

BRITISH POLICY AND THE  
DEVELOPMENT OF PALESTINIAN NATIONALISM, 1917 – 1948

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO  
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
OF  
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR  
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE  
IN THE PROGRAM OF  
MIDDLE EAST STUDIES

JULY 2011

Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

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## **ABSTRACT**

**BRITISH POLICY AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF PALESTINIAN  
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M.S., Middle East Studies

Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Recep Boztemur

July 2011, 127 pages

This thesis analyzes the emergence and development process of Palestinian nationalism. The role of the notable families within the development of Palestinian nationalism that led Palestinian Arab society during the British Mandate will be discussed in detail. The thesis is going to examine whether Palestinian nationalism is a genuine ideology or it is developed as a counter nationalism against both Jewish immigration and settlements activities and British Mandate. It will also be analyzed Mandate policies which were applied in order to provide balance between both of the nations.

**Keywords:** Nationalism, Palestinian Nationalism, Palestinian Notable Families, British Mandate

## ÖZ

### İNGİLTERE POLİTİKALARI VE FİLİSTİN MİLLİYETÇİLİĞİNİN GELİŞİMİ, 1917-1948

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Tez Yöneticisi: Doç. Dr. Recep Boztemur

Temmuz 2011, 127 sayfa

Bu tez, Filistin Milliyetçiliğinin oluşum ve gelişim süreçlerini analiz etmektedir. Müslüman Filistin halkını yöneten, bölgenin ileri gelen ailelerinin Filistin milliyetçiliğinin gelişmesinde üstlendikleri rol detaylı bir biçimde tartışılacaktır. Filistin milliyetçiliğinin özgün bir ideoloji mi yoksa Yahudi göç ve yerleşim hareketlerine, aynı zamanda İngiliz Manda yönetimine rekabet amaçlı oluşan karşı bir milliyetçilik olup olmadığını inceleyecektir. Ayrıca, İngiliz yönetiminin iki toplum arasındaki dengeyi sağlayabilmek için uyguladığı politikalar da analiz edilecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Milliyetçilik, Filistin Milliyetçiliği, Filistin İleri Gelen Aileleri, İngiliz Mandası

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

First and foremost I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my advisor Assoc. Prof. Recep Boztemur for his guidance and encouragement throughout the research. I thank him for his sincere support during my undergraduate and graduate education life.

I also thank to my committee members; Prof. Meliha Benli Altunışık and Assoc. Prof. Erdoğan Yıldırım for their contributions.

Most importantly, I would like to present my endless thanks to my parents; Şefik and Tülay and my brother Burhan Kazım Çalık who always put their trust in me. Last but not least, I thanks to my friends; Tuğçe Ersoy Öztürk, İrem Şengül and Zeynep Ceren Akyüz for their friendship, support and positive energy.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Though national awakening and the emergence of nation-states go back to the 16th century in Europe, and nationalism became a state-making ideology in the 19th century, Arab societies of the Ottoman Empire were late not only in the development of nationalist ideology, but also in their attempts to establish their nation-states. It should be emphasized that Ottoman citizenship and national awakening of the Ottoman subjects emerged after the Tanzimat Decree in 1839 and until then the peoples of the Empire were classified according to their religious identities depending on the communal representation based on the millet system. Therefore, with the millet system Arab subjects of the Empire were ruled according to their religious identities during the Ottoman regime.

Moreover, the Empire held together many different religious groups and ethnic identities for almost six centuries thanks to the loyalty not in a national but in a dynastic sense until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In other words the loyalty of the non-Muslim subjects, including Bulgarians, Serbians, Greeks, and all others was to the house of Osman and the Muslims felt belonging to the dynasty as well as to the Islamic *umma* with which the Ottoman Empire legitimized its sovereignty. However, when these different populations from different regions under the Empire had also been affected in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Western ideologies like nationalism, concepts of patriotism and nationhood, the breaks from the Empire started. Thus, in order to gain the loyalty of the subjects, the Ottoman bureaucracy adopted the ideology of unification, Ottomanism until the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Its emphasis was on the common Ottoman citizenship and loyalty.

However, the development of Turkish nationalism especially during the Young Turk governments after 1908 caused the reaction of Arabs. The Arabs that have been populated in Middle Eastern region were one of the significant subjects that involved in nationalist movements against the Ottoman Empire. The rise of nationalist movements both in Europe and in Ottoman Empire caused the Arabs to

response these developments initially with political Arabism in which the goal was reform, greater Arab autonomy and insurance of the Arab rights within the Ottoman Empire. However, Arab nationalism with which absolute political Arab independence was aimed became main ideology of the Arab unification during the World War I.

Therefore, the Middle East entered a new era that witnessed the waves of nationalism from Europe, which were in the highest, symbolic and intellectual form. Nationalism in the Middle East “was a reaction of the Muslim World, to its own political degeneration, an awakening to its own weakness, an attempt to remedy its shortcomings by use of the latest imported Western ideologies”<sup>1</sup>. Although Arab nationalism was a twentieth century ideology, it was not an accidental event. Arab nationalism was a doctrine and system of ethics that appeared as the outcome of difficult intellectual crises that were experienced by Islam and it was also used as a political weapon against European domination<sup>2</sup>. It was not a fully-developed ideology until 1918 which had grass-roots support and a program that would serve as a guide for the action<sup>3</sup>. It was rather an idea that appeared as a response to nationalism both within Ottoman Empire and Europe.

Although the role of Syria and Lebanon was significantly emphasized within Arab nationalism, Palestine had also important effects over it. However, when the ideology of Greater Syria which involved Syria, Lebanon and Palestine territories and required political efforts of the three entities, began to be focused mostly on Syrian and Lebanese leadership and governance, Palestinian nationalist activities began to be centered around Palestinian Nationalism in specific manner. Moreover, as a result of the failure of the universalism of Arab nationalism, the Palestinian politics lost their importance and received not enough attention. The

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<sup>1</sup> Don Peretz, *Middle East Today*, New York: Praeger Publishers, 1988, p.132

<sup>2</sup> Silvia Haim, *Arab Nationalism: An Anthology*: Introduction, US: University of California Press, 1962, p.6

<sup>3</sup> Muhammad Muslih, *The Origins of Palestinian Nationalism*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1988, p.213

question of Palestine was not at the top of the agenda of Lebanese, Syrian and Iraqi politics. Therefore, Palestinian nationalism began its development within itself.

This thesis aims at analyzing Palestinian nationalism with regard to the relations between nationalist groups, and between these groups and the British mandatory government. The problematic of the thesis is that Palestinian Arab nationalism had its origins in the development of Arab nationalism in general, however it emerged during the British Mandate within the struggle between the nationalist groups on the one hand, and their relations with the mandate power on the other. It can also be said that the reaction to Zionism and the Israeli state contributed the different path that Palestinian nationalism took. Therefore, the sub-questions of the thesis are as follows: “Was there a genuine Palestinian Nationalism as different from Arab nationalism, and if so what characteristics did Palestinian nationalism have?”, “Did Palestinian nationalism develop as counter-nationalism against political Zionism and British Mandate?”, “What families were politically dominant in Palestine?” and “What were the political sources of power of these families? “How much were these families divided in national issues?”, “Did their position vis-à-vis the British rule affect the development of Palestinian nationhood? The thesis will therefore examine the emergence and development of Palestinian nationalism and attempt to demonstrate the role of the most popular leading families of Palestine over the development of Palestinian nationalism in the region after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and during the British Mandate. Their positions and situations against pro-Jewish policies of the British administration and against Jewish immigrations are the main issues of this thesis study.

As a result of all these negative effects, Palestinian nationalism began its own political emergence. It emerged as a reaction to the growth of Jewish settlements in Palestine. Zionism was the most important factor that caused the motivation of Palestinian Arabs to organize themselves politically and they also formulated their nationalist ideology. Zionism led the Palestinian people to emphasize the significance of the aggressive leadership, unity and organization. Zionism provided for Palestinian nationalism a focus and a pivot around which the

politics of Palestinians were centered. W. Cleveland argues that Palestinian nationalism was not an ideology which was defined by the Mandate but it was a reaction against the increase in Jewish settlement and British Mandate<sup>4</sup>. Furthermore, Jewish immigration, land purchases, rapid growth of Jewish settlements and economic improvement of the Jewish people while Palestinian Arabs were struggling with the impoverishment were also other dynamics for the emergence of Palestinian Nationalism.

According to Lewis, “there have been states in this region before the Mandate, but they were not called Palestine; there were places called Palestine in this region before that, but they were not states”<sup>5</sup>. The identity of the Palestinian people was defined by religion, by descent or by allegiance to a particular state, ruler, and locality. The formation of a political entity as Palestine, national identity as Palestinian and the construction of Jerusalem as capital city were constituted by the British Mandate. In addition to the continuing threat of increase in the Zionist movement, the anti-colonial nationalist movements of neighboring Arab countries, Syria, Egypt and Lebanon, contributed to the increasing militancy of Palestinian nationalism. Moreover, the possibility of becoming alienated minority of Palestinian Arabs in their own territories led the emergence of fear among them and caused these people to focus on their own local interests and wishes. These fears led to the emergence of Palestinian patriotism. Palestinian patriotism rejected Zionism completely because the Palestinians believed that the aim of Zionism was to seize Palestine from the hands of the Arabs. Palestinian patriotism needed a strong challenge that would convert it to a full-fledged Palestinian nationalism that has its own ideology and its own institutional framework. Two challenges provided the conversion of Palestinian patriotism to Palestinian nationalism: the first one was the fragmentation of the Arab nationalist movement and the second one was the division of Syria among Britain and France.

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<sup>4</sup> William Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, US: Westview Press, 2000, p.153

<sup>5</sup> Bernard Lewis, *From Babel to Dragomans: Interpreting the Middle East*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2004, p.153

Furthermore, another impulsion was the social environment that involved the long-term growth of the *Yishuv*. It caused the increase of Palestinian national movement which was led mostly by the family and clan network of the Palestinian Muslims. The village and local rulers gave their support to the leading families and these leading families accelerated the process of the first serious nationalist mobilization in Palestine that caused Great Arab Revolt between 1936 and 1939. However, these political developments left the national movement as fragmented as ever and the rivalry between families continued as a competition between national parties. That situation negatively affected the development of Palestinian nationalism whose roots were created against the Jewish settlements during the Mandate Period.

Additionally, the notable families that created and led Palestinian nationalism had linkages with the Ottoman imperial bureaucracy. The institutional framework in which ideologies of Ottomanism and Arabism competed with each other and in which Palestinian nationalist movement appeared were formed by these notable families. However, the most important problem which prevented the improvement of the Palestinian nationalism was lack of political unification and division between the families. The social structure of the Muslim community was composed of main families and tribes among that rivalry within the leading families, existed. According to Ilan Pappé, in addition to this political division and rivalry, the lack of leadership and lack of institutionalization comparing to Jewish community were the other main problems of the unification of the Muslim community<sup>6</sup>. There was not a widespread membership within the network which affected the development of Palestinian Nationalism.

The political source of power of these families were connected to their possession of property, their tradition of learning and their integration into the Ottoman system of government in the second part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, an official post in government service was an opportunity for the acquisition of wealth, influence over society and a status symbol. High status families could benefit from

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<sup>6</sup> Ilan Pappé, *Modern Filistin Tarihi: Tek Ülke İki Halk*, Ankara: Phoenix Taynevi, 2007, p.137-138

these situations and the high positions were occupied by the members of these families. Therefore, these families could acquire authority over the local society and they began holding intermediary position between the government and the community. Besides these, the urban leading Palestinian families made use of these official posts to obtain legal rights to more land and private property<sup>7</sup>. The intensified involvement of the notable families in economic and administrative activities caused them to extend their economic sources of the financial power also.

This thesis is going to discuss that whether Palestinian nationalism is a rooted and genuine nationalism that has existed constantly or appeared as a reaction. Moreover, another important argument of the thesis is that whether Palestinian nationalism is a nationalism that depended upon Arab nationalism or not. Palestinian nationalism is both dependent and independent nationalism because it emerged within the concept of Arab nationalism as a part of the Greater Arab state but later on it was separated from Arab nationalism. When the aim of the establishment of the Greater Arab state turned into the foundation of Greater Syria; Palestinian nationalism was broken out from Arab nationalism and emerged as a separate ideology and movement.

In its analysis of Palestinian nationalism, the thesis is composed of five chapters, including the introduction in the first and the conclusion in the last chapter. The second chapter discusses the definitions of nation, national identity and nationalism. Furthermore, the formation and development of Arab nationalism during the First World War under CUP policies will be discussed. The perceptions of different nationalism writers, relevance of these perceptions and definitions with Palestinian nationalism and lastly the emergence of Palestinian nationalism and its break from Arab nationalism are going to be analyzed in detail. Moreover, claims of some contemporary writers of nationalism and the opposite views will be discussed. Whether nationalism produces and invents nations or nations produce and invent nationalism and whether a nation exists without having its own state or not will be the main subjects that are going to be discussed in this chapter.

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<sup>7</sup> Muslih, p.218

Although Palestinian nationalism has appeared as a counter nationalism and developed as a part of Arab nationalism rather than a single and unique ideology, the existence of Palestinian Nationalism cannot be ignored today due to not possessing an official state and state borders in order to provide its security against challenges of other powers as the modernist model of nationalism claimed. The modernist writers of nationalism asserted that nations are made by the state, and its nationalist ideology, and they could pursue their existence as long as they possess territorial borders and official states. However, this thesis focuses on the widely-accepted definition of nation that involves arguments of both modernist and nationalist discourses. This definition explains nation as it is composed by historical territory or homeland, common myths and common historical memory, a common collective public culture, legal rights and duties that are necessary for public, a common economy on which people have the freedom of movement.

In the third chapter, the period of British Mandate, the situation of Palestine under the Mandate and its policies over both the Palestinian Arabs Jews will be examined. The strategies and policies of the Jewish population such as immigrations and settlements that led to the awakening of Palestinian nationalism and balance policies of Britain such as publication of different White Papers for the sake of both sides in order not to attract the reaction of Palestinian Arab or Jewish population are going to be explicated. As a result of strict immigration and settlement movements of the Jewish people and as a result of non-prevention of those by the British Mandate, the Arab Revolt arose. Therefore, in that section of this thesis, the Arab Revolt, measures that were taken by British administration to end the revolt, the reaction of the Mandate and the effects of the revolt over the development of Palestinian nationalism will be discussed. Besides, the situation of Palestine during the World War II, the withdrawal of British Mandate, the partition of the region and the establishment of the Israeli state are also the focuses of this part.

And in the fourth chapter, the awakening of the Palestinian Arab notables and families, their situation and rivalry for the power share in the region under the British Mandate period will be examined. This rivalry not only weakened the unity

of the Palestinian people but also worsened the existence of their political authority which was necessary to constitute power against the Jews and British Mandate even though it was weak. Moreover, the political groups, societies and national parties, governmental positions and the rivalry of the families over these positions by the way of political parties and the significant figures from these families who led the Palestinian society are going to be emphasized. As a result of the rivalry between Palestinian notable families and clans, the Palestinian national movement was left weak and the unity among the Palestinian Arabs could not be provided. Thus, the disunity was used and benefited by the British Mandate and Jewish political movement for their own sake.

Methodologically, different research methods are going to be used throughout this thesis. It is composed of methods of description, explanation and comparisons and hermeneutic. In order to write about the definitions of nationalism, the preferred method is going to be the description and this will lead to literature search about nationalism. Furthermore, the method of comparison and sampling are the other methods that will be used in order to see different types of nationalisms and to decide which ones are the most relevant for the main issue. Moreover, the thesis also refers to the methodology of hermeneutic in order to provide better understanding of the topic and therefore, analyses will be made at the end of the discussions. The explanatory method will be applied for the clarification of the policies of the British Mandate and it is the most useful way for examining the families and their rivalries. In short, in order to provide objectivity, the comprehensive-explanatory-interpretative approaches are going to be implemented rather than total acceptance or total rejection.



## CHAPTER 2

### NATIONALISM AND PALESTINIAN ARAB NATIONAL IDENTITY

#### 2.1 Definition and Function of Nation, National Identity and Nationalism

The definition of the nation by the French philosophers during the Enlightenment emphasized that nation is a public community which obeys the same rules and foundations in a specific country. The meaning of national identity requires a political society that implies common institutions, and a unique constitution involving the rights and duties for all individuals of society. Nation, as an ethnic group involves determinative characteristics such as language, religion, racial background, culture and territory and it is generally open to political mobilization<sup>8</sup>. Kedourie makes his definition of nation depending on the idea of the general will as follows:

“by the definition, nations are composed of citizens who are at one with each other, among whom there is neither conqueror nor conquered, neither ruler nor subject, but all are animated by one general will, willing the good of nation, which is also that of the individual”<sup>9</sup>.

However, a detailed definition that is different from the political point of view defines the nation both as a whole community that possess unity of language, religion, belief, history and culture and as an administrative unit whose individuals that have both economic and social benefits within the same territory, and connected to it with their sense of belonging<sup>10</sup>. In fact, the most important element of the formation of a nation is the *belief* of individuals in which common features create their own nation. Historical language and cultural features create the national consciousness of the society.

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<sup>8</sup> E. F. Borgatta, ” Nationalism”, *The Encyclopedia of Sociology*, New York: Macmillan Reference, 2000, p.1939

<sup>9</sup> Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism*, London: Hutchinson & Co., 1960, p. 120

<sup>10</sup> Recep Boztemur, “Tarihsel Açıdan Millet ve Milliyetçilik: Ulus-devletin Kapitalist Üretim Tarzıyla Birlikte Gelişimi”, *Doğu Batı*, No: 38, 2006, p.161

Another important component of national identity is a social place and a piece of land whose borders have been roughly defined. Under the Western model, the dominant ideology of national identity is *territoriality* and a nation should have a well-defined territory which is historical homeland. The meaning of a homeland for national identity requires a society with its own law under which individuals of society are equal and have a sole political will<sup>11</sup>.

In addition to territory and political will of the public, language is another way of gaining consciousness for an individual of his personality. The unity of language both provides communication of the individuals in a society and the exclusion of the others who are not able to speak their own language. The perception of the “other” by referring to their common features is another point that constitutes the nation. Kedourie also emphasizes the importance of language for the formation of a nation. Therefore, he writes that “language is not only a vehicle for rational propositions, it is the outer expression of an inner experience, the outcome of a particular history, the legacy of a distinctive tradition“<sup>12</sup>. Moreover, language also provides to distinguish one nation from another and it is a criterion for the recognition of the existence of a nation and recognition of the right of nation to form a state on its own: “The people who speak an original language are nations and that nations must speak an original language. To speak an original language is to be true to one’s character, to maintain one’s identity...”<sup>13</sup>. According to Kedourie, there can be more than one type of nationalism, like linguistic, racial and religious nationalisms and there is not a specific difference between linguistic and racial nationalisms. The importance of language depends on the position of language like a sign of continuity and peculiarity of a nation. Additionally, Benedict Anderson also gives importance to language for nationhood. He thinks that importance of common language is based upon to create sense of national solidarity in order to define imagined community as a nation. According to him, nationalism replaced Latin and used-languages of high cultures and administrations with the privilege of vernaculars that are also involved in it. He also writes about the ways of

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<sup>11</sup> Anthony Smith, *Milli Kimlik*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1994, p.34-35

<sup>12</sup> Kedourie, *Nationalism*, p. 62

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p.67

print languages for the basis of the national consciousness. Language is the necessary cultural condition for the notion of nationhood. Moreover, exchange and communication fields became as the unified formations under Latin and vernaculars. However, for Anderson, the language is not necessarily the language of the nation. The national language may be any language to unite the people, it may be even the language of the conquerors. According to the relation between language and nationalism, nationalism was a result of the print technology and capitalism. This print technology provided the fixity of a language and encouraged the notion of long-standing national identity. In sum, languages-of-power as a different kind from the older administrative vernaculars were the formation of print capitalism<sup>14</sup>.

As a result of these common features of the society, nation requires common institutions that reflect the common political consciousness and aims. In other words, in order to keep its people together, nations should have common aim, thinking, consciousness, civil ideology and culture. Furthermore, a nation also reflects values and traditions, and it became main legitimate power of the public's legal rights, duties and legal institutions. Under this Western model of national identity, the members of nations are cultural communities that have common historical heritage, myths, symbols and traditions; however, they are not homogeneous cultural communities. In addition, Anderson defines the nation as an imagined political community that is imagined both as limited and as sovereign. An imagined community is different from an actual community because it is not based on face-to-face interaction between its members. Instead of this, its members hold mental image of their affinity in their minds. The members of this community probably will never contact with one another face to face, however, they can have similar interests or are both just a part of the same nation<sup>15</sup>.

In the Western concept of nation, there is also an understanding of the *public*; however, it is seen as a *political community* that depends upon common law and institutions. On the other hand, in the Eastern ethnic model, the *public* is the

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<sup>14</sup>Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso, 1991, p.37-47

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, p.6-7

main subject of nationalism and its discourse. In this model, the leaders need the will of public in order to legitimate and realize their nationalist activities and they only bring different segments of the community together by the way of the public will<sup>16</sup>. Therefore, national self-determination is a definition of will and nationalism is a method of teaching of the right of self-determination will.

Thus, the national identity<sup>17</sup> is composed by

1. Historical territory or homeland
2. Common myths & common historical memory
3. A common collective public culture
4. Legal rights & duties that are necessary for the public
5. A common economy on which people have the freedom of movement

In addition to the Western model of nation, a different national understanding began to emerge from the East and Asia as a challenge against the Western model. This non-Western model of nationalism may be named as *ethnic national concept* whose distinctive feature is that while in the Western national concept individual can chose his own nation, in the Eastern national concept, the individual belongs to society that s/he is born whether s/he stays within this society or migrates.

Craig Calhoun also writes about nationalism by referring to authors whose point of view is based upon the Western concept of nationalism. According to Craig Calhoun, it is given importance, in recent analyses, to the role of modern politics and the idea of sovereignty in modern sense. And the possibility of the explanation of nationalism by using the linkage of ethnicity has been refused. Furthermore, he also writes that even if ethnicity plays a role, it cannot be a sufficient explanation for the most twentieth century analysts. As cited in Calhoun, in order to explain this argument that refuses the way of explanation of nationalism by using ethnicity, he

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<sup>16</sup>Smith, *Milli Kimlik*, p.29

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, p.31-32

refers to claims of Hobsbawm who sees nationalism as political movement to which ethnicity only helps its production but not to its explanation because the origin of nationalism lies in political economy, not in culture<sup>18</sup>. Another author who sees nationalism as a political principle is Gellner. According to him, nationalism is a “theory of political legitimacy which requires that ethnic boundaries should not cut across the political ones and in particular, that ethnic boundaries within a given state should not separate the power-holders from the rest”<sup>19</sup>.

On the other hand, Anthony Smith gives importance to the pre-modern ethnicity which has an essential origin in nationalism and does not see nationalism as primordial or natural. However, he claims that the bases of nationalism are rooted in ancient histories and in ethnic consciousness. According to Anthony Smith, nationalism, as an ideology is newly created; however, ethnic origins of nationalism rely on antiquity and myths and memories, values and symbols form the core of ethnicity. He writes that

“myths, symbols, memories and values are ‘*carried*’ in and by forms and genres of artifacts and activities which change only very slowly, so *ethnie*, once formed, tend to be exceptionally durable under ‘*normal*’ vicissitudes, and to persist over many generations, even centuries, forming ‘*moulds*’ within which all kinds of social and cultural processes can unfold and upon which all kinds of circumstances and pressures can exert an impact”<sup>20</sup>.

At that point, it should be mentioned that in order to talk about the existence of Palestinian nationalism, firstly the Palestinian people and society are taken into consideration as an ethnicity that created their *national consciousness* and then the formation of their nationalism may be examined as a political movement and principle.

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<sup>18</sup> Craig Calhoun , “Nationalism and Ethnicity”, *Annual Review of Sociology*, Volume 19, 1993, p. 227

<sup>19</sup> Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, New York: Cornell University Press, 1983, p.1

<sup>20</sup> Anthony Smith, *Ethnic Origins of Nations*, New York: B. Blackwell, 1986, p. 16-17

Pre-independence movements that depend on ethnicity and genealogy is a branch of the concept of ethnic nationalism. The main aim of these movements is to spread from the dominant political power or to separate the chosen ethnic territory from the dominant power or to get together within the chosen territory and to re-establish a new political ethno-nation that would replace the dominant power. These are separatist or diaspora nationalisms. The Palestinian case is an exam for this separatist nationalism because the basis of their nationalism bases upon the right of return and they aim to separate their chosen territory from the dominant power of Israel.

According to Smith, the main element of such an ethnic nationalism is family and race, more than nation. Nation is seen as an imagined superior identity and especially in Middle Eastern and Eastern Europe countries the roots of race and family are the means of proud. As a result, Palestinian nationalism may be involved into this group of ethnic nationalism because during the following years of the First World War, families had an important role within the Palestinian society and political structure and starting point of Palestinian nationalism depends on these families because these families created the resistance power against the Mandate and the Jews.

In his book, Smith refers to the claims of Weber and Tilly that are about the formation of the ethnicities and nations. According to Smith, Weber emphasizes that political action is important for ethnic formation and persistence and he also emphasizes that political community encourages the belief in common ethnicity. In China, Japan, Israel, ancient Egypt, and Iran, the establishment of a unitary policy has the most significant role for the development of the consciousness of ethnic identity<sup>21</sup>.

Additionally, Smith refers to Tilly who supports the influence of wars over the development of the ethnicity; according to Tilly “the state makes the war and

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<sup>21</sup>Quoted from Max Weber by Anthony Smith, *Milli Kimlik*, p.50

war makes the state”<sup>22</sup>. Tilly also supports that wars have an important role in the development of the ethnic identity and national consciousness. Wars cause the appearance of ethnic identities of fighting sides, and sometimes a third side that is the owner of the territories where the wars are held. This last function penetrates deeply into the constitution of ethnic identity. For instance, the Palestinian case forms an evident example for this argument. Antagonism against the Jewish migrations, against their organization in a disciplined way and especially the 1948 War created an urge behind the establishment and development of Palestinian people’s nationalist ideology and consciousness.

There are common and different features of ethnicity and nation. Both nation and ethnicity have common myths and memories; however, the nation is a territorial community. While relation of an ethnicity with a homeland might be only symbolic and historical, the relation of the nation with the homeland is always physical and actual because nations possess their territories. While nations are seen as political communities and as sources of sovereignty, this is not the same as for ethnicities. Furthermore, Calhoun writes that “nationalism is not simply a claim of ethnic similarity but a claim that certain similarities should count as *the* definition of political community” and “nationalism involves a new form of group identity or membership<sup>23</sup>”. Therefore, while nationalism requires boundaries ethnicity does not. These demonstrate that there is a connection between ethnicities and nations because nations occur within the core of the ethnicities, in other words nations necessitate ethnic elements. But, it is difficult to understand nations without common myths and memories that are belong to the territorial homeland.

