Ghassan Kanafani was born in Acre in 1936, and his family was expelled from Palestine in 1948 by Zionist terror, after which they finally settled in Damascus. After completing his studies, he worked as a teacher and journalist, first in Damascus, and then in Kuwait. Later, he moved to Beirut and wrote for several papers before starting Al Hadaf (The Target), the weekly paper of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), in 1969.

To begin with, Kanafani was an active member of the Arab Nationalist Movement, the forerunner of the PFLP, but later, along with his comrade George Habash, he became a Marxist, believing that the solution to the problems which faced the Palestinians could not be achieved without a social revolution throughout the Arab world.

Kanafani was killed when his car exploded in July 1972, murdered by Zionist agents.

Ghassan Kanafani

The 1936-39 Revolt in Palestine

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INTRODUCTION

Between 1936 and 1939, the Palestinian revolutionary movement suffered a severe setback at the hands of three separate enemies that were to constitute together the principal threat to the nationalist movement in Palestine in all subsequent stages of its struggle: the local reactionary leadership; the regimes in the Arab states surrounding Palestine; and the imperialist-Zionist enemy. The present study will concentrate on the respective structures of these separate forces and the dialectical relations that existed among them.

The intensity of the Palestinian nationalist experience, which emerged since 1918, and was accompanied in one way or another with armed struggle, could not reflect itself on the upper structure of the Palestinian national movement which remained virtually under the control of semi-feudal and semi-religious leadership. This was due primarily to two related factors:

1. The existence and effectiveness of the Zionist movement, which gave the national challenge relative predominance over the social contradictions. The impact of this challenge was being systematically felt by the masses of Palestinian Arabs, who were the primary victims of the Zionist invasion supported by British imperialism.

2. The existence of a significant conflict of interests between the local feudal-religious leadership and British imperialism: It was consistently in the interest of the ruling class to promote and support a certain degree of revolutionary struggle, instead of being more or less completely allied with the imperialist power as would otherwise be the case. The British imperialists had found in the Zionists "a more suitable ally."

The above factors gave the struggle of Palestinian people particular features that did not apply to the Arab nationalist struggle outside Palestine. The traditional leadership, as a result, participated in, or at least tolerated, a most advanced form of political action (armed struggle); it raised progressive slogans, and had ulti-

86. Jewish Observer, Sept. 20, 1963. London, pp. 13-14.
87. Abdul Qadir Yasin. al Katib, No. 121. April 1971 p. 114
88. Kayyali. Op. cit., P.346.
89. Ibid., p.346.
90. In May 1938. the rebels occupied Hebron after they had already occupied the old port of Jerusalem. On Sept. 9, they occupied Beersheba and released prisoners. On Oct. 5, they occupied Tiberias; in early August parts of Nablus, etc.
91. Bouyissir. Op. cit., p.247.
92. Ibid., p.247.
93. Ibid., p.258.
94. al-Ahram, March 1. 1939, Cairo.
95. Yasin. Op. cit. p.115.
96. Ibid., p.114.
97. Kayyali, Op. cit., p.359.
98. Sayegh, Anis. The Hashemite & the Palestine Question. Beirut, 1966. p. 150.
99. Ibid. See also al-Talia'a, No.4 April 7, 1971. Cairo, p. 98.
100. Kayyali, Op. cit., p.348.
101. A letter from Baghdad to the British Foreign Minister. 31 Oct. 1930. Quoted in Kayyali, Ibid. p. 349
102. Walid Khalidi ed, From Haven to Conquest. IPS, Beirut, 1971. pp. 836-849.
103. Bouyissir, Op. cit., P.21.
104. Barbour. Op. cit. p.193.
105. Himadeh, Op. cit., P.323.
106. Bouyissir, Op. cit., p.323.
107. Ben Gurion. Op. cit., p.372.
108. Ibid., p.373.
109. Sifri, op.cit. pp.131-132.
110. Khalidi. Op. cit., p.375-378.

Geneve, 1959. p.29. 109. Sifrl, Op. cit., pp.131-132.
49. Communist Internationalism. PP.143-144.
50. Collection, p.52.
51. Himadeh, Op. cit., p.45.
52. "Arab Society" by Dr. Ali Ahmed Issa, quoted in Yusra Arnita, Folkloric Arts in Palestine. Beirut, Palestine Research Center, P.L.O. p.187.
53. Yaghi, Dr. Abdul Rahman. Modern Palestinian Literature. Beirut, p.232.
54. Ibid., p.237.
55. Ibid., P.283.
56. Our Popular Songs. by Nimr Sirhan. Jordan, Ministry of Culture and and Information, P.157.
57. Ibid., pp.299-300.
58. Ibid., p.301.
59. Yehuda Bauer, Op. cit. P.49
60. Sifri. Issa. Arab Palestine Under the Mandate & Zionism. the New Palestine Bookshop. Jaffa, 1937. Vol. II p. 10
61. Palestinian Struggle over half a century, by Saleh Bouyissir. al-Fatah House, Beirut, p. 180.
62. The Great Arab Revolution in Palestine. al-Hana House, Damascus. Subhir Yasine, p.30
63. Bouyissir, Op. cit., P.181.
64. Kayyali, Op. cit., P.302.
65. Collection. p,96.
66. Hadawi. Op. cit., p.38.
67. Yasin, Subhi. Op. cit., pp.22-23
68. Ibid. p.22.
69. Kayyali, Op. cit. p.296.
70. Palestine. No.94. Jan 1,1969. Arab Higher Committee. Beirut.
71. Ibid., No. 94. p.19.
72. Kayyali, Op. cit., p.296.
73. Palestine's Economic Future. Percy, Lund H. London, 1946. p. 61.
74. Sifri, Op. cit., pp,39,40.
75. Kayyali, Op. cit., P.311.
76. Sifri, Op. cit., p.60.
77. Ibid.. P.93.
78. Kayyali, Op. cit. p.319.
79. Documents, p.454.
80. Ibid., P.457.
81. Ibid., p.458.
82. Collection. P.8.
83. Kayyali, Op. cit., p.326.
84. Neville Barbour, Nisi Dominus, London, pp. 183-193.
85. Kayyali, Op. cit., P.338.

mately, despite its reactionary nature, provided positive leadership during a critical phase of the Palestinian nationalist struggle. It is relevant to explain, however, how the feudal-religious leadership succeeded in staying at the head of the nationalist movement for so long (until 1948). The transformation of the economic and social structure of Palestine, which occurred rather rapidly, had affected primarily the Jewish sector, and had taken place at the expense of the Palestinian middle and petty bourgeoisie, as well as the Arab working class. The change from a semi-feudal society to a capitalist society was accompanied by an increased concentration of economic power in the hands of the Zionist machine and consequently, within the Jewish society in Palestine. It is significant that Palestinian Arab advocates of conciliation, who became outspoken during the thirties, were not landlords or rich peasants, but rather elements of the urban upper bourgeoisie whose interests gradually coincided with the expanding interests of the Jewish bourgeoisie. The latter, by controlling the process of industrialization, was creating its own agents.

In the meantime, the Arab countries surrounding Palestine were playing two conflicting roles. On the one hand, the Pan-Arab mass movement was serving as a catalyst for the revolutionary spirit of the Palestinian masses, since a dialectical relation between the Palestinian and overall Arab struggles existed, on the other hand, the established regimes in these Arab countries were doing everything in their power to help curb and undermine the Palestinian mass movement. The sharpening conflict in Palestine threatened to contribute to the development of the struggle in these countries in the direction of greater violence, creating a revolutionary potential that their respective ruling classes could not afford to overlook. The Arab ruling classes were forced to support British imperialism against their counterpart in Palestine, which was in effect leading the Palestinian nationalist movement.

Meanwhile, the Zionist-Imperialist alliance continued to grow; the period between 1936 and 1939 witnessed not only the crystallization of the militaristic and aggressive character of the colonial society that Zionism had firmly implanted in Palestine but also the relative containment and defeat of the Palestinian working class; this was subsequently to have a radical effect on the course of the struggle. During that period, Zionism, in collaboration with the mandatory power, successfully undermined the development of a progressive Jewish labor movement and of Jewish-Arab Proletarian brotherhood. The Palestine Communist Party was effectively isolated among both Arab and Jewish workers, and the reactionary Histadrut completely dominated the Jewish labour movement. The influence of Arab progressive forces within Arab labour federations in Haifa and Jaffa diminished, leaving the ground open for their control by reactionary leaderships that monopolized political action.

Background: The Workers

The issue of Jewish immigration to Palestine was not merely a moral or national issue; it had direct implication on the economic status of the Arab people of Palestine, affecting primarily the small and middle-income farmers, workers and certain sectors of the petty and middle bourgeoisies. The national and religious character of Jewish immigration further aggravated the economic repercussions.

Between 1933 and 1935, 150,000 Jews immigrated to Palestine, bringing the country's Jewish population to 443,000 - or 29.6% of the total - from 1926 to 1932 the average number of immigrants per year was 7,201.1 It rose to 42,985 between 1933 and 1936, as direct result of Nazi persecution in Germany. In 1932, 9,000 German Jews entered Palestine, 30,000 in 1933, 40,000 in 1934 and 61,000 in 1935,2 nearly three quarters of the new immigrants settling in cities. If Nazism was responsible for terrorizing the Jews and forcing them out of Germany; it was "democratic" capitalism, in collaboration with the Zionist movement, that was responsible for directing comparatively large numbers of Jewish migrants to Palestine, as illustrated by the following: of 2,562,000 Jews that fled Nazi persecution, the U.S.A. accepted only 170,000 (6.6%), Britain 50,000 (1.9%), while Palestine received 8.5% and 1,930,000 (75.2%) found refuge in the U.S.S.R.3 The severe economic impact of the immigration into Palestine can be realized when it is considered that a comparatively large percentage of Jewish settlers were basically capitalists: In 1933, 3,250 of the latter (11%) were considered as capitalists, in 1934, 5,124 or 12%, and in 1935, 6,309 or 10%.4

According to official statistics, of the Jewish immigrants who entered Palestine between 1932 and 1936, 1,370 (with 17,119 dependents) possessed PL 1,000 or more: and 130,000 were officially registered as seeking employment, or dependents of previous immigrants.5 In other words, the immigration was not only designed to ensure a concentration of European Jewish capital in Palestine, that was to dominate the process of industrialization, but also to provide this effort with a Jewish proletariat: The policy that raised the slogan of "Jewish labor only" was to have grave consequences, as it led to the rapid emergence of fascist patterns in the society of Jewish settlers.

Another result was the development of a competitive struggle between the Palestinian Arab and Jewish proletariats and between Palestinian Arab peasants, farmers and agricultural laborers and their Jewish counterparts. This conflict also extended to higher classes, in as much as the Palestinian Arab small landowners and urban middle bourgeoisie realized that their interests were being threatened by growing Jewish capital.

16. Ibid., p.66.
17. Ibid., p.59.
18. Yehuda Bauer. "The Arab Revolt of 1936" New Outlook. Vol.9 No. 6 (81). Tel-Aviv, 1966. p. 50.
19. Ibid., p.51.
20. In 1930. the number of Arab construction workers in Jerusalem dropped from 1500 to 500 while that of Jews went up from 550 to 1600.
21. Up to 1931. the Zionists expelled 20,000 Palestinian Arab peasants after they bought the land on which the latter used to work.
22. Haim Hanagbi, Moshe Machover, Akiva Orr. "The Class Nature of Israel" New Left Review (65), Jan-Feb 1971, p.6.
23. Theodor Herzl, Selected Works, Newman Ed.. Vol.7, Book 1. Tel Aviv, p.86.
24. Exco Foundation for Palestine. Inc., Palestine. A Study of Jewish, Arab and British Policies. Vol. 1. Yale University Press.1947. p. 561.
25. Kayyali., Abdulwahhab. Modern History of Palestine. Arab Institute of Studies and Publication. Beirut. 1970. p. 174.
26. Documents of the Palestine Arab Resistance (1918-1939). Beirut, pp. 22. 23. 24, 25.
27. Action among the peasants and the struggle against Zionism, The Palestine Communist Party Theses for 1931. Communist Internationalism and the Arab Revolution, Dar a1-Haqiqa, Beirut, p. 54.
28. Ibid., pp. 122, 121.
29. Ibid., pp. 124.
30. Ibid., p. 162.
31. Himadeh; Ibid., p. 39.
32. Communist Internationalism, pp. 135-145.
33. Weinstock. Ibid.
34. Collection. p.34.
35. The Sublime Porte had granted this land to the Sursuk family of Lebanon In return for services. See also: Hadawi, Palestine Under the Mandate. 1920-1940, Palestine Studues, Kuwaiti Alumni Association., pp.34, 36. In 1934, the Zionists.
36. Collection. P.34.
37. Ibid., P.39.
38. Hadawi., Op. cit., P.29.
39. Collection. p.25.
40. Ibid.. p.56.
41. Ibid., p.58.
42. Himadeh. Op. cit., p.376.
43. Collection, P.60.
44. Ibid., pp.62-63.
45. Ibid., p..62.
46. Ibid., p.44.
47. Ibid., p.63.
48. Rony E. Gubbay, A Political Study of the Arab-Jewish Conflict, Librairie de Droz.

