut and Damascus. The struggle for power eventually led to the dissolution of PLO’s executive committee by Shuqayri and its replacement by a “revolutionary council” that would “prepare the people for the battle of liberation”.  

Shuqayri was compelled in December 1967, to resign and allow the Palestinian resistance movements to take their natural role in leading the Palestinian people. In July 1968, the fourth Palestinian National Council enacted the necessary reformations, redrafting the Palestinian National Charter and limiting membership of the Palestinian National Council (PNC) to 100. From 1 – 4 February 1969, the fifth Palestinian National Council convened, gave all the power in the PLO to the Palestinian Liberation Movements and elected Yasser Arafat as the president of the PLO.  

Before the creation of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), the PLO also had departments and agencies that provided military, health, information, finance, education, and other social services to the dispersed Palestinian population. But the PNA has taken over all these functions since 1994.

In March 1968, less than a year after the six-day war, the PLO guerillas won fame by repelling an Israeli attack on PLO bases in Jordan. Later, in 1971, Arafat became commander in chief of the Palestinian Revolutionary Forces. Two years later, he became head of the PLO’s political department. From that point forward, he directed his efforts increasingly toward political persuasion rather than armed struggle and violence against Israel.

In the 1970s, a violent wing of Fatah, Known as Black September, organized a series of devastating attacks. Black September’s most notorious action came when gunmen kidnapped and assassinated 11 Israeli athletes in Munich, West Germany, during the 1972 Summer Olympics. This event (during which five Palestinians and a


German police officer were also killed) not only brought international attention to the Palestinian cause, but this violence shocked the world also.\footnote{Hall, John G., \textit{Creation of the Modern Middle East: The Palestinian National Authority}, (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 2009), p. 93.} Throughout its struggle, the PLO faced many obstacles, suffered defeats and achieved victories. The main achievement of the PLO is that it managed, in October 1974 to win recognition of the Arab summit, the movement of Non-Allied Nations, the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), and U.N. as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, ending the long dispute with Jordan over the representation of the Palestinians and forcing Israel to accept the PLO as the only negotiating partner on behalf of Palestinians. Furthermore, the PLO was awarded an observer status in the U.N. in the same year.\footnote{Saleh Mohammad Mohsin, \textit{History of Palestine: A methodical Study of the Palestinian Struggle}, (Cairo: Al-Falah Foundation, 2003), pp. 250-251; Hall, John G., \textit{Creation of the Modern Middle East: The Palestinian National Authority}, (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 2009), pp. 93-95.}

In 1970 the PLO entered into a bloody confrontation with the Jordanian army and was compelled to leave Jordan. The remaining PLO bases in Lebanon suffered much during the Lebanese civil war and were continuously targets of Israeli military actions. The 1982 war forced PLO to leave Lebanon, and to reestablish its headquarters in Tunisia, quite far from home, depriving the organization from the grounds it needed to launch military resistance against Israel. Consequently, the PLO was dragged to accept a negotiated settlement, which came to be known as the Oslo Accords in 1993. The Accords established the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), which took over most of the functions of the PLO and marginalized its role.\footnote{Ibid.,}

**THE POPULAR FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF PALESTINE (PFLP)**

During the 1950s, when the future leaders of Fatah were concluding that Palestinians must reassert control over their national struggle, an opposite point of view was being put forward by the Arab Nationalist Movement (ANM). The ANM, which included a number of Palestinian intellectuals, emphasized the primacy of Arab
unity and cooperation as a necessary precondition for the liberation of Palestine. Student’s at the American University of Beirut in the late 1940s and early 1950s had debated these issues and in times had formed a political organization around a Palestinian of Greek orthodox background, Dr. George Habash. The Arab Nationalist Movement remained weak and decentralized, with small regional groups organized in several parts of the Arab world.

In 1957, Habash was forced to flee from Jordan to Syria after the eviction of the Nationalist Nabulsi government. For several years the ANM remained nationalist and relatively non-ideological, devoted to the idea of Arab unity and the liberation of Palestine, as its motto “Unity, Liberation, Revenge” implied. By 1963, however, a young generation within the ANM was seeking to develop a more rigorous ideological posture along Marxist – Leninist lines, and the seeds of a possible split in the movement began to appear. Later, in 1965, Egypt tried to incorporate ANM into the framework of the branches of the Arab Socialist Union that were to be established throughout the Arab world. In a fear to lose their identity through such a merger, the ANM leaders resisted, and by early 1967 President Nasser had renounced the ANM as a reliable political instrument of his Arab policy.

Several small Palestinian groups with uncertain connections to the ANM had emerged during 1965 – 1966. One, representing the younger and more militant factions of the ANM, had given itself the name “the Vengeance Youth,” under the leadership of the East Bank Jordanian student from the American University of Beirut, Nayif Hawatmah.61

In addition to the political organizations associated with the ANM, two Palestinian groups led by military men came into existence during this period. The first led by Ahmad Jibril, who had been an officer in the Syrian army, called itself the Palestinian Liberation Front (PLF). In early 1965, the group came into contact with Fatah and which resulted in some exchange of funds and military training between them. This early cooperation seems to have been superseded in September 1966 when the Ba’thist regime of Syria began to sponsor PLF in an effort to counter Fatah’s

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growing prominence. At the same time a second group, called Heroes of Return, appeared under the leadership of an officer in the Palestinian Liberation Army, Wajid al-Madani. During December 1967 and January 1968, negotiations led to the merger of the Palestinian part of ANM, the Vengeance Youth, the Heroes of the Return, and PLF. The new coalition, initially under the leadership of George Habash, was named the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP).

In contrast to Fatah’s doctrine of unity through armed struggle, the PFLP emphasized the need for organization and planning prior to the stage of using violence. The PFLP decided to adopt Leninism in 1968 which brought great resentment within the organization and caused its split into three main groups: the first was the Popular Front-General Command under Ahmad Jibril, and left the mother Front in October 1968. Second was the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), under Nayif Hawatmah who declared its formation in February 1969 and sought more rapid transformation to Marxism. The third was the mother organization, the PFLP that lost much of its support and credibility due to this split.

In spite of these secularist liberation movements which emerged in the political scene of Palestine, there were also other movements which were taking shape in background. These movements were Islamist movements in which Hamas and Islamic Jihad were the most important.

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