On the other hand, ethnic communities are usually deprived of the attributes of the nation. They do not have to be the residents in their national homeland. They do not need to reveal a common division of labor and economic unity, and also their culture does not have to be common to all the members. Lastly, they do not need to

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<sup>22</sup> Anthony Smith, *Milli Kimlik*, p.50-51, c.f., Charles Tilly, *The Formation of the National States in Western Europe*, Princeton: Princeton University Press,1975

<sup>23</sup> Calhoun, p. 229

have common legal codes with common rights and duties for all<sup>24</sup>. Due to the symbolic and historical relationship of an ethnicity with a homeland, the Palestinian people's relation with their homeland is also historical because of not living in their homeland, but because of their ideas about the right of return. From this point of view, the Palestinians may be seen as an ethnic unit. However, from the other perspective, because of different factors such as war, occupation or expulsion, the Palestinians have created their nationalism as a resistance power. It might be said that the Palestinians have a special position.

Anthony Smith makes the definition of nationalism by referring to five different explanations. He writes that

- 1- Nationalism is a process of formation or growth of nations
- 2- It is a sentiment or consciousness of belonging to the nation
- 3- It is the language and symbolism of the nation
- 4- It is a social and political movement on the behalf of the nation
- 5- It is a doctrine and/or ideology of the nation, both general and political<sup>25</sup>.

Smith prefers to use the last three descriptions of nationalism because while the first one is very general and include specific process, the second one is related to other three but they cannot be used together. For instance, it is possible to own national feeling without possessing symbolism, movement and ideology on the behalf of the nation. Therefore, they have to be differentiated. In sum, nationalism is understood as a language and symbolism, the ideology of nation and a socio-political movement; that gives importance to cultural gestation and representation. Nationalism is an ideology whose concerns and purposes are focused on the nation in order to advance its well-being. Furthermore, one of the important aims of nationalism is to give force and direction to symbols and movements. The ideals and principles of nationalism also shape the targets of the socio-political movement.

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<sup>24</sup> Smith, *Milli Kimlik*, p.70-71

<sup>25</sup> Anthony Smith, *Nationalism: Theory, Ideology, History*, UK: Polity Press, 2001, p.5-6



National autonomy, unity and identity and a nation are the necessities for the existence of nationalism and they also depend on one another for their survival<sup>26</sup>.

Furthermore, Anthony Giddens also makes the definition of nationalism. He writes that “nationalism is a phenomenon of the late eighteenth century and after” and “is the psychological affiliation of individuals to a set of symbols and beliefs emphasizing commonality among the members of a political order”<sup>27</sup>. According to Giddens, nations and nationalism are different properties of the modern state and their appearance is not accidental because there is a connection between these two. There cannot be nationalism without the formation of the nation. Furthermore, nationalism aims the movement of the society through a better future, in parallel to the common traditions, language, religion, common identity, unity of homeland.

As an additional feature of nationalism, Kedourie asserts that the ideology of nationalism supports the reshaping of frontiers and redistribution of a political power in favor of a particular nationality and this causes interruption of equality provided among different groups and causes appearance of the new questions, renews conflict. Therefore, nationalism complicates the relations of different groups of heterogeneous areas. It increases the tension, damages political stability and political liberty and creates a mutually hatred society. Although the main aim of the national state is to provide equality for all the citizens as the members of the nation, this only causes to disguise the tyranny of one group over another. As long as the members of the nations do not live with the same spirit, differences would be divisive and rebellious<sup>28</sup>.

The modernists define nationalism as a modern movement and ideology of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and they specify that there were only expressions of a national sentiment before the French Revolution. In the modernist concept of the nation, nationalism creates national identity. Gellner writes that “[n]ationalism is not the

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* p. 7-8-9

<sup>27</sup> Anthony Giddens, *The Nation – State and Violence: Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987, p.116, 119

<sup>28</sup> Giddens, p.127

awakening of nations to self-consciousness; it invents nations where they do not exist- but it does need some pre-existing differentiating marks to work on, even if, as indicated, these are purely negative...”<sup>29</sup>. In addition to Gellner, Hobsbawm and Kedourie also think that national identities are invented by modern nationalism ideology. For instance, according to Kedourie, nationalism is a product of European thought in the last 150 years and it is far from being a universal phenomenon<sup>30</sup>. In the same way, Kedourie also writes that “[n]ationalism is a doctrine invented in Europe at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century”<sup>31</sup>. However, Smith writes that as an ideology and language, nationalism is relatively modern that emerged into the political arena over a period of in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century but nations and nationalism are not more invented than other kinds of culture, social organization or ideology<sup>32</sup>. He writes that “nations were perennial; only their degree of self-awareness and activism varied”<sup>33</sup>.

Unlike Smith, Eric Hobsbawm also writes about nationalism as a modern ideology and he contributes to the modernist concept of nation by saying that states and nationalisms are not result of nations but just the opposite way; nations are made by states and nationalisms. He supports the opposite thinking of Smith and he writes that nation as considered by nationalism should be recognized as *posteriori*<sup>34</sup>. According to Hobsbawm, the nation is neither primary nor unchanging social entity but it is a social entity as far as it maintains its relation with a territorial-state and a nation-state and connection of nation and nationality to nation state is the important point that should be emphasized. They survive as the functions of a territorial state and they have the ambition of establishing a territorial state<sup>35</sup>. Moreover, according to Hegel the real history of nations begins with the establishment of their own states and he writes that “[n]ations may have had a long history before they finally reach

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<sup>29</sup> Ernest Gellner, *Thought and Change*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965, p.168

<sup>30</sup> Kedourie, *Nationalism*, p.74

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p.9

<sup>32</sup> Gellner, *Thought and Change*, p. 168-169

<sup>33</sup> Smith, *Milli Kimlik*, p. 76

<sup>34</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, UK: Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, p.9

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9-10

their destination- that of forming themselves into states”<sup>36</sup>. It is understood from the words of Hegel that the pre-state period is pre-historical. Additionally, as different perspectives, the ideas of Smith and Hobsbawm may be written. As a result, the modernist perspective examines national identities and nations as the inventions of the modern nationalist ideology. On the other hand, the nationalist discourse presents that nations have been existent for centuries and a nationalist that was going to awaken nationalism has been waited by nations in order to discover national identity and make them aware of their nationalities. The main claim of the nationalist ideology focuses on the presence of every national entity since long ago, before the age of nationalism, like Mount Everest<sup>37</sup>.

Additionally, Kedourie sustains that state is the main legitimate power for the existence of nationalism as an ideology, and nations are exposed to challenge of other dominant nationalisms without the existence of their own state. However, according to Smith, the general public believes that every nation must have its own state and the state is the core of a nation which are common but not necessary assumptions. He supports that nation and nationalism as an ideology may exist without its own state. From this general point of view, it is understood that nationalism is a cultural doctrine or a political ideology with a cultural doctrine at its centre. And Smith supports that nationalism is an ideology of the nation, not of the state and it is an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining the autonomy, unity and identity of a nation<sup>38</sup>. Gellner defines nationalism from the nationalist perspective that the environment where the reality of the state is granted provides the emergence of nationalism. However, he explains that the presence of politically centralized and granted units is necessary but not an adequate condition for nationalism. According to him, the necessity of the presence of a state is the bringing of industrial age; therefore, the absence of state does not create a problem for nationalism<sup>39</sup>.

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<sup>36</sup> Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalisms*, p.48, c.f. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, Cambridge,1975

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48-49

<sup>38</sup> Smith, *Milli Kimlik*, p. 122

<sup>39</sup> Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, p.4-5

There is nation at the centre of the nationalism and both of the history of the world and the prescriptions of collective action are related to nation and its members. Smith writes that as an ideology and language, nationalism is relatively modern that emerged into the political arena over a period of in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century but nations and nationalism are not more invented than other kinds of culture, social organization or ideology<sup>40</sup>. Furthermore, according to Kedourie, the humanity is a natural division of nations which are determined by certain characteristics and it is a doctrine whose legitimate type of government is self-government and he also writes that nation is a body of people who decide on a common government and the government is responsible for them. Within the doctrine of nationalism, sovereign states are constituted by nations and freedom and completion are achieved by the members of nation by developing the peculiar identity of their own nation and by absorbing persons in the greater whole of the nation. In Kedourie's own words, "[n]ationalism pretends to supply a criterion for the unit of population proper to enjoy a government exclusively its own, for the legitimate exercise of power in the state and for the right organization of a society of states"<sup>41</sup>. He also thinks that the welfare which is provided by the state to individuals brings the unity of the state and loyalty to it and the love of fatherland becomes as a function of benefit.

Therefore, the idea about that the sovereignty of nations is only connected to their possession of an independent state is a general argument rather than being universal. It should be defined that the main argument of this thesis is about the Palestinian people's acquisition of national consciousness, identity and their effort for the maintenance of autonomy in the Palestine region. Throughout the thesis, it will be utilized from the idea that the nations are not invented by nationalism but they are awakened by the nationalist ideology. Furthermore, the claims of Tilly and Weber that political actions and wars are influential over the development of ethnicities and nations will contribute to the argument of this thesis. The argument of Smith is also relevant to the Palestinian case of this study, because without

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<sup>40</sup> Smith, *Milli Kimlik*, p.118

<sup>41</sup> Kedourie, *Nationalism*, p. 9-12

having an independent state, the Palestinian people created their own nationalism as a reaction to the British governance against the Jewish oppression.

Another point is that in Middle Eastern countries where the division within society is between the people who have connection with state and who do not, there is not a relation between nationalism and an existent middle class. In the Middle East, nationalism mostly developed among the young bureaucrats, officers who were educated in Western methods and whose families were generally eminent within their societies.<sup>42</sup> When the beginning phase of Palestinian nationalism is considered, it might be said that it spread by the way of two important and leading families; the Husaynis and the Nashasibis as will be mentioned in the forthcoming chapters.

In conclusion, it would be beneficial to explain Arab nationalism with its main features in order to provide better understanding for the situation and conditions in which Palestinian nationalism appeared. Therefore, before writing about the beginnings of Palestinian nationalism, Arab nationalism in late 19th and early 20th centuries must be examined.

## **2.2 Arab Nationalism before World War I**

The Middle East entered a new era that witnessed the waves of nationalism from Europe, which were in the highest, symbolic and intellectual form. Nationalism in the Middle East “was a reaction of the Muslim world, to its own political degeneration, an awakening to its own weakness, an attempt to remedy its shortcomings by use of the latest imported Western ideologies”<sup>43</sup>. Although Arab nationalism was a twentieth century ideology, it was not an accidental event. Arab nationalism was a doctrine and system of ethics that appeared as the outcome of

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<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p.102

<sup>43</sup> Don Peretz, *Middle East Today*, New York: Praeger Publishers, 1988, p.132

difficult intellectual crises experienced by Islam, and it was also used as a political weapon against European domination<sup>44</sup>.

Until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, in the region that encompassed today's Middle Eastern territories, the identity of the people would be characterized not with their national background or with their territorial borders but they were defined with their religion, and their traditions were also the determining factor to identify people. According to Dawisha, by the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the *Arabness* was defined according to people's historical bonds under the early Islamic rule, the proximity of their traditions and Arabic as their mother tongue<sup>45</sup>. The Arab political loyalty focused on the Ottoman house and the state and there was a widespread feeling among the Arabs that they belonged to the larger Muslim *umma* which meant for the Arabs as an identity of faith or the bond of Islam<sup>46</sup>. Furthermore, within the sense of belonging to the *umma*, the Arabs had aimed the maintenance of the unity of the Empire and the protection of Islam against Western threats. During the sovereignty of the Ottoman Empire over the Arab and other territories, the Ottoman *millet* system under which the people were identified with their religions was dominant. The focus of loyalty in the Ottoman Empire was based not on national but on the dynastic loyalty. Therefore, the Christians, Jews and Muslims were governed by their own religious law and they lived within a single town as being Ottoman subjects responsible to their own religious leaders under the domination of the Ottoman Sultan. The symbols of groups and identities were also depended upon the religions that people belong to. For instance, the sacred values of the three main religions; the Kuran, Bible, Torah, the holy site, the tomb of a martyr, the cross are the examples for those symbols. Islam and the language of Arabic have preserved the sense of belonging of the Arab people through ages. During the Ottoman administration, the Turks and Arabs survived as two important civilizations, the existence of Arab culture and language continued under the Ottoman sovereignty

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<sup>44</sup> Silvia Haim, *Arab Nationalism: An Anthology*, Introduction, US: University of California Press, 1962, p.6

<sup>45</sup> Adeed Dawisha, *Arab Nationalism in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, UK: Princeton University Press, 2003, p.14

<sup>46</sup> Muhammad Muslih, *The Origins of Palestinian Nationalism*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1988, p.58

and many institutions were conducted by two of them. The Ottoman Empire's governmental law was based upon the Sharia in which the language of Arabic was used both in holy book; the Kuran and in mosque. Throughout the Empire, there were Arab officials who were appointed by the government in state services like religious and legal affairs. They worked as being generals, prime ministers, governors and especially Sheikh'ul Islam was usually chosen from among the Arabs.

Hence, it may be said that there was not an awareness of a national identity among the Arabs and the loyalties of people were particularistic such as their regional and sectarian divisions or the district, clan or creed which they belong to were the characteristics that they defined themselves. However, the Ottoman Empire began a new process of reform in order to prevent its decline in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As a result of this reformation process, local dynasties from Arab provinces began to appear as political powers with their deep-rooted traditions. The modernization program<sup>47</sup> that began with Sultan Selim III was supported by a group of officers, diplomats and interpreters and it gave the Arab subjects of the Empire a chance to engage in the program. The reformation process provided the Arab subjects direct access to modern institutions, provided opportunity to learn and to legitimate European ideas of citizenship and government<sup>48</sup>. As a national sense, patriotism was not known and the term of Arab was deprived of a national symbolism<sup>49</sup>. Antonius defines the first stirrs of Arab nationalism that appeared during the Ottoman Empire as an *infant* national movement<sup>50</sup>. Furthermore, he claims that these first stirrs were a result of the British opposition under Mehmed Ali of Egypt and his son's administrations because there was a discontent of Britain against any Arab kingdom under Mehmed Ali.

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<sup>47</sup> The detailed information about the modernization period of the Ottoman Empire can be found in Enver Ziya Karal, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, 5. Cilt, Ankara: TTK Yayınları,

<sup>48</sup> Yousef Choueiri, *Arab Nationalism: A History: Nation and State in the Arab World*, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 2000,p.59

<sup>49</sup> Dawisha, *Arab Nationalism in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, p.28

<sup>50</sup> George Antonius, *Arab Awakening: The Story of the Arab National Movement*, New York: Capricorn Books, 1965, p. 59-60

If Arab provinces are taken into consideration, the administration of the Ottoman Empire over these Arab provinces were different in structure and intensity in late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> because the control of the central authority over these provinces began to be weakened. Local administrations were one of the important factors for the development of Arab nationalism under the Ottoman regime. In today's Lebanon, Palestine and Iraq, local rulers transformed their authorities into local principalities. The most relevant example for these local principalities is Mehmed Ali who was the Ottoman governor of Egypt and his son; Ibrahim Paşa. George Antonius writes that although the driving motive was personal ambition, and their desire to revive an Arab Empire was a result of their desire to acquire an empire, the genesis of the Arab nationalist movement may be dated back to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century that involves the political ambition of Mehmed Ali Paşa<sup>51</sup>. As being the governor of Egypt, he had an aim to establish an Arab kingdom that would be independent from the Ottoman Empire. Mehmed Ali and his son also claimed emancipation and promised for a full citizenship for the Christian Arabs who had not been the members of the *umma* who had the status of subjects during the Ottoman reign. He and his son could not justify their campaign against the Ottoman Empire in religious terms and in order to legitimate it they applied to the fighting Arabs against Turks<sup>52</sup>. Therefore, they referred to the sense of separateness, ethnic and national differences of the Arabs from the Ottoman Turks so that they consolidated their power.

By the way of educational reforms which were applied by Ibrahim Paşa in Syria, the contribution to the Arab revival in the region was provided and he was admitted as the founder of the modern Arabism by some devotees of him as mentioned above. During the Ibrahim's administration, the French Jesuits who left during the French revolutionary period were allowed to re-open schools in 1831 and in 1875 they established the Université de St. Joseph. The aim of France in the Middle East was to block Britain's communications to India, therefore, it supported

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<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p.27-34

<sup>52</sup> Bassam Tibi, *Arab Nationalism: A Critical Enquiry*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997, p.98



the independence of Egypt from the Ottoman Empire under an Arab State<sup>53</sup>. Therefore, France had begun to establish missions in the Christian areas of Syria and Lebanon. On the other hand, Britain who did demand a weak and unthreatening Ottoman Empire and the American and Russian Orthodox missionaries had settled in the region. Furthermore, after the arrival of American Presbyterian mission in 1820, increase in the printing press that later contributed to the existent educational activities and opening of Syrian Protestant College which later became American University of Beirut were among the reforms of the Ibrahim's era<sup>54</sup>. As a result of the encouragement of Ibrahim Paşa and due to the Western missionaries and educational institutions, the problem of the shortage in Arabic texts was resolved. These institutions, the printing press and the awakening of Arab interest on their classics encouraged Arab intellectual activities and Arabic literary revival that were crucial for the nationalist movements in the Arabic-speaking provinces of the Ottoman Empire<sup>55</sup>. These Christian activists were mostly in cooperation with the European associates. Furthermore, according to Mahmoud Haddad, the revival of the Arab language began among the Syrian Christians by the way of translation and adaptation of European works and concepts. Although those American missionaries did not have any role for the spreading of literary Arabic, they had influence over the Syrian Christians because of their supervision and initiations for the translation of Bible into Arabic<sup>56</sup>. Furthermore, in 1816 in Istanbul and in Cairo in 1822, first Arabic literary revival began as a result of the modern literary of press and scientific works. The interest of Ibrahim Paşa over the education provided intellectual awakening and caused the appearance of the genuine Arab nationalist movement.

There is a common belief that nationalism is a bourgeois movement and the Christian Arabs believed that only bourgeoisie was themselves in Arab society at

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<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p.97

<sup>54</sup> Peretz, *The Middle East Today*, p.133

<sup>55</sup> Dawisha, *Arab Nationalism in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, p.18

<sup>56</sup> Mahmoud Haddad, "The Rise of Arab Nationalism Reconsidered", *Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol.26, 1994, p. 203

that time<sup>57</sup>. Furthermore, Dawisha writes that Christian Arabs' aim of full independence was a result of their feelings which was about having inferior position as a religious minority in an Islamic state and through a complete independence; a secular Arab state would provide them equality among other Muslims. The first movement of the Arabs into the modern world of Western science and secularism was the beginning part of the Arab awakening. And these Western missionary schools, especially the American ones were the first instructors of Western ideas into the Arab world. Cairo, Beirut and Syria were the three important centers of Arab intellectualism.

Before the beginning of Arab nationalist movements, the Christian population directed the centers of Arab intellectual formations. In Beirut, close relations of Christian-Arab intellectuals with American missionaries were the propulsion behind the Arab renaissance in the city. For instance, these American missionary schools had an important role in the provisioning of aid for the formation of the first Arab Society of Arts and Sciences in 1847 to Nazif Yazıcı and Butros Bustani, both of whom were Christians.

The Christians had a significant place in Arab nationalism because of their secular position when compared with their Muslim counter-parts. The Christian Arabs had aimed a separate Arab identity, an independent political realm for the people whose mother tongue was Arabic. They claimed that the Arabs were not only Muslims but also Christians and they had to constitute one nation under a secular, liberal and constitutional Arab state that had to be politically independent from the Ottoman Turks and in which they would find the way of true expression<sup>58</sup>. The first group that emphasized an Arab consciousness in the modern world and that regarded the non-Muslims equal to Muslims was Syrian Scientific Society in 1857. That group was important because it gathered all Arab communities together without their religious associations and it was also significant because of its non-religious activities. Moreover, in Beirut the first nationalist organization; the *Beirut*

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<sup>57</sup>Ernest Dawn, "The Origins of Arab Nationalism", in *The Origins of Arab Nationalism* ed. by Rashid Khalidi, New York: Columbia University Press, 1991, p. 3

<sup>58</sup> Dawisha, *Arab Nationalism in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, p. 25

*Secret Society* was established in 1875. The aim of society whose founders were the graduates of the Syrian Protestant College and whose members were Christians was to end the sovereignty of the Ottoman Empire over Arab provinces and to establish an Arab state. The distributed pamphlets and plastered posters in prominent places were important because those emphasized the Arab unity and an independent Arab state that included Syria, Palestine, Lebanon for the first time in history<sup>59</sup>.

Before the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, most of the Arab intellectuals did not support separation from the Ottoman Empire, but they focused on autonomy or on decentralization within the multinational Ottoman Commonwealth of Nations<sup>60</sup>. These members of the Arab elite who supported Islamic revival and who had interest in the Ottoman State were Ottomanists and those who did not such an interest were the Arabists. For example, Jamal al-Din al-Afgani in Cairo during 1870s and Muhammad Abduh from Egypt were significant reformers and nationalists who supported and worked for Islamic modernism and revival of Islam. Al- Afgani was aware of the raising tendency for the formation of national states as a result of the internationalization of capitalism. Therefore, he tried to combine Islam with the European idea of the nation by purging of its secular connotations and he declared that all Muslims were a single nation disregarding all ethnic, linguistic and cultural differences<sup>61</sup>. They supported the modernity of Europe based on Islamic origin which was borrowed from the Muslims, Islamic societies deviate from the true Islam and began the Muslim stagnation and decline. The true Islam which was necessary to reach the modernism of the West was the Islam of their ancestors who were also Arabs. This meant the revival of Arabism, Arab culture and restoration of the leadership positions of the Arabs among the whole Muslim world. These ideas were developed by Abdul Rahman al-Kawakabi, a native of Aleppo and Rashid Rida, the followers of Abduh.

This Muslim-Arab reaction to the West concluded in Abduh's Islamic modernism and many Christian Arabs, most of whom were called the creators of

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<sup>59</sup> Mim Kemal Öke, *Filistin Sorunu*, İzmir: Ufuk Yayınları, 2002, p.58

<sup>60</sup> Peretz, *The Middle East Today*, p.135

<sup>61</sup> Tibi, *Arab Nationalism*, p.91

secular Arab nationalism also shared the issue because the Christian Arabs had complained about the arrogance of Anglo-Saxon Protestant missionaries<sup>62</sup>. They initially recognized the cultural threat of the Christian West and they tried to solve this problem by referring to Islamic reform, resurgence and unity. They aimed to revive the stagnant Muslim society and to educate the Muslim people under the institutions and ideas of the modern world<sup>63</sup>. Both Afgani and Abduh did not oppose to the Ottoman rule over Arab provinces and they believed that the Muslims had one nationality that was their religion and supported that secular nationalism was an invention of West to divide the Muslim *umma*.

On the other hand, secular societies that were established mostly by the Christians did not have any concern about the Islamic revival. They involved in language reforms and culture of Pre-Islamic Arabs rather than Islamic revival on their agenda. However, the Arab elites that gave importance to language reform were not only Christian nationalists but also Arab Syrian Islamic reformers gave a special importance to Arabic that has been the language of the Arab lands and Islam<sup>64</sup>. Conversely, the Ottoman Sultan, Abdulhamid II gave emphasis on Ottoman Turkish and pursued it as the language of the state in order to emphasize the ideology of Ottomanism. Ottomanism was an ideology with which the Sultan aimed to gain loyalty of the subjects of the Empire that includes the inhabitants of the Arab provinces. Ottomanism had one common characteristic that was the desire for a single Ottoman nationality and a common loyalty to the Ottoman state by not considering ethnic origins of the subjects<sup>65</sup>.

Furthermore, Abdulhamid II also instituted Turkish in state schools, in different branches of the provincial administration. The Turkish employees rather than Arab ones were appointed to the local administration status, many teachers of state secondary schools (*rüşdiye*), including teachers of Arabic, were also Turks

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<sup>62</sup> Dawn, "The Origins of Arab Nationalism", p. 7

<sup>63</sup> Dawisha, *Arab Nationalism in 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, p.19

<sup>64</sup> Haddad, "The Rise of Arab Nationalism Reconsidered", p. 202

<sup>65</sup> Muhammad Muslih, "Arab Politics and the Rise of Palestinian Nationalism", *Journal of Palestinian Studies*, Vol. 16, No.4, 1987, p.78

rather than Arabs and higher positions of local civil and judiciary bureaucracies began to be Turkified during the Abdulhamid's sultanate. Otherwise, the policies of Abdulhamid, especially his newly-opened military and civil provincial administration to young Arab students of mainly Syrian and Iraqi origin accelerated formation of new and modern Arab professional elite alongside similar to the Turkish elite. A policy of centralization and limited Turkification in the local administration were pursued by Abdulhamid II. However, despite the ideology of Ottomanism pursued by the Sultan to unify the subjects of the Empire, Arab nationalism developed further especially against the Turkification policy of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) which established the government after the Young Turks took over the power.

### **2.2.1 Arab Nationalism under CUP Policies**

After thirty years sultanate of Abdulhamid II, when Committee of Union and Progress seized the administration, the Arabs and other communities believed the promised equality and the era of progress. During the victory of the CUP over the Hamidian regime, a Turk-Arab fraternity was established and it was called in Istanbul for unity of all races in loyalty to the sultan and it was aimed to support the welfare of Arab provinces, advance Arab language and encourage Arab culture. During that time, the *amir* of Hijaz; Sharif Husayn was appointed as the keeper of the Holy places.