FOOTNOTES

* Examples of such proverbs: He who eats from the Sultan's bread, strikes by his sword; Let no grass grow after mine; Today's egg is better than tomorrow's hen (A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush);When we started selling coffins people started dying; The most severe of pains is the present one; He runs after the loaf of bread and the loaf of bread runs before him; Life goes well with the well to do.52

** According to Taufiq Ziyad, a resistance poet in occupied Palestine (Nazareth): "Our revolutionary poetry (Mahmud Darwish, Samih al-Qasim and myself) is an extension of the revolutionary poetry of Ibrahim Tuqan, Abd al-Rahim Mahmud, Mutlaq Abd al-Khaliq and others...because our battle is an extension of theirs." (On Popular Poetry, Dar al-Thawra, p.15)

*** Taufiq Ziyad described this poem in the following words: "I have not known a poetry work equivalent in the strength, sacrifice and bravery in this great poem." (from Literature and Popular Literature, Dar al-Awda, p. 30).

**** Transjordan is the East Bank of the River Jordan, while the west Bank is part of Palestine (Editor).

***** Let us take as an example, wages paid by the growers of citrus fruits- the most important agricultural produce in Palestine. In 1936 the General Agricultural Council fixed the wages of Jewish workers at PL12 per dunum per year, and of Arab workers at PL8.

Notes and Sources

1. Himadeh,Said (ed.) Economic Organization of Palestine. American University of Beirut. Beirut 1939, p.32.
2. Menuhin, Moshe. The Decadence of Judaism in our Time. Institute of Palestine Studies, Beirut, 1969.
3. Weinstock. Nathan. Le Sionisme - Contra Israel. Maspero. Paris, 1969.
4. Ibid.
5. Himadeh, op. cit., p.26,27.
6. Weinstock, Op. cit.
7. Himadeb, Op,cft., P,373.
8. Ibid. p.376.
9. Collection of Arab testimonies in Palestine before the British Royal Commission. al-Itidal Press Damascus, 1938, p.54.
10. Ibid.. p.55.
11. Himadeh. Op. cit. (the number of the unemployed increased to 4000 in Jaffa alone after 1936. see footnote 5,p.55).
12. Collection. Op. cit, P.55.
13. Ibid. p.55.
14. Davar No. 3462 (see ft. note 13. p.661.)
15. Collection. Op. Cit., P.15.

In 1935, for example, Jews controlled 872 of a total of 1,212 industrial firms in Palestine, employing 13,678 workers, while the rest were Palestinian Arab-controlled and employed about 4,000 workers: Jewish investment totaled PL 4,391,000 compared to PL 704,000 Palestinian Arab industrial investment; Jewish production reached PL 6,000,000 compared to PL 1,545,000 by Palestnian Arab firms: In addition, Jewish capital controlled 90% of the concessions granted by the British mandatory government, which accounted for a total investment of PL 5,789,000 and provided labor for 2,619 workers.6

An official census in 1937 indicated that an average Jewish worker received 145% more in wages than his Palestinian Arab counterpart: (As high as 433% more in textile factories employing Jewish and Arab women, and 233% in tobacco factories 7). "By July 1937, the real wages of the average Palestinian Arab worker decreased 10% while those of a Jewish worker rose 10%."8

The situation resulted in an almost total collapse of the Arab economy in Palestine, primarily affecting Palestinian Arab workers. In his report to the Peel Royal Commission, George Mansour, the Secretary of the Federation of Palestinian Arab Workers in Jaffa, indicated that 98% of Palestinian Arab workers had a "well below average" standard of living. Based on a census covering 1,000 workers in Jaffa in 1936, the Federation had found that the income of 57% of Arab workers was less than PL 2.750 (the average minimum income required to support a family being PL 11); 12% less than PL 4.250, 12% less than PL 6, 4% less than PL 10, 1.5% less than PL 12 and 0.5% less than PL 15.9

When the Mandatory Government refused to allow nearly 1,000 unemployed Jaffa workers to hold a demonstration on June 6, 1935, the Federation of Workers issued a statement warning the Government that unless their problems were solved, "the government would soon have to give the workers either bread or bullets."10 With the conditions of workers continuing to deteriorate, an uprising seemed imminent. George Mansour (who had been previously a Communist Party member) came out with striking illustrations in his report to the Peel Commission: by the end of 1935, 2,270 men and women workers were unemployed in the city of Jaffa alone, with a population of 71,000.11 Mansour pointed out five reasons for the high unemployment rate, four of which were directly connected with Jewish immigration: 1) the settling of new immigrants; 2) urban migration 3) dismissal of Arab workers from their jobs; 4) the deteriorating economic situation; 5) the discriminatory policy of the Mandatory Government in favor of Jewish workers.12

In a period of nine months, the number of Histadrut workers increased by 41,000. According to an Article published in the issue No. 3460 of the newspaper Davar,

Histadrut workers numbered 115,000 at the end of July 1936; the official 1936 government report (p. 117) had showed their number at the end of 1935 to be 74,000.13

The policy of dismissal of Palestinian Arab workers from firms and projects controlled by Jewish capital initiated violent clashes. In the four Jewish settlements of Malbis, Dairan, Wadi Hunain and Khadira, there were 6,214 Palestinian Arab workers in February 1935. After six months, this figure went down to 2,276, and in a year's time, went down to 617 Palestinian Arab workers only.14 Attacks against Palestinian Arab workers also took place. On one occasion, for instance, the Jewish community forced a Palestinian Arab contractor and his workers to leave their work in the Brodski building in Haifa. Among those who were systematically losing their jobs were workers in orchards, cigarette factories, mason's yards, construction, etc. . .15

Between 1930 and 1935, Palestinian Arab pearl industry exports fell from PL 11,532 to PL 3,777 a year. The number of Palestinian Arab soap factories in Haifa alone fell from 12 in 1929 to 4 in 1935. Their export value fell from PL 206,659 in 1930 to PL 79,311 in 1935.16 It was clear that the Arab proletariat had fallen "victim to British colonialism and Jewish capital, the former bearing the primary responsibility."17

Yehuda Bauer wrote:18 "On the eve of the 1936 disturbances, Palestine was possibly the only country in the world, apart from the U.S.S.R., that had not been affected by the world economic crisis; in fact, it enjoyed real prosperity as a result of a massive import of capital (over 30,000,000 in capital had entered Palestine). The imported capital had even fallen short of the necessary funds needed for all the investment programmes." This prosperity, however, was based on rather shakey foundations, which collapsed once the influx of private capital came to an end because of fears of the outbreak of war in the Mediterranean. "The loan system collapsed; there were indications of serious unemployment and construction activity greatly diminished. Palestinian Arab workers were being dismissed by both Arab and Jewish employers, a number of them returning to their original villages; national consciousness was rising due to the aggravating economic crisis."19

Bauer, however, omits the primary factor: continued Jewish immigration. Sir John Hope Simpson stated in his report that, "It was a bad, and perhaps a dangerous policy, to allow large sums of money to be invested in unprofitable industries in Palestine to justify increased immigration." In effect, Bauer's statement was basically unfounded. since the influx of Jewish capital continued during the years he referred to and, in fact, reached its climax in 1935; the number of immigrants also increased during these years. (Capital invested in Jewish industries and commerce

launched both by the British and the Zionists, was in a difficult situation on the eve of the Second World War. The claims of some historians that the Arabs "stopped" their revolt to allow the British to wage its world war against Nazism, are naive, and refuted not only by the facts, but also by the fact that Hajj Amin al-Hussaini took refuge in Nazi Germany throughout the war.

This picture as a whole represents the political and social map that prevailed through the years 1936-1939. It is this situation, with the dialectical relations involved in it, that explains the stagnation of the Palestinian nationalist situation throughout the war. When the war ended, the British found that the Palestinian nationalist movement had been pretty well tamed: its head was broken and scattered, its base had been weakened and its social fabric worn out and disintegrated as a result of the violent change that was taking place in society and of the failure of its leaderships and parties to organise and mobilise it and also as a result of the weakness and confusion of the left and the instability of the nationalist movement in the neighbouring Arab countries.

Thus the Zionist movement entered the forties to find the field practically clear for it, with the international climate extremely favourable following the psychological and political atmosphere caused by Hitler's massacres of the Jews. While the Arab regimes in the neighbouring Arab countries were bourgeois regimes in the historical predicament without any real power. Nor was there in Jewish society in Palestine at that time any leftist movement to exert pressure in the opposite direction - practically the whole of this society was devoted to settlement through invasion. The Palestinian left had, with the Second World War, begun to lose the initiative with which it had started in the middle thirties, as a result of the change in Comintern policy, accompanied by the failure to Arabize the Party. What is more, the communist left was becoming more and more subject to repression by the defeated Arab leadership. (For example, the Mufti's men assassinated the trade unionist leader Sami Taha in Haifa on 12 September 1947 and before that, the assassination in Jaffa of the unionist Michel Mitri, who had played an important role in mobilizing Arab workers before the outbreak of the troubles in 1936).

All this enabled the Zionist movement in the middle forties to step up its previously only partial conflict with British colonialism in Palestine, after long years of alliance. Thus in 1947 circumstances were favourable, for it to pluck the fruits of the defeat of the 1936 revolt which the outbreak of the war had prevented it from doing sooner. Thus the period taken to complete the second chapter of the Palestinian defeat - from the end of 1947 to the middle of 1948 - was amazingly short, because it was only the conclusion of a long and bloody chapter which had lasted from April 1936 to September 1939.

task of guarding it was given to "Shaikh Turki ibn Zain, chief of the Zain subdivision of the Bani Sakhr tribe, whom the company authorized to patrol the desert by any means necessary."109

Ben Gurion almost reveals this fact directly when talking about British efforts to establish a Zionist Air Force, whose task was to be to safeguard these interests.
The British in an early stage were able to see the strategy called by the Americans 30 years later "Vietnamization". This was extremely important, because it was this incident that strengthened Britain's conviction that the formation of a Zionist striking force would solve many problems connected with the defence of Imperialist interests accompanied by efforts to form a Zionist armed force to protect these interests.

In this field the British officer Charles Orde Wingate played a prominent role in translating the British-Zionist alliance into practical action. Zionist historians try to give the impression that Wingate's efforts were the consequence of personal temperament and "idealistic" devotion. But it is clear that this intelligent officer, who was sent to Haifa by his chiefs in the autumn of 1937, had been entrusted with a specific task - the formation of the nuclei of striking forces for the Zionist armed force which had been in existence for at least six months, but which needed crystallisation and preparation.

This British officer, whom "Israeli" soldiers regard as the real founder of the "Israeli" army, made the pipe-line problems his special task, However, this task led on to a series of operations involving terrorism and killing, and it was Wingate who took upon himself the task of teaching his pupils at Ain Daur - among whom was Dayan - to become an expert in such operations.

There can be no doubt that, in addition to his qualifications as an experienced imperialist officer, Wingate was equipped with an unlimited racialist hatred for the Arabs. It is clear from the biographies written by those who knew him that he enjoyed killing or torturing Arab. peasants, or humiliating them in any way.110
Through imperialists like Wingate, and through reactionary leaders of the type of the Amir Abdullah the British were making it possible for the Zionist movement to become at both military and economic levels, a beach-head to guard their interests. All this happened from the conviction of all concerned that the leadership of the Palestinian nationalist movement was not sufficiently revolutionary to enable it to stand up to these closely united enemies.