However, by World War I, the CUP did not only proceed with, Abdulhamid's centralization and the Turkification policies but also broadened the centralization and Turkification policies without the incorporation of Arab elites. The unionist leaders thought that trustworthy men, whose political background, standing and outlook had been closer to the new regime, should be appointed to the governmental positions. From their perspectives, the Arab notables who did not want to lose their social status and social stability since Abdulhamid's reign were too close to Abdulhamid and might form the opposition, so they should not be trusted. As a result of the strong nationalist view of the CUP, it preferred the

replacement of the Arab officials with the Turks<sup>66</sup>. In addition, according to Zeine, the CUP desired a government that has been a constitutional and representative of one nation and believed that an Empire which involved different elements could not provide equal rights for each element. Hence, the Unionists restricted governing body to one element; the Turks who would be in commanding and privileged<sup>67</sup>. Consequently, such a policy created a great disappointment among the Arabs, especially among the Arabs notables who were deposed from their key posts and among the liberal intellectual Arabs who promoted CUP because of its claims to ensure equality among all subjects of the Empire and to restore the parliament and the constitution of 1876. Last of all, the exclusion policies caused to trigger an Arab-Turkish crisis. The alienation of the non-Turks by CUP became as an instrument for the creation of fervent nationalist movements. According to Khalidi, the reason behind the rise of opposition of the Arabs against the CUP were not only Turkish nationalism and secular policies of CUP but also insufficiency of the Young Turks in defense of Iraq against foreign powers also attracted negative attention of the Arabs and they accused CUP in facilitating foreign intervention. Especially, after the crashing 1909 counter-revolution, the CUP became harsh in its policies in terms of toleration and cooperation. In order to provide a homogenous Ottoman State, Turkification policies were conducted deeply. As an initial step, all non-Turkish societies, including Ottoman-Arab Fraternity were banned by CUP<sup>68</sup>. This approach of CUP to non-Turks caused the Arabs to become more independent and to focus on their independence from the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, secret and public groups began to oppose Turkification program and these were spread among the Arabs in Istanbul, Damascus, Beirut, Aleppo, Baghdad and other Arab cities. At the end, the response of the Arabs was not delayed and they claimed that “if Turks were a nation racially culturally and politically, so were the Arabs”<sup>69</sup>. And political Arabism at the first stage and Arab nationalism at the second appeared as the expression of response. While political Arabism aimed reform in order to guarantee

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<sup>66</sup> Muslih, *The Origins of Palestinian Nationalism*, p.61

<sup>67</sup> Zeine Zeine, *The Emergence of Arab Nationalism*, New York: Caravan Books, 1958, p. 86

<sup>68</sup> Peretz, *The Middle East Today*, p.136

<sup>69</sup> Muhammad Muslih, “The Rise of Local Nationalism in Arab East”, in *The Origins of Arab Nationalism* ed. by Rashid Khalidi, New York: Columbia University Press, 1991, p.79

the rights of the Arabs and provide Arab autonomy under the roof of the Ottoman Empire, the objective of Arab nationalism was to win complete political independence of Arab nations from the Ottoman Empire.

It might be useful to give as an example of these first nationalist groups that were established in the Arab provinces during the CUP administration in order to explain the genesis of opposition movements of the Arab nationalists. One of the best organized and mostly known Arab groups was the Ottoman Decentralization Party that was established in Cairo in 1912. The importance of this party depends on its program which called a multiracial and multinational empire gathered by the throne's itself. The agenda of the party emphasized that each Ottoman province would have an elected representative body and conduct its affairs through these bodies. Moreover, it also promoted that Turkish and the language of each province would be the official language, and education would be done in local tongue.

Another important organization was the secret Young Arab Society that was named as *Al-Fatat*. It was organized by seven Muslim students in Paris before World War I and after the war the center of the society moved firstly to Beirut then to Damascus. Until World War I, *Al-Fatat* interested in equal rights and obligations for the Arabs and Turks within a unified Ottoman State rather than Arab independence from the Ottoman rule<sup>70</sup>. According to George Antonius, any other society did not have such an importance in the history of the national movement<sup>71</sup>. While the aim of the society was Arab independence in a bi-racial Turko-Arab Ottoman Empire like the Austro-Hungarian dual monarchy<sup>72</sup>, after Jamal Paşa's execution of the Arab nationalists, the members of the society began to struggle for full independence and unity for the Arab provinces<sup>73</sup>. The object of the society was to reach Arab society to the level of West. It aimed the independence of the Arab countries and their liberation from Turkish or any other foreign domination. *Al-Fatat* organized the first Arab congress and convened the delegates of nationalist

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<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p.168

<sup>71</sup> Antonius, *Arab Awakening*, p.111

<sup>72</sup> Peretz, *The Middle East*, p. 137

<sup>73</sup> Antonius, *Arab Awakening*, p.202-203

groups half of whom were Muslims and half were Christian mostly from Syria in order to utter complaints of the non-Turkish provinces about the denial of Arab rights by the Ottoman governance. In addition to *Al-Fatat*, the Ottoman Decentralization Party and the Beirut Committee of Reform sent their representatives to the Congress. The focus of the Congress was not the succession of the Empire, but rather it was the reforms that had demanded by the organizations of Cairo and Beirut. During the Paris congress, the usage of Arabic as an official language and giving central positions to Arabs in government were not mentioned. The Congress involved a reforms decree of 1913 that involved the usage of Arabic in both primary and secondary schools while at the second one Turkish also should be used.

Additionally, a new secret society, *Al-Ahd* which was organized by Aziz al-Masri had an agenda similar to *Al-Fatat*. According to its agenda, while the Arab provinces would become one kingdom with its own parliament, its government and its Arab institutions; the Ottoman Sultan would also continue its sultanate in Istanbul, like the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, mentioned above. Therefore, the society of *Al-Ahd* under the leadership of Aziz al-Masri supported a dual Ottoman monarchy. Aziz al-Masri like the Islamist reformers desired to reach past glorious history of the Arabs by opposing to Western influence. During the administration of the Young Turks, although he had sympathy for Young Turks, he began to support the Arab movement because of their overemphasis of Turkish nationalism. Like the other members of *Al-Ahd*, Aziz al-Masri was a member of the Ottoman army as a commander<sup>74</sup>.

Some of the important Arab nationalists had been supporters of Ottomanism as an ideology before World War I. The Arabists had also been the believers of Ottomanism ideology before World War I and although those Arabists emphasized Arab identity, they also pursued the loyalty to the Ottoman Empire and a small

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<sup>74</sup> Peretz, *Middle East Today*, p.137



minority demanded the secession from the Empire<sup>75</sup>. Furthermore, there were also pre-war Arabists who were opposing the fellow Arabs who had official positions in the Ottoman State. Those pre-war Arabists were not as successful as the Ottomanist Arabs before the war. The political dominance of those Ottomanist Arabs did not weaken due to the Ottoman collapse, French or British Mandates and Kemalist abandonment of Ottomanism. However, these significant events did not leave them any alternative rather than Arabism. These external pressures determined the self-definition and the attitude of the populace from the Arab periphery of the Empire which was defenseless to European designs. Therefore, Arab nationalism appeared as a response to Turkish nationalism, to the centralization program of the CUP and to the Empire's decline under the pressure of European imperialist powers. Some writers such as Khalidi, Muslih and Zeine see Young Turks' nationalist policies to focus on the Turks and later Turkification policies as the major factor that caused to increase in Arab nationalist movements. Khalidi adds Zionist movements and the support of the Young Turks for Zionism to those factors. Zeine writes that the nationalist model and racial superiority were constituted as the basis of a new Turkey by the Young Turks that based upon culturally and politically strong unity. As a result of this implementation of the Young Turks, the Arab leaders began to think the future of Arab lands from the same nationalist and racial perspective as a reaction to the Young Turks<sup>76</sup>. Nationalist policies within a multi-national empire would cause rivalry and antagonism among the different nations. As a result of the Turkification program of the Young Turks, the aim of the Arab leaders to achieve an Arab independence was stimulated. Besides, according to Muslih, the rise of Turkish nationalism and impose of Turkish language and culture by the Young Turks were the main factors that led to the emergence of Arab nationalism as a movement whose basis was cultural and political independence for Arabs<sup>77</sup>. Other factors such as Western concepts of patriotism and nationalism came later according to these points of view. This perspective does not only belong to those writers but also most of the Arab nationalist argued that enacting laws requiring use

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<sup>75</sup> Rashid Khalidi, "Introduction" in *The Origins of Arab Nationalism* ed. by Rashid Khalidi, New York: Columbia University Press, 1991, p. ix

<sup>76</sup> Zeine, *The Emergence of Arab Nationalism*, p.82

<sup>77</sup> Muslih, *The Origins of Palestinian Nationalism*, p. 60

of Turkish in administration, schools and courts were the major effects of the rise of nationalist movements. According to Khalidi, these did not cause the birth of Arab nationalism because it had been formulated long before the Young Turk period, but he asserts that those policies intensified nationalist activities. On the other hand, Ernest Dawn supports another factor that Arab nationalism arose as a result of intra-Arab elite conflict over the territories involved in Greater Syria that was aimed by the Syrian notables before World War I, during the decline period of the Ottoman Empire and that was opposed by the Palestinian and Lebanese elites who refused to live under the leadership of a Syrian governance<sup>78</sup>. Arab nationalism remained a minority opposition movement until the end of World War I and that ideology became the only political belief and ideology of the Arab political activists in the Fertile Crescent. However, the political prestige of prewar Ottomanists continued because majority of the Arab notables remained as loyal Ottomanists and because Arab nationalist movements were mostly dominated by those pre-war Ottomanists who were later converted to Arabism. Therefore, political superiority of those former Ottomanists who converted Arabism survived during the Mandate period. Those surviving Arabists could establish an unstable network with the Arab Independence Party and the Syrian Palestinian Congress Executive Committee whose membership had informal ties with oppositionists in Iraq and Amin al-Husayni in Palestine<sup>79</sup>.

The Arab nationalists continued an important campaign against the Unionists. As a nationalist government, the Young Turks and Mandates caused Arab nationalism to become stronger and the Young Turk period provided significant opportunity to the nationalists when it is compared with the reign of Abdulhamid. Arabism had also existed before the Young Turk Revolution; however, the 1908 Revolution accelerated the nationalist movements of the Arabs owing to the restoration of the Parliament, party activities, and the expansion of the press. Because of those facilities, the new arena for political debates was constituted and an opportunity for the Arab nationalists to win the recruits was created.

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<sup>78</sup> Dawn, "The Origins of Arab Nationalism", p.12

<sup>79</sup> Ernest Dawn, "The Formation of Pan Arab Ideology in the Interwar Years", *Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 20, 1988, p.80

From the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, until the Young Turk revolution, while the Christian Arabs had been supporting Arab independence, most of the Muslim Arabs like the Islamist reformers and former Ottomanist promoted reforms in Arab society and greater Arab autonomy. The majority of the Arabs were not ready for a break from Istanbul and a small minority was formed themselves in an oppositional position and some Arabist societies like *Al-Ahd* aimed only improvement of their social and political standing within the Empire. More participation in government, decentralization of administration in the regime and the recognition of Arabic as the second language especially for the usage of Arab provinces were the main aims of those Arabist who sought neither separation from the Ottoman Empire nor creation of a distinct Arab nation within the defined territorial borders<sup>80</sup>. There was an Arab Muslim intelligentsia who resented the secularist orientation of the Christians believing it would divide the Muslim *umma* as mentioned above.

However, the separatist attitude of Turkification program of CUP caused the Muslim Arabs to become aware of their distinctive character within the Empire. Ernest Dawn also writes that before World War I, Arab nationalism had originated as an opposition movement in the Ottoman Fertile Crescent<sup>81</sup>. Although there was a reaction against the program of the CUP, some of the Arab society tried to protect against the Central Powers and tried to bring consciousness for their Muslim fellows in order not to join the Christians that were on the Allied side. There was a fear that any insurrection against the Empire would have led to foreign invasion. Different Arab nationalist trends convened as a single power against any threat of Western powers during World War I. For instance, even though it pursued its demand about freedom, *Al-Fatat* had taken a decision about promoting Turks in order to resist against foreign penetration. Moreover, Aziz al- Masri also warned the members of *Al-Ahd* against any attempt to join Western Powers.

Nonetheless, there were also Arab nationalists who acted just the opposite way. Most of the leaderships and members of nationalist societies joined the

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<sup>80</sup> Dawisha, *Arab Nationalism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century*, p.30-34

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81

movement of Sharif Husayn and his sons and preferred to break ties with the Ottoman Empire. Although there was not a serious nationalist movement to remove Arab lands from the Empire, the 1916 Arab Revolt was the first but the most influential movement of the Arab nationalists. Long before the eruption of the War, the son of Sharif Husayn; Abdullah had allied with the British council-general in Cairo and informed Kitchener<sup>82</sup> about that under any circumstances such as deposition of Husayn by the Ottoman Sultan, there would be a revolution in Hejaz against the Empire and he might gather most of the Arab nationalists by the way of his popularity. Sharif Husayn, as he defined, gained the support of nationalist societies by using his popularity and established a connection with *Al-Fatat* and *Al-Ahd* despite their former supports to the Turks. Although it was not reached any concluded negotiation with Britain, these secret societies joined a military action against the Ottoman Empire by depending on the agreement with McMahon<sup>83</sup>.

The 1916 Arab revolt was not a mass movement because there was not a widespread civil unrest behind the revolt and there was not a common participation among the Arab people against the Ottoman Empire. The revolt under the support of Britain provided a number of benefits to Arab national movements. For instance, for the first time, the Arab leaders found the chance of taking part in the post-World War I political debates. However, while it was aimed in 1916 Arab revolt to provide political separation and statehood for all Arabs' benefit it could not be achieved by the Arabs because of the changed post-war policy of British government. The reason of this change involved the lack of encouragement by the government of British in India. The British Government of India had an important role for the development of the revolt because of its strategic position. The British Indian Army officers who occupied Iraq were not sure about the victory of the Arab revolt and

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<sup>82</sup> Lord Kitchener was the person whose messages to Sharif Husayn aimed to persuade Arabs about an alliance with England for their future and he promised to the Sharif that Arabia would be defended against external aggressions. It was guaranteed the recognition and the security of an independent state in Arabia by a declaration of British Parliament.

<sup>83</sup> Sir Henry McMahon was British High Commissioner for Egypt and Sudan between 1915 and 1917 and he has been known for the McMahon-Hussein Correspondence. The detailed analysis about McMahon-Hussein Correspondence can be found in George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, p.164-184

did not want to cause unrest and to attract reaction of ninety million of Muslims in India who had a sentimental allegiance to the Ottoman Caliphate.

By the end of World War I, the Arab nationalist movement evolved into various divisions. The Arab Peninsula was divided among different sheikhs, amirs and the other tribal leaders, any of whom did not have a significant political power. In Arabia Ibn Saud emerged as the dominant power and his Saudi Kingdom became the largest and the most powerful political power in today's Saudi Arabia. Because of the British threat, Ibn Saud gave up his aim to attack other principalities in the region and in other Gulf coasts. Before World War I the heart of the Arab nationalist movement was Syria, Lebanon and Palestine under the Syrian aim to establish Greater Syria.

To sum up, Arab nationalism arose as an opposition movement within the Ottoman Empire and it occurred as an immediate predecessor of Ottomanism and Islamic modernism. The Arab nationalist movement improved before 1914 but it remained as a minority movement until the 1916 Great Arab Revolt. After the revolt under the leadership of Sharif Husayn with the British support, and after the defeat of the Ottoman Empire; the Syrian, Lebanese, Palestinian and Iraqi Arab notables did not have any other alternative than the ideology of Arabism.

### **2.3 Emergence of Palestinian Nationalism**

The perception of Palestine as a country was shaped by its local inhabitants as a result of firstly through Ottoman boundaries and secondly through European interests over the country. After 1874, Palestine was named as the *sanjaq* of Jerusalem that included the districts of Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Hebron, Beersheba, Gaza and Jaffa by the Ottoman administration and it was connected to the direct authority of Istanbul as different from other provinces. Until that year, Jerusalem had been the capital of the Vilayet (Province) of Filastin of the Empire that involves today's Palestine. During and after the Ottoman Empire, the people of Palestine defined themselves under the identification of their hometowns, villages and they

took those as their family names. For example, they named themselves as al-Nabulsi, al-Ghazzawi and al-Khalili (inhabitants of Nabuls, Ghazza and today's Hebron)<sup>84</sup>. This was a tradition in the Islamic culture and has continued even today in Palestine. While the conception of Palestinian nationalism may be discussed under the question of “was there a genuine Palestinian nationalism or was it developed as counter-nationalism against Zionism?”, the existence of the Palestinian identity may be proved and verified even by the historical positions of the Palestinians under the Ottoman Empire.

Before ending the identity discussion, it would be beneficial to quote some words from Rashid Khalidi's book of Palestinian identity;

“A nation which has long been in the depths of sleep only awakes if it is rudely shaken by events, and only arises little by little.... This was the situation of Palestine, which for many centuries had been in the deepest sleep, until it was shaken by the great war, shocked by the Zionist movement, and violated by the illegal Policy [of the British], and it awoke, little by little”<sup>85</sup>.

Additionally, some elements like Islam, Arabism, local and regional loyalties; such as loyalty to family, dynasty or tribe had important role in the constitution of the Palestinian identity throughout the twentieth century. It is important to emphasize that a Palestinian may identify his/herself as an Arab first, a Muslim or Christian second, as a Nabulsi or Jaffan third and as a Palestinian in the fourth context<sup>86</sup>.

Although the role of Syria and Lebanon were overemphasized by the authors who write about Arab nationalism, Palestine had also an important role in the growth of Arab nationalism. The Palestinian intelligentsia was affected from the Arab nationalist newspapers in terms of the ideas of Arab nationalism. Some of the young Palestinian activists who attended to the Arab Nationalism began to integrate

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<sup>84</sup> Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity*, New York: Colombia University Press, 1997, p.151

<sup>85</sup> Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity*, p.158, c.f., Khalil al-Sakakini, *Palestine After The Great War*, Jerusalem, Bayt al- Maqdis Press, 1925

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p.146

that ideology into Palestine after the fall of the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, it may be understood that there were a number of Palestinian participants in Arab nationalist societies. Ernest Dawn makes a list of the number of those activities. By 1914, while there were 126 members of Arab nationalist societies and 22 of them were Palestinian; 13 members came from Nablus and 9 of whom came from Jerusalem. Furthermore, these 3 Palestinian participants from Jerusalem were the members of the Ottoman Parliament also; and later on, one member from Haifa, one member from Jaffa and one from Gaza also attended to these Arab nationalist societies<sup>87</sup>. Between 1909 and 1918, four men from Al-Husayni family of Palestine had been given missions in those societies that adopted to the Arab cause for reform in the Ottoman Empire, and to the Arab cause for independence during the war.

Among Jerusalem, Gaza, Haifa and Jaffa; Nablus was an important city for the development of Arab nationalism in Palestine. Nablus had a significant role at the beginning of Arab nationalism because of its two central features. It had a homogenous Muslim population whose ideas focused on the interests of Muslim Arabs and who were against the interference of the West and against the concept of modernization. Other feature of Nablus that made it an important city for Arab Nationalism in Palestine was that it was also one of the centers of textile and soap industries in the Middle East. As a result of those industries, Nablus had trade relations with Damascus, Aleppo, Beirut and Cairo and it found the opportunity to contact with other Arabs from different regions that provided the spread of Arab nationalism in Nablus.

However, because of the Syrian Arab nationalists' aim of the establishment of the Great Syrian government and of the Pan-Syrian unity, the rising territorial nationalities of Syrian, Palestinian and Iraqi nationalities began to compete among themselves. Different political aims of the Syrians, Palestinians and Iraqis who formed the backbone of the Faisal's Syrian Arab Government caused the weakness of Pan-Arabism and the alienation of the Palestinians and Iraqis. Furthermore, the

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<sup>87</sup> Ernest Dawn, *From Ottomanism to Arabism: Essays on the Origins of Arab Nationalism*, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1973, p.153

Palestinian activists also withdrew their support from Faisal because of his attempts for cooperation with Chaim Weizman in order to secure the British support for the Syrian Arab Government<sup>88</sup>. Consequently, after the end of World War I, the Arab nationalist movement was fragmented.

This fragmentation of Arab nationalism had an important effect in the emergence of Palestinian nationalism. Besides, Zionism was another and strong factor that motivated the Palestinian Arabs to organize them politically and constitute their nationalist ideology. The confrontation of the Palestinians with the Syrians and Iraqis, and the idea of the Palestinian's separation from those were the results of this fragmentation. The political agenda of the Iraqis and Syrians were different from the agenda of the Palestinians. For the Palestinians either in the Parliament or as only activists, the priority of the agenda was Palestinian interests. They focused on Zionist colonization and tried to attract the attention of the Arab intellectuals to the absence of a strong leadership and to the fear of the Palestinian Arabs that Zionism would reduce the Palestinians to a minority position in their own territories. On the other hand, the Arab nationalists thought that they would provide the assistance for the Palestinians against Zionism by supporting Faisal's Arab Government. Furthermore, the younger generation of the Palestinian elite believed that the victory of Arab nationalism as an ideology would bring both the independence and the unity of Arabs and it would also prevent foreign entity in Palestine. However, the older generation of Palestinian political elites preferred to focus on resistance against Zionism. Besides, the interest of the Ottoman Empire and the Arab nationalists over Palestine had also been contradicted. While Ottoman loyalty rejected Zionism that would separate Palestine from the Ottoman state completely, Arab nationalism opposed to Zionism because it focused on wresting Palestine away from the Arab hands and would divide the Arab unity. Therefore, while Zionism created Palestinian nationalism as an opposition that patriotic opposition against Zionism created division between the Arab nationalists and the Palestinian Arabs.

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<sup>88</sup> Muslih, "Arab Politics and the Rise of Palestinian Nationalism", p.83



As seen, the division was not only between the Syrian, Iraqi and Palestinian Arab nationalists but also there was dissidence among the older and younger generation of Palestinian Arabs. The older notables of Palestine did not want to lose their own privileged positions in Palestine and demanded a stable position. Damascus and Aleppo were more populated cities and urban families of Syria had larger network connections than the Palestinian families in terms of commercial activities. Therefore, for the older Palestinian notables, the maintenance of their existent position would only be provided by the way of an independent Palestine, however, the establishment of the Great Syrian government would challenge their positions. Although the older generation did not wish to see the young Arab nationalists in the Palestinian political arena, those younger nationalists viewed the Syrian-Palestinian unity as an opportunity in order to stable their political position in the local dominance<sup>89</sup>. At the end, although those older notables had not supported Arab nationalism and unity of Arabs formerly, they began promotion for the ideology of Arab nationalism after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire later on.

The urban notable families of Palestine that had bureaucratic relations with the Ottoman State constituted the institutional framework of the ideologies of Ottomanism and Arabism that formed the political ground for Palestinian nationalism. The source of power of these Palestinian families was based upon their properties, lands, and they gained local dominance owing to their integration to the Ottoman governance system in the Arab provinces. As a result of the appointments to governmental services, those families both obtained and expanded their status, influence and wealth<sup>90</sup>. Moreover, those urban families of Palestine acted as intermediaries between the Ottoman state and their own society and by using their positions they also increased their lands and private properties and they also obtained legal rights. Thus, it may be understood that these families were dominant powers in political leadership of Palestine as a region and Palestinian nationalism as an ideology. The members of these older notable families as being member of the Ottoman bureaucracy were seen as natural leaders with local sources of political

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<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 86

<sup>90</sup> For the detailed analysis of Political Notables in Ottoman Empire, see: Albert Hourani, *The Emergence of the Modern Middle East*, London: The Macmillan Press, 1981, p. 36-67

power by their own society, by the Ottoman state and later on by the British Mandate.

Jerusalem was the most important city in which the Palestinian notable families that dominated the Palestinian policy and Palestinian nationalism have inhabited for many centuries. For instance, the leading members of Al-Husayni family were one of these notable families of Jerusalem whose members monopolized political powers. On the other hand, the Nashashibi family was the main opponent of the Husaynis about the domination of political power. In addition to Husayni and Nashashibi families, there were other families, the Khalidis, Alamis that had possessed religious institutions and endowments; *waqfs*, of Palestine as hereditary managers. Al Husayni and Nashashibi families also held mayor and mufti positions of Jerusalem in the second part of nineteenth century and al-Husayni family which was the dominant political elite outranked other aristocratic families in Palestine.

In conclusion, those families were important for the political life of Palestine because they had the capacity to mobilize the Palestinian public, and to influence their political views by using mosques, churches, guesthouses, town cafes, press, clubs and schools for their purposes. Political societies were also established as family coalitions and always one family was dominant in one political institution like the Arab Executive Committee<sup>91</sup> that was dominated by the Husayni family. Therefore, as will be discussed in following chapters, the families, dynasties and tribes were the bases of nationalism in which sovereignty and loyalty were linked to a specific territory and society in both Palestine and in entire Middle East. Furthermore, both of the two classes of Palestine, the older and younger notables were affected from European thought, westernization, and the right of self determination. And both of the groups supported the independence of Palestine as well. Although these groups maintained their existence with Islam, they also supported to inclusion of the Christians and local Jews because their nationalism

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<sup>91</sup> The role of Husayni family, details of Arab Executive Committee will be explained in fourth chapter of this thesis.

was not justified only in religious terms<sup>92</sup>. The younger Palestinian politicians who were later formed the basis of the opposition movement against Zionism and the British Mandate became the dominant group in the Palestinian Arab society and they continued their claim that were about all Arabs were connected to each other by a common language and a common culture, and they also pursued to support the Arab unity and independence. However, like the older Palestinian notables, they also saw their independent future in independent Palestine after the failure of Arab nationalism in post-War era.

And as a last word, the literate and politically conscious and urban Palestinians lived a transformation period in terms of their political and national identification under the impact of rapid and significant changes after World War I and during the British Mandate in Palestine. The result was a developing and growing identification and nationalism among the Arab settlers of the country.

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<sup>92</sup> Muslih, "Arab Politics and the Rise of Palestinian Nationalism", p. 91

## CHAPTER 3

### BRITISH MANDATE AND MANDATE POLICIES

#### 3.1 Situation of Palestine before the Mandate

Within the geographical area that the ancient Palestinians and later Jews had lived, there were not any existent political entities called as Palestine. This was one of the difficulties that British Mandate encountered when entered into the region. After the conquest of the Ottoman Empire, the region was divided into provinces that were called as *vilayet* and the geographical Palestine was separated into provinces of Beirut and Syria and to the *sanjak* of Jerusalem also which had special status because of the holy places that had placed in it.

Almost all of the British colonies have been established as two categories called as the colonies of occupation and the colonies of settlement. While India, Nigeria and Gibraltar could be the examples for the first category because these colonies were founded in order to fulfill economic or strategic aims, the colonies like Canada and Australia were used by Britain for the purpose of settlement. However, Palestine did not comply with both of the categories. By the establishment of the Palestinian Mandate as a quasi colony, it was aimed to serve for the strategic interests of Britain. Palestine was to become an easy way of the accession to India for Britain. While the settlement was never aimed by the Mandate, it was also treated as a colony of settlement for the non-British Jews who were mostly from Eastern Europe<sup>93</sup>.