In the midst of all this, the Palestinian nationalist movement, which had been paralysed by the subjective factors we have mentioned and the violent attacks

firms increased from PL 5,371,000 in 1933 to PL 11,637,300 in 1936; op. cit. p. 323). Moreover, the dismissal of Arab workers by Jewish employers had begun long before that time.20 In the meantime, large masses of Palestinian Arab peasants were being evicted and uprooted from their lands as a result of Jewish colonization of rural areas.21 They immigrated to cities and towns only to face increasing unemployment. The Zionist machine took full advantage of the rivalry between Palestinian Arab workers and their fellow Jewish workers. "Israeli" leftists later observed that not once, in a period of fifty years, were Jewish workers mobilized and rallied around material issues or the struggle of Labor Federation, to challenge the "Israeli" regime itself. "The Jewish proletariat could not be mobilized around its own cause."22

The fact is that the situation was fully the result of efficient Zionist planning, to recall Herzl's words: "Private land in areas allocated to us must be seized -from its owners. Poor inhabitants are to be quickly evacuated across the border after having secured for them jobs in the countries of their destination. They are to be denied employment in our country; as for large property-owners, they will ultimately join us."23 The Histadrut summed up its policy by declaring that "to allow Arabs to penetrate the Jewish labor market meant that the influx of Jewish capital would be employed to service Arab development, which is contrary to Zionist objectives. Furthermore, the employment of Arabs in Jewish industries would lead to a class division in Palestine along racial lines: capitalist Jews employing Arab workers; should this be permitted, we would have introduced into Palestine the conditions that had led to the emergence of anti-semitism."24 Thus the ideology and practices that underlined the process of colonization, with the escalation of the conflict with the Arab society in Palestine, were developing fascist characteristics in Zionist organizations; fascist Zionism was using the same tools as the mounting fascism in Europe. The Arab worker was at the bottom of a complex social pyramid and his condition grew worse as a result of the confusion within the Arab labor movement. During the period between the early twenties and early thirties, the progressive labor movement - Arab as well as Jewish - suffered crushing blows, which, together with the impact of purely subjective weaknesses, resulted in its virtual paralysis. On the one hand, the Zionist movement which was rapidly becoming fascist in character and resorting to armed terrorism sought to isolate and destroy the Communist Party, most of whose leaders were Jews, and that resisted being contained by Zionist labor organizations. On the other hand, the Palestinian feudal religious leadership could not tolerate the rise of an Arab labor movement that was independent of its control. The movement was thus terrorized by the Arab leadership. In the early thirties, the Mufti's group assassinated Michel Mitri, President of the Federation of Arab Workers in Jaffa. Years later, Sami Taha, a trade unionist and President of the Federation of Arab Workers in Haifa was also assassinated. In the

absence of a economically and politically strong national bourgeoisie, the workers were directly confronted and oppressed by the traditional feudal leadership; the conflict occasionally led to violent confrontations which were reduced whenever the traditional leadership managed to asssume direct control over trade union activities. As a result, labor activity lost its essential role in the struggle. Moreover, with the sharpening of the national struggle, a relative identity of interests united the workers with the traditional Arab leadership. Meanwhile, the Communist Party occasionally succeeded in organizing political action. On one occasion on May 1st, 1920, a group of demonstrating communists clashed with a Zionist demonstration in in Tel-Aviv and were forced to flee the city and take refuge in the Arab quarter of Manshiya in Jaffa; later a confrontation took place with a British security force that was sent to arrest the Bolsheviks.25 In a statement distributed on the same day, the Executive Committee of the Party declared: "The Jewish workers are here to live with you; they have not come to persecute you, but to live with you. They are ready to fight on your side against the capitalist enemy, be it Jew, Arab or British. If the capitalists incite you against the Jewish worker, it is in order to protect themselves from you. Do not fall into the trap; the Jewish worker, who is a soldier of the revolution, has come to offer you his hand as a comrade in resisting British, Jewish and Arab capitalists. . .We call on you to fight against the rich who are selling their land and their country to foreigners. Down with British and French bayonets; down with Arab and foreign capitalists." 26

The remarkable thing in this long statement was, not only the idealist portrait of the struggle, but also the fact that nowhere did it mention the word "Zionist"; yet Zionism represented to the Palestinian Arab peasants and workers a daily threat, as well as to the Jewish communists, fifty-five of whom were attacked by Zionists in Tel-Aviv and expelled to Jaffa.

The Palestine Communist Party remained isolated from the political reality until the end of 1930, which was the year its Seventh Congress was held. In the resolutions passed by the Congress, the Party admitted that it had "essentially adopted an erroneous attitude towards the issue of Palestinian nationalism, and the status of the Jewish national minority in Palestine and its role vis-a-vis the Arab masses. The Party had failed to become active among the Palestinian Arab masses and remained isolated by working exclusively among Jewish workers. Its isolation was illustrated by the Party's negative attitude during the Palestinian Arab uprising of 1929."27

Although in practice the Party systematically attacked the Palestinian bourgeoisie - which at the time was in a difficult position - and although it never adopted the policy of popular fronts and alliances with the revolutionary classes, the records of try, and the British undertook to train its members. In 1937 it was strengthened with 3,000 new members, all of whom played a direct role in repressive operations against the Palestinian rebels, especially in the North. In June 1938 the British decided that offensive operations must be undertaken against the rebels. They therefore held instruction courses on this subject which provided training to large numbers of Haganah cadres, who later became cadres of the `Israeli' army.108 At the beginning of 1939, the British army organized ten groups of Colony Police into well armed groups, which were given Hebrew names. Members of this force were allowed to abandon the Qalbaq, the official headgear, for the Australian bush hat, to make them even more distinctive. These groups totalled 14,411 men, each being commanded by a British officer, who was assisted by a second in command appointed by the Jewish Agency. By the spring of 1939 the Zionists also had 62 mechanised units of eight to ten men each.

In the spring of 1938 the British command decided to entrust to these Zionist elements the defense of railways between Haifa and Ludd that were blown up frequently by Palestinian commandos, and sent 434 members to execute this mission. However, only six months later the Jewish Agency had succeeded in raising their numbers to 800. This development was not only of service in the building up of Zionist military strength, but also helped to absorb and employ large numbers of unemployed Jewish workers, who were constantly increasing in numbers in the towns. In this way the Jewish proletariat was directed to work in repressive organizations, not only in British security projects directed against the revolt, but also in the Zionist military force.

The foundations of the Zionist military apparatus were laid under British supervision. The Zionist force which had been'' entrusted with the defence of the Haifa-Lydda railway was later given the defence of the oil pipeline in the Bashan plain. This pipeline, which had been recently constructed (1934) to bring oil from Kirkuk to Haifa, had several times been blown up by the Palestinian rebels. This was of great symbolic value, The Arab rebels, who were aware of the value of the oil to the British exploiters, blew up the pipeline for the first time near Irbid on 15 July 1936. It was later blown up several times near the villages of Kaukab, Hawa. Mihna Israil, Iksal, and between at-Ufula and Bashan, and at Tell Adas, Bira, Ard al-Marj, Tamra, Kafr Misr, Jisr al-Majami, Jinjar, Bashan and Ain Daur. The British were unable to defend this vital pipeline, and admitted as much, that the "pipe" as the Palestinian Arab peasants called it, was enshrined in the folklore which glorified acts of popular heroism.

At any rate, the British secured minimum protection for the pipeline in two ways. Inside Palestine it was defended by Zionist groups while in Jordanian territory the

Fifty Zionist colonies were established between 1936 and 1939, and in between 1936 and 1938, Jews invested PL1,268,000 in building works in five Jewish towns, as against only PL120,000 invested by Arabs in 16 Arab villages in the same period. Jews also engaged extensively in the British security projects undertaken to absorb and employ large numbers of unemployed Jewish workers, who were constantly increasing in numbers on the frontiers of Palestine, for which "the British employed Jewish labor at a cost of PL100,000 to build"104 as well as dozens of other projects.

Figures published later give us a more accurate idea: the value of exports of locally manufactured goods rose from PL478,807 in 1935 to nearly double that figure (PL896,875) in 1937, in spite of the revolt.105 This can only be explained by the greatly increased activity of the Jewish economy. The scope of this mobilization expanded from the economic field, in alliance with the Mandate, to the military field, in collusion with it.

The British realized that their Zionist ally was qualified to play a role that no one else could play so well. In fact, Ben-Gurion is only telling part of the truth when he admits that the number of Jewish recruits in the quasi-police force armed with rifles rose to 2,863 in September 1936, for this was only a part of the Jewish force - there were 12,000 men in the Haganah in 1937, in addition to a further 3,000 in Jabotinski's National Military Organization.106 The alliance of these, as the real representatives of the Zionist movement, with British colonialism, led to the idea of a "Quasi-Police Force" in the spring of 1936. The idea served as a cover for the armed Zionist presence which enjoyed the blessing and encouragement of the British.

This force served as a transition period for some months, during which the Haganah prepared to move, at the beginning of 1937, to a new stage. Not only were the British aware of this, they actually helped it to take shape. This stage consisted of forays by patrols and limited operations against the Palestinian Arabs, the main object of which was to distract and confuse them. It would have been quite impossible to advance to this stage and at the same time to maintain the "truce" (the alliance) with the Mandatory authorities had this not been the result of a joint plan. Ben Gurion affirms that the additional Zionist police farce made an ideal "framework" for the training of the Haganah.107

In the summer of 1937 this force was given the name "Defense of the Jewish Colonies", which was later changed to "Colony Police". It was organised under the supervision of the British Mandate throughout the length and breadth of the country.

the Seventh Congress held in 1930-1931 provide a most valuable political analysis. As shown in these records; the Party considered solving the Palestinian Arab national question as one of the primary tasks of revolutionary struggle: It viewed its isolation from the Palestinian Arab mass movement as the result of a "Zionist-influenced deviation that prevented the Arabization of the Party." The documents mention "opportunist efforts to block the Arabization of the Party." The Congress adopted the view that it was the duty of the Party to expand the cadres of the revolutionary forces capable of directing the activity of the peasants (that is, cadres of revolutionary Palestinian Arab workers.) The "Arabization" of the Party, its transformation into a real party of the toiling Palestinian Arab masses was the first condition of the success of its activity in the rural areas.28

The Party, however, proved incapable of carrying out the task of mobilizing Palestinian Arabs, and the revolutionary slogans adopted by the Congress were never translated into action: "Not a single dunum to the Imperialist and Zionist usurpers," "the revolutionary expropriation of land belonging to the government, to rich Jewish developers, Zionist factions and big Arab landowners and farmers," "No recognition of agreements on the sale of land," "the struggle against Zionist usurpers."29 The Congress had also decided that "it is possible to solve all the burning issues and end oppression only through armed revolution under the leadership of the working class."30 The Palestine Communist Party was thus never "Arabized." The field was open for the domination of the Palestinian Arab mass movement by the feudal and religious leaderships. Perhaps one reason behind the line and practices of the Party at that time was the uncompromising revolutionary attitude for which the Comintern was famous between 1928 and 1934. But despite their small number, their relative isolation and their failure to reach the Palestinian Arab masses, particularly in the rural areas, the communists threw all their weight into the 1936 revolt. They showed great courage, cooperated with some of the local leaders, and supported the Mufti; many of them were killed and arrested. But they did not succeed in becoming an influential force. Apparently the slogan of "Arabization" got lost somewhere later on; nearly ten years later, on January 22, 1946, Izvestia dared to compare the "struggle of the Jews" in Palestine with the Bolshevik struggle before 1917.

In any case, the resolutions of the Seventh Congress of the Palestine Communist Party have only been revealed recently; the process of Arabization did not take place, and despite the educational role played by the Party and the contributions it made to the struggle in this field, it did not play the role projected for it by its Seventh Congress in the Palestinian national movement at that time. During the 1936 revolt the Party split. There was also another fundamental split in 1948, and another in 1965, for reasons connected with Arabization; the dissidents advocated

a "constructive" attitude towards Zionism.

This failure of the Communist Party, the weakness of the rising Arab bourgeoisie and the disunity of the Arab labor movement meant that the feudal-religious leaderships were cast to play a fundamental role as the situation escalated to the point of explosion in 1936.

Background: The Peasants

Such was the situation concerning the workers at the outbreak of the 1936 revolt. However, what we have considered so far dealt only with one domain in which the conflict raged between the Jewish and Arab societies in Palestine and later inside each of these societies.