#### 3.1.1 The Case of the Jewish Colonists and the Palestinian Arabs

After the Roman dispersal, the Jews were dispersed throughout the Europe and North Africa and although most of them were assimilated into the societies that they lived, their belief about the return to Israel existed. The Jews who lived in the area

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<sup>93</sup> D.K. Fieldhouse, *Western Imperialism in the Middle East 1914-1958*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2006, p.117

since the Roman Dispersion was in small number and when Napoleon invaded Palestine there were approximately 5000 Jews. Their numbers doubled many times until 1882 and most of the Jews had lived in four holy cities; Jerusalem, Hebron, Safed and Tiberias. By 1914, there established 43 Zionist agricultural settlements and the Jewish people were only 10 percent of total Palestine's population under the Ottoman administration.

Faith about the settlement of the Jewish people in Palestine was maintained especially among the evangelical Christians in Britain and USA rather than Jews. Moreover, idealism of these British and American evangelical Christians was the most important support for the creation of the Zionist movement. Furthermore, one another reason that backed to the growth of Zionism<sup>94</sup> was the dreadful condition of the Jews in Russia. The main question that faced the Jews was that whether to leave, and if left, where to go. Therefore, most of them migrated towards the West, especially Germany, Eastern Europe and finally to the USA. However, after the 1921 and 1924 legislations of the USA about the ending of Jewish immigration, the creation of the organizations for the colonization of Palestine began to accelerate. As a result, the first land purchase in the South of Haifa; Zamarin was actualized and 228 Jewish colonists were sent there in 1882<sup>95</sup>. The *Hovevei Zion* (Lovers of Zion) was established in Russia as a student organization and it focused on the basic ideology of Zionism that rather than migration to America or any other country, the Jews must establish their own country and this had to be Eretz-Israel.

Vital writes the claims of important figures of the Lovers of Zion about the Jewish choice of Palestine as homeland that “we have an historic right which has not been lost along with our [lost] rule of country, any more than the peoples of Balkans lost their rights to their lands when they lost their rule over them”<sup>96</sup>. According to him, the Jews could not deserve being aliens in any country but they could be only the citizens and masters of their own country. Consequently, the main

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<sup>94</sup> For detailed analysis of Zionism, See: David Vital, *The Origins of Zionism*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1975

<sup>95</sup> Fieldhouse, p.118

<sup>96</sup> Vital, p. 119

ideology of the Zionists may be understood easily that they aimed to create their own homeland rather than to migrate to America or another country. Therefore, imagination of the Diaspora Jews was based on description of the Bible and the words of Theodor Herzl<sup>97</sup> that were “a land without a people awaiting a people without a land”<sup>98</sup>. In his pamphlet, although Herzl emphasized the creation of the Jewish State, the Ottoman government had never accepted it in Palestine. Therefore, according to Herzl that creation should be legitimized with public law with the achievement of the settlement of Jewish farmers, artisans and tradesmen.

The organized activities of Zionist groups caused the Ottoman administration to make strict regulations over land purchases; however, these regulations could not prevent subterfuge. Most of the land purchases were made by the Jewish people in the name of an Ottoman subject because Ottoman officials were not paid sufficiently; most of them were keen on bribes. As a result, in Palestine there were 22 settlements, with 705 farms and rural population was about 5,210<sup>99</sup>. The main complements of the Ottoman state and the Arabs were basically because of land sales to the Zionists rather than immigration because until 1908 there were very few permanent settlers and colonization meant the acquisition of land. Although later, these land purchases caused reactions; at the beginning these new comers were welcomed by the Palestinian Arabs because of their bringing such as valuable goods or skills. Their main talent was their money especially for the Arab farmers whose useless lands were evaluated by these Jews. These Arab peasants also found the chance of labor and market for their products. Moreover, Peretz says that there was little contact between the Jewish national movement and the Arabs, there were not any expression of competing nationalisms, and relation between the Jewish community and the Arab settlers of same towns were temporary and sincere. However, that situation had changed by 1914 and a general reaction was appeared against Zionism among the Turks, Muslims, and Arab Christians in

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<sup>97</sup> Theodor Herzl a German speaking Hungarian Jew was the creator of political Zionism. After leaving France because of anti-Semitic treatments, he converted to Zionism and published his famous pamphlet *Der Judenstaat* in which he argued about the need to create a Jewish in Palestine.

<sup>98</sup> Peretz, p.277

<sup>99</sup> Fieldhouse, p.119

Palestine and especially among the younger educated Arabs anti-Zionist feelings and violence against Jewish settlements in the north increased.

Until the half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Jews had still been constituted an element of the *Millet* system under the Ottoman Empire as religious minorities and not composed of a nation and a state until the defeat of the Ottoman Empire by European powers. While the Herzl's project and Zionist success began to be realized with the 1917 Balfour Declaration and with the establishment of the British control over Palestine, hostility to Zionism began to escalate in Palestine.

### **3.2 Balfour Declaration**

The Balfour Declaration was declared in 1917; one month before the occupation of Jerusalem and one year before the complete conquest of Palestine by the British Army. Palestine was perceived by the British administration as the only territory that was suitable to be promised to another community. The time that was after World War I was the time of the concession of the British Government to the Jews because of their services for London during the War. The Zionists had to be awarded with a documentation which would be a support to reach their major aims. Therefore, when Lord Rothschild and Weizmann went to visit Lord Balfour in 19<sup>th</sup> June of 1917, the British Foreign Minister demanded a draft which would be a sample text for the British administration from the Zionists. The first draft dwelled on three issues that were the recognition of the Zionist organization as a sole foundation which represented Jewish nation, acceptance of Palestine as Jewish national homeland and provision of independent migration and settlement policies by England<sup>100</sup>. By making some changes in the first draft, the British Foreign Minister sent the final text as a letter to Lord Rothschild as named the Balfour Declaration on 2 November 1917. The matter that involved the acceptance of Palestine as the Jewish homeland was changed as the acceptance of a Jewish national homeland in Palestine and the final version of the Declaration was formed.

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<sup>100</sup> Mim Kemal Öke, *Filistin Sorunu*, Ufuk Kitapları, 2002, p. 262

The promise which involved the assurance of Palestine to the Jewish people as a national homeland by the British Government caused the most difficult problem that the British Administration had ever experienced until that time. Palestine became more problematic region to govern than any other part of the post-1918 partition of the Near East<sup>101</sup>. The Balfour Declaration did not only include the promise for a national homeland for the Jewish people but also contained a pledge about the protection of the rights of the Jewish and non-Jewish people in Palestine. Moreover, it is written about the Balfour Declaration that with the document, "one nation solemnly promised to a second nation the country of a third"<sup>102</sup>. One of the characteristics of the Declaration was that the authors of it were like-minded about the establishment of a Jewish State. And another feature of the Declaration was that Britain promised to the Jews unilaterally in order to provide the continuation of the Jewish support during the peace negotiations.

By the end of World War I, Britain dealt with several contradictory commitments. With a secret agreement called the Sykes-Picot; Britain, France and Russia aimed at the partitioning of the Ottoman Empire among the Allied powers. Palestine should be administrated internationally because of locating holy places of the Christians. Therefore, the Balfour Declaration which was another partition plan, a national homeland was assured to the Zionists<sup>103</sup>. There were several factors which caused the British government to pay attention to the Zionist issue during the First World War. The Balfour Declaration was pronounced at a time when the British Government needed all kinds of support and Jewish backing support was one of these sources of support. One of these factors was the fear of Britain that the Jewish population which had been living in the US or Russia would influence their governments' policy towards the war. Russia withdrew from war because of the 1917 Revolution and most of the leaders of the new anti-war leftist Soviet Government were Jewish. Therefore, Britain demanded the continuation of Russia

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<sup>101</sup> Fieldhouse, p.129

<sup>102</sup> Quoted from Arthur Koestler by M. K. Öke, op.cit., p. 263

<sup>103</sup> A. M. Lesch, Part I: "Palestine National Movement under the Mandate" in *The Politics of Palestinian Nationalism*, ed. by William B. Quandt, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973, p.8



as an allied power in war and believed that this might be provided with kindness toward the Jewish people of Russia to affect their government. Furthermore, many significant American Jewish leaders were also pro-Zionist and it was very important for Britain to fortify the pro-Allied sentiments of many influential Jews during war time. Later on, war time Prime Minister David Lloyd George stated that the Zionists promised to strengthen the Jewish pro-Allied sentiment if they were given assurance for the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine and he also emphasized that they were helpful in the House of Commons<sup>104</sup>.

Additionally, under the influence of Chaim Weizmann<sup>105</sup> who was the Zionist spokesman in London and who had a significant role in the British policy towards Jewish nation, Zionism was effectively kept as a question in the British Cabinet. The support given to Zionism also coincided with Britain's strategic interests that included the continuation of the war-time alliances and sympathy towards religious and humanitarian aspects of Zionism. That means, the assistance of Britain to the Jewish settlement in Palestine would necessitate the presence of Britain in the region and would provide to keep France out of the region which was on the way of Suez Canal. These dynamics involving search for wartime alliances, Weizmann's ability of persuasion, sympathy for Zionism in the British Cabinet and British aims to protect its strategic interests, caused to the declaration of the Balfour Declaration on November 2nd in 1917<sup>106</sup>. On this date, British foreign secretary, Arthur Balfour wrote to inform Lord Rothschild who was an important figure in British Zionist circles about the approved declaration.

Balfour Declaration was not published as an official government paper but was shaped as a public letter, sent from the British Foreign Minister Alfred Balfour to a well-known English Jewish leader; Lord Rothschild:

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<sup>104</sup> Peretz, p.101

<sup>105</sup> Chaim Weizmann who was a Chemistry lecturer at Manchester University and an important Zionism leader had significant political maneuvers for the feature of Jewish State. As a result of his prominent scientific discoveries Weizmann found the chance of establishing contact with British war leaders in order to provide favor for the Zionist case.

<sup>106</sup> Cleveland, p.238

"His Majesty's Government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country."<sup>107</sup>

Furthermore, the first real planning like a draft of the Declaration and the demands were reported by the Zionists in private meetings that were organized among Sykes, Weizmann, Samuel and Gaster and these demands included the recognition of Palestine as the Jewish national home, the freedom of immigration of all Jews from all over the world with full national political and civic rights, a charter for the Jewish Company, the local government for the Jewish population and lastly, officially recognized Hebrew language<sup>108</sup>.

At the end, the moral claims of the Zionists were persuasive enough for the British Parliament to possess Palestine as their one-time homeland. The issue was not discussed sufficiently in the Parliament or revealed publicly. An impression about the approval of the Balfour Declaration was created and a small group of senior politicians could not resist against the pressures of the Zionist politicians.

### **3.3 Establishment of the British Mandate and Mandate Policies during 1918-1948**

The British Mandate in Palestine was unique for British Government policy because when it left the country there was not a self government to which the power would be handed over. The Mandate administration governed Palestine through a governor, an executive council, the nominated advisory council which composed of most autocratic of colonial systems and there was no legislative council<sup>109</sup>. It can be asserted that the British Mandate failed from the beginning and when it was given

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<sup>107</sup> The Facsimile of the Balfour Declaration can be found in Leonard Stein, *The Balfour Declaration*, Frontispiece, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1961

<sup>108</sup> Leonard Stein, *The Balfour Declaration*, Part III, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1961, p.361-378

<sup>109</sup> Fieldhouse, p. 151

up in 1948, it caused the establishment of the future of Palestine by a civil war among two different religious societies.

After the occupation of Jerusalem in 1917 by Great Britain, the Ottoman Empire lost its connection with Palestine and during the years of 1917-1920 Palestine was under British military occupation. During this military occupation, the Balfour Declaration began to be implemented. Anti-Zionist feelings had already been formed among the Arabs before the implementation of Balfour because of the increased immigrations and land purchases through the direction of the Zionist Commission under Chaim Weizmann. In addition to these causes, the demands of the Zionists increased anti-Zionist feelings of Arabs. After the establishment of the military government that was the Occupation of Enemy Territories Administration; OETA, requests like demands about making Hebrew as the official language equal to Arabic and the appointment of Jewish people to official positions were granted by the military government. On the other hand, after the San Remo Conference in 1920, Britain was given the Mandate of Palestine and the military government in the region was replaced with a civilian administration<sup>110</sup>. In 1922 with the League of Nations, formal sanction was given and new provisions were added to civil administration. For instance, granted demands like the recognition of Hebrew as the official language was actualized. That caused to the Arab discontent and immediate organization of the Arab people under different institutions like the Muslim-Christian Association and caused increase in Zionist expectations.

Additionally, in order to undertake the Palestine Government, Sir Herbert Samuel was appointed as the High Commissioner of the Palestine Mandate by Llyod George who wished the appointment of someone who was sympathized with Zionism and demanded the implementation of a successful Zionist Program<sup>111</sup>. The appointment of Sir Herbert Samuel whose involvement in Zionism went back through the outbreak of the First World War gave encouragement to the Zionists and he declared his duty as the facilitation of the establishment of Jewish national

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<sup>110</sup> W. Cleveland, op.cit., p.240

<sup>111</sup> Elie Kedourie, *The Chatham House Version and Other Middle Eastern Studies*, New York: Praeger Press, 1970, p. 52

homeland. However, the term of national homeland was interpreted as the Jewish State by the Zionists and they hoped that the British Government would assist for this state. On the contrary, the British Government did not devote itself for the establishment of the Jewish state. It was also mentioned in the Balfour Declaration that Britain was also responsible from the maintenance of the rights and privileges of the “existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine”. This was the result of the duty of equal obligation and contradiction of the Balfour Declaration<sup>112</sup>. What's more, Lesch writes that “...the Zionists read the Declaration as a pledge by the British Government and later, by the League of Nations, to establish a Jewish State in Palestine and maintained that this pledge overrode any secondary obligations on the part of the British to protect the non-Jewish population...”<sup>113</sup>. From the beginning, the British Mandate had found itself in a dilemma which meant that while Britain promised for the facilitation of the establishment of a Jewish State, it did also guarantee that the rights of Arabs would not be threatened. This situation was also mentioned by Sir Herbert Samuel in one of his reports that “the Jewish people had fear about the Balfour Declaration because it would undermine their position as citizens and they began to regard Balfour Declaration with embarrassment and hostility”<sup>114</sup>.

In order to influence the British government and demonstrate their reaction against the Jewish promote the Arabs founded different institutions and congress during 1919 and 1928. One of these congresses belonged to the Arab Executive Committee to organize a body of deputation to London in 1921. The main aim of the organization of this deputation body was to provide the recognition of the Mandate and balance the Zionist Commission and later the Jewish Agency. This demand of the Arabs was not accepted and the AE was not recognized as the representative body since it did not recognize Balfour Declaration. That delegation included four Muslim, one Greek Roman Catholic from Haifa, one Greek Orthodox from Jerusalem and two secretaries. While the Colonial office under Churchill supported a legislative council which had only advisory functions, the Arab

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<sup>112</sup> Cleveland, p.240

<sup>113</sup> Lesch, p.10

<sup>114</sup> Kedourie, p. 53

delegation demanded a legislative council with extended authority. Furthermore, they requested a native Palestinian government responsible to an elected parliament, the cancellation of the pledge to a national homeland for the Jews and cessation of Jewish immigration<sup>115</sup>.

These demands of the Arab delegation that reflected a type of regime in Iraq in 1920 were not acceptable for London. In order to prevent any contribution of these men of delegation to the period of demonstrations, the Colonial office offered many suggestions. Main belief of High Commissioner, Herbert Samuel was to create an integrated political community, thus he offered different proposals for the development of a unitary state. According to Samuel, only way for the unitary state depended upon the provision of the participation of the Arabs to the mandatory government. Besides, Samuel also thought that Arab-Jewish cooperation would improve the Arab standards of living in Palestine. However, since an Arab-Jewish cooperation would mean the recognition of Balfour Declaration by the Arabs and since none of the suggestions referred to the control of Jewish immigration, Arab delegation rejected all of these proposals. At the end, the Arab Executive withdrew the members of delegation and blocked further discussion after the publication of Churchill's White Paper in 1922.

### **3.3.1 Churchill White Paper of 1922**

During the visit of Churchill to Jerusalem, he was informed about the demands of the Arab community about the cancelation of the promise for a national home to the Jewish people and their request about the creation of a national government for the people, who had been living there before the war. On the other hand, the Colonial Secretary supported the idea of the establishment of a national homeland for the Jewish people. Thus, Churchill indicated that although he had sympathy for Zionism, the British Government had double pledge to the Jewish and non-Jewish communities of Palestine and assured the non-Jewish community of the provision of their salvation without any complaint because of national home. In order to

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<sup>115</sup> Fieldhouse, p.154

negotiate the situation and present a statement of policy Samuel visited London and the statement was accepted both by Churchill and the Cabinet. At the end, that statement of policy was published in a White Paper in June 1922 and approved by the House of Commons<sup>116</sup>. Although Britain continued its support policy of Zionism and of the creation of the Jewish National Home, the White Paper declared the Muslim world that His Majesty's Government had not

“at any time contemplated, as appeared to be feared, the disappearance or the subordination of the Arab population, language and culture in Palestine, ...The Balfour Declaration... does 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...Moreover, the Zionist Commission in Palestine [which had changed into the Palestine Zionist Executive (PZE)]...does not possess...any share in the general administration in the country.”<sup>117</sup>

The British Government in Palestine issued Churchill's White Paper in order to clarify Britain's future policy and to provide the balance between Arab and Jewish communities of Palestine. On the one hand, it was defined, in the White Paper, Britain's solicitude for the existence of Arab population, language and culture and that Britain had always avoided from the departure or subordination of these. On the other hand, in Churchill's White Paper what was meant by the Balfour Declaration was re-emphasized. It was indicated with Balfour Declaration that the British Government never aimed to convert Palestine into a Jewish national homeland and it was only mentioned such a national homeland should be established in Palestine. The development of a Jewish national homeland in Palestine was not meant that the imposition of the Jewish nationality over non-Jewish residents of Palestine. It was intended to develop the existent Jewish society with the support of the other Jews from all over the world and not aimed at the creation of the Jewish state but of a “center for all Jews in which Jewish people... may take an interest and a pride”<sup>118</sup>. British Government's interpretation of the Balfour Declaration was explained with Churchill's White Paper. According to this interpretation, the survival of Jewish

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<sup>116</sup> Ritchie Owendale, *The Origins of the Arab Israeli Wars*, UK: Pearson Education, 2004, p.57

<sup>117</sup> Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims: A history of the Zionist-Arab Conflict 1881-2001*, New York: Vintage Books, 2001, p 103

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, p.103

community in Palestine was depended upon the acceptance of their right of existence not of sufferance. Therefore, this document was formally accepted by Jewish community but the Arab Delegation refused it and turned from London.

Discussions that were sustained by Samuel in London in May 1922 constituted the White Paper and British policy in Palestine nearly a decade was led by its three principles. Firstly, although the British Government promised for a national homeland for the Jews, it also pledged that Palestine would not become a Jewish state and the Arabs would not dominate the Jews. Secondly, a legislative council would be founded in order to take the Jewish immigration under British control. Thirdly, economic absorptive capacity of Palestine was the determinant of the Jewish immigration rate<sup>119</sup>.

Additionally, Cleveland describes that “to placate Arab community, the white paper stated that the development of a Jewish national home did not mean the imposition of Jewish nationality upon the inhabitants of Palestine as a whole”<sup>120</sup>. However, in order not to attract the reaction of the Jewish people the White Paper also accepted some of the Jewish demands. For instance, it admitted the right of the Jews to be in Palestine and conceded Palestine to become a center where the Jewish people might glory in their religion and race. In order to provide justice, the colonial office that was supported by the British cabinet attempted to create a British foreign policy based upon common wealth and a democratic foundation where all parts of the population would implement equal political rights. For this aim, Samuel’s first proposal was the constitution of 1922 and with that constitution he aimed the creation of a legislative council with Christian, Muslim and Jewish representatives and 11 members appointed by the High Commissioner. As mentioned above, the rejection of Arab leaders was due to their refusal of the recognition of the Balfour Declaration. The Arab community did not want to serve in any constitutional government that did not cancel the Balfour Declaration. Therefore, Samuel shelved constitution to 1923 and attempted to offer a second plan in order to establish an

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<sup>119</sup> Fieldhouse, p.155

<sup>120</sup> Cleveland, p. 240

advisory council that would include ten Arab and two Jewish representatives who were appointed by High Commissioner, like in the legislative council.

However, both of the proposals of Samuel about legislative and advisory councils and making the Arabs and Jews to meet and discuss in a common assembly ended with failure because the Arab leaders were insistent on refusal to serve. Arab and Jewish populations of Palestine did not participate to the improvement of national institutions but isolated from each other. Expectations for compromise between two populations disappeared because of the militant nationalist movements of each groups and the break of these two groups was broadened.

Briefly, the White Paper of 1922 was cleverly prepared document because while it was persisting for the support of Zionism and for the protection of Jewish right to live in Palestine, it demanded to find the opportunity of assurance for the Arabs that development of a national home for the Jews in Palestine did not mean the ignorance of the rights of Arab inhabitants of Palestine.

### **3.3.2 1929 Wailing Wall Riots**

Until the end of the 1920s, the British Mandate struggled with endless conflicts between the elites of the two sides and decided that to establish a modern state in Palestine was an impossible mission because Palestine had an exceptional feature that a modern state should be built with equal votes of the two sides. While the Palestinian leaders were afraid of the Zionist seizure of the control of political system without equality of vote, the Jewish leaders demanded division of Palestine into two political units<sup>121</sup>. However, instead of establishing of a modern state, British administration requested Palestine to be governed by a local government that was approved by a cabinet composed of British officers and that was under control of the British High Commissioner. Besides, the British administration tried to take rising conflicts under control and tried to pursue its supervision of the region.

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<sup>121</sup>Illan Pappé, *Modern Filistin Tarihi*, Ankara: Phoenix Yayinevi, 2007, p. 112



That policy of Britain which was to provide the survival of the both nations under British control without their own administration would lead to an unsolved situation.

In addition to poverty, religion was one of the important factors that diverted the policies of Palestinians, especially in Jerusalem. Violent events about the holy places of Jerusalem appeared periodically in Palestine. The Palestinian Arabs believed that the main aim of Zionism was to change the status quo of the country and to restore the ancient Israeli Kingdom. Therefore, that belief caused fears of the Palestinian people as if the mosque of al-Aqsa and the Dome of Rock became the object of Zionist plans. The increased numbers of Jewish population also provoked the Palestinian Arabs that they began to fear from the recognition of the right of worship beside the Wailing Wall<sup>122</sup>. The Western Wall was significant for both the Arabs and the Jews because while for the Arabs it was part of the Harem al- Sharif where Muhammad had tied his horse after his journey from Mecca to Jerusalem, he ascended to the seventh layer of heaven, for the Jews it was a sacred sanctuary and a souvenir of the past glory<sup>123</sup>.

To worship at the Wailing Wall had been a customary for centuries. However, for the first time, the Arab people of Palestine witnessed an unprecedented amount of the Jewish people while praying and such a situation meant the purification of Palestine from Islam for them<sup>124</sup>. From the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there were different attempts in order to actualize the aspirations of the Jews. The rising Jewish population began to bring chairs, benches, to divide women and men during pray with a screen and to repair square in front of the Wall. These movements of the Jews were perceived as if the Jews took over whole al-Haram al-Sharif area. It should be noted that, although some of these attempts were a product of the needs of the Jewish community, especially in the Day of Atonement which is a day of fasting, it was interpreted by the Muslim people that

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<sup>122</sup> Yehoshua Porath, *The Emergence Of The Palestinian-Arab National Movement 1918-1929*, UK: Frank Cass And Company Limited, 1974, p. 258

<sup>123</sup> Ovendale, p.71

<sup>124</sup> Pappé, p.119

any concession from the customary habits of the Muslims might create a new regime and might change the status quo<sup>125</sup>.

Because of the attempts of the Jewish people which were to enlarge their places to the Wailing Wall by violating the boundaries of Haram al-Sharif in the Jewish Day of Atonement on 24<sup>th</sup> of September in 1928, the tension in Jerusalem began to increase. Immediately after the Day of Atonement, the British police removed by force the dividing curtain which was placed near the Wailing Wall for the separation of Jewish women and men and this created a sharp reaction among the Jewish people. On the other side, the Mufti of Jerusalem Amin al-Husayni, attempted to provide control over the region by founding a council in order to defend Jerusalem and to counter the Jewish construction of a third temple. The Supreme Muslim Council and the President started an organized and systematic campaign to defend al-Masjid al-Aqsa and to secure Muslim rights at *al-Buraq al-Sharif* (the name of Wailing Wall in Arabic). Consequently, the worshippers arranged protest meetings in the mosque and they sent signed and printed protest papers and pamphlets to the British Government, which stated Jewish aim of attainment of al-Buraq.

As a result of the rising Muslim pressure, the Colonial Secretary published an official declaration in 19<sup>th</sup> of October and accepted the basic elements of the Arab stand. With the declaration the Colonial Secretary stated that the Government

“are bound to maintain the status quo, which they have regarded as being, in general terms, that the Jewish community has a right to access to the pavement for the purposes of their devotions, but may bring to the Wall only those appurtenances of worship which were permitted under the Turkish regime”<sup>126</sup>.

That declaration was interpreted differently by two sides. While the Jews were seeing the document as a continuation of the humiliating organizations that were dating back to administration of the Turks, the Arabs perceived the declaration as

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<sup>125</sup> Porath, p.261

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, p.267

satisfactory for the survival of the formal status quo from the Ottoman regime. In contrast to Jewish claims, during Ottoman times, while there was not any application like division with curtain or bringing benches, Jewish community was tolerated about bringing their basic needs to worship. Furthermore, although the Arabs received the declaration as protection of the status quo, the British administration did not success to provide Jewish implementation of the prohibition of bringing benches to the Wall or setting up partition beside the Wall.

Consequently, the disagreement between two nations about the worship near the Western Wall triggered the tension and violence events and these events spread over the whole Palestine in a short period of time in 1929. At the end of the riots, 113 Jewish and 116 Arab people lost their lives<sup>127</sup>. The British Mandate was unequipped enough to deal with the riots. That means, there were no British military forces and there were only 292 British police in all over Palestine. When military troops were transferred from Egypt and Transjordan, it was too late to intervene. Because of not taking these 1929 events of violence under control, the British Government in Palestine decided to create a commission of inquiry under Sir Walter Shaw.

### **3.3.3 Shaw Commission**

The Shaw Commission was created immediately after the 1929 Riots, in March 1930 in order to examine the reasons of the unrest. The report of commission which was declared in same year, acknowledged that Jewish immigration and political dimension aroused Arab apprehension. Moreover, the report also proved that the reasons behind the riots were the cumulated Zionist activities over whole Palestine and growing discontent of the Palestinian Arabs due to pro-Zionist policies of the British Mandate<sup>128</sup>. British administration in the region could not foresee what happened and that systematic agitation was not considered as important by the members of the High Commission. Additionally, the Mufti of Jerusalem did not

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<sup>127</sup> Fieldhouse, p.162

<sup>128</sup> Pappé, p.121

also predict such a violent uprising because at the beginning he aimed only a protest movement. However, this protest movement transformed into a mass movement and could not be taken under control.

The report published after the investigation recommended the withdrawal of Balfour Declaration from establishment document of Mandate and suggested to bring limitation to the land sales in the region<sup>129</sup> because the Shaw Commission found that the reasons of such a violence depended on the disappointment of Arab community about their national and political aspirations, fear for their economic future and finally hostility to Zionist activities. Ovendale emphasizes the idea of Walter Shaw which was clear in the report about the Zionist demands for the immigration “was a breach of principle which was accepted by the Zionist Organization in 1922 that immigration should be regulated by the economic capacity of Palestine to absorb new arrivals”<sup>130</sup>. With the Shaw Commission report, a halt on immigration was recommended in order to prevent any recurrence of excessive immigration like 1925 and 1926 immigrations. Besides, it was also suggested that the land possessions of Jewish nation in the region should be stopped until finding new methods of cultivation which would stimulate the growth of agricultural sector. The Shaw Commission Report which was followed by the Hope Simpson Report along with the Passfield White Paper pleased the Arab community and was considered as very pro-Arab by the Jews.

### **3.3.4 Passfield White Paper 1930**

The Arab Executive saw these troubles as an opportunity in order to provide change in British policy in Palestine with the new political efforts. Therefore, subsequent to the 1929 Riots and violent events, the Arab Executive decided to send an Arab Delegation including the Mufti to London in order to negotiate with Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald and Colonial Secretary Lord Passfield. The Arab Delegation discussed with the British Government about the possible changes in its Palestine

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<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, p.121

<sup>130</sup> Ovendale, p.72

policy<sup>131</sup>. Demands of the new Delegation were about the prohibition of land sales, stop to Jewish immigration and national parliamentary government in terms of League agreement. As a result, Britain send a new delegate; Sir John Hope Simpson to Palestine to investigate the land question and he informed that the number of the cultivated land was less than the estimates of the Zionists and the Commissioner of Lands. Due to the Hope Simpson report, it was understood that the existent land was not adequate for the Arab inhabitants of Palestine and there was no more place for the Jewish settlers.

Hope Simpson report shaped the basis of the 1930 Passfield White Paper which mentioned the immigration restrictions. Some authors argue that one of the important results of the 1929 Riots was the Passfield White Paper. The Hope-Simpson Report had proposed that such a declaration should be published in the hopes of clarifying unresolved questions concerning the British Mandate of Palestine and Balfour Declaration. The paper that was issued in October 1930 was considered very favorable for the Arabs. The importance of the Passfield White Paper was based on two significant issues. One of these issues was the establishment of a legislative council and the other was heavy restrictions on the Jewish immigration, land acquisitions and settlement<sup>132</sup>. These themes were issued under the influence of the Shaw Report. However, 1929 Riots caused opportunity of an excellent argument to the opponents of the idea of establishing a legislative council and the riots not only induced such an opposition but also caused postponement of the adaptation of the topics of the White Paper and its program by the British Government.

The Paper also devoted some attention to the issue of agricultural development. According to it, there was simply not enough cultivable land to support the new immigrants. The Jews who had purchased considerable tracts of land would be allowed to develop them. However, later on they need permission of

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<sup>131</sup> Porath, p. 271

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 273

the British authorities before acquiring additional land. As a result of the Passfield White Paper, Jewish immigration was limited to a much greater degree.

Due to the decisions that were taken with these reports, the Zionists launched a campaign against the Mandate administration in Palestine and began anti-British demonstrations throughout the Jewish world. Therefore, the British government felt threatened and arranged an Anglo-Zionist conference and completed its works in January 1931. At the end of the conference, Weizmann horrified by the possibility of the limited immigration and by using his close links he persuaded Ramsay MacDonald to publish a letter which was drafted by the Zionists firstly and was read in the House of Commons then. The letter emphasized that any limit on the Jewish immigration other than economic absorptive capacity of 1922 Churchill's formula would not be implemented by the British Mandate in Palestine. Therefore, the letter was called as the Black Letter by the Arabs and it remained as main policy of the Mandate until 1939 as the most important factor for the rise of Arab resistance and violence<sup>133</sup>. With the Black Letter, the intention of the British government that was supported by the Mandate was reaffirmed. That meant the British Government acted as if it was responsible to the Jewish nation from the continuation of the plan of the Jewish national home by more land settlement and immigration. Besides, it also allowed Zionist policy of discrimination about preference of Jewish labor force in Jewish enterprises.

In conclusion, Wailing Wall Riots were the starting point of the transformation of the Palestinian question from a local problem to a Pan-Arab one. In addition to the Passfield White Paper, one of the results of 1929 Riots was the internationalization of the Palestinian question. As a result of the propaganda that was dealt by the Supreme Muslim Council during riots, the whole Muslim public drew its attention to the issue of Palestine and holy places. For instance, the SMC called for the Muslims of the entire world to aid the Palestinian Muslims in defense of the holy places, it collected large amount of money in Muslim countries for the victims of the riots and announced riots that it served for the aim of the Mufti of

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<sup>133</sup> Fieldhouse, p.163

Jerusalem; Hajj al-Amin and the Palestinian National Movement. Furthermore, an international Muslim Congress was organized after the riots in 1931 for the protection of holy places under the leadership of Amin al-Husayni. Therefore, another result of the Wall affair was that Hajj al- Amin became an internationally known Islamic figure and leader. He viewed Wailing Wall Riots as an opportunity in order to reestablish his authority and dominance of SMC in spite of the reformed Arab Executive and success of rival notable groups. Because of the Black Letter, the policy of 1930 White Paper could not be implemented and the influence of the Wall affair remained limited with the Arab and Muslim affairs rather than implementation of limitation to the Jewish immigration and land acquisition.

### **3.4 Arab Revolt of 1936–1939 and its effects on Palestinian Nationalism**

The Arab Revolt began spontaneously when the Palestinian Arabs have been engaged in civil disobedience and political violence in different parts of the Holy Land during 1936 and 1939. The violent events and later on the Arab Revolt started suddenly because of the frustration of the young Palestinian generation from the unending political situation, the continuous Jewish expansion and occupying administration. Because of the spread of general strike, the local and national committees began to be formed in different and largest parts of the Palestine. The general strike were also involved the intra-Arab conflict and aggressive Palestinian nationalists both accused some Palestinians by collaborating with Zionists and used various forms of intimidations such as death threats and assassinations.

Before the beginning of the general strike and later on revolt, the Palestinians tried to acquire their aims of self-determination and self- government by the way of repeated boycotts, pressures and demonstrations. However, these methods were nor successful without the existence of a strong military option. The Palestinian Arabs were disturbed by the growing number of the Jews in Palestine and their increased settlement policy. The acquisitions of lands by the Zionists were perceived as a threat for the existence of the Arabs and in order to give a response to the movements of the Zionists, the Arab leaders began negotiations for the

limitation of migrations and land transfers. However, no solution was gained. Despite the earlier promises of the British Government in the region about the limitation of the Jewish immigration, the Mandate continuously supported the Jews in Palestine in which the Arabs were strongly depended upon the dominance and support of the British administration.

In addition to growing number of Jewish settlements and immigration, the Palestinians were suffered from unemployment and underemployment. There was drought in traditional sources of capital import and there was also decrease in the prices of crops in agriculture<sup>134</sup>. During 1933-35, there was an economic boom that was related to the intense of the Jewish immigration and their colonization in Palestine. However, that economic boom and prosperity did not affect Palestinian people and the drought from which the Palestinian Arabs were suffered continued. Even that drought left the rural Arabs in starvation.

The situation was explained in a letter by one of the leaders of Arab community; Emile Ghory, to the *Observer* that:

“Prosperity and economic improvement are not everything of worth of life. There are other phases of life which are more dear to the Arabs than money and gold. “Man cannot be live by bread alone,” said Jesus Christ. The Arabs appreciate and understand this golden saying. Their case could not and should not be discussed or argued as a case of “bread and butter.” They desire to enjoy the right of every people to live in a peace of mind as well as of body, now and in the future, in their own country, as seems best for them. They prefer to be destitute and poor, but independent and free, in their country, than prosperous and rich in a country which will in a few years time be theirs no more.”<sup>135</sup>

The Palestinians were in a condition that both their freedom was under a threat and they were in poverty and starvation in their own territories. Moreover, despite the objections of the Great Power in Palestine, it had a pro-Jewish perspective and supported the interests of the Jews such as protection of the continuation of the

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<sup>134</sup> Kenneth W. Stein, “The Intifada and the 1936-39 Uprising: A Comparison”, *Journal of Palestinian Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 4, p.65

<sup>135</sup> The Observer, London, October 4, 1936, c.f., Abboushi, “The Road to Rebellion Arab Palestine in the 1930s”, *Journal of Palestinian Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 3, p.29



presence of the Jews in Palestine. Therefore, while all these caused the increase in tension, the suggestion of a limited self-rule for the Palestinians and the proposal of division of the country into two parts; one Jewish and one Arab state led to the turning of the strike into a great revolt. Furthermore, the Palestinian Arabs decided to boycott all products of the Zionists with a consensus and they passed the resolutions. The Arab elite started a massive anti-immigration campaign and they expressed that in the Arab press which caused the increase in tension<sup>136</sup>. The riots were the result of "...a general feeling of an apprehension among the Arabs engendered by the purchase of land by the Jews and by Jewish immigration"<sup>137</sup>. It was also stated in the report that the behavior of the Zionist also contributed to the Arab unrest. For instance, there was dramatization in the Jewish press that they dramatized the immigration of the Jewish immigration and "expressed joy"<sup>138</sup>.

As a result of these, the Palestinian revolt of 1936-39 began with a six-month general strike and ended with the crushing by British forces of a nationwide armed insurrection. The Arab Revolt which began in 1936 as a general strike was transformed into a general revolt and lasted three years. The first signal of the rebellion appeared with the confrontation of a group of armed men under the leadership of Iz al-Din al-Qassam with the British soldiers and that confrontation turned into a battle in which al- Qassam was killed. The death of Qassam "led to a strong wave of Arab patriotic feeling"<sup>139</sup> however, violent events were stopped until the legislative proposal for the establishment of self-government was refused in the House of Commons. When the hopes of Arabs were destroyed the violent events started again. Three Jews were killed during their travel on the Tulkarm-Nablus road and that event caused the spread of rebellion against the Mandate. Within days, the Arabs began to organize in the towns and in the villages, national committees were formed and the Arab Higher Committee was established in order to be replaced by the Arab Executive that called the Arabs for a six-month general strike.

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<sup>136</sup> Abboushi, "The Road to Rebellion Arab Palestine in the 1930s", *Journal of Palestinian Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 3, p.28

<sup>137</sup> Abboushi, p. 28

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28

<sup>139</sup> Palestine Government, *A Survey of Palestine*, 1945-46, Vol. 1, p.33

The 1936 Palestinian general strike and armed revolt later on brought significant events for the Palestinians, for the region and for the British Government. The general strike that lasted six months from April to October, involved work stoppages and economic boycotts, was the “longest anti-colonial strike of its kind”<sup>140</sup> until that time of history and longest ever.

During the first stage of the armed revolt that appeared in the whole country in September 1937, British forces lost much of the control against the armed bands and they had to depart from the most of the major cities like, Old City of Jerusalem, Jaffa, Acre, Jericho, Beer Sheva. A few thousand of Palestinian peasants could achieve to resist against the British armed forces successfully for a long time. The regional rivals of the British Empire; Germany and Italy had also an effect over the Arab and Islamic opinion and they also discouraged the Zionist movement and angered the British military officers, officials and politicians.

However, in the end, the strength of Britain, the lack of the important external support for the revolt, the absence of a unified and regular Palestinian military or political structure brought together the failure of the revolt and reemergence of the Palestinian political disunity and caused the suppression. Moreover, various punishments, curfews, administrative detentions that were implemented by the British administration and repression had significant negative effect over the Palestinian’s ability to fight. The experienced military cadres and enterprising fighters mostly composed of a high amount of Arab casualties. The end of the task of most of the Arab political leaders, thousands of other cadres, militants and fighters as a result of their imprisonment, exile or death, the Arab military and political leadership disappeared. Therefore, that caused an important decrease in the ability of the Palestinians to fight, divisions and weakness in the Palestinian polity.

Consequently, most of the political leaders of Palestine were imprisoned, exiled or expelled from the politics and public service. Much of the upper and middle class of the country were either alienated from the politics or had to be fled

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<sup>140</sup> Rashid Khalidi, *Iron Cage; The Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood*, Boston: Beacon Press, 2006, p.106

the country. The disagreement between Husayni and Nashashibi families was deepened during the revolt, to provide cooperation became impossible and lastly, the political life in Palestine was paralyzed<sup>141</sup>. Serious divisions among the Husaynis, Nashashibi- Abdallah of Jordan alliance and the Istiqlalists prevented the formation of a national front. The Arab community was broken politically and economically due to “the deportations, arrests, fines, deaths and serious economic destruction”<sup>142</sup>. As a result of being exhausted and not having a successful leadership within the country the Palestinian Arabs could neither act politically during World War II nor counter the Zionists. They became more dependent on other Arab States and the leadership of those other Arab States took the place of the Palestinian leadership and became more widespread over the country.

This revolt caused to the life of three thousand of Arabs, two thousand Jews and six hundred British people<sup>143</sup>. Even during the first six weeks of the revolt 24 civilians were killed and 204 were injured. During the process of 1936-39, the British Mandate issued two papers which were different in publication dates but were similar in contents. Firstly, at the end of the 1936 general strike, the British government ordered the organization of a committee of inquiry and appointed a Royal Commission, which was headed by Lord Peel in order to investigate the reasons of the revolt and to recommend a solution. The commission presented its report and demonstrated the causes of the revolt but there was not an unpredicted reason. Secondly, after the eruption of the revolt on 26 September 1937 and at the end of the violent events in 1939, the White Paper was issued by the colonial secretary, Malcolm MacDonald. The recommendations and the solutions of these two papers will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

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<sup>141</sup> Morris, *Righteous Victims*, p.159

<sup>142</sup> Ann Mosely Lesch, Part I: “Palestine National Movement under the Mandate” in *The Politics of Palestinian Nationalism*, ed. by William B. Quandt, p.40

<sup>143</sup> Dawisha, p.108

### 3.4.1 Peel Commission Report 1936-37

The planned Jewish activities ruled the Mandate Palestine during the 1930s until the 1936 Great Arab Revolt. The organized land acquisitions, continuation of Jewish immigration and using Jewish labor in Jewish enterprises caused a significant growth of Arab reaction. From 1930 to 1935, the Mufti of Jerusalem, Hajj Amin al-Husayni tried to carry out a propaganda campaign in order to persuade the Arabs not to sell land, however, that propaganda resulted with little success. Furthermore, although there was a significant development in Palestine economy as a result of the investments of the migrated, well-educated, wealthy Jews from Europe, especially the German Jews, there was strong limitation of work in the Jewish-controlled businesses. While the Jews were working with higher wages than Arabs in these enterprises, the unemployed and landless Arab population increased in major towns. Thus, due to the radicalization of Arab public opinion, the expected outbreak of violence erupted in 1936, as a general strike and revolt<sup>144</sup>.

Such immense protests and serious troubles led to the appointment of the Royal Commission by the British Government under Lord Peel's command at the end of the 1936 general strike. The Peel Report was prepared by this investigative commission in 1937 under Lord Peel.<sup>145</sup> The mission of the commission was to investigate the reasons of the disturbances and to recommend a solution. Before proposing his recommendations, Lord Peel visited Palestine for three times. The report published by the commission recommended the termination of the British Mandate and partition of the country into two parts as the only solution due to the gap between the two nations which was broadening rapidly both as a result of the intense and self-centered Jewish and Arab nationalisms. The Commission's 404 pages report was published on July 7, 1937 and it was based upon the argument that the mandate was unworkable and the conflict was irrepressible and insoluble within the framework of one state<sup>146</sup>. The basic recommendation was the partition theory. How the Palestinian territories would be divided and shared between the two

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<sup>144</sup> 1936 Great Arab Revolt will be explained in detail in fourth chapter of this thesis work.

<sup>145</sup> Cleveland, p.252

<sup>146</sup> Morris, p. 139

communities was discussed seriously by the British administration and it was also explained by different today's authors. For instance, according to Morris, Jewish nation would receive less than one-fifth of the Palestinian lands and Arabs would be given the rest of it except the area which was under control of the British Mandate. Avi Yonah also writes that

“two sovereign independent states were to be established – a Jewish State comprising Galilee and the coastal area down to Rehovoth, and an Arab State to include the rest of the country united with Transjordan, together with an enclave in Jaffa. Jerusalem, with a linking corridor to the coast, was to be retained under British Mandate...”<sup>147</sup>.

Besides, impossibility of securing harmony between the two peoples under one government was emphasized by the report constantly<sup>148</sup>. The Peel Commission Report was a detailed analysis of the conditions in Palestine and brought a radical proposal and solution which had never been uttered by the Mandate administration before. That was the partition of the country between two nations; Arabs and Jews.

The final report of the Commission in 1937 offered 5000 square kilometers as a Jewish state, a large land as the Arab state and a residential area which covers from Jerusalem to Jaffa under a permanent British Mandate<sup>149</sup>. The land which was given to the control of the British mandate included strategically important regions like Jaffa, newly built airport in Lydda and Negev and it also proposed the annexation of Palestine to the Kingdom of Jordan<sup>150</sup>. By this way, an international zone was to be created which could be administrated by a mandate power appointed by the League of Nations and peace over the region containing the Holy Places would be provided<sup>151</sup>. Therefore, the plan of partition proposed the creation of two sovereign and independent states and the principle of division was the separation of

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<sup>147</sup> Micheal Avi Yonah, *A History of Israel and the Holy Land*, the Continuum International Publishing Group, 2003, p.327

<sup>148</sup> “The Problem of Palestine: A Note on the Report of the Royal Commission”, *Geographical Review*, Vol. 27, No. 4, (October 1937), p. 566

<sup>149</sup> Avi Shlaim, *Iron Wall*, Norton & Company, New York: 2000, p.19

<sup>150</sup> Pappé, p.141

<sup>151</sup> M. F. Abcarius, *Palestine: Through the Fog of Propaganda*, London: Hutchinson & Co. Publishers Ltd, 1946, p. 196

areas where the Jewish people obtained lands which were occupied wholly or mainly settled by the Arabs:

“The Jewish lands and colonies are mostly be found in the Maritime Plain between Al-Majdal and Mount Carmel, in the neighborhood of Haifa, in the Plain of Esdraelon and the Valley of Jezreel, and in the east of Galilee, i.e., south of Tiberias, on the shores of the Lake, near Safad, in the Huleh Basin. The rest of Galilee and the northern part of the plain of Acre are almost wholly in Arab occupation. So also is the central hill-country of old Samaria and Judea- except for Jerusalem and its vicinity. The towns of Nablus, Jenin and Tulkarm, the last an outpost on the edge of the Maritime Plain, are centers of Arab nationalism. Except in and near Jerusalem and at Hebron, there are practically no Jews between Jenin and Beersheba. This Arab block extends eastwards to the Jordan River between the Dead Sea and Beisan. In the area stretching south and southeast of Beersheba to the Egyptian frontier, the Jews have bought some isolated blocks of land but the population is entirely Arab”<sup>152</sup>.

Additionally, a second recommendation was made for the partition as an outcome in the Peel Commission report. It was the exchange of population among the forthcoming states by transferring 225,000 Arabs and 1.250 Jews<sup>153</sup>. Without population exchange, a potential Jewish State would have had as many Arabs as Jews. It was thought by the commission that the exchange of populations should be implemented by agreement and if the Arabs opposed to the population transfer, it could be provided by sanction “in the last resort”<sup>154</sup> by the British Mandate.

While the Arab Higher Committee did not accept the solution by seeing the proposal as violation of the rights of the Arab inhabitants of Palestine, the Jews favored the solution. Both the Jews of Palestine and Eastern Europe supported the report because it was preferable to the continuation of the Mandate and because with the partition that was offered by the report might provide that acceptable frontiers and west Jerusalem could be protected for the Jewish state<sup>155</sup>. However,

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<sup>152</sup> Quoted from Peel Commission Report by the article: “The Problem of Palestine: A Note on the Report of the Royal Commission”, p.570-571

<sup>153</sup> Morris, p.139

<sup>154</sup> Quoted from Peel Commission Report by B. Morris, op.cit., p.139

<sup>155</sup> T.G. Fraser, “A Crisis of Leadership Weizmann and the Zionist Reactions to the Peel Commission’s Proposals, 1937-8”, *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 23, No.4, October 1988, p.670

they found the land which was given to the Jews in partition insufficient and with the World Zionist Congress in 1937 they refused the Peel Report's proposal. Two proposals of the Peel Commission report about partition and population transfer continued to be discussed in the twentieth Zionist Congress which met in Zurich in August 1937. While a group of delegates of the congress insisted on the indivisibility of the Land of Israel and opposed to the partition, a large majority group accepted the principles of the report and transfer. That majority group insisted on the necessity of a land created for the Jews of Europe without any quotas or restrictions on the Jewish immigrations. And they voted in favor of the Peel package in the Congress.

Due to the failure of the Peel Commission report, the Woodhead Commissioner's report was published on 9 November in order to examine the Peel Commission Plan in detail and to recommend an actual partition plan. The purpose of the commission was to release Great Britain from its responsibilities and to focus on the growing threat in Europe. The Commission discarded the partition as Germany and Italy foresaw; that it would not be economically valid and would require a large scale of movements of population<sup>156</sup>. Therefore, a British intention was shaped about leaving the partition because of the fear of two states and Arabs. Furthermore, the British administration began to think that the postponement of partition and abandonment of immigration would bring peace to Palestine.

However, the report of Peel Commission and the final revised report which was proposed by the Woodhead Commission did not give any results. While the Arabs refused the Peel Commission Report, Ben Gurion approved the report in a sense on behalf of the Jewish community. When the idea of commission arose, the Zionists did not like it because they thought that the commission was used to reduce Jewish immigration by the Colonial administration. However, the head of the Colonial Office; Ormsby Gore declared that there would not be any postponement of the immigration during the investigation of commission<sup>157</sup>. According to Gurion,

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<sup>156</sup> Ovendale, p. 77

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75

the Peel partition plan was the beginning of the end of the British Mandate and the birth of a Jewish state and the proposal of the report for a Jewish state did not represent the whole and complete state but it was offering the necessary groundwork for the future negotiations. In the 20<sup>th</sup> Zionist Congress in Zurich in August 1937, the decision of agreement and acceptance of partition plan were taken as a basis for the negotiation with the British Government. Therefore, Ben Gurion agreed for a small part of Palestine.

Additionally, for the pro-partition Zionist leaders; Chaim Weizmann, Ben Gurion and Moshe Sharett, establishing a Jewish state even in a small part of Palestine meant the realization of Zionist aims. Moreover, Weizmann defended the idea that if Jewish side would not accept the Peel partition plan, an important opportunity to build up an independent state for the Jewish community would be lost. A state would provide the chance for the Jews to have unlimited immigration, to for Jewish economy and to establish Jewish army<sup>158</sup>. The idea of exchange of population was not initiated with the Peel Commission but that idea was goes back to the seniors of Zionists. It was obvious for the Zionists that a Jewish state could only be possible with the majority of Jewish nation and this could be provided with a massive Jewish immigration. However, the Arab population covers the majority of the Palestinian community and this was a threat for the Jewish nation.

On the other hand, the Arabs refused to accept any decision that was taken by the Royal Commission from the beginning. The leaders of the Arab community, initially, rejected giving any evidence to the commission. They repeated invalidity of Balfour Declaration and the Mandate administration and rejected partition because the pledge of McMahon to Hussein for an independent Arab state included Palestine also<sup>159</sup>. Therefore, the Arabs demanded independence and the Zionists opposed that request which meant an independent Palestine state. Furthermore, the Arab Higher Committee which refused the partition plan asserted four principles for a settlement which were

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<sup>158</sup> Shlaim, p. 21

<sup>159</sup> Ovendale, p. 75



“recognition of Arab right to independence in Palestine; end of the experiment in a Jewish national home; the abrogation of the mandate, to be replaced by a treaty between Britain and Palestine as a sovereign state; and the immediate end of Jewish immigration and land purchases pending negotiation and the conclusion of a treaty”<sup>160</sup>.

The Arabs of Palestine never gave up that point of view. The Arabs of Galilee were opposed strongly to partition any transfer of population and life under the Jewish rule. The British district commissioner reported that

“The Arab population of Galilee should ever be reconciled to the scheme is clearly too much to hope...Christians, Muslims, fellahin, and landowners are probably more united in their rejection of the proposal than they have ever been before. Their common feeling... is that they have been betrayed and that they will be forced to leave their lands and perish in some unknown desert”<sup>161</sup>.

The Arabs claimed that the best land and seven-eighths of citrus groves were given to the Jews by the scheme of the Peel Report. They also asserted that once the Jewish state overflowed by the Jewish immigrants; they would struggle to enlarge at the expense of the Arab state.

To sum up, the proposal of partition by the Peel Commission Report caused series of protests among the Jews and Arabs both in and outside Palestine and also among the interested people and countries. Although the British Government saw the partition plan as the best and most hopeful solution for the deadlock because the conflict between the Jews and Arabs was an “irreconcilable conflict”<sup>162</sup>, the proposals of the Peel Report caused the renewal of the Arab violence and general strike in 1937. The Palestinian Arab leaders and people convinced the other Arab states in order to protest against the Peel report and organized a conference at Bludan in September 1937. At that conference, the delegates from Syria, Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon and Palestine agreed on protests against the partition plan and support for full independence.

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<sup>160</sup> Fieldhouse, p.169

<sup>161</sup> Morris, p.144

<sup>162</sup> Fieldhouse, p. 168

### 3.5 White Paper 1939

Despite intensified British measures against violent activities, the revolt had erupted on 26 September 1937 as a result of the assassination district commissioner of L.Y Andrews. The revolt of 1937-39 was similar to the 1936 strike and it was pursued by the irregular bands in the mountains. Arab rebellious groups began to be organized in Jaffa and Nablus and they formed national committees. Lesch writes about the Revolt of 1937-39 that

“local national committees, traffic strike committees, Arab national guard units, labor societies, Muslim and Christian sport clubs, boy scouts, the Jaffa boatmen association, women’s committees and various other local groups directed the different aspects of the strike under the coordination of Arab Higher Committee”<sup>163</sup>.