The other domain is the rural areas, where the conflict assumed its primarily nationalist form because of Jewish capital pouring into Palestine. Despite the fact that a large share of Jewish capital was allocated to rural areas, and despite the presence of British imperialist military forces and the immense pressure exerted by the administrative machine in favor of the Zionists, the latter achieved only minimal result (a total of 6,752 new colonizing settlers) in comparison to Zionist plans to establish a Jewish state. They nevertheless seriously damaged the status of the Palestinian Arab rural population. Ownership by Jewish groups of urban and rural land rose from 300,000 dunums in 1929 to 1,250,000 dunums in 1930. The purchased land was insignificant from the point of view of mass colonization and of the solution of the "Jewish problem." But the expropriation of nearly one million dunums - almost one-third of the agricultural land - led to a severe impoverishment of Arab peasants and Bedouins. By 1931, 20,000 peasant families had been evicted by the Zionists. Furthermore, agricultural life in the underdeveloped world, and the Arab world in particular, is not merely a mode of production, but equally a way of social, religious and ritual life. Thus, in addition to the loss of land, the Palestinian Arab rural society was being destroyed by the process of colonization.
Until 1931, only 151 per thousand Jews depended on agriculture for a living, compared to 637 per thousand Arabs. Of nearly 119,000 peasants, about 11,000 were Jews.31 Whereas, in 1931, 19.1% of the Jewish population worked in agriculture, 59% of the Palestinian Arabs lived off the land. The economic basis for this clash is very dangerous of course but to comprehend it fully we should see its national face.

In 1941, 30% of the Palestinian Arab peasants owned no land, while nearly 50% of the rest owned plots that were too small to meet their living requirements. While were obliged to refuse some of the vigorous demands of the Zionist movement.
The Zionists clearly knew that if they gave the British - who at the time had the strongest and most aggressive colonial army in the world - the chance to crush the Arab revolt in Palestine, this army would be doing a greater service to their schemes than they ever could have dreamed of.
Thus the main Zionist plans ran along two parallel lines: the closest possible alliance with Britain - to the extent that the 20th Zionist Congress held in the summer of 1937, expressed its readiness to accept partition in its determination to conciliate Britain and avoid any clash with it. Such a policy was pursued so as to allow the colonialist empire to crush the Arab revolt that had broken out again that summer.
The other line of their policy consisted of the continuous internal mobilization of Zionist settler society, under the slogan adopted by Ben Gurion at the time of "no alternative," which emphasized the necessity of laying the foundations of a military society and of its military and economic instruments.

The question of the greatest possible conciliation with the British, in spite of the fact that they had, for example, taken steps to reduce Jewish immigration, was a pivotal point in the history of Zionist policy during that period, and in spite of the fact that there were in the movement certain elements that rejected what was called "self-control," the voice of this minority had no effect. The law that led the policies of the Zionists during that period was that summarized by Weizman who said: "There is a complete similarity of interests between the Zionists and the British in Palestine."

During this period, cooperation and interaction between the two lines of policy: (1) alliance with the British mandate to the greatest possible extent, and (2) the mobilization of the Jewish settler society; had extremely important consequences. The Jewish bourgeoisie took advantage of the spread of the Arab revolt to implement many of the projects that they would not have been able to implement under different circumstances. Suddenly freed from the competition of cheap***** Palestinian Arab agricultural produce, this bourgeoisie proceeded to take action to promote its economic existence. Naturally it was not possible to do this without the blessing of the British.

During the revolt the Zionists and the mandatory authorities succeeded in building a network of roads between the principal Zionist colonies and the towns which were later to constitute a basic part of the infrastructure of the Zionist economy. Then the main road from Haifa to Tel-Aviv was paved, and the Haifa harbor was expanded and deepened, and a harbor was constructed at Tel-Aviv which was later to kill the port of Jaffa. In addition the Zionists monopolized contracts for supplying the British troops who had started to flood into Palestine.

1. The subjective point - meaning the incapacity, vacillation, weakness, subjectivity and anarchy of its various leaders.
2. The Arab point - meaning the collusion of the Arab regimes to frustrate it at a time when the weak popular Arab nationalist movement was only interacting with the Palestinian revolt in a selective, subjective and marginal way.
3. The international point.- meaning the immense disequilibrium in the objective balance of power which resulted from the alliance of all the members of the colonialist camp with each other and also with the Zionist movement, which was henceforward to have at its disposal a considerable striking force on the eve of the Second World War.

The best estimate of Arab human losses in the 1936-39 revolt is that which states that losses in the four years totaled 19,792 killed and wounded; this includes the casualties sustained by the Palestinian Arabs at the hands of the Zionist gangs in the same period.

This estimate is based on the first conservative admissions contained in official British reports, checked against other documents.102 These calculations establish that 1200 Arabs were killed in 1936. 120 in 1937, 1200 in 1938 and 1200 in 1939. In addition 112 Arabs were executed and 1200 killed in various terrorist operations. This makes the total of Arabs killed in the 1936-39 revolt, 5,032, while 14,760 were wounded in the same period. Detainees numbered about 816 in 1937, 2,463 in 1938, and approximately 5,679 in 1939.

The real significance of these figures can be shown by comparisons. In relation to numbers of inhabitants, Palestinian losses in 1936-39 are equivalent to losses by Britain of 200,000 killed, 600,000 wounded and 1,224,000 arrested. In the case of America the losses would be one million killed, 3 million wounded and 6,120,000 arrested!

But the real and most serious losses lay in the rapid growth of both the military and economic sectors which laid the foundations of the Zionist settler entity in Palestine. It is no exaggeration to say that this economic and military presence of the zionists, whose links with Imperialism grew stronger, established its principal foundations in this period (between 1936 and 1939) and one Israeli historian goes so far as to say that "the conditions for the Zionist victory had in 1948 been created in the period of the Arab revolt."103

The general policy followed by the Zionists during this period can be seen in their profound determination to avoid any conflict between themselves and the mandatory authorities, even at a time when the latter, hard-pressed by the Arab rebels, 250 feudal landlords owned 4 million dunums, 25,000 peasant families were landless, and 46,000 owned an average of 100 dunums. 15,000 hired agricultural laborers worked for landlords. According to survey of 322 Palestinian Arab villages conducted in 1936, 47% of the peasants owned less than 7 dunums and 65% less than 20 dunums (the minimum required to feed an average family was 130 dunums.) 32 Although they lived under the triple pressure of Zionist invasion, Arab feudal ownership of the land and the heavy taxes imposed by the British Mandatory Government, the Palestinian rural masses were primarily conscious of the national challenge. During the uprisings of 1929 and 1933, many small Palestinian Arab peasants sold their lands to big landlords in order to buy arms to resist the Zionist invasion and the British mandate. It was this invasion which, by threatening a way of life in which religion, tradition and honor played an important role, enabled the feudal-clerical leaderships to remain in a position of leadership despite the crimes they had committed. In many cases, it was feudal elements who bought the land to sell it to Jewish capital.

Between 1933 and 1936, 62.7% of all the land purchased by Zionists belonged to landowners residing in Palestine, 14.9% to absentee landlords and 22.5% to small peasants. While between 1920 and 1922, the figures were 20.8% from resident landlords, 75.4% from absentee landlords and 3.8% from small peasants.33 The laws passed by the Mandatory Government were designed to serve the objectives of Jewish settlement; although they were framed in such a way as to suggest that peasants were protected against being evicted or forced to sell. In reality they provided no such protection. This was illustrated in the cases of Wadi al-Hawarith, an area of 40,000 dunums, the village of Shatta with its 16,000 dunums and many other villages where the land was seized by Zionists after having evicted its inhabitants. As a result, the 50,000 Jews who lived in agricultural settlements owned 1,200,000 dunums - an average of 24 per inhabitant - while 500,000 Arabs owned less than 6,000,000, an average of 12 dunums per inhabitant.34 The case of the 8,730 peasants evicted from Marj Ibn Amer (240,000 dunums), where the land was sold to Zionists by the Beirut feudal family of Sursock, remained suspended until the end of the Mandate in 1948. 35

"Every plot of land bought by Jews was made foreign to Arabs as if it had been amputated from the body of Palestine and removed to another country."36 These words were those of a big Palestinian feudal leader. He added: "According to the Jews, 10% of the land was purchased from peasants, and the rest from big landlords...But in fact 25% of the land belonged to peasants."37 This apologetic attitude on the part of the feudalist does not change the fact that (as reported by Jewish sources) of the total land acquired by three large Jewish companies by 1936 (which accounted for half the land purchased by Jewish capital up to that date),

52.6% belonged to absentee landlords, 24.6% to residing landlords, 13.4% from the government, churches, and foreign companies, and 9.4% from individual peasants.38

This transfer of land ownership created an expanding class of dispossessed peasants who turned to seasonal salaried labor. The majority eventually made their way to the cities and sought unskilled labor. "For a peasant who was evicted from his land, it was impossible to secure other land, and the compensation was usually very small except in cases where the Mukhtar (Mayor) or other village notables were involved."39

The majority of dispossessed peasants thus moved to cities and towns. "In Jaffa, most of the street cleaners were ex-villagers; the Arab Cigarette and Tobacco Company in Nazareth reported that most of its workers were also of village origin."40 The following illustrates the fate of migrating peasants: "We asked the Company how many workers it employed and the answer was 210. The total weekly wages paid to the workers were PL62, amounting to an average of 29.5 piastres per worker per week."41 At that time, the average weekly wages of a Jewish woman worker in tobacco factories ranged from between 170 and 230 piastres a week.42 Even in government employment, an average Jewish worker earned over 100% more than his Arab counterpart.43 In 1930, the Johnson-Crosby commission estimated the average annual income of a peasant at PL31.37, before tax deductions. The report further indicated that average tax deductions amounted to PL 3.87. If we further deducted the PL8 that the average peasant paid as interest on his loans, the net income would amount to PL19.5 annually. According to the same report, the average sum required to cover the expenses of a peasant family was PL26. "The peasants, in fact...were the most heavily taxed group in Palestine...the policy pursued by the government clearly aimed at placing the peasant in an economic situation that would ensure the establishment of a Jewish national home."44

Clearly then, Jewish immigration and the transformation of the Palestinian economy from an essentially Arab agricultural economy to an industrial economy dominated by Jewish capital, affected primarily the small Palestinian Arab peasants. Tax exemptions were granted meanwhile to Jewish immigrants, as well as exemptions covering the imports related to Jewish industries, such as certain raw materials, unfinished products, coal...etc. Customs duty on imported consumer goods rose. The average import tax rose from 11% at the beginning of the Mandate to more than 26% by 1936; 110% on sugar, 149% on tobacco, 208% on petrol, 4005 on matches and 26% on coffee.45

held with Mithqal al-Faiz in the chair in the village of Umm al-Amd, to support the Palestinian revolt with men and material, the British decided to consider Transjordan as part of the field of action against the activities of the Palestinian rebels. The role played by the subservient Transjordan regime was not restricted to this; it closed the roads to Iraq to prevent any support arriving, and restricted the movements of the Palestinian leaders who, after the construction of the barbed wire entanglement along the northern frontier of Palestine, had been obliged to increase their activities from Transjordan. The regime's activities culminated in the arrest in 1939 of two Palestinian leaders. One of them, Yusuf Abu Durrar, was handed over to the British whereupon he was executed.

At the time, the forces of the Transjordan regime were engaged side by side with the British troops and the Zionist gangs in hunting down the rebels. There can be no doubt that this role played by the Transjordan regime encouraged elements of the internal counter-revolution to step up their activities. A number of the Defence Party leaders took part in the establishment of what they called "peace detachments," small mercenary forces which were formed in cooperation with the English, and helped to hunt down the rebels, took part in engagements with them and evicted them from some of the positions they controlled. Fakhri al-Nashashibi was a leader of one of these divisions, in arming them and directing their activities ... this led to his being killed a few months after the end of the revolt.99 Before that, the savage British campaign to disarm the whole of Palestine had depended on "encouraging elements hostile to the Mufti to supply them (the British) with information and to identify rebels."100 The attitudes of Iraq and Saudi Arabia at that time were not much better than that of the Jordanian regime. At the London Conference they had expressed their readiness "to use their influence with the Palestinian leaders to put an end to the revolt."101 But all this could not make the leaders of the counter-revolution (the agents of the British) a force that had any weight with the masses. On the contrary, it strengthened the Mufti and his leadership, whereas the encouragement of counter-revolutionary elements was intended, among other things, to curb the Mufti and confine him within a field that could eventually be controlled. Throughout, the British acted in accordance with their conviction that al-Nashashibi could never be a substitute for the Mufti. The small marginal degree of manoeuvreability of the Mufti's command, which was the result of the minor disputes their in progress between French colonialism in Syria and Lebanon and British colonialism, was not capable of leading to a radical change in the balance of power, and it soon contracted to the point where it hardly existed at all on the eve of the War.

These facts as a whole show that the Palestinian revolt was attacked and received blows in its three most vital points:

tural society into a Jewish industrial one. This was the real reason why the Arab nationalist bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie did not play their historical role in the Palestinian nationalist movement at the time, and allowed the feudal religious leaders to lead this movement for a long period without rivals.