Furthermore, these rebellious groups were involved peasants and supported by rural population and this revolt which was planned against British and Zionist forces, involved also aspects of peasant social revolution against nobility. They were concentrated on the destruction of railroads, bridges and British police stations. They also destroyed the Jewish properties and killed Jewish settlers. In the summer of 1938, they obtained countryside and most of the important towns<sup>164</sup>. At the peak of the revolt, there were 9,000-10,000 active rebels, 3,000 full-time and rest of it was the part-time peasants<sup>165</sup> who attended to the revolt.

Although Hajj-al Amin tried to control activities from Beirut through a central committee of the AHC in Damascus, he could not achieve to provide a controlled, centralized command structure. The finance of the rebels was supplied by the wealthy Arabs and they were violent against those who did not contribute. During these revolts, alienation appeared between the rebels, their supporters and Arab population and vendettas which were continued one generation occurred. That alienation caused divisions within the Arab population and weakened Arab

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<sup>163</sup> Lesch, p.34

<sup>164</sup> Cleveland, p.253

<sup>165</sup> Fieldhouse, p. 169

resistance against Zionism even in 1948. In 1939 spring, Palestine was in deep economic depression, there was enormous unemployment among both Arabs and Jews and many villages were destroyed due to revolt.

The Arab Revolt provided the recognition of the Palestine issue by other Arab states and demonstrated that Britain would need Arab Middle East's oil resources and airfields in any future conflict in Europe. Britain understood the necessity of the appeasement of the Arab World in order to protect its future cooperation. Hence, its new policy was declared in 1939 with a new White Paper.

In January 1939 the policy which was drafted by MacDonald was approved by the Cabinet. The draft included that Palestine would neither an Arab nor a Jewish State. The first draft also stated that the Mandate would support the independence of self-governed institutions and recognized the majority of Arab population in Palestine. The majority belong to the Arabs because at the end of the 1938, twenty-nine percent of the Palestinian population was composed by the Jewish people<sup>166</sup>. Since the Cabinet accepted the outlined policy, Jewish immigration was restricted and if Palestinian Arabs did not consent for the immigration, it would be postponed after ten years.

The White Paper on Palestine was published by the British Government in May 1939 and outlined the future British policy in Palestine. The Paper was issued by the colonial secretary, Malcolm MacDonald, set forth the new proposals of the British Government at a time when most of the cabinet members had accepted the indispensability of the war. The White Paper was a result of the deteriorating conditions in the Arab Middle East and was recognition the increase in a militant and anti-British way of Arab nationalism in Palestine. The paper aimed to prevent this type of nationalism becoming widespread<sup>167</sup>.

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<sup>166</sup> Ovendale, p.78

<sup>167</sup> Michael Cohen, "Appeasement in the Middle East: The British White Paper on Palestine May 1939", *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 16, No.3, 1973, p. 571

With the White Paper, the recommendations of the Peel Commission about the partition of Palestine were examined and found as impractical. Moreover, Tessler writes that the White Paper observed that the purpose of British Government was “the establishment within ten years of an independent Palestine State in such treaty relations with the United Kingdom as will provide satisfactorily for the commercial and strategic requirements of both countries in the future”<sup>168</sup> and the policy asserted by the White Paper was a bi-national state; “in which the two peoples of Palestine; Arabs and Jews, share authority in government in such a way that the essential interests of each are secured”<sup>169</sup>. The White Paper refused both the partition recommendations of the Peel Commission and the independent Jewish State with partition plan. Instead of partition, it proposed new restrictions over Zionist immigration and Jewish land purchases. The White Paper clarifies in the specific areas regarding land purchases that “transfers of land must be restricted if Arab cultivators are to maintain their existing standard of life and a considerable landless Arab population is not to be created”<sup>170</sup>. Besides, authority of “prohibition and regulation of any land transfer that might be injurious to Palestine’s Arab population”, was given to high commissioner.

It was issued for Palestine by the British administration but consulted with the other Arab states and the paper reflected a remarkable change of the British policy which had been pro-Zionist oriented and sympathetic to the Jews. The document emphasized that British administration would attempt to apply its new policy “as soon as peace and order have been sufficiently restored in Palestine”<sup>171</sup>. Furthermore, the White Paper both restricted Jewish immigration into Palestine and made it dependent upon Arab permission. Jewish immigration would be suspended if the permission of Arab population could not be provided. Cleveland defines the number of Jewish immigrants that Jewish immigration should be limited to 15 thousand a year over the next five years with the British decision. It was also

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<sup>168</sup> Mark Tessler, *A History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, US: Indiana University Press, 1994, p.245

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, p.245

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, p.245

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, p.245

proposed that an additional 25 thousand Jewish immigrants would be permitted. Furthermore, land transforms would be restricted to specific areas and independence would be granted in ten years time. Jewish nation did not object to the establishment of an independent state in Palestine. It is stated with the paper that “His Majesty’s Government now declare that it is not part of their policy that Palestine should become a Jewish State”<sup>172</sup>. However, Tessler and Ovendale emphasize more numbers than Cleveland that 75,000 Jewish immigrants<sup>173</sup> would be permitted “unless the Arabs of Palestine are prepared to acquiesce in it”<sup>174</sup>. This means, Jewish immigration would be depended on the Arab approval over the following five years period after the White Paper. The number of the immigrants was also dependent different factors that Britain had treaty relations in order to fulfill the commercial and strategic interests of both Palestine and Britain.

The purpose of the 1939 White Paper was to pursue and to protect the status quo in Palestine until the situation of Europe would be clear. The limit to the immigrations of the Jews and restriction to the land purchase were dealt at a time when Nazi expansion and pressure began over the lives of the Jews. Pappe defines that “...the Yishuv now waged its own kind of rebellion, a clandestine operation of illegal immigration, land take-over and formation of a paramilitary organization, helped by sympathetic British officer...”<sup>175</sup>. Therefore, especially because of the timing of publication, the White Paper was perceived as betrayal of British government and withdrawal of its Jewish support.

However, the White Paper did not satisfy Arab people and main political functions in Palestine refused the continuation of Jewish immigration. Most of these political functions rejected also the attitude about sharing government of Palestine in the context of bi-national state between the Jews and Arabs. In addition, Arab leaders from other countries did not approve the White Paper also. On the other hand, reactions of Jewish people against Ramsay MacDonald’s letter of 1931 were

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<sup>172</sup> Cleveland, p.253-4

<sup>173</sup> Ovendale, p.78

<sup>174</sup> Tessler, p.245

<sup>175</sup> Pappe, p.107

also similar to the Arabs. The statement which was announced by the Jewish agency was full of accusations claiming that Britain had an intention to create “a territorial ghetto for Jews in their own homeland”<sup>176</sup>. Furthermore, the Jews also described the White Paper as “a breach of faith and a surrender to Arab terrorism”<sup>177</sup>. The White Paper was a great shock for the Jewish community and British administration was indicted that British government ignored the idea of national home and capitulated to the Arab violence and threat under a condition in which European Jews were persecuted. Jewish Agency declared that “the need of the Jewish people for a Home was never more accurate, and its denial at this time is particularly harsh”<sup>178</sup>. Furthermore, the Jewish Agency continued their critiques by announcing that “[i]t is in the darkest hour of Jewish history that the British Government proposes to deprive the Jews of their last hope and to close the road back to their homeland”<sup>179</sup>. According to Yishuv, the White Paper was “illegal” because it contradicted the terms of the Mandate and it declared that the Paper could not accept in the new British policy.

The White Paper was published by the Mandate in order to propose an acceptable and satisfactory policy for both the Arabs and Jews. However, it caused only to the increase in tensions and contributed to the rise of militancy. It also triggered Jewish opposition to the British rule and facilitated terrorism and violence. Despite the restrictions that the White Paper brought, immigration continued and land purchases could not be stopped. Even in the prohibited areas, a number of new Jewish settlements were established during the war. Contrary to the Arab and Jewish claims, the British government especially the defenders of British policy like Skyes, continued to defend the White Paper and asserted that the White Paper was “only as a necessary but ruthless war measure and experience and history show that all such measures have to be paid for dearly”<sup>180</sup>. Despite the opposition of both

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<sup>176</sup> Tessler, p.246

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, p.246

<sup>178</sup> Morris, p.158

<sup>179</sup> Tessler, p.246

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, p.246

sides, new decisions of the White Paper continued to constitute the Mandate policy during World War II.

### **3.6 Palestine during World War II and End of British Mandate**

Since Europe shifted through the war, the existence of British administration in the Middle East was threatened by the events in the mandate of Palestine. The policies of the British Mandate in Palestine weakened good relations with the Arab states and British dominance in the Middle East. The efforts of Britain to apply the policies decided with the White Paper did not produce any solution for the conflict between the Arabs and Jews. Land transfer regulations continued and the Jews also pursued to buy lands without restrictions. In terms of immigration issue, although illegal migrations could be provided, the British administration tried to limit the number of immigrations with certificates of Zionists in order to prevent illegal Jewish entry into the country. Half of the Jewish immigrants in Palestine were illegal; they did not have entry papers and smuggled into the country. At the end of the war, in 1945 the number of the Jewish people in Palestine had reached 554,000<sup>181</sup>.

The Jewish community was against the existence of the White Paper, its policies and the Jewish underground organization; Irgun pursued its attacks against British administration due to the White Paper restrictions and immigration quotas. Moreover, Hagana whose 6,000 of 37,000 numbered troops were well trained enhanced its power until 1944<sup>182</sup>. It began a general campaign against British administration in Palestine in October 1945.

However, during World War II, they supported and fought for the British Empire against Nazi Germany. Three aims which the Jewish Agency Executive determined were the protection of the Jewish Homeland, the welfare of the Jewish nation and the victory of the British Empire. That fight for the British Empire in the

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<sup>181</sup> Tessler, p.249

<sup>182</sup> M.E Yapp, *The Near East since the First World War; A History to 1995*, London: Longman, 1996, p.134

army both provided for the military experience for the Jews and contributed to the Jewish efforts to establish a Jewish army and these efforts and attacks caused the deterioration of the relations between the British Mandate and Jewish community. During the 1940s, Jewish press emphasized the urgent necessity of creation of an independent Jewish state. There was a growing agreement among the Jewish community about a sovereign state and in 1942 conference of the Jews in New York with the Biltmore Program, Zionist policy was reformulated and the aim of creation of an independent Jewish state in Palestine with a national community, Jewish laws and values which Arabs were strongly against, was declared. Therefore, Hagana focused on illegal immigration, attacks on British communications and attacked the British personnel. In order to disturb British government in Palestine, on 22 July 1946 it exploded British headquarters in King David Hotel in Jerusalem.

### **3.6.1 UN Partition Plan**

As a result of these troubles, London announced formally and publicly that the British Mandate could not provide settlement in Palestine. It declared in the Parliament that it would hand the responsibility of Palestine Mandate over United Nations. Therefore, the demand of the British Mandate was accepted by the UN and United Nations Special Community on Palestine with eleven members was established as a world body. UN appointed a committee of representatives from various countries in order investigate the situation in Palestine. When UNSCOP arrived at Palestine in January 1947, it found the country in a chaotic and violent environment. Both Jewish terrorism against the British Mandate and Arab terrorism against the Zionists continued.

There was a general agreement among the members of this committee about the partition of the country in order to provide satisfaction of the Jewish and Palestinian Arabs' needs and demands. At the end of 1946 there were 1,269,000 Arabs and 608,000 Jews within the borders of Mandate Palestine. The Jews had obtained 6 to 8 percent of the total land area of Palestine which covers the 20



percent of the cultivable land by the way of purchasing<sup>183</sup>. Therefore, UNSCOP presented two reports on 31 August 1947 which involved a minority and a majority proposal. The majority plan suggested partition of Palestine into three parts which were constituted an Arab state, a Jewish State and an international zone covering Jerusalem. The minority one recommended an independent and federal state. With the UN partition plan, Palestine was divided as each state would have a majority of its own population. Some Jewish settlements would be involved in the proposed Palestinian state and many Palestinians would become part of the proposed Jewish state. The territory that was allocated to the Jewish state would be a little larger than the Palestinian state with a theory that increasing numbers of Jews would immigrate there. With the proposed boundaries, Galilee and Negev which had been given to the Arabs with the recommendation of Peel Report, was attached to the Zionist state with UN Partition Plan. Thus, 56 percent of Palestine was awarded to the Jews<sup>184</sup>. According to the UN partition plan, the area of Jerusalem and Bethlehem were to become an international zone. On 29 November 1947, UN accepted the majority plan with 13 votes of 33 with 10 abstentions<sup>185</sup> and UNGA approved the partition resolution. Besides, the USSR and the US were among the countries that supported the recommendation of partition.

At the end, despite the centrally organized, internationally financed and well-concentrated colonization, the land which had been acquired by the Jews since 1880s was about 1,820,000 *dönüms* which covers less than 7 percent of the total Palestine<sup>186</sup>. However, with the UN Partition Resolution, the Jews were rewarded with land of 15,000,000 *dönüms* for the Jewish State. Thus, the Partition Plan of the UN was perceived as green light for the Zionist leadership in order to start their long-considered and postponed conquest because partition plan was interpreted that

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<sup>183</sup> “The United Nations Partition Plan: Palestine, Israel and the Arab-Israeli Conflict A Primer”, Middle East Report Online, [http://www.merip.org/palestine-israel\\_primer/un-partition-plan-pal-isr.html](http://www.merip.org/palestine-israel_primer/un-partition-plan-pal-isr.html) Accessed on January 7, 2011

<sup>184</sup> Tessler, p. 259

<sup>185</sup> Yapp, p. 136

<sup>186</sup> Walid Khalidi, “Revisiting the UNGA Partition Resolution”, *Journal of Palestinian Studies*, Vol. 27, No.1, Autumn 1997, p.13

it enabled the establishment of the Israeli state whatever the wishes of overwhelming majority of inhabitants<sup>187</sup>.

Palestine was an important part of the Arab world and the whole Arabs were against the creation of a Jewish state in their homeland. Therefore, the Arabs refused the UN partition plan. Furthermore, the Arab community thought that as a body that was created and controlled by the US and Europe, UN could not grant any portion of the Arab territory to the Zionists. The belief of the Arabs was that European support for the establishment of a Jewish state was a payment of Europe's debt to the Jewish people with another nation's land. On the other hand, despite the initial reluctance of Zionists, they declared to accept the partition recommendation of the majority. For the Jews, there was not any other authority that the UN that would manage the condition with such a compromise.

### **3.6.2 Withdrawal of British Mandate and Establishment of Israeli State**

After the announcement of British government that the Mandate in Palestine could not handle any settlement for both of the nations, the UN published its partition plan. And after the vote of UN plan, the British administration declared that it gave up the mandate and declared its final withdrawal from Palestine as of 15 May, 1948.

With the approach of the termination date of the British Mandate 15<sup>th</sup> of May, a National Council was gathered by the Zionists in which a thirteen-member provisional government was elected with the prime-ministry of David Ben Gurion. The Council declared its independence in a part of Palestine in which the UN was assigned for a Jewish State by United Nation<sup>188</sup>. The newly established Israeli State was recognized firstly by the Unites States although the president of it was advised to wait. The official boundaries of new state were the frontiers that were defined by the armistice agreements of 1948 War. State of Israel possessed the larger share of the Palestinian land than the share that had been schemed by the UN partition

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<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, p.5

<sup>188</sup> Tessler, p. 263

resolution for the Arab state. Consequently, the State of Israel was established as a militarily secured and internationally recognized country.

Last British troops departed from Haifa on 30 June 1948. The reason of the British withdrawal was not only UNSCOP recommendation but also the burden of Palestine for the mandate. The British Empire had placed its 80,000 troops and also had assigned 20,000 police forces in Palestine and all of these, cost approximately 40,000 million a year for the Empire<sup>189</sup>. In spite of these economic expenditures, the establishment and the stability of security could not be provided. Civil and military authority was broken down. The murder of the two British sergeants by the Revisionists caused the British opposition against the Palestine connection. Furthermore, Britain began to lose its prestige within the international arena. The return of the ship named Exodus by Britain to Germany which was full of Jewish refugees after its arrival to Palestine was the indicator of the British inability to make accurate decisions.

In addition to the economic and security failures, the British Empire demanded the withdrawal of Palestinian Mandate in order not to damage its relation with other Arab countries. The association of British administration with the UN's partition solution would harm its relation with the Arab countries which were opposed to the partition. Until it left Palestine, British administration did not want to take any action in order to aid any side and did not allow the entry of any forces that belong to Arabs or United Nations' observers. At the end, the result of the British withdrawal was the fight of the Arabs and Jews for Palestine.

### **3.6.3 1948 War**

As soon as the UN approved the partition resolution, war broke out in Palestine. There were both Arab attacks on the cities in which the Jews resided including Haifa, Tel Aviv, Jaffa, Lydda and Jerusalem and anti- Jewish revolts in other Arab countries. Although the two sides were equal in the number of the fighters, the

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<sup>189</sup> Yapp, p.137

superiority of the men in the military age was belong Jewish forces. Another helpful feature of the Jewish military was that the operations of the Jewish forces were more organized. As a result of these organized operations, even when they were in defensive position, they achieved to protect their settlements and territories that had been allocated to them.

On the other hand, the Arabs were disorganized. Although Hajj Amin al-Husayni had appeared as the leader, there was discoordination among different Arab groups. However, the public opinion of the whole Arab countries was to reject UN decision on Palestine. Thus, these countries; Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, Transjordan and the Palestinian Arabs, prepared for war in May 1948 and they established a military committee in order to provide coordination military and political action. However, especially because of the disagreement of the governor of the different Arab states about the leadership during the war, an agreement or a plan of action could not be decided. When the Arab forces intervened in May 1947, they fought as a separate army.

With the final defeat of Arabs in 1949, the control of much of Palestine and old Jerusalem came under the control of the Kingdom of Jordan, the new Jerusalem, Galilee and Negev also were held by Israel. The 1948 War ended not by a peace agreement but by a number of armistice agreements among each Arab states and the Israeli state between February and July 1949. As a result of the war, prior settlement of the UN had to be changed because of the Israeli war recoveries. At the end of the war, the portion of the Israeli territories was expanded from 55 percent of the mandatory Palestine which was granted by UN before war, to 79 percent<sup>190</sup>. Two of the UN's proposals which included an Arab state with entirely Arab population and an international zone were completely disappeared. The Arab state and international zone were divided between Israel and Jordan and only Gaza was taken by Egypt<sup>191</sup>. That division of territories caused a significant population transfer and caused the refuge problem which has been continued for years. When the war ended both

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<sup>190</sup> Shlaim, p. 47

<sup>191</sup> Yapp, p.139

political map and demographical character of Palestine had changed but Israel protected its independence. The Israeli military achieved to expel all of the Arab forces from Palestine except for the Arab Legion which remained in the West Bank. While the Palestinian Arab state could not be established even within the territories that were envisaged by the UN resolution, Israel became the only independent state in Palestine.

The 1948 War was important for the development of Palestinian nationalism because the refugee problem that began with the 1948 War caused the strengthening of self-identity and national consciousness within refugee camps. However, despite that awareness of self-identity, the Palestinian Arabs were still deprived of a political institution that was necessary to declare their independent state and to defend their right of return. Especially with the deportation of Amin Al-Husayni after the 1948 War caused the dissolution of the Husayni family and government; the notables were also weakened in Palestine. The division of the Palestinian political thinking which there had been already before, between the supporters of an independent Arab Palestine and supports of a unity of whole Arab World occurred again. The 1948 War demonstrated once again that each of the Arab States considered their dynastic or national interests behind the fig leaf of protection of Palestine for the Palestinians<sup>192</sup>. The Arabs were unable to coordinate their diplomatic and military plans and this inability was the most important reason for the disaster. Israeli leaders, who were well-aware of these divisions, exploited them and used the official outbreak of hostilities. The uncoordinated actions of the whole Arabs during the war also reflected to the movements of nationalists and this fragmentation prevented the Palestinian nationalists to form a united action.

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<sup>192</sup> Shlaim, p.36

**CHAPTER 4**  
**DEVELOPMENT of PALESTINIAN NATIONALISM**  
**and FAMILY POLITICS**

From the 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards, the local Muslim population began to produce notable families within the towns of Ottoman Palestine and those families started to rise into important positions and possess locally different degrees of power. The weakness of the central government and the custom which was the transition of the official positions by inheritance from father to son or to the nearest kin were the reasons of the rise of notable families to power. For example, a letter which was written following the death of an official by the *kadi* to the *mutawalli* of the wakf of the Dome of the Rock mosque defined that

“his functions have become free...[consequently] they pass to his uncle, and that is according to the exalted order (al-amr al-‘ali), that if a functionary from among the inhabitants of Jerusalem dies leaving no son, his functions should pass to his nearest kin because he deserves that more than the stranger and this [emphasizes the kadi] is in accordance with the sultanic order and the special ‘urf”<sup>193</sup>

As a result of the application of this rule, the same families inherited significant functions and offices for a number of generations and thus they ascended to the status of notable families and therefore, influence, wealth and power remained in the same families.

The Husaynis and Nashashibis were the two of these important notable families which played main role during the development of Palestinian nationalism under the British Mandate. The rivalry and contention between these two families, their separate activities and their position against Zionism and against the British Mandate shaped the political progress of Arabs of Palestine. Therefore, the Husayni

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<sup>193</sup> B. Abu-Manneh, “The Husaynis: The Rise of a Notable Family in 18th Century Palestine”, in *Palestine In The Late Ottoman Period* ed. by David Kushner, Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi Press, 1986, p.93

and Nashashibi families became the two leading notable families in Palestine in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

#### **4.1 Early Days of Two Families at the beginning of Mandate**

It is accustomed within the Husayni family to identify the roots of their family with Sayyid ‘ Abd al-Latif b. ‘ Abdallah b. ‘ Abd al-Latif ‘ as the founding father of their house. Abd-al Latif was a member of a well-established family of Jerusalem and had remarkable qualities in order to fill the positions which were given by the Ottoman government. Such an appointment with the confirmation of Istanbul led to the family to rise to significant positions in Palestine and gave the opportunity of an unrivalled power by any other local notable in Jerusalem for a long time. Although the family lost much of its importance during the Tanzimat period against the Khalidi family who promoted the reforms, during the Abdulhamid regime, they reestablished their influence in Jerusalem. In the city, the family held the post of *Mufti* of Jerusalem for six successive generations. Moreover, even during the Tanzimat period when this religious position lost its importance, the owners of this office pursued their social and political distinction.

As a result of the expansion of the power of the Husayni family in Jerusalem the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century on, the anger of other notable families in the city increased and that anger caused the competition between them. This was a common situation in Palestine because there were limited resources and small number of families that had to share these resources. Moreover, there had appeared also a new shareholder which was the Jewish nation. In order to resist and overcome their rivals, the Husaynis struggled to enlarge their power base in Palestine and tried different methods in order to solidify their position during the Ottoman and British regimes. For example, one of these methods was to provide alliance with different local families and with powerful figures like the governors of Jerusalem through marriages. Furthermore, another way was to establish friendly associations with notable families or *valis* of different provinces. The Husayni family also used sending presents to important political positions as an important manner of being an

influential family in Jerusalem. The last factor to strengthen their power was the significance of their surname which demonstrated their linkages with the Prophet as being descendants of the Prophet. With their surname, the Husaynis gained important respect from the Muslim world.

Consequently, until the establishment of the British Mandate, the Husaynis established a strong position in the Palestinian political arena. They became an important family among the limited number of families in Jerusalem.

The political division and rivalries of Palestine were among the Arabic speaking population which constituted the majority of Palestine overwhelmingly. This division appeared as a result of the different political positions and standpoint of the different political groups. The leadership among the Muslim Palestinian Arabs against the threat of Zionism was a matter of dispute that caused disagreement between the two important families of Jerusalem; the Husaynis and the Nashashibis<sup>194</sup>. Strong candidates who were mentioned both by the British Mandate and by Palestinian notables for the leadership of both Arab population and political positions of Muslims in Palestine were the two important members of these two families; Muhammad Amin al-Husayni and Raghib al-Nashashibi.

Amin al- Husayni was born in Jerusalem. He completed elementary school in Jerusalem which was called as Küttab and secondary school in İdadi under Ottoman Empire and in order to pursue his education he went to Cairo<sup>195</sup>. He studied both at al-Azhar in Cairo and the War College in Istanbul<sup>196</sup>. Furthermore, he recruited in the Ottoman army behind the lines of Anatolia during the First World War and became an officer in the army. In the immediate post-war period he was active in the organizations of the anti-Zionist demonstrations because of the decisions which were taken with the Balfour Declaration. He represented the

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<sup>194</sup> Elie Kedourie, *Arabic Political Memoirs and Other Studies*, London: Cass Press, 1974, p.52

<sup>195</sup> Zvi Elpeleg, *The Grand Mufti: Hajj Amin Al-Hussaini: Founder of the Palestinian National Movement*, England: Frank Cass, 1993, p.23

<sup>196</sup> Cleveland, p.243



symbol of the Palestinian resistance against the Jewish settlement and British Mandate. Nevertheless, after the 1936-1939 Arab Revolt in Palestine, the Arab Higher Committee dissolved and Hajj Amin al-Husayni had to fled to Lebanon in 1937<sup>197</sup>

Amin al-Husayni appeared first for the leadership of Palestinian Arabs in 1918. In this year he left the Ottoman army and he began to serve as a recruiting officer for Faysal's forces that were dealing with operation in Eastern Transjordan. This operation was realized with the encouragement and knowledge of the British Army Command and was an opportunity for Britain in order to gain the support of Arab population for its own sake. Additionally, after the establishment of the British Mandate Amin al- Husayni stayed in Damascus in order to serve for the establishment of Greater Syria and this caused him to gain experiences in politics with the organized conferences and congresses. Therefore, both Amin al-Husayni prepared himself for the struggle against Zionism and all Husaynis entered into modern politics that developed in the whole Arab World after World War I. Because of his talents and skills, he facilitated the social standing of his family into modern terms of political parties and organizations.