Dr. Abd al-Wahhab al-Kayyali adds other important causes. "Weariness with fighting," he says, "constant military pressure, and the hope that some aspects of the White Paper would be applied, in addition to the lack of arms and ammunition, all played their part in making it difficult to continue the revolt. Moreover, in view of the fact that the world was on the brink of the Second World War, France suppressed the rebels' headquarters in Damascus."97

To all this we can add two important interconnected factors which can be discussed together, as they played a prominent role in frustrating the revolt. They are the attitude of Transjordan as embodied in the attitude of the subservient regime led by the Amir Abdullah, and the activity carried on by agents of the counter-revolution in the interior who were on the periphery of the terrorist activities of the British and Zionist forces.

The Defence Party, led by Raghib Nashashibi, played the role of legal representative of the subservient Transjordan regime in the Palestinian nationalist movement. This link was probably a kind of camouflage because of the Party's inability to reveal the links of subservience which connected it with British colonialism in the midst of a battle in which the principal enemy was that same colonialism. Therefore the link with the regime in Transjordan was a sort of camouflage accepted by both sides. The Defence Party consisted of a small group of urban effendis who chiefly represented the interests of the rising comprador bourgeoisie and had begun to discover that its existence and growth depended on its being linked not only with British colonialism but also with the Zionist movement which controlled the industrial transformation of the Palestinian economy. Because of this class situation it is possible to sum up their history by saying that they "cooperated with the occupation authorities in the administrative field and with Zionism in the commercial field, sold land to the Jews, acted as brokers, disseminated misgivings, impeded nationalist activity, strengthened the link between Abdullah and Hussain and the Zionists in 1923-1924 supported immigration and the Mandate in the twenties and partition in the thirties, advocated the establishment of a Jewish national home in part of Palestine and the surrender of the other part to Transjordan ... etc."98

While the Amir Abdullah of Transjordan was suppressing the Transjordanian mass movement which, on its own initiative, had decided at the popular conference

An illustration of government policy is provided by the following story told by Archbishop Gregorius Hajjar to the Peel Commission: "I was once in the village of Roma in the Acre district, where the inhabitants live off the production of olive oil. For a long time, they had been complaining to the High Commissioner about the Oil Company. The Company received help from the government in the form of tax exemption on its imports of ground nuts from which it extracted oil and mixed it with olive oil and sold it at lower prices. The people in the village asked that their product be protected against the Company's product, and the government formed a committee to hear the villagers' complaints. When the committee went to Roma the villagers were furious to find out that its chairman was none other than the director of the Company."46

On the other hand, the tax system was clearly discriminatory in favor of the rich. On a yearly income of PL22.37 the tax rate was 25% while salaries and earnings that exceeded PL1,000 per year were subject to 12% in taxes.47

The small and middle peasants were not only impoverished as a result of losing their land, but were also the victims of Zionist practices that were based on the slogans of "Jewish labor only" and "Jewish products only." Jewish industrialists employed only Jewish workers, paid them higher wages and sold their products at higher prices. "Jews were encouraged to give preference to Jewish products although at higher prices than those of Arab competitors."48

Raw materials were exempted from custom duty, while high taxes were imposed on imported goods, particularly if similar goods were locally produced by Jewish factories.

On the other hand, the class that was known as the "effendi class" and lived in the town, derived their income from agricultural land rented to peasants and from interests on loans to peasants. (The Effendis did not begin to invest in industry until the forties.) This form of exploitation was by far more ruinous to the peasants than Zionist colonization.

Another rural group was the "Bedouins," who counted 66,553 in 1931 (in 1922 there were 103,000 Bedouin in Palestine). They were to play a principal role in the 1936 revolt, as they did during the August 1929 uprising. It drew the attention of the Palestine Communist Party in the congress referred to previously. The Bedouins, who made up nearly 35% of the population, constituted a potential revolutionary force. "Turned desperate because of severe impoverishment and constant hunger, they were always on the verge of armed uprisings. Their participation in the August uprising showed that they could play a leading role in a mass revolt,

and at the same time it appears clearly that the leaders of these tribes could be spoilt by money. They were constantly providing the army of landless peasants and semi-proletarians with new hands and mouths."49

In the meantime, the fragmented Arab urban petty-bourgeoisie was in a state of confusion, indecision and fragmentation: the speed at which society was being transformed into a Jewish industrial society gave neither the growing bourgeoisie nor the feudalists the chance to take part in or to profit from the process. It was, therefore, by no means surprising that most of the Palestinian leaders who testified before the Peel Commission in 1937, and before the previous commissions, had eulogized Ottoman imperialism and praised the way it had treated them as compared with British imperialism. They had been the instrument of the Porte, the bulwark of the Sultan and an integral part of the system of domination, oppression and exploitation, whereas British imperialism had dismissed them from the post of chief agent, because it had found a better qualified, more firmly established and more highly organized agent in the Zionist movement.

In this way, the main outlines of the fundamental role that the feudal-clerical leadership was to play were established - it was to be a "struggle" for a better position in the colonialist regime. But they could not engage in this "struggle" without rallying around their support, the classes that were eager to free themselves from the yoke of colonization. With this end in view, they drew up a programme that was clearly progressive, adopted mass slogans, which they were neither willing nor able to push to their logical conclusions, and followed a pattern of struggle which was quite out of character.

Of course these leaderships did not have absolute freedom of action, as many people like to suggest; on the contrary, they were exposed to all the pressures that were shaping the course of events, to the increasing intensity of the conflicts and to all the influences we have already discussed. This explains why there developed from time to time partial contradictions between their interests and those of the ruling classes of the Arab countries surrounding Palestine, although they upheld the same class interests. It also explains their widescale alliances within the class structure of Palestine.

Background: The Intellectuals

In 1930, after thirteen years of British occupation of Palestine, the Director of Education admitted in his report that: "Since the beginning of the occupation, the government has never undertaken to provide sufficient funds for the building of

thrown in to gain control of the situation. (The Peel Commission admitted that security expenditure in Palestine had risen from PL826,000 in 1935 to PL2,223,000 in 1936).

This campaign of terrorism and the efforts that were made to cut the rebels' links with the villages, exhausted the revolt. The killing of Abd al-Rahim al-Hajj Muhammad in March 1939 came as a crushing blow to the revolt, depriving it of one of the bravest, wisest and most honest of the popular revolutionary leaders. After that the local commands started to collapse and leave the field. Moreover, the Franco-British rapprochement on the eve of the Second World War certainly made it easier to surround the rebels; Arif Abd al-Razzaq, worn out by hunger and pursuit, was handed over to the French, along with some of his followers; Jordanian forces arrested Yusuf Abu Daur and handed him over to the British, who executed him. Also British and Zionist terrorism in the villages had made people afraid to support the rebels and supply them with ammunition and food, and doubtless the lack of even a minimum of organisation made it impossible to surmount these obstacles.

At the time the Palestinian Communist Party attributed the failure of the revolt to five principal causes:
1. The absence of the revolutionary leadership;
2. The individualism and opportunism of the leaders of the revolt.
3. The lack of a central command for the forces of the revolt,
4. The weakness of the Palestinian Communist Party.
5. The inauspicious world situation.95

On the whole, this is correct, but to these causes must be added the fact that the Communist Party was close to the leadership of Hajj Amin al-Hussaini, whom they viewed as "belonging to the most extremely anti-imperialist wing of the nationalist movement", while it regarded his enemies as "feudalist" traitors.96 And this in spite of the fact that the Mufti's group had absolutely no hesitation in liquidating leftist elements who tried to penetrate labour circles.

The Communist left, in addition to being weak, was incapable of reaching the countryside; it was concentrated in certain towns. It had failed to Arabise the Party, as the Seventh Comintern Congress had recommended, and was still a victim of its restricted view of Arab unity, and of relations, as far as the struggle was concerned, with the rest of the Arab homeland, which had organisational repercussions.

It is clear that the shortcoming that was mainly responsible for this defeat was the great gap caused by the rapid movement of society in Palestine which, as we have seen, was undergoing an extremely violent transformation from an Arab agricul-

speaking as a close friend of Britain and who did not want to say a single word that might hurt the feelings of any Briton, because he was their friend from the bottom of his heart,93 only confirmed the success of the policy which Britain had for so long been carefully pursuing vis-a-vis the leadership of the Palestinian nationalist movement; it did not abandon it, and kept it constantly at the end of an open bridge. And the British were confident that Iraq and Saudi Arabia "were prepared to use their influence with the Palestinian leaders to put an end to the revolt and ensure the success of the Conference."

However, the revolt in Palestine had not subsided (according to official figures, in February 1939, 110 were killed and 112 wounded in 12 engagements with the British, 39 villages were searched, curfews were imposed in three towns three times, about 200 villagers were arrested, there were fires in five government departments, ten Arabs were executed on charges of carrying arms, there were attacks on ten Zionist settlements, the oil pipeline was blown up; a train between Haifa and Lydda was mined, and a search post was set up in the Aqsa Mosque).

The British figures presented by the Colonial Secretary show that "between 20th December and 29th February, there were 348 incidents of assassination, 140 acts of sabotage, 19 kidnappings, 23 thefts, nine mine and 32 bomb explosions, while the Army lost 18 dead and 39 wounded, and the Palestinians lost 83 dead and 124 wounded; these figures do not include casualties to the rebels. . ."94

Things continued in this way until September 1939, the month in which the Second World War broke out. In the meantime the Palestinian Arabs suffered irreplaceable losses; the leadership quite apart from the spirit of compromise that was afoot, was outside the country; the newly constituted local commands were falling one after the other on the various fields of battle, British oppression had reached its climax, and Zionist violence had been constantly escalating since the middle of 1937. There can be no doubt that the British concentrated presence and the persistence that accompanied it in the Palestinian theatre had exhausted the rebels, who, with their leadership, no longer really knew who they were fighting against or why. At one moment the leadership would talk of traditional friendship and common interests with Britain, at another went so far as to agree to the granting of autonomy to the Jews in the areas where they were settled. There can be no doubt that the vacillation of the leadership, and its inability to determine a clear objective to fight for, played its part in weakening the revolt.

But this must not lead us to neglect the objective factor: the British used two divisions of troops, several squadrons of planes, the police, and the Transjordan Frontier Force, in addition to the six thousand strong quasi-Zionist force; all this was

a single school in the country," and in 1935, the government turned down 41% of the applications by Palestinian Arabs for places in schools. In the 800 villages in Palestine there were only fifteen schools for girls and 269 for boys and only fifteen village girls got as far as the seventh elementary grade.

There were 517 Palestinian Arab villages which had neither boys' nor girls' schools and there was not one secondary school in the villages. Moreover, the government "censored books and objected to all cultural links with the Arab world, and did nothing to raise the educational level of the peasants..."50

Thus in 1931 among Palestinian Muslims 251 per thousand males and 33 per thousand females had attended school, and among the Palestinian Christians 715 per thousand males and 441 per thousand females (for Jews the figures were 943 per thousand males and 787 per thousand females.)51

These figures give an idea of the educational situation in the rural areas, but not of that in Palestine as a whole, which had played a pioneering role in education since the start of the Arab resurgence at the beginning of the 20th century. In fact, a large number of printing presses had been established in Palestine before the British occupation, about fifty Arabic newspapers appeared between 1904 and 1922, while at least ten more with a wide circulation made their appearance before the 1936 revolt.

A number of factors, which it is not possible to deal with at length here, had made Palestine an important center of Arab culture, and the persistent efforts of intellectuals migrating into and out of Palestine were a basic factor in establishing the cultural role of Palestine and in the establishment of literary associations and clubs which began to appear in the early twenties.

This cultural development, which was constantly fed by a flow of Arab graduates from Beirut and Cairo, was accompanied by an extensive activity in the field of translation from French and English. The foreign missions that were primarily attracted to Palestine for historical and religious considerations, placed a prominent role in disseminating an atmosphere of education in the cities. However, it is not the general cultural climate in Palestine during that period that is of concern to us, but rather, in particular, the influence of the aggravating economic and political crisis on the literary movement. The development of a certain "popular culture" was very significant. It represented a certain awareness that existed in rural areas despite the widespread illiteracy, an awareness that was spurred by the rapidly developing economic and political reality. Popular poetry in particular reflected a growing concern on the part of the rural masses over the course of events. This

spontaneous awareness led to a spirit of mobilization in the villages.

The majority of urban intellectuals, for their part, were of a feudal or commercial petty-bourgeois class affiliation. Although they basically advocated a type of bourgeois revolution, the objective conditions were by no means favorable to the development of the class that would logically lead such a struggle. As political activists, they thus remained under the control of the traditional leadership. Their work nevertheless reflected a degree of awareness that, in general, was not shared by their counterparts in other Arab countries.

The struggle between advocates of revolution and reactionaries in the rural areas, and between revolutionary militants and defeatist elements in the cities was developing in favor of the revolution. We do not know of a single Palestinian writer or intellectual in that period who did not participate in the call for resistance against the colonial enemy. There is no doubt that the intellectuals, even though they were not, in general, mobilized by a revolutionary party, played an important role in the national struggle.

The position of Palestinian intellectuals was unique. Having completed their studies and returned to their towns, they became aware of the incapacity of the class they belonged to of leading the national struggle. But at the same time they suffered from their own inability to participate and benefit from the process of industrial development that was essentially controlled by an alien and hostile community. On the other hand, in the rural areas of Palestine, the peasants, who for centuries had been subject to class and national oppression, lived in a most archaic society where local feudal and religious leaders exercised absolute authority. Popular poetry often reflected the submissiveness of peasants*, which the Palestinian intellectuals, and in particular the poets, could not combat easily. Certain intellectuals attempted to overcome the submissive mood of the rural masses and played a prominent role in disseminating progressive awareness.

Wadi al-Bustani, a poet of Lebanese origin who graduated from the American University of Beirut and settled in Palestine, played an important role as a progressive intellectual. He was the first to warn against the Balfour Declaration and its challenges, the very month it was issued. His period (as Palestine was on the verge of armed revolt) produced a powerful vanguard of revolutionary poets whose works became part of the cultural heritage of the masses.** On January 29, 1920, the British Mandatory Government sent a letter to the editor of the cultural magazine Karmel, which was then published in Haifa, requesting the publication of a poem by the celebrated Iraqi poet Ma'ruf Al-Risafi that was dedicated to the British High Commissioner and that praised and eulogized him along with a Jewish speaker

British oppression, which had escalated to an unexpected level, and the escalation of police raids, mass arrests and executions throughout 1937 and 1938 weakened the revolt but did not end it. The British had come to realise that both in essence and substance, and as regards its local leadership, it was a peasant revolt. As a result of this, the revolutionary spirit that prevailed throughout the whole of Palestine led to everyone in the towns wearing the peasant headdress (keffiya and agal) so that the countryman coming into the town should not be subjected to oppression by the authorities. Later, all were forbidden to carry their identity cards, so that the authorities should not be able to distinguish a townsman from a countryman.

This situation indicates very clearly the nature of the revolt and its influence at that time. The countryside in general was the cradle of the revolt, and the temporary occupation of towns in 1938 was achieved after attacks by peasants90 from outside. This meant that it was the peasants and villagers in general who were paying the highest price.

In 1938 a number of peasants were executed merely for being in possession of arms. A rapid glance at the list of the names of those who were sent to prison or to the gallows shows us that the overwhelming majority were poor peasants. For example, "all the inhabitants of the village of Ain Karem, three thousand in number, were sentenced to go ten kilometres every day to report to the police station."91 During that period Britain sentenced about 2,000 Palestinian Arabs to long terms of imprisonment, demolished more than 5,000 houses and executed by hanging 148 persons in Acre prison, and there were more than 5,000 in prison for varying terms.92

Britain, which in November 1938 had abandoned the partition proposal recommended by the Peel Report, now started trying to gain time. The Round Table Conference held in London in February 1939 was a typical illustration of the dubious transaction that was going on silently all the time between the command of the Palestinian revolt and the British, who knew for certain that the command was prepared to bargain at any moment. Of course Jamal al-Hussaini did not go to the Round Table Conference in London alone; he was accompanied by representatives of the "independent" Arab countries. Thus the Arab regimes which were subject to colonialism were destined for the second time in less than two years to impose their will on the Arabs of Palestine through the identity (latent and potential) of interests of all those who sat around the Round Table in London.

The speeches made by Jamal al-Hussaini, Amir Faisal (Saudi Arabia), Amir Hussein (the Yemen), All Mahir (Egypt) and Nuri al-Sa'id (Iraq), who declared that he was

more important than it had been in the previous period. These were closely linked with the peasants. This does much to explain to what extent the revolt was able to go. In this period, for example, Abd al-Rahim al-Hajj emerged as a local commander, and the Communists say that they were in contact with him and supplied him with information.87 This development might have constituted a historic turning point in the revolt had it not been for the weakness of the "left" in both the relative and the true sense, and had not these local commands been obliged to maintain their organisational link, to a certain extent, with the "Central Committee for Struggle" (Jihad) in Damascus, not only because of their traditional loyalty to it, but also because they depended on it to some extent for financing.

In the whole history of the Palestinian struggle the armed popular revolt was never closer to victory than in the months between the end of 1937 and the beginning of 1939. In this period the British forces' control of Palestine weakened, the prestige of colonialism was at its lowest, and the reputation and influence of the revolt became the principal force in the country.

However, at this time, Britain became more convinced that it would have to rely on Zionists who had provided them with a unique situation that they had never found in any of their colonies - they had at their disposal a local force which had common cause with British colonialism and was highly mobilised against the local population.

At this time Britain began to be alarmed at the necessity of diverting part of its military forces to confront the ever more critical situation in Europe. Therefore Britain viewed with increasing favour "the rapid organisation of a Jewish volunteer defense force of 6,500 men already in existence."88 It had already gone some way in pursuing a policy of relying on the local Zionist force and handing over to it many of the tasks of repression, which were increasing. However, it did not destroy the bridge which it had always maintained with the class led by the Mufti, and it was in this field and at this time in particular that the British played a major role in maintaining the Mufti as the undisputed representative of the Palestinian Arabs. Their reserves of the leadership on the right of the Mufti were practically exhausted so that if the Mufti were no longer regarded as the sole leader, this would "leave no-one who can represent the Arabs except the leaders of the revolt in the mountains", as the British High Commissioner for Palestine said.89 There can be no doubt that this, among other reasons, contributed to keeping the Mufti at the head of the leadership of the Palestinian nationalist movement in spite, of the fact that he had left his place of refuge in the Aqsa Mosque in a hasty manner, and had been in Damascus since the end of January 1937.

called Jehuda. The editor agreed to publish it along with a reply to it. Al-Bustani wrote the reply in the form of a poem which said the following:
"Juda's" speech? Or acts of witchcraft? And Rasafi's saying? Or lies of poetry
Your poetry is of the choicest words, you are well-acquainted with the jewels of sea verse
But this sea is one of politics, if justice spreads high its low tide begins
Yes! He who has crossed the Jordan River is our cousin but he who comes from across the sea is suspicious.53

This long poem, which became very famous at the time, was in fact a unique political document; it not only made Al-Risafi look a fool, but also asserted, even at that early date, political facts of great importance. It not only mentioned Jewish immigration and the danger it constituted, but also the role played by Britain in fragmenting the Palestinian Arabs, the Balfour Declaration, and its implications, etc.
A short time before this, on March 28th 1920, Al-Bustani had himself led a demonstration, which chanted a song that he had composed himself. He was summoned to an inquiry, and the following appears in the records of the inquiry conducted by the Public Prosecutor:

Public Prosecutor: Statements have been made that you were carried shoulder-high, and that you said to the people who were following behind you: "Oh Christians, Oh Muslims".
The Accused: Yes.
Public Prosecutor: And you also said: "To whom have you left the country?"
The Accused: Yes.
Public Prosecutor: Then you said: "Kill the Jews and unbelievers."
The Accused: No. That violates the meter and the rhyme. I could not have said that. What I said was both rhyming and metrical. It is called poetry.54

In the subsequent periods poetry played an increasingly important role in expressing, on all sorts of occasions, feelings of the helpless masses. Thus, when Balfour came from London to attend the opening ceremony of the Hebrew University in 1927, the ceremony was also attended by Ahmad Lutfi al-Said, as the delegate of the Egyptian government, and the poet Iskandar al-Khuri wrote the following lines addressed to Balfour:

"Running, from London you came to stir the fire of this battle
Oh Lord I cannot blame you for you are not the source of our misery.
For Egypt is to be blamed as it only extends to us empty hands."***

Ibrahim Tuqan, Abu Salma (Abd al-Karim al-Karmi) and Abd al-Rahim Mahmud

were, since the beginning of the thirties, the culmination of the wave of nationalist poets who inflamed the whole of Palestine with revolutionary awareness and agitation. As'af al-Nashashibi, Khalil al-Sakakini, Ibrahim al-Dabbagh, Muhammed Hasan Ala al-Din, Burhan al-Abbushi, Muhammed Khurshid, Qayasar al-Khuri, the priest George Bitar, Bulos Shihada, Mutlaq Abd al-Khaliq and others.
The work of these three, Tuqan, al-Karmi and Mahmud, displays an extraordinary power of appreciation of what was going on, which can only be explained as a profound grasp of what was boiling in mass circles. What appears to be inexplicable prophecy and a power of prediction in their poems is, in fact, only their ability to express this dialectical relationship that linked their artistic work with the movement that was at work in society.

The fact that we have concentrated on the role played by poetry and popular poetry does not mean that other manifestations of cultural activity in Palestine did not play any role, or that their role was insignificant. Literary newspapers and articles, stories and the translation movement all played a significant pioneering role. For example, in an editorial published by Yusuf al-Isa in Al-Nafa'is in 1920, we read: "Palestine is Arab - its Muslims are Arab - its Christians are Arab - and its Jewish citizens are Arab too. Palestine will never be quiet if it is separated from Syria and made a national home for Zionism. . ."

It was expressions of this kind at the beginning of the twenties that fashioned the revolutionary cultural tide in the thirties, which was to play an important role in promoting awareness and sparking off the revolt - writers such as Arif al-Arif, Khalil al-Sakakini (a mocking writer of fiery prose, and son of a master carpenter), As'af al-Nashashibi (a member of the upper bourgeoisie who was influenced by al-Sakakini and adopted many of his views), Arif al-Azzuni, Mahmud Saif al-Din al-Irani and Najati Sidqi (one of the early leftist writers who, in 1936, extolled the materialism of Ibn Khaldun and deplored idealism.) He was probably the first chronicler which the Arab nationalist movement had from the beginning of the renaissance who used a materialist analysis of events. He published his researches in Al-Tali'a in 1937 and 1938: Abdullah Mukhlis (who in the middle thirties started calling for the view that colonialism is a class phenomenon, and maintaining that artistic production must be militant), Raja al-Hurani, Abdullah al-Bandak, Khalil al-Badiri, Muhammad Izzat Darwaza and Isa al-Sifri (whose eulogy of the death of al-Qassam had a profoundly revolutionary significance.)

This effervescence in the Palestinian cultural atmosphere which reached its climax in the thirties, was expressed in a variety of forms, but for many reasons related to the history of Arabic literature, the greatest influence was always exercised by poetry and popular poetry.

been able to take up a year earlier. In September 1937 Andrews, the District Commissioner of the Galilee district, was shot dead by four armed commandos outside the Anglican church in Nazareth. Andrews was "the only official who administered the Mandate as Zionists consider it right ... he never succeeded in winning the confidence of the Fellahin [Palestinian peasants]." The Arabs regarded him as a friend of the Zionists and believed that his task was to facilitate the transfer of Galilee to the Zionist state that had been demarcated by the partition proposal. The Arab peasants disliked him,, and accused him of facilitating the sale of the Huleh lands, and the commandos who killed him are believed to have belonged to one of the secret cells of the Qassamites.84

Although the Arab Higher Committee condemned this incident on the same night, the situation, exactly as had happened when al-Qassam was killed, had got out of the control of the Mufti and his group, so that, if they wanted to remain at the head of the national movement, they had to hang onto it and mount the rising wave, as had happened in April 1936.

This time, however, the revolutionary enthusiasm of the masses was more violent, not only because of the experience they had acquired during the past year, but also because the conflict that was taking place before their eyes had become increasingly clear. It is certain that this stage of the revolt was directed substantially, if not entirely, against the British rather than the Zionists. The growth of the conflict had led to the crystallisation of more clear-cut positions; the peasants were in almost complete control of the revolt, the role of the urban bourgeoisie had retreated somewhat, and the wealthy people in the country and the big middle peasants were hesitant to support the rebels, while the Zionist forces had effectively gone on the offensive.