#### **4.1.1 Arab Club, Literary Society and Muslim Christian Association**

When the war ended, Hajj Amin al-Husayni began to deal with politics and became the president of the Arab Club, *al-Nadi al- Arabi*, which was a literary and political organization. It was established in 1918 in order to support the Palestinian issue and was under the influence of the younger Husaynis. Amin al- Husayni who was regarded as pro-British in his early years became one of the leaders of the nascent Palestinian national movement. Amin al-Husayni used his position as being president of the Arab Club in order to educate the Palestinian people about the national case. For this aim, he struggled to spread Palestinian nationalism among urban class, peasants and aristocrats as well. Thus, the Husaynis which was the

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<sup>197</sup> Choueiri, p.97

most well-known families of Jerusalem and which kept the control of six of thirteen mayors of Jerusalem<sup>198</sup> since 1864 administered *Nadi al-Arabi*.

Together with the Arab Club there were two other important organizations which were the Literary Club; *al-Muntada al-Arabi* and the Muslim Christian Association; *al-Jamiyya al-Islamiyya al-Masahiyya*. Amin al-Husayni who was an active unionist dedicated most of his energies to the persuasion of the Muslim-Christian Association to support the union with Syria. These three organizations gathered around one main and common ideology which stated the Palestinians as the rightful inhabitants of Palestine who were the owners of the land for at least 1300 years and asserted that the Zionists could not pronounce any legitimate claim over Palestine<sup>199</sup>. The Literary Club and the Arab Club were both dominated by young and well-educated activists and unlike the Muslim Christian Association; both of them were composed mostly of Muslim people. These two organizations joined with the idea of resistance against Zionism and with a desire of becoming Palestine a part of Greater Syria under the rule of Faysal<sup>200</sup>. The Literary Club was financed by the French in order to gain support of Palestine for their plans over Syria. However, when the British Government took over the Palestine region, the Literary Club came under the leadership of the Nashashibi family.

The two families were different in their political attitudes. While the Husaynis were pro-British at the beginning, the Nashashibi family was anti-British and had pro-French orientations. The former one and their collaborators were Pan-Arabists and their main purpose was the unification of Palestine with Syria as a means of relieving Palestine of the Zionists. Furthermore, when it was understood that the Great Syrian project was unsuccessful, the Husayni family focused its attention to national politics. In internal affairs the family pursued its Jerusalemite stance and they continued to affect the city's character. Some of the members of the family- Kamil al-Husayni and Musa Kazim were the members of the Association

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<sup>198</sup> Tessler, p.220

<sup>199</sup> Philip Mattar, *The Mufti of Jerusalem: Al-Hajj Amin al-Husayni and the Palestinian National Movement*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1988, p.13

<sup>200</sup> Tessler, p.219

of Jerusalem which was a dynamic political body of the city. It was an interfaith, inter-communal and bi-national organization and served as a model for the international community who wanted to solve the problem of Jerusalem. Those Husayni members of the association managed for the preservation of the holy city with a team of archeologists, architects and government officials<sup>201</sup>. While the Husaynis were pro- British and anti- Zionists in the beginning, they maintained a dual struggle against both the British rule in Palestine and the Zionists later on.

On the other hand, the Nashashibi family had close relations with French agents and tried to realize the complete independence of Palestine. In the beginning, in order to demonstrate their different political views, the young Nashashibis joined the Literary Club as rivals. They had newly gained their existence in Jerusalem as a notable family and with the Young Turk Revolution in 1908 the Nashashibi family became an influential socio-political factor in Palestine. However, when the end of the British Mandate came, the family could not have the power to lead the Palestinian population compared to the Husaynis.

The Nashashibis survived as landlords and merchants in Jerusalem and they had substantial authority in Palestine under the Ottoman Empire and Memluks. The most prominent figure of the Nashashibi family during especially the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was Raghib al-Nashashibi. He was born in Jerusalem and lived between the years of 1881-1951 was a significant, public figure under both Ottoman Empire and under administration of British Mandate. He was graduated from the Istanbul University and became Jerusalem's District Engineer. He was elected in the Ottoman parliament in 1914 and he was also the member of all-Syrian Conference in 1919<sup>202</sup>. Moreover, he was also member for Jerusalem in the *Meclis-i Mebusan* in Istanbul under the Ottoman Empire<sup>203</sup>. Raghib al-Nashashibi who was a wealthy land owner became the mayor of Jerusalem after Musa Kazim al-Husayni

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<sup>201</sup> Illan Pappé, *The Rise and Fall of a Palestinian Dynasty: the Husaynis 1700-1948*, London: Saqi Books, 2010, p. 186

<sup>202</sup> Illan Pappé, *A History of Modern Palestine*, p.328

<sup>203</sup> Yezid Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, p.9

between 1920-1934 and he would become the founding member of the Arab Higher Committee and a leader of the National Defense Party<sup>204</sup>. Kedourie writes for Raghib al-Nashashibi that “after 1948, Nashashibi also made reputation for himself as a journalist of talent”<sup>205</sup>. In August of 1949 Raghib al-Nashashibi was appointed as the minister of refugees in the Jordanian Government and was appointed as the first Governor-General for Arab Palestine in September of that same year.

These organizations demonstrate that the political groups that dominated Palestine’s political atmosphere were under the authority of specific families. Although both the Arab Club and the Literary Society had identical programs about the unification and independence of Syria, the main distinction between them was the rivalry of their administrators Husayni and Nashashibi families which desired the leadership of the nascent nationalist movement.

Additionally, these political institutions produced a series of Palestine national congresses. For instance, All-Palestine Congress which was known as First Congress of the Muslim-Christian Societies was organized in Jerusalem in 1919 by MCA. These Palestinians were organized under the leadership of the Arab Club and became the leading political association which helped to arrange a General Syrian Congress in Damascus in both July 1919 and another in March 1920<sup>206</sup>. The main claim of these congresses was the unity of Greater Syria including its southern province of Palestine and with the proclamation of independence by the second General Congress; different demonstrations were organized by the Arab and Literary Clubs in Palestine. In a speech, al- Hajj Amin addressed the people in Arabic by criticizing and opposing to the Balfour Declaration and Jewish immigration. Therefore, the British administration blamed Amin al-Husayni due to the involvement in anti-Jewish uprisings that occurred in Jerusalem and he fled to Damascus. At the end of Easter Sunday, 4 April 1920, Ronald Storrs, the military governor of Jerusalem, wrote in his diary that

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<sup>204</sup> National Defense Party and its position as an opposition organization will be explained later.

<sup>205</sup> Kedourie, *Arabic Political Memoirs and Other*, p. 192

<sup>206</sup> Tessler, p.221

“The Nabi Musa celebrations turned into a riot aimed against the Jews. A man by name of al-Hajj Amin al-Husayni, the Mufti’s brother, was responsible for the riot. Like all men who instigate riots, having incited the mob, he himself vanished.”<sup>207</sup>

These accusations could not prevent the establishment of another political group that was organized by Palestinians in Syria named as the Palestinian Arab Society.

## **4.2 Rivalry over Governmental Positions**

The independence-oriented congresses, anti-British and anti-Jewish demonstrations and the expulsion of Amin al-Husayni caused an important result which was the end of pro-British orientation of the Husayni family. Besides, the dismissal of King Faysal from Syria led to the conclusion of the intention of the unity with Syria. Palestinian nationalism’s pan-Arabist and Southern-Syria orientation did also collapse. The British administration in Palestine accused not only Amin al-Husayni and the Arab-Club of provoking the April disturbances but also found the mayor of Jerusalem, Kazim al-Husayni responsible and deprived him.

The British administration benefited from that position of the Husayni family and from the situation. It increased the rivalry between the two families and promoted Raghib al- Nashashibi for the position of Musa Kazim al-Husayni. Thus, the Mandate both gained the support of the Nashashibi family and deepened the rivalry between the Husayni and Nashashibi families. Another important result of these events was while Husayni family began emerging as the leading group of the growing Palestinian national movement, the Nashashibi family began promoting the British Mandate.

### **4.2.1 Election of Raghib al-Nashashibi as Mayor**

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<sup>207</sup> Pappé, *The Rise and Fall of a Palestinian Dynasty*, p.194

With a report issued by Raghīb al-Nashashībī, three joint actions of the Husaynis were described. The mufti who was from the Husayni family provoked the Arab population with the verses from Qur'an, al-Hajj Amin shouted to the crowd with a picture of Faysal by saying that "Faysal is our King!"<sup>208</sup>, and lastly, Musa Kazim addressed to the inhabitants of Hebron and others with political arguments. Therefore, during the 1920 rebellions in the Eastern part of Palestine, the Mayor of Jerusalem, Musa Kazim al-Husayni was regarded as the head of the riots and the distinct governor decided to dismiss him from his position. Due to the deposal of Musa Kazim, Raghīb al-Nashashībī who was from rival family was appointed as the Mayor of Jerusalem. This appointment also happened during the post of Herbert Samuel.

That appointment of Mayoralty from the Nashashibi family would cause struggle between these two families and opposition against the British Mandate. Therefore, in order to prevent any struggle between these two families and while the Mayor of Jerusalem was elected from Nashashibis, the Mufti was chosen from Husaynis.

Although there were linkages of marriage between the two families, all of the relations were forgotten during the British Mandate. The severe rivalry between these families caused a division among the Palestinian population and hindered them to present unification when they were in need of solidarity. In addition to that appointment, the efforts of Raghīb al-Nashashībī in order to prevent Hajj al-Amin from the presidency of the Supreme Muslim Council in 1921, triggered the enmity between the two families.

#### **4.2.2 The Pardon of Hajj al-Amin**

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<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, p.201

During a visit of Herbert Samuel to Transjordan in 1920 after the departure of Faysal from Damascus, demanded from the Commissioner to forgive Hajj al-Amin and Arif al-Arif, the editor of the first Arab nationalist newspaper in Palestine, *Suriyya al-Janubiyya*, in order to turn back to Jerusalem where Amin al-Husayni was in the black list of police. For the period of the establishment of the the British Mandate in Jerusalem, Hajj Amin was pro-English because he worked in the governor's office and he provided the recruitment of the Palestinians under the Sharifian army. Nevertheless, after the announcement of the Britain's support for Zionism with the Balfour Declaration, Hajj Amin altered his approach. He became one of the leaders of nationalist revolts of 1920 in the eastern part of Palestine. He had an active role during the Nabi Musa celebrations in 1920 and mobilized the Palestinian people for the achievement of independence and liberation from both the Zionists and the British Governance.

Therefore, he was condemned to ten years imprisonment by the British Mandate and had to escape through refugee camps in Trans-Jordanian tribes. After a consideration about the demand for the pardon of Amin al-Husayni and Arif al-Arif through one night, the High Commissioner informed the general public that he pardoned them.

The High Commissioner, Sir Herbert Samuel might forgive Amin al-Husayni because of two reasons. Firstly, he might avoid appearing too pro-Jewish; he had difficulty about the impartiality. Secondly, he might want to provide balance between the Nashashibis who had the position of mayoralty of Jerusalem and the Husaynis in order to rule efficiently over divided societies. Although Samuel was a supporter of Zionism, he was pragmatist as well. He recommended that the Zionist program should not be pushed too far and too fast and the Zionists and British Government should provide Palestinian economic, minor political, religious and social needs<sup>209</sup>. The High Commissioner considered the pardon question as a minor compromise.

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<sup>209</sup> Mattar, p.21

After six months from the appointment of Herbert Samuel as the High Commissioner of Palestine, the Mufti of Jerusalem; Kamil al-Husayni died in 1921 and that caused the debates about who would be the successor of the old Mufti. In the following days, many shaikhs of tribes, notables and significant people began to send their petitions to the distinct government that Hajj Amin was the selection of people<sup>210</sup>. Hajj Amin al-Husayni who indicated his distrust<sup>211</sup> on British officials at the beginning wrote his brother that he did not mind to be forgiven because he was not a criminal when he heard about the pardon. However, when Kamil became ill, Amin al- Husayni accepted the pardon and turned to Jerusalem in December 1920.

#### **4.2.3 Election of Al-Hajj Amin as Mufti**

After his return to Jerusalem, Hajj Amin declared his wish for the appointment to the office of Grand Mufti and began to prepare for the position. He also announced that he would collaborate with the British government to provide silence and order in Jerusalem. Although the Husayni family wanted the Mufti's position to stay within the family, they did not favor young and impetuous Amin al-Husayni who was the younger brother of the last Mufti. Furthermore, although he was very young to be appointed to this important position; he was twenty five at that year; he emphasized his education in Al- Azhar in Cairo for being the Mufti. Moreover, since the death of Kamil, the political and cultural club whose president was Amin al-Husayni began collecting signatures for the petitions which defined al- Amin as the successor of the Mufti. On the other hand, the British Mandate was in demand of a mufti who did not oppose to their rule. Even though Amin al- Husayni declared that he would be cooperative and would provide collaboration with the Mandate, he was known to be against the policy. The most important obstacle in front of Amin was the rival family Nashashibis and their supporters.

Until the increase of Jerusalem's status and importance of the mufti's position, the Mufti of Jerusalem was a minor official in Palestine. Until the establishment of the British Mandate in Palestine, it remained as depended on Shaykh al-Islam in

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<sup>210</sup> Kedourie, *The Chatham House Version*, p.60

<sup>211</sup> Pappe, *The Rise and Fall of a Palestinian Dynasty*, p.210



Istanbul and limited under the control jurisdiction of Jerusalem. When the connection with Istanbul was lessened, then the importance of the Mufti of Jerusalem enhanced.

Despite all obstacles and difficulties, the willingness of Hajj al-Amin for the cooperation with the government to prevent violent acts served for the purpose and Sir Herbert Samuel preferred him among the three candidates. In order to make the election, the Muslim Committee met on 12 April 1921. There were four candidates and while Jarallah received most of the votes, Hajj al- Amin took the fewest votes. Since the result disappointed the Husayni family, they began organizing opposition in order to provide acceptance of the election as invalid and in order to influence the High Commissioner who would select the mufti among the three candidates. The family supported their claims by declaring that the committee was not consisted a delegation of electors and it did not represent the Palestinian Muslims. The support for the campaign against the election of the Mufti came not only from the Muslim ulama but also from the Christian communities with hundreds of signatures that were sent to the Palestinian Government. Every political and religious society, even the people who were not from the Husayni family backed Amin al-Husayni because the claims over election such as the manipulation of the elections by the mayor of Jerusalem; Raghib al-Nashashibi, the Palestinian Government, the Jews caused the increase in suspicion among the people. The Husayni family who organized the campaign against the elections asserted that the aim of the Jews was to kill Palestinian national spirit by placing a traitor within the office of the Mufti.

All these claims and suspicions led to the rise of national sentiment among the Palestinians and caused the increase in support for Hajj Amin al- Husayni. Therefore, the district governor of Jerusalem; Ronald Storrs sent the petitions to the High Commissioner; Herbert Samuel and informed him that Amin al- Husayni was the popular choice. The younger members of the Husayni family also emphasized Amin al-Husayni as the people's choice<sup>212</sup> with the petitions.

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<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, p.214

As a result of the intense persistence for Hajj al- Amin for the Mufti's office, the High Commissioner met with him to speak about his candidacy. During the meeting, Amin gave certain assurances for the collaboration with the British Mandate. It is written about the promises of Amin al-Husayni;

“his earnest desire to cooperate with the Government, and his belief in the good intention of the Government towards the Arabs. He gave assurance that the influence of his family and himself would be devoted to maintaining tranquility in Jerusalem and he felt sure that no disturbances need be feared this year. He said the riots of last year had been spontaneous and unpremeditated. If the government took reasonable precaution, he felt sure they would not be repeated.”<sup>213</sup>

Amin was sincere about his promises because his personal view was also that the Palestinian people should not revolt against the British Mandate which was too strong but should resist and oppose against the Zionists who were the main threat for the Palestinians. Hajj al- Amin's honesty was tested during the Nabi Musa celebrations in 1921. Contrary to the previous celebrations in which Amin al-Husayni had radical attitude and severe speeches, this time celebrations were peaceful in Jerusalem. Moreover, one day before the second elections, Samuel met with Hajj al-Amin and he indicated his promises to cooperate and stated the regrets for his involvements in the 1920 organizations. Al-Amin also defined that the demonstrations that took place during the celebrations were unplanned and spontaneous<sup>214</sup>. Thus, Samuel also believed that Amin al-Husayni would use his own and his family's influence to bring tranquility in Jerusalem and the whole Palestine.

However, at that time there were clashes between the Jews and Arabs in Jaffa and the deaths from both sides were perceived by the British Mandate as the demand of Arab population for representation. Therefore, in order to meet Arab complaints the High Commissioner Samuel informed Hajj al-Amin that he would select him as Mufti.

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<sup>213</sup> Mattar, p.26

<sup>214</sup> Pappé, *The Rise and Fall of a Palestinian Dynasty*, p.216

In order to select Hajj al-Amin in a legal way, it was necessary to convince Raghib al-Nashashibi to leave his support for another candidate Jaralla. Despite the objections of the members of the Nashashibi family, Raghib al-Nashashibi drew his support. As a result, Hajj al-Amin could become one of the three candidates for the office of the Mufti. At the end, Amin al-Husayni became the Mufti of Jerusalem, but not Grand Mufti because the British Mandate was not completely sure about his loyalty. Moreover, an official letter of appointment was not sent to him and the official newspaper did not declare his new position. Despite all of these, the office of Mufti provided Hajj al-Amin the religious and moral authority throughout Palestine. A memorandum was organized on 7<sup>th</sup> June which demonstrated the overwhelming desire of the public for the Mufti of Hajj Amin al-Husayni. Both of the Muslim divines, notables, Bedouin sheikhs and the Orthodox patriarch, Syrian Bishop, the head of the American part of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher declared their wishes for Hajj Amin. Although there were also oppositional indicators against Hajj Amin by both the Jews and Nashashibi faction which was supported by Mr. Bentwich who was the legal secretary, Amin al-Husayni became the owner of the position of the Muftiship of Jerusalem. He not only declared himself as the Grand Mufti but also announced that he was the head of the Muslim community in Palestine. He was supported by the Assistant Secretary, Richmand that because of being the leader of Muslim community in Jerusalem and according to him, his salary should be more than other muftis.

#### **4.2.4 Struggles over the Supreme Muslim Council**

Muhammad Amin al-Husayni was not only allowed to become the mufti of Jerusalem and but also became the president of the Supreme Muslim Council which was founded by the British Mandate to administer Muslim religious endowments and establishments. At the end of 1920, the High Commissioner wondered about how the government officials transfer their religious affairs to the Muslim notables. He asked the issue to a committee of Muslim religious leaders in Palestine which was led by Kamil al-Husayni. On the other hand, the Muslim community was also

alarmed because of the probability of the control of Muslim affairs by a Christian government led by a British Zionist High Commissioner Sir Herbert Samuel. Since the religious institutions, sharia courts, awqafs were under the control of British legal secretary, Norman Bentwich, the Muslims complained of religious discrimination and demanded the authority over their own affairs. Therefore, the High Commissioner guaranteed the Palestinians that the “Government does not want to take the place of Sheikh ul-Islam” and suggested that the Muslim secondary electors to the last Ottoman Parliament choose a higher body<sup>215</sup>. Draft regulations for a Supreme Muslim Council which would control over the Muslim affairs were prepared by a committee of this body. At the end, the committee presented its proposal to create a Supreme Muslim Council.

The Supreme Muslim Council was an autonomous body which involved all Islamic institutions under the Mandate. It was founded on 9<sup>th</sup> June of 1922 when 53 of the 56 secondary electors to the last Ottoman electors were assembled to vote for the members of the electors of the Council and they also had to choose the *Rais al-Ulama* as the president. Hajj Amin was elected as the president of the Council<sup>216</sup>. It was a lifetime position and Hajj Amin was well-aware of his post. He and twenty-eight members of the Husayni clan who were also member of the council were well-paid with their positions. However, as happened in the election of the mufti, the Nashashibis and their supporters made a last minute effort to block the growing power of the Husaynis and to prevent the election of the Hajj Amin al-Husayni as the president and his henchmen to the council. Raghیب al-Nashashibi demanded the postponement of the elections and started a strong propaganda. However, although he called for a boycott of the elections, it did not provide any useful result for them. There were only ten members who supported the Nashashibis and therefore, Raghیب and six of his supporters left the assembly<sup>217</sup>. At the end, during the elections for the president of Supreme Muslim Council a committee in which there were fifty-three electors, was formed and despite the demands of Raghیب al-Nashashibi for the delay of the elections, his demand was refused with forty-three votes to ten and forty-

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<sup>215</sup> Mattar, p. 28

<sup>216</sup> Cleveland, p.243

<sup>217</sup> Porath,, p.196

seven electors voted for the presidency of Hajj Amin al-Husayni<sup>218</sup>. The members of the SMC were elected for four years while the task duration of al- Hajj Amin was not clearly determined. That lack of clarity caused al- Hajj Amin to strengthen his position and tried to make the term of office as a lifetime position.

The Palestinian Arab population welcomed the foundation of the Supreme Muslim Council with a general satisfaction and the Secretary of the Arab Executive; Jamal al- Husayni described the result as “a victory for the Nationalist Movement”<sup>219</sup> and it was surprising that the even the rivals of the Amin al-Husayni received this body as “the vanguard of the Nationalist Movement, despite its being a religious body”<sup>220</sup>. The establishment of the Supreme Muslim Council was perceived as the recovery of the young national movement and it was declared as “the triumph of the national movement”<sup>221</sup>. Even opponents of the Husayni family accepted the leader of the council as the national leader. By having authorities in two important institutions, Hajj Amin obtained direct power over the patronage system and he used his power of appointment and dismissal in order to promote the positions of his supporters and to secure positions from his opponents. Therefore, the Mufti transformed his religious authority into political organization of Arabs in Palestine. The dominance in the Palestine community was in the hands of the Husayni family with the acquisition of the Mufti by Amin al-Husayni and the Husayni family directed the political structure of Palestine until 1947<sup>222</sup>.

The Supreme Council which was inspired from the *Millet* system of the Ottoman Empire was created by the British Mandate. In the House of Lords, Herbert Samuel proposed that the system of communities was suitable for the conditions of Palestine and the Middle East. During the Ottoman Administration, the Muslims did not need such specific institutions while the Christians and Jews had their own communal organizations. On the other hand, under the British

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<sup>218</sup> Kedourie, *The Chatham House Version*, p.72

<sup>219</sup> Porath, p.200

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 200

<sup>221</sup> Pappé, *The Rise and Fall of a Palestinian Dynasty*, p.223

<sup>222</sup> Kedourie, *The Chatham House Version*, p.69

Mandate, the Muslims were in need of such institutions in order to control Muslim religious endowments (waqifs), to choose preachers (imams) for mosques and qadis for the religious courts. With the creation of the Supreme Muslim Council in 1921, the authority of the Mufti was expanded because the Supreme Muslim Council involved the management of Islamic institutions of whole Palestine.

The main importance of the Council was its combination of political and financial power. As a result of the annual budget of the Council which involved 50,000 to 65,000 Palestine pounds<sup>223</sup>, Amin al- Husayni increased his influence throughout Palestine. From the beginning of the establishment of the Council, he worked for the consolidation of the status of Mufti as the head of Islam in Palestine and after the foundation of it he tried to centralize the functions of leadership, the offices of Mufti of Jerusalem and the Presidency of the Muslim Council. The Head of the Middle East Department; Sir John Shuckburgh wrote that

“The institution of the Supreme Muslim Council in 1920 has, on the whole, been one of the most successful moves in Palestine. It practically gave the Mohammedans self-government in regard to Moslem affairs. The arrangement has worked smoothly and has no doubt done much to reconcile Mohammedans to the Mandatory regime with its unpopular Zionist flavor”<sup>224</sup>

As a result of his political and financial power, Amin al- Husayni started to implement different welfare applications for different areas of Palestine. For instance, while he offered special treatment for the development of his favored areas, he neglected other areas where he had weaker standing such as Hebron, Acre and Haifa. He also had the right of hire and dismissal of court officials.

The Supreme Muslim Council had the duty of control religious schools, courts, orphanages, mosques and funds of awqafs. In terms of the authorization, the Council cannot be compared with the office of Muftiship because the authorities of the first one are much more expanded than the latter one. The aim behind the

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<sup>223</sup> Pappé, *The Rise and Fall of a Palestinian Dynasty*, p.223

<sup>224</sup> Quoted from the minutes of Shuckburgh by Y. Porath, op.cit., p.201

establishment of SMC was to provide the satisfaction of Muslim population of Palestine. Furthermore, that arrangement was used by the British Mandate in order to pacify the Palestinian elite by providing control over their religious affairs and to resolve the Palestinian opposition against British policy which favored Jewish nationalism.

With the Supreme Muslim Council, the Mufti of Jerusalem gained a considerable authority and began the establishments of new institutions. He firstly established a Muslim orphanage of 160 girls and boys, gave strong support to schools such as *Rawdat al-Ma'arif* and repaired the *Nahawiyya* School which was built within the *Haram al-Sharif*. Moreover, he established a new library and museum, brought in 50,000 trees to plant on waqf land, improved welfare and health clinics and restored mosques; especially two mosques of Haram, and other buildings<sup>225</sup>. The reason why Hajj gave importance to the renovation of the religious buildings and other was to attract the attention of the Muslim world to Jerusalem and to reaffirm the centrality of Jerusalem. These restorations required the growth of the funds, therefore, a delegation was sent to Hejaz and different countries in order to collect financial aid. That restoration scheme helped for the provision of world wide support for the struggle of the Palestinians against the Jewish settlement in Palestine. By the end of 1920s, the Dome of the Rock was plated with gold. The Supreme Muslim Council worked for the establishment of a museum of Islamic art and library of religious works in the region.

In addition to the construction and restoration of the religious buildings or the administration of the waqf properties, SMC and Hajj al-Amin Husayni involved in national activities for the Palestinian cause. In 1930s SMC and its president led the forceful campaign by Palestinian National Movement against the sale of Arab lands to Jews. A Fatwa was issued by the president of the SMC and ulama forbade the sale of the lands to the Jews and warned with the punishments such as excommunication and denial of the Muslim marriage<sup>226</sup>. Both of SMC and Amin al-

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<sup>225</sup> Mattar, p. 29

<sup>226</sup> Porath, p.205

Husayni worked for the increase and activate the interest of the world over the Jerusalem's status and over the importance of the city's two mosques in order to save those from damage. In order to influence other countries SMC and the president organized propaganda that focused on the danger of falling the mosques into the hands of Zionists.

The activities of the collection of the fund provided the opportunity for the Hajj Amin to be recognized as a Palestinian leader. His prestige was also increased. He strengthened his power in definite regions such as Jerusalem, Jaffa and Nablus, while he disregarded the regions of the opposition like Hebron, Haifa and Acre. Hajj al-Amin's family origin, his everlasting ambition and his ability of being leader provided him to achieve office of the Mufti of Jerusalem, later on with the policy of the British Mandate that office was transferred into the Head of Muslim Community in Palestine that gave the opportunity Amin al- Husayni to serve as the president of the Supreme Muslim Council. However, those positions of him served his own personal political endings. The opponents of the Mufti frequently complained that the budgets of waqfs that reserved for the expenditure of the restorations of the mosques were used for the political aims such as organization of demonstrations or money aids to Muslim-Christian Association. While the members of the SMC except its president and high officials attended different Palestinian conferences during the first half of the 1920s, the opponents of Hajj al-Amin who arranged themselves into political party were confronted by Supreme Muslim Council's mobilized forces for a battle.