There are two important questions to be considered as regards this stage of the revolt:
1. "The Arabs contacted the Zionists, proposing that they reach some kind of an agreement on the basis of a complete severance of relations with Britain. But the Zionists immediately rejected this, because they regarded their relations with Britain as fundamental".85 This was accompanied by a rise in the number of Zionists serving in the police in Palestine; from 365 in 1935 to 682 in 1936. and at the end of that year the government announced the recruitment of 1240 Zionists as additional policemen armed with army rifles. A month later the figure rose to 286386 and British officers played a prominent role in leading Zionist groups in attacks on Palestinian Arab villages.
2. The fact that the leadership of the revolt was outside Palestine (in Damascus) made the role of the local leadership, most of which were of poor peasant origin,

ance in the leadership of the nationalist movement, as the forces to the right of Hajj Amin al-Hussaini, led by the Defence Party, immediately opposed the decision to boycott the Peel Commission, and gave numerous indications of their desire to accept the settlement that Britain was to propose. The leaders of this party, which represented mainly the urban effendis, relied on the discontent felt by the big merchants in the towns and on the dislocation of the interests of the urban bourgeoisie, which depended on close economic relations embodied in the agencies they held from British, and sometimes Jewish, industrial firms.

The Arab regimes, especially that of Transjordan, strongly supported the attitude of this right wing, and Hajj Amin al Hussaini and what he represented had no inclination to turn to the leftist front which, in fact, he had started to liquidate. Thus his attitude began to be increasingly vacillating and hesitant, and it was clear that he had got into a position where he could not take a single step forward with the revolt, and where, equally, retreat could no longer do him any good. However, when the British thought that they could now achieve the political liquidation of the Mufti in the period of quiet that followed the end of the strike, they found that this was not true, and that the Mufti's right wing was still much too weak to control the situation. The British High Commissioner maliciously continued to realise how great a role the Mufti could play while he was restricted to that position between the Defence Party on his right and the Independence Party (its left wing) and the young intellectuals' movements on his left. This High Commissioner realised Britain's ability to take advantage of the wide margin between "the inflexibility (obstinacy) of the villagers who resisted for six months, receiving little pay but not indulging in plunder" and the weakness or non-existence of great qualities of leadership in the members of the (Arab Higher) Committee."83

The correctness of the High Commissioner's view of the limited role that the Mufti's right-wing could play was shown when the Defence Party failed to take an unambiguous stand against the report of the Peel Commission, which, published on 7th July 1937, recommended partition and the establishment of a Jewish state.
At the same time, it became clear that the High Commissioner's fear that pressure from the Mufti's left-wing might lead hum to abandon his moderate attitude was not groundless. This pressure, however, was not exerted by the quarter from which the High Commissioner had expected it, but by the middle cadre which was still represented on the national committees, and which was daily represented by groups of dispossessed peasants and unemployed workers in the cities and the countryside.

Thus the only course left to the Mufti was to flee. He avoided arrest by taking refuge in the Haram al-Sharif, but events forced him into a position which he had not

This alone explains the role which poetry took upon itself in this period, which was almost direct political preaching.

Ibrahim Tuqan, for example, commenting on the establishment, in 1932, of the "national fund" to save land in Palestine from being sold to the Zionists (this was the fund established by the feudal-clerical leadership on the pretext of preventing the land of poor peasants from falling into the hands of the Zionists) says: "Eight of those responsible for the fund project were land brokers for the Zionists."
As early as 1929, Ibrahim Tuqan disclosed the role that the big landowners were playing in connection with the land problem:

"They have sold the country to its enemies because of their greed for money; but it is their homes they have sold. They could have been forgiven if they had been forced to do so by hunger, but God knows that they have never felt hunger or thirst."

"If only one of our leaders would fast like Gandhi - perhaps his fast would do some good. There is no need to abstain from food - in Palestine a leader would die without food. Let him abstain from selling land and keep a plot in which to lay his bones."55

In the same year, Tuqan had written his epic on the death sentences passed by the Mandatory Government on the three martyrs, Fuad Hijazi, of Safad, and Muhammad Jumjum and Ata al-Zir of Acre. This poem became extremely famous, and came to be regarded as part of the revolutionary heritage, like the poem of Abd al-Rahim Mahmud written on August 14, 1935 in hich he addressed the Amir Saud who was visiting Palestine:

"Have you come to visit the Aqsa Mosque, or to say farewell to it before it is destroyed?"

This poet was to lay down his life in the battle of Al-Shajara in Palestine in 1948, but before that he was to play a prominent role, along with Abu Salma and Tuqan. In laying the foundations of Palestinian resistance poetry which later, under Israeli occupation, was to become one of the most conspicuous manifestations of the endurance of the Palestinian masses.

Poetry and popular poetry accompanied the mass movement frm the early thirties, expressing the developments that preceded the outbreak of the revolt.
The poem of Abu Salma, in which he chronicled the 1936 revolt, courageously describes the bitter disappointment caused by the way the Arab regimes abandoned

it:
"You who cherish the homeland revolt against the outright oppression
Liberate the homeland from the kings liberate it from the puppets. . .
I thought we have kings that can lead the men behind them
Shame to such kings if kings are so low
By god, their crowns are not fit to be shoesoles
We are the ones who will protect the homeland and heal its wounds."

Mention must also be made of the popular poet "Awad" who, the night before his execution in 1937, wrote on the walls of his cell in Acre a splendid poem ending with the lines:

"The bridegroom belongs to us; woe to him whom we are fighting against - we'll cut off his moustache with a sword. Shake the lance with the beautiful shaft; where are you from, you brave men. We are men of Palestine - welcome with honor.
"Father of the bridegroom, do not worry, we are drinkers of blood. In Bal'a and Wadi al-Tuffah there has been an attack and a clash of arms. . . Oh ye beautiful women sing and chant. On the day of the battle of Beit Amrin you hear the sound of gun-shooting, look upon us from the balcony."56

The anger felt against all three members of the enemy trinity - the Zionist invasion, the British mandate and Arab reaction, both local and otherwise, grew constantly as the situation grew more critical.

At that time the countryside, with the escalation of the conflicts and the outbreaks of armed uprisings, was developing its new awareness through the contacts of its "cultural" elements, with the towns and the multiplication of factors inducing such awareness:

"Good people, what is this hatred? A Zionist with a Westerner?"57 and "the gun appeared, the lion did not; the muzzle of the gun is wet with dew," or: "His rifle, with the salesman I say my heart will never rest till I buy it His rifle got rusty from lack of use but still longing for its fighter."

Indeed, the inflammatory call to revolt went to such extraordinary lengths that, after all the inherited proverbs which counseled submissiveness, and constituted a lead with the infallible authority of traditions, popular poetry suddenly became capable of saying: "Arab, son of weak and poor woman, sell your mother and buy a gun; a gun will be better than your mother when the revolt relieves your cares."58 As the conflict became more and more acute, the "gun" was to become the instrument which destroyed the age-old walls of the call to submissiveness and suddenly

ous scheme, and repeatedly denied it.

After this large numbers of British troops, estimated at twenty thousand, poured into Palestine, and on 30th September 1936, when they had all arrived, a decree was issued enforcing martial law. The mandatory authorities stepped up their policy of relentless repression, and September and October witnessed battles of the greatest violence - the last battles, in fact, to cover nearly the whole of Palestine.
On 11th October 1936, the Arab Higher Committee distributed a statement calling for an end to the strike, and thereby the revolt: "Inasmuch as submission to the will of their Majesties and Highnesses, the Arab kings and to comply with their wishes is one of our hereditary Arab traditions, and inasmuch as the Arab Higher Committee firmly believes that their Majesties and Highnesses would only give orders that are in conformity with the interests of their sons and with the object of protecting their rights; the Arab Higher Committee, in obedience to tire wishes of their Majesties and Highnesses, the Kings and amirs, and from its belief ill the great benefit that will result from their mediation and cooperation, calls on the noble Arab people to end the strike and the disturbances, in obedience to these orders, whose only object is the interests of the Arabs."79

Exactly a month later (on 11th November 1936) the "General Command of the Arab Revolt in Southern Syria-Palestine" announced that it "calls for all acts of violence to be stopped completely, and that there should be no provocation towards anything liable to disturb the atmosphere of the negotiations, which the Arab nation hopes will succeed and obtain the full rights of the country."80 Ten days later the same command issued another statement in which it declared that it had "left the field, from its confidence in the guarantee of the Arab kings and amirs, and to protect the safety of the negotiations".81

As Jamil al-Shuqairi says: "So, in obedience to the orders of the kings and amirs, the strike was called off, and the activities of the revolt came to an end within two hours of the call being published".82

Although at that time Britain was challenging the Palestinian leaderships on precisely the point over which they had deceived the masses - the question of Jewish immigration to Palestine - and although these leaders decided to boycott the Royal Commission (the Peel Commission), the Arab kings and amirs obliged these leaderships to obey them for the second time in less than three months. King Abdul Aziz Al Sa'ud and King Ghazi wrote letters to Hajj Amin al-Hussaini saying: "In view of our confidence in the good intentions of the British government to do justice to the Arabs, it is our opinion that your interest requires that you should meet the Royal Commission". In fact this incident, which appears trivial, shattered the alli-

Secondly: Amir Abdullah of Transjordan**** and Nuri Said started to take action to mediate with the Arab Higher Committee. However, their mediation was unsuccessful, despite the readiness of the leadership to accept their good offices. But the movement of the masses was not yet ready to be domesticated in 1936 although these contacts did have a negative effect on the revolt, and left a feeling that the conflict then in progress was amenable to settlement, And in fact this initiative which started with failure was to be completely successful in October of the same year, only about seven weeks later.

Not that these contacts were the only form assumed by the dialectic of the relations between Palestine and the neighbouring Arab countries. This dialectic was more complicated and reflected the complexity of the conflicts, We have already seen what al-Qassam represented in this field; and in fact the Qassamist phenomenon in this sense continued to exist. Large numbers of Arab freedom fighters poured into Palestine; among them were Sa'id al-As, who was killed in October 1936, Sheikh Muhammad al-Ashmar and many others. This influx also comprised a number of adventurist nationalist officers, the most prominent of whom was Fauzi al-Qawuqji who shortly after entry into Palestine at the head of a small band in August 1936 declared himself commander in chief of the revolt.

Although these men improved and expanded the tactics of the rebels, the greater part of the burden of revolutionary violence in the country and of commando action in the towns, continued to be borne by the dispossessed peasants. In fact it was the "officers" who emerged from the ranks of the peasants themselves who continued to play the major role, but most of them were subject to the leadership of al-Mufti. They also represented legendary heroism for the masses of the revolution.
Although the British officials in Palestine did not completely agree with London's policy of reckless support for the Zionist movement, and thought that there was room for an Arab class leadership whose interests were not linked with the revolt, to cooperate with colonialism. Britain finally accepted, so it seems, on June 19th, 1936, the "importance of the organic link between the safety of British interests and the success of Zionism in Palestine".78 Britain decided to strengthen its forces in Palestine and to increase repressive measures.

Frightened by this decision, the leadership of the Palestinian nationalist movement vacillated and lost its nerve. Hajj Amin al-Hussaini, Raghib Nashashibi and Auni Abd al-Hadi hastened to meet the British High Commissioner, and it is clear from reports he sent to his government at the time they confirmed that they were prepared to end the revolt if the Arab kings asked them to do so. They did not, however, dare to admit to the masses that they were the originators; of this tortu-

became able to pierce the heart of the matter, and the revolt became the promise for the future - better than the warmest things in the past, the mother and the family.

But over all this effervescence the patriarchal feudalism was ossified with its impotent leadership, its authority and its reliance on the past.

In the midst of these complicated and heated conflicts, which were both expanding and growing more profound, and which mainly affected the Arab peasants and workers, although they also pressed heavily on the petty and middle bourgeoisie and the middle peasants in the country, the situation was becoming ever more critical, expressing itself in armed outbreaks from time to time (1929-1933). On the other hand, the Palestinian feudal-clerical leaders felt that their own interests too were threatened by the growing economic force - Jewish capitalism allied with the British Mandate. But their interests were also threatened from the opposite quarter - by the poor Arab masses who no longer knew where to turn. For the Arab urban bourgeoisie was weak and incapable of leadership in this stage of economic transformation which was taking place with unparalleled rapidity and a small section of this bourgeoisie became parasitic and remained on the fringe of Jewish industrial development. In addition both their subjective and objective conditions were undergoing changes contradictory to the general direction Arab society was pursuing.