To sum up, the restoration of mosques and strengthening the position of Jerusalem were the two important political weapons against Hajj Amin's rivals whom were prevented by the suppression policies of him, and constituted the basic prop of his policy.

### **4.3 Rivalry between the Two National Parties**

Changing conditions of the social environment which was formed by family and clan network in Palestine caused the increase in the Arab national movement. The



village and local rulers gave their support to the leading families and these leading families accelerated the process of mobilization in Palestine<sup>227</sup>. Different parties in Palestine were founded and two of them were the significant ones which were established by Husayni and Nashashibi families of Palestine on the basis of the structure that focused on family and clan networks. These leading families had political powers in their villages and towns and they felt themselves as the equal of others. Nonetheless, alliances between these families and clans altered according to personal and family privileges rather than politics. This caused division in the unity of national feeling and in the interest of all groups to protect the Arab identity in Palestine.

Arabic speaking Palestine was divided in two factions; the majlisiyyun<sup>228</sup> or majlisiyeen<sup>229</sup> which meant Pro-Council men. Their name also indicated that their group was constituted by the Husayni family's followings and they supported the Hajj Amin al-Husayni who was President of the Supreme Muslim Council. The other one was the mu'aridun or moarideen which meant oppositionists and who opposed the Husaynis and supported the National Defense Party. Thus, the years 1930-35 witnessed a keen competition between Opposition and Husaynis.

#### **4.3.1 National Defense Party**

After the defeat in municipal elections in 1938, Raghیب al-Nashashibi who was the leader of the oppositionist group set up his own party that was the National Defense Party. Although the opposition won the municipal elections in Gaza and Jaffa, they lost the race in Jerusalem against a Husayni candidate from Khalidi family, Dr. Fakhri al-Khalidi. Due to being a side of anti-Zionist Palestinian delegation to London in 1930<sup>230</sup>, Raghیب al-Nashashibi was not supported by Jews while Khalidi was supported. Therefore, after the defeat in municipal elections in 1934, oppositionist Nashashibi family decided for the foundation of the party. The defeat

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<sup>227</sup> Mosely Lesch, Part I in B. W. Quandt, et al.(eds.), op.cit., p.17

<sup>228</sup> Kedourie, *The Chatham House Version*, p.72

<sup>229</sup> Abboushi, p.40

<sup>230</sup> Morris, *Righteous Victims*, p.124

in municipal elections made Raghیب Bey free in the participation for partisan politics and he became the president of the Hizb al- Difaa al-Watani<sup>231</sup>.

The rival National Defense Party which was formed by the Nashashibis in 1934 was mostly promoted by the Arab Mayors of Palestine who were opponents against mufti gained the support of other notables in a number of towns, such as Nablus, Jaffa and Ramleh. It was also supported by another family; Dajanis in Jerusalem. Furthermore, Greek Orthodox which was the vice mayor of Jerusalem provided support and therefore, party did obtain the Christian support also. However, that situation created an important weakness for the party. The anti-Muftis party, most of its supporters and members were very urban. That characteristic of the party caused the party to be deprived of any influence or authority over the rural areas and rural people in Palestine. Therefore, the party had remained always distanced to the problems of the rural areas.

Additionally, Jaffa leader of Palestine Arab Workers Society gave its promotion to labor branch of the party<sup>232</sup>. Weldon Matthews states that “during the municipal elections of 1934, Fakhri al-Nashashibi who was the cousin and closed friend of Raghیب al-Nashashibi created Arab Workers Society in Jerusalem”<sup>233</sup>. What is more, a branch of Arab Workers Society also appeared in Jaffa and threatened the Zionist activities and attempted to unify Arab workers in the city. After the 1933 demonstrations, it was seen that the workers began to follow Fakhri al-Nashashibi and they supported anti-mandate protests which should be controlled.

Long-term official aims of the party were parallel to the Husayni’s party but there was an important difference between them that National Defense Party had the willingness to cooperate with the government which the Husaynis resisted strongly. Leaders of the party were far more moderate. They contacted with Zionists and rejected the calls of radicals for the boycotting Yishuv and made an agreement with the Zionists over short-term Zionist aims such as continued but limited Jewish

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<sup>231</sup> Tessler, p.229

<sup>232</sup> Peretz, p.286

<sup>233</sup> Matthews, p.228

immigration. However, while the National Defense Party manifested itself as anti-Zionist which was necessary to provide the support of population and to achieve the opposition against Husaynis, it was actually centre in policy. The party periodically accepted money from the Jewish Agency<sup>234</sup> to finance that political campaign against Husaynis.

However, during the process in which the British Mandate sent an investigation committee in 1937 for the practicality of the partition, both of the parties were against any probability of the division of territory. Before the publication of Peel report, the National Defense Party disassociated itself from the Arab Higher Committee which supported the Peel proposal that would give Arabs seven-eighths of the Arab lands and would provide an economically non-viable Arab state and rejected partition. The withdrawal of NDP from the AHC marked the beginning of disagreement within the leadership. The reason of disagreement was not the dissension over the purposes. Both sides declared their rejection of the Royal Commission report after less than three weeks and refused any possibility of the creation of the Jewish state in part of Palestine.

The reason of disagreement was about the methods that were used. While some leaders thought that the only way for the attainment of national goals was the usage of force, the other leaders believed that the only influential ways for the solution were the gradualism and diplomacy<sup>235</sup>.

Moreover, after publication of the White Paper, two delegates of the National Defense Party who attended the Arab delegation also, issued the majority of their program on 17 January of 1939. The program of NDP involved specific topics that “There would be no direct negotiations with Zionists”, “All Zionist immigration and land purchase must be stopped” and lastly, “ Palestine would become an independent Arab state in a treaty relationship with Britain”<sup>236</sup>. Furthermore, there were also other themes of the program of NDP about the Jews

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<sup>234</sup> Morris, p.124

<sup>235</sup> Abboushi, p.39

<sup>236</sup> Fieldhouse, p.171

that had been living in Palestine. Firstly “Palestine would be cantonized to provide local autonomy in the Jewish majority areas”, secondly “Hebrew would become the second public language” and “the civil rights of Jews would be guaranteed”<sup>237</sup>. Thus it might be understood that NDP did not persist in the immediate independence, it did accept limited immigration, and its demand was a local legislature.

That party had a characteristic which was its moderate stand towards the British Mandate and its opposing position. The founder of the Party; Raghib al-Nashashibi formed an alliance with Amir Abdullah of Transjordan for the opposition against the rival Husayni family with the new alliance and party. In other words, the party’s close relations with Amir Abdullah of Transjordan, party’s attitude towards the British Mandate was not hostile but was moderate. Another motivation for the moderate attitude of the National Defense Party was both the fear of party leaders about the upheavals that would change the social status quo and fear of British and Zionists<sup>238</sup> Moreover, the party was first of the new nationalist parties in Palestine and first demonstrations of the mobilization began in first two months of 1935<sup>239</sup>. The aim of the party did not focus on Arab unity; on the contrary, it emphasized only the struggle for the independence of Palestine and social, educational and economic development. Founders of the Party were the wealthy people of Palestine and it supported the legislative council from the beginning of its establishment. There were village mukhtars, newspaper owners, Arab Mayors from Jaffa and notables from different towns and cities among its members.

On the one hand, the new party considered the progress of the interests of definite segments of Palestinian elite and served as a vehicle for that aim. On the other hand, it tried to establish a grass-roots base in some areas. Besides, the party

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<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*, p.171

<sup>238</sup> A. M. Lesch, *Arab Politics in Palestine, 1917–1939: The Frustration of a Nationalist Movement*, Cornell University Press, 1979, p. 106

<sup>239</sup> W. C. Matthews, *Confronting an Empire, Constructing a Nation: Arab Nationalists and popular Politics in Mandate Palestine*, New York: I. B. TAURIS, 2006, p.226

criticized other groups like the Youth Congress because of their militancy and aggressiveness. Thus, the Party focused on moderation policy and less confrontation with which it would gain the concessions from British Mandate. This policy involved some kind of realism that weakness of the national movement was obvious. Another policy of the party was to develop international links in order to explain its outlook and find support, for that, it sent delegations to Egypt in 1935.

Additionally, the National Defense Party was heavily concentrated on self-interest. One of the aims of the party was to undermine the position of the Hajj Amin al-Husayni as mufti. The party delegates criticized Hajj Amin while they were travelling abroad and local newspapers which were supported by Nashashibis targeted him. Conversely, the party was worried about the status and authority of the traditional elite due to the emergence of more radical political factions which undermined the traditional elite and about the increased social mobilization at the non-elite level.

In short, Arab politics failed to form a unified front against the threat of Zionist expansion and division proposals of the British Mandate. Even in 1943, it was attempted to organize a general conference with the attendance of all pre-war parties in Jerusalem to provide the unification of all parties and to provide a unified front. However, this attempt was also unsuccessful. The only achievement of 1943 was the establishment of the Arab National Front to promote the anti-Jewish movement.

#### **4.3.2 Palestine Arab Party**

After the departure of Musa Kazim, Husayni family began to search for a new structure in its political and national action. Especially as a response to the Nashashibis' new party; the National Defense Party and to the new political developments, on the April of the 1935, Majlisi faction constituted its own

nationalist party which was called as the Palestinian Arab Party; Hizb al-Arabiyya al-Filastiniyya.

1,500 individuals participated to the founding conference that was organized in Jerusalem. As a religious leader, Hajj amin al-Husayni did not demand to become political leader of the party. Therefore, Jamal al- Husayni resigned from his position as the secretary of the Supreme Muslim Council and became the president of the new Party. In order to gain support of the Christians, a prominent Greek Catholic layman from Jaffa who was Alfred Rock was appointed as the vice president of the party. There was help of Alfred Rock also over the election of Jamal as the head of the party.

The party was the largest of all parties in Palestine<sup>240</sup>. It was attractive especially to the young generation of Palestine because of its uncompromising and anti-British stand. The popularity of the party was originated from the prestige of the Husayni family rather than the principles or organizations of the party because many people strongly believed that the family lineage of the Husayni family went back through the family of prophet. Moreover, the fact that Amin al-Husayni was a religious leader who provided an opportunity for the party that it gained attraction among the rural people. Being opposed to the collaboration with British Governance in Palestine, it also drew the attention of young and fighting men.

The aims of the new party were the end of the British Mandate, the achievement of independence of Palestine and the annulment of the Jewish national home. The policy of the new party did not involve anti-British or non-imperialist proclamations<sup>241</sup>. The party was formed from the Councilites<sup>242</sup> that were the supporters of the Mufti within the Supreme Muslim Council. Besides, the party remained the most influential party in Palestine and its popularity was attributed to Hajj Amin al-Husayni.

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<sup>240</sup> Abboushi, p. 26

<sup>241</sup> Mattar, p.268

<sup>242</sup> Peretz, p.286

With the establishment of the party, Hajj Amin al-Husayni explained his opinions that presence of the Christians in the party did not only indicate the national unity but also reflected the political and intellectual outlook of the Husayni family since 1920s. Palestinian Arab party occupied the most significant place in Palestinian intellectual life and became the center of politics during 1930s. In political organization the family developed new skills and became stronger in political arena. However, family could not improve itself in guerilla activities and military warfare that it fell behind both Izz al-Din al-Qassam and Jewish community which established a military infrastructure and smuggled weapons into country by the way of civilian imports.

The strong pan-Arab and nationalist program of the Palestinian Arab Party resembled to the program of the Istiqlal Party<sup>243</sup>. On August of 1935, the leading cadre of the party established a newspaper as an agent of the party which was called as al- Liwa. The year of 1935 was also the beginning time of the Palestine Arab Party's activation process. Additionally, in July and August party leaders organized branches in Jaffa, Gaza, Majdal, Khan Yunis, Beersheba, Bethlehem, Nazareth, Safuriyah, Acre and Nablus, however, they did not gain support and success in Haifa, Jenin and Tulkarm. On September 1935, in Nazareth, three hundred participants attended to the meeting of the party and the public demanded and supported the independence of Arab Palestine. Party also announced that it had purposes to establish youth groups. Jerusalem and Haifa leaders of the Palestine Arab Workers' Society were allied to party and with association of two groups an illegal quasi-military youth group that was called as al-Futuwwah; Chivalry<sup>244</sup> was organized. There were various demands of the National Pact which was the platform of the Palestine Arab Party. Refusal of Balfour Declaration, end of the Mandate, halt of the Jewish immigration and land sales and announcement of the Palestine as an independent state were the basic requests.

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<sup>221</sup> Matthews, p.226

<sup>244</sup> Peretz, p.286

Additionally, party was an arena for Hajj Amin al-Husayni in order to describe his political demands and party also used the position of Mufti for its own sake. In order to persuade Arabs for the sale of their lands to the Supreme Muslim Council as a religious endowment of the Arab people in Palestine, party members utilized from the position of Mufti. There were threats such as religious reprisals over the Muslims who sold their lands to Jews.

Nevertheless, this created problem for the party. The main difficulty of the party was that it was lacked of a modern leadership and party was too much conservative. Hajj Amin al-Husayni was a religious leader who was involved into politics also by his religious position and family connections. Although he had also cooperation with Christian Arabs over the leadership, his style was traditional and he was integrated with the religious elements.

The Palestinian Arab Party could be distinguished from the National Defense Party of Nashashibis with its platform and tactics. Its political rhetoric and ideology was much more radical and militant than the National Defense Party and it was much more similar to the ones of Istiqlal Party and Youth Congress. The demands of the party were certain that it refused piecemeal and partial reform; it ordered unconditional independence, end of the British Mandate, resistance to Zionism and the protection of Arab character of Palestine<sup>245</sup>. The Party was dynamic within the political base and there were continuous political campaigns and tours over Palestine by the party leaders in 1935 and those activities of leaders led to the organization of local branches in different towns.

Another feature of the new party was that, it gave importance to the mobilization of young generation of Palestine. It worked together with local Boy Scout troops and created its own organization of young people that was named as Youth Troops. Moreover, the Party struggled organized against the Nashashibis and denounced them with the newspapers that belong to the family. The Party also adapted to various propaganda campaign against the Zionism and the British Mandate.

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<sup>245</sup> Tessler, p.229



Some of the members of the Husayni family and the Palestinian Arab Party were influenced from the Nazis during that period and saw Nazi Germany as a model in terms of construction of a mass organization and alliance against Jews and Britain. After a visit to German consul in 1933, Hajj Amin declared its support to German regime. During the founding conference of Youth Troops, the organization ability of German people for the defense of the national interests, the Nazis were praised.

All of the pre-war parties attempted to organize a conference in November 1943 in Jerusalem in order to form a united front against the threat of the revision of White Paper of 1939. As a character of Arab politics, all of those Arab parties failed to unify. The establishment of the Arab National Fund in order to support the anti-Jewish movement was the only practical achievement of 1943.

As a reaction to those activities of opposition, Husaynis rearranged the Palestine Arab Party in April 1944. The party was centered in Jerusalem again under the presidency of Tawfiq Salih al-Husayni; old brother of Jamal Husayni who was not in the position. The members of Palestine Arab Party kept themselves apart from the Istiqlal leaders because the politics of that party were restricted with the full execution of 1939 White Paper. On the other hand, PAP was maximalist<sup>246</sup>. Demands of the party were varied that involved independence of Palestine within the Arab unity, the establishment of Arab Government over Palestine and the dissolution of Jewish National Home.

Although the Palestine Arab Party was the only and most powerful party of Palestine until September 1944, it could not success to provide a united Arab leadership. Hurewitz commented on the leadership in Palestine politics that “the

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<sup>246</sup> Fieldhouse, p.172

leadership of the national movement was still being determined on a personal basis<sup>247</sup>.

In October 1937, the Government of the British Mandate could achieve to demolish the influence of pro-Muftis. The governance ordered to arrest and expulsion of the six prominent leaders that involved President of the Arab Party, Mayor Khalidi. Therefore, Hajj Amin al-Husayni was discharged from his office of SMC and had to leave the country. He fled to Lebanon by boat and set up his headquarters. His cousin, Jamal who headed the party, had to leave country to Syria before being arrested.

Thus, in the years of Arab revolt and later on, the Arab national movement became politically uncoordinated because of the imprisonment of the leaders or because of the leaders' being out of the country. Furthermore, Palestinian national movement and Arab community were still divided during 1944-45. In addition to Istiqlal and PAP, National Bloc and Youth Congress also changed their leaders while Raghieb al-Nashashibi of the National Defense Party and Husayn Fakhri al-Khalidi of the Reform Party still remained as the leader of the their parties. Arabs were worried about that disunity because the process of establishment of the Arab League in 1944-45 was started.

There were other important parties that directed the policies of Palestine. The first one that should be mentioned was the Hizb al-Islah which meant Reform Party. It was established by Fakhri al-Khalidi in 1935. It was a small patron party that had little impact over the national movement but contributed to the institutional pluralism. It was interested in internal changes than in the politics of the Mandate. Its connections with the outside of Palestine was very limited and it was a less controversial party because of its emphasize over education and social reform. The second party was the National Bloc; al- Kutla al-Wataniyya that was organized by Abd al-Latif Salah who was a lawyer from Nablus. The party was established by

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<sup>247</sup> Jacob Coleman Hurewitz, *The Struggle for Palestine*, Greenwood Press, New York: 1968, p.186-187

Salah for personal interest, in order to create a local power base for himself<sup>248</sup>. It was the only party that had a central base and leadership outside Jerusalem. The centre of the party was Nablus which was the most conservative cities in Palestine. Furthermore, when new nationalist parties were founded, Arab labor organizations developed also as national associations. However, these workers began to oppose notables and in time this Arab Workers Society would begin to cooperate with Istiqlal Party<sup>249</sup> for a national resistance against the British Mandate in Palestine.

In short, none of these parties constituted a challenge to the Mufti and its Palestine Arab Party. Some of those did not mind to cooperate with Hajj Amin al-Husayni. These parties were groups that were competing for prestige and influence. Moreover, even the leaders of the same parties were frequently rivals at the local level.

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<sup>248</sup> Tessler, p.228

<sup>249</sup> Matthews, p.229

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSION**

The Middle East has been the most significant region that attracts the attention of the Great Powers throughout history. Today it is still the focal point of the international actors due to the natural resources that it has and the conflicts that take place in the region. Palestine is one of the areas where constant clashes among the two different nations, namely the Palestinian and Israeli, continue. The early reasons that caused the Palestinian-Israeli conflict had also played significant role over the emergence of Palestinian nationalism such as the illegal-immigration and settlement. Due to the falling down to a minority status in their own lands the Palestinian Arabs became more aggressive and as a result mutual violent attacks led to the increase in the militarization among both communities.

The Mandate regime in Palestine which was established by the British Mandate at the end of the World War I took apart Palestinian region from the Ottoman Empire and began its administration with the traditional divide and rule policy. However, that policy could not provide tranquility in the region. The European States, in which an intensified Jewish population lived, considered the Palestine region as an opportunity to settle the Jewish people there and found a newly independent state for them. Therefore, a long-time immigration process started and one third of the Jewish population of Europe began immigration. This process accelerated especially during World War II.

Before and during the Mandate regime there were assurances which had been given to both Palestinians and Israelis by the Great Britain and later on these promises contradicted with each other. These contradictions caused Mandate administration to stay in a difficult position. Especially after the conflicts that occurred in Palestine during the Arab Revolt in 1936, the British Empire charged an investigation committee. It indicated the contradictions of promises and the difficult situation of the British Mandate clearly. Furthermore, the solution that was set forth by the commission was the end of the Mandate and two-state solution for both

nations in one territory. However, the partition plan accepted instantly by the Jewish population and rejected by the Arabs was postponed due to the World War II. At the end, the British Empire was in difficult situation because of the World War. Its resources were exhausted; it had problems to fulfill the demands on raw material after its recognition of the independence of some colonies. As a result of these conditions, the Empire abstained from application of two-state solution which was totally rejected by the whole Arab communities and it handed the Palestine administration to the United Nations in 1947.

In this international conjuncture, this thesis attempted to examine the emergence and development of the Palestinian nationalism in detail. The thesis analyzed the role of the Palestinian notable families over the development of Palestinian nationalism during the turbulent years of the British Mandate with a due attention to the relations of the Palestinians with the British government. In this regard, the characteristic of Palestinian nationalism as a genuine and pure nationalism or as a nationalism that appeared as a reaction against British Mandate, especially against the Jewish immigrations and their systematic organizations are the other main points that have been discussed throughout the thesis. The balancing policies of British Mandate by the means of different published official papers, the official investigation committees and different methods for the appeasement of both sides that British Mandate used were examined.

This thesis argued that the Palestinian nationalism may be analyzed from the points of both the terminology of modernist and nationalist discourses. From the modernist point of view, Palestinian nationalism could not be formed as a rooted ideology because of not having officially accepted territorial borders and an official state. The modernist nationalism discourse supports that nations can maintain their existence as long as they pursue their connection with a territorial state. Thus, from the modernist perspective the Palestinian national identity may be a social entity as long as it preserves its relations with the territorial state. Otherwise, it might be disappeared from the political arena.

As a result, one of the points that this study reached out is that; although the Palestinian ethnic identity does not have an officially accepted state or territorial border it may be written about the existence of Palestinian nationalism. The emergence of Palestinian nationalism began after the appearance of the challenges and threats by the Zionist immigration and settlement activities in the region. The British Mandate policies also caused the reaction among the Palestinian identities due to its promises to the Jewish side about the establishment of a Jewish state. Therefore, Palestinian nationalism is a counter nationalism that appeared as a result of the pressures of external powers.

Furthermore, this thesis also demonstrated that although Palestinian nationalism appeared as a part of Arab nationalism, later on it departed from Arab nationalism in order to provide more emphasis on the Palestinian issue. The territorial problem which was to share one region among two nations caused the Palestinian people to focus on their own causes rather than the establishment of the Great Arab State. The territorial disputes caused the reaction of the whole Palestinian public and provided the development of Palestinian nationalism as an ideology.

This thesis also argued that different notable families in Palestine had strong influence over the emergence and development of Palestinian nationalism. However, it is also showed in this thesis that there was a tough division among these Palestinian families that caused Palestinian nationalism to remain fragile. The reasons behind the threats that weakened the Palestinian identity date back to the emergence of process. The rivalry among the notable families that led the Palestinian Arab population caused them not to be able to unify systematically and resist against the well-organized Jewish immigrations and policies. These families gave the first priority to their own economic interests; in other words, the improvement of individual situation was preferred to the liberty of Palestine. Thus, the infant Palestinian nationalism got stuck between Palestinian notable families, parties, and the British Mandate and Zionism. The competition over the higher

posts, individual economic and political interests caused the division among notable families which had the responsibility to lead the Palestinian Muslims.

The thesis also emphasized the cross-connection between the political and economic development of the Jewish population, the Yishuv, and political, economic decline of the Palestinian Arab population. While the Jewish population increased their wealth, organized themselves well and paved the way for the establishment of a Jewish state, the Palestinian Arabs became poorer because most of job opportunities were created by the Jewish population or these fields of works were merely controlled by the Jews. The only field in which the Palestinian Arabs worked was agriculture; however, due to the land purchases by the Jews, the Muslim population became impoverished. On the other hand, the notable leaders who benefited from the land sells enhanced their wealth and authority. This in turn made the Palestinian leaders alienated from their community and caused partitions within the community as well. Thus, the Zionists and the British Mandate used these divisions effectively in line with their own stakes and in the course of time, the Arab Revolt which caused the bitter fruits, erupted.

Moreover, different parties that were established under the leadership of those notable figures could not provide the unification either. While one of the parties preferred consensus with the British Mandate, the other one was more radical in its political activities and made its decisions and actions by focusing on religion. If one of the parties of the Palestinian Arabs could achieve to be a real national party despite the opposition, it would be possible to develop and strengthen Palestinian nationalism and Palestine would become a real state.

It has reached a consequence that Palestinian nationalism got stuck between the policies of the British Mandate, the organized Jewish activities and rivalry among the notable families that led the community. The rivalry between the important notable families prevented the formation of an actor or a class that would produce the Palestinian nationalism. Generally, the nationalisms are invented by a class such as military, bourgeois or aristocrat class. However, these notable families

prevented the formation of such a class and caused Palestinian nationalism to be remained as proto-nationalism. Therefore, it was difficult for the Palestinian nationalists to develop their ideology that would provide them the foundation of an official and internationally accepted state.

Additionally, Palestinian nationalism was a nationalism that developed in the course of time. It developed as a reactionary movement especially after 1920s and remained as a proto-nationalism until 1948. Refugee problem that occurred as a result of 1948 Arab-Israeli War caused the appearance of national consciousness due to the ideology of refugees about the right of return. Moreover, 1948 War also led to the new awareness of self-identity within the refugee camps. As a result of 1948 War, Palestinian nationalism was out of the hands of notable families and it could be reached to the Palestinian people and gained a grass-root base.

It should be criticized the statements of Anthony Smith and Rashid Khalidi which demonstrate Palestinian national identity and Palestinian nationalism as an existent ideology from ancient history. During Ottoman administration, there was not a Palestinian nation or identity; however, those people identified themselves firstly as Arab, then as Muslim, thirdly as Nabulsi or Jaffan and lastly as Palestinian. Therefore, a national identity such as Palestinian was defined by British Mandate and it could be described as a given nation.

Today the Palestinian case has taken a new shape because new problems are integrated to the ongoing dispute. The issue of holy places, demands over Jerusalem, partition of the territory among the Jewish settlers and the Palestinian Arabs and the issue of capital city are on the one hand and the refugee problem, the right of return and terrorist activities are on the other hand. The reason behind to choose to study this topic is that the background of the conflict between Hamas and Al-Fatah today and the political instability in the Palestine region date back to the times of the British Mandate. It may be beneficial to examine the roots of conflict and origins of historical conditions in Palestine in order to have a better understanding of the present situation of not only Palestinian nationalism, but also of the problems and



issues related to it. Therefore, the connections between the Palestinian national parties and notable families with the today's Palestinian parties; Hamas and Al-Fatah may constitute a new research area. The author of this thesis believes that historical divisions within Palestinian families and clans, community and Palestinian politics may be helpful to understand the problems that faced today in Palestine.

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