The young intellectuals, sons of the rich rural families, played a prominent role in inciting people to revolt. They had returned from their universities to a society in which they rejected the formula of the old relationships, which had become outdated, and in which they were rejected by the new formulas which had started to take shape within the framework of the Zionist-colonialist alliance.
Thus the class struggle became mixed, with extraordinary thoroughness, with the national interest and religious feelings, and this mixture broke out within the framework of the objective and subjective crisis which Arab society in Palestine was experiencing. Due to the above, Palestinian Arab society remained a prisoner of the feudal-clerical leaderships. In view of the social and economic oppression which was the lot of the poor Palestinian Arabs in the towns and villages, it was inevitable that the nationalist movement should assume advanced forms of struggle, adopt class slogans and follow a course of action basd on class concepts. Similarly, faced with the firm and daily expressed alliance between the invading society built by the Jewish settlers in Palestine and British colonialism, it was impossible to forget the primarily nationalist character of that struggle. And in view of the terrible religious fervor on which the Zionist invasion of Palestine was based, and which was inseparable from all of its manifestations, it was impossible that the underde-

veloped Palestinian countryside should not practice religious fundamentalism as a manifestation of hostility to the Zionist colonialist incursion.

Commenting on the emergence of the Black Panther movement in "Israel," the leftist Hebrew-language magazine Matzpen (No. 5, April 1971) says: "Class conflicts in Israel sometimes tend to take the form of confessional conflicts. Class conflicts, even when translated into the language of confessionalism, have from the start lain at the heart of Zionism." Of course this statement applies to an even greater extent to the role played by religion against the Zionist incursion, as being a form of both national and class persecution. For example: "One of the results of Zionism was that celebrations of the Prophet's Birthday were turned into nationalist rallies under the direction of the Mufti of Haifa and the poet Wadi' al-Bustani and were attended by all the Christian leaders and notables, not a single Jew being invited. In this way, saints' days, both Muslim and Christian, became popular festivals with a nationalist tinge in the towns of Palestine."

The feudal-clerical leaderships proceeded to impose themselves at the head of the movement of the masses. To do this they took advantage of the meagerness of the Arab urban bourgeoisie, and of the conflict which was, to a certain extent, boiling up between them and British colonialism, which had established its influence through its alliance with the Zionist movement; of their religious attributes, of the small size of the Arab proletariat and the meagerness of its Communist Party, which was not only under the control of Jewish leaders, but its Arab elements had been subjected to oppression and intimidation by the feudal leadership ever since the early twenties. It was against this complicated background, in which the interlocked and extremely complicated conflicts were flaring up, that the 1936 revolt came to the forefront in the history of Palestine.

The Revolt

Historians are at odds with each other with regard to the different incidents that took place in various places as the reason for the outbreak of the 1936 revolt.
According to Yehuda Bauer, "the incident that is commonly regarded as the start of the 1936 disturbances" occurred on 19th April 1936, when Palestinian Arab crowds in Jaffa attacked Jewish passers-by.59

In the view of Isa al-Sifri60, Salih Mas'ud Buwaysir61 and Subhi Yasin62, the first spark was lit when an unknown group of Palestinian Arabs (Subhi Yasin describes it as a Qassamist group including Farhan al-Sa'udi and Mahmud Dairawi) ambushed fifteen cars on the road from Anabta and the Nur Shams prison, robbed their Jew-

Colonies, which took place on June 12th. There was nothing unusual about this incident, which was to be constantly repeated throughout the subsequent months and years. The British High Commissioner had observed with great satisfaction that "the Friday sermons were much more moderate than `I had expected, at a time when feelings are so strong. This was mainly due to the Mufti".75
From the outset the situation had been that the leadership of the Palestinian nationalist movement regarded the revolt of the masses as merely intended to exert pressure on British colonialism with the object of improving the conditions of the masses as a class. The British were profoundly aware of this fact, and acted accordingly. They did not, however, take the trouble to grant this class the concessions it desired; London persisted in meeting its commitments as regards handing over the colonialist heritage in Palestine to the Zionist movement and, moreover, it was during the years of the revolt - 1936-1939 - that British colonialism threw all its weight into performing the task of supporting the Zionist presence and setting it on its feet, as we shall see later.

The British succeeded in achieving this in two ways: by striking at the poor peasant revolutionaries with unprecedented violence, and by employing their extensive influence with the Arab regimes, which played a major role in liquidating the revolt.
Firstly: The British Emergency Regulations played an effective role. AI-Sifri cites a group of sentences passed at the time to show how unjust these regulations were: "six years' imprisonment for possessing a revolver- 12 years far possessing a bomb - five years with hard labour for possessing 12 bullets- eight months on a charge of misdirecting a detachment of soldiers. nine years on a charge of possessing explosives- five years for trying to buy ammunition from soldiers- two weeks' imprisonment for possessing a stick . . . etc."76

According to a British estimate submitted to the League of Nations, the number of Palestinian Arabs killed in the 1936 revolt was about one thousand, apart from wounded, missing and interned. The British employed the policy of blowing up houses on a wide scale. In addition to blowing up and destroying part of the city of Jaffa (June 18th, 1936) where the number of houses blown up was estimated at 220 and the number of persons rendered homeless at 6,000. In addition one hundred huts were demolished in Jabalia, 300 in Abu Kabir, 350 in Sheikh Murad and 75 in Arab al-Daudi. It is clear that the inhabitants of the quarters that were destroyed In Jaffa and of the huts that were destroyed in the outskirts were poor peasants who had left the country for the town. In the villages, according to al-Sifri's estimate. 143 houses were blown up for reasons directly connected with the revolt.77 These houses belonged to poor peasants, some medium peasants and a very small number of feudal families.

head, on 25 April 1936, Jamal al-Hussaini, the leader of the Arab Party, had been dissatisfied by people's growing belief that the English were the real enemy, and the National Defence Party which represented, first and foremost, the growing urban comprador class, was not really disposed for an open clash with the British. Only two days earlier, on 23 April 1936, Weizmann, the leader of the Zionist movement, had made a speech in Tel-Aviv in which he described the Arab-Zionist struggle, which was beginning to break out, as a struggle between destructive and constructive elements, thereby putting the Zionist forces in their place as the instrument of colonialism on the eve of the armed clash. This was the position on both sides of the field on the eve of the revolt!

In the countryside the revolt assumed the form of civil disobedience and armed insurrection. Hundreds of armed men flocked to join the bands that had begun to fan out in the mountains, Non-payment of taxes was decided on at the conference held in the Raudat al-Ma'aref al-Wataniya college in Jerusalem on May 7, 1936 and was attended by about 150 delegates representing the Arabs of Palestine. A review of the names of the delegates made by Isa al-Safri74 shows that it was at this conference that the leadership of the mass movement committed itself to an unsubstantial alliance between the feudal-religious leaderships, the urban commercial bourgeoisie and a limited number of the intellectuals. The resolution adopted by this conference was brief, but it was a clear illustration of the extent to which a leadership of this kind was capable of reaching.

"The conference decided unanimously to announce that no taxes will be paid as from May 15th, 1936 if the British government does not make a radical change in its policy by stopping Jewish immigration."

The British response to civil disobedience and armed insurrection was to strike at two key points: the first was the organizational cadre which was, for the most part, more revolutionary than the leadership, and the second the impoverished masses who had taken part in the revolt and who in fact had nothing but their own arms to protect them.

This goes a long way towards explaining why the only two people who were comparatively proficient at organisation - Auni Abed el-Hadi and Mohammad Azat Darwazeh - were arrested, while the rest were subjected either to arrest or to harassment to the extent that they were totally paralysed. This is shown by the fact that 61 Arabs responsible for organising the strike (the middle cadre) were arrested on May 23rd. However, these arrests did not prevent Britain from giving permits to four of the leaders of the revolt, Jamal al-Hussaini, Shibli al-Jamal, Abd al-Latif Salah and Dr Izzat Tannus to travel to London and meet the Minister for the ish and Arab passengers alike of their money, while one of the three members of the group made a short speech to the Palestinian Arabs, who formed the majority of the passengers, in which, according to al-Sifri, he said "We are taking your money so that we can fight the enemy and defend you."63

Dr. Abd al-Wahhab al-Kayyali thinks that the first spark was lit before that - in February 1936, when an armed band of Palestinian Arabs surrounded a school which Jewish contractors were building in Haifa, employing Jewish-only labor.64

But all sources rightly believe that the Qassamist rising, sparked off by Sheikh Izz al-Din al-Qassam was the real start of the 1936 revolt.

However, the report of the Royal Commission (Lord Peel) which Yehuda Bauer regards as one of the more authoritative sources written about the Palestine problem, sidesteps (ignores) these immediate causes for the outbreak of the revolt, and attributes the outbreak to two main causes: the Arabs' desire to win national independence and their aversion to, and fear of, the establishment of the "Jewish national home" in Palestine.

It is not difficult to see that these two causes are really only one, and the words in which they are couched are inflated and convey no precise meaning.

However, Lord Peel mentions what he calls "secondary factors" which contributed to the outbreak of the "disturbances." These are:
1. The spread of the Arab nationalist spirit outside Palestine.
2. Increasing Jewish immigration since 1933.
3. The fact that the Jews were able to influence public opinion in Britain.
4. The lack of Palestinian Arab confidence in the good intentions of the British government.
5. The Palestinian Arabs' fear of continued land purchases by Jews.
6. The fact that the ultimate objectives of the Mandatory government were not clear.65

The way the then-leadership of the Palestinian national movement understood the causes can be deduced from the three slogans with which it adorned all its demands. These were:

1. An immediate stop to Jewish immigration.
2. Prohibition of the transfer of the ownership of Palestinian Arab lands to Jewish settlers.
3. The establishment of a democratic government in which Palestinian Arabs would

have the largest share in conformity with their numerical superiority.66
But these slogans, in the bombastic versions in which they were repeated, were quite incapable of expressing the real situation, and in fact to a great extent all they did was to perpetuate the control of the feudal leadership over the nationalist movement.

In fact the real cause of the revolt was the fact that the acute conflicts involved in the transformation of Palestinian society from an Arab agricultural-feudal-clerical one into a Zionist (Western) industrial bourgeois one, had reached their climax, as we have already seen.

The process of establishing the roots of colonialism and transforming it from a British mandate into Zionist settler colonialism, as we have seen, reached its climax in the mid-thirties, and in fact the leadership of the Palestinian nationalist movement was obliged to adopt a certain form of armed struggle because it was no longer capable of exercising its leadership at a time when the conflict had reached decisive proportions.

A variety of conflicting factors played a role in inducing the Palestinian then-leadership to adopt the form of armed struggle:

Firstly: the Izz al-Din al-Qassam movement.
Secondly: The series of failures sustained by this leadership at a time when they were at the helm of the mass movement, even with regard to the minor and partial demands that the colonialists did not usually hesitate to yield to, in the hope of absorbing resentment. (The British took a long time to see the value of this manoeuvre; however, their interests were safeguarded through the existence of competent Zionist agents.)
Thirdly: Zionist violence (the armed bands, the slogan of "Jewish labor only," etc.) in addition to colonialist violence (the manner in which the 1929 rising had been suppressed.)

In any discussion of the 1936-1939 revolt, a special place must be reserved for Sheikh Izz al-Din al-Qassam. In spite of all that has been written about him, it is not too much to say that this unique personality is still really unknown, and will probably remain so. Most of what has been written about him has dealt with him only from the outside and because of this superficiality in the study of personality several Jewish historians have not hesitated to regard him as a "fanatical dervish," while many Western historians have ignored him altogether. In fact it is clear that it is the failure to grasp the dialectical connection between religion and nationalist tendencies that is responsible for the belittling of the importance of the Qassamist Hadl at its head. It included the intellectuals, the middle bourgeoisie and some sectors of the petty-bourgeoisie; this contributed to its left wing playing a special role.

4. The Reform Party which, founded by Dr Husain al-Khalidi in August 1935, represented a number of intellectuals.

5. The National Bloc Party, headed by Abd al-Latif Salah.

6. The Palestine Youth Party, headed by Ya'qub al-Ghusain.

This multiplicity was purely superficial; it was not a clear and definite expression of the class configuration in the country. The overwhelming majority of the masses were not represented (according to Nevill Barbour 90% of the revolutionaries were peasants who regarded themselves as volunteers).

A glance at the class structure in Palestine in 1931 shows that 59% of the Palestinian Arabs were peasants (19.1% of the Jews), 12.9% of the Arabs worked in construction industry and mining (30.6% of the Jews). 6% of the Palestinian Arabs worked in communications, 8.4% in commerce, 1.3% in the administration, etc.73
This means that the overwhelming majority of the, population was not represented in these parties which, although they represented the feudal and religious leaders, the urban compradors and certain sectors of the intellectuals; they were always subject to the leadership of the Mufti and his class, which represented the feudal-clerical leaders, and was more nationalist than the leadership which represented the urban bourgeoisie. The latter was represented by the effendis at a time when they were starting to invest their money in industry (this trend became more pronounced after the defeat of the 1936-1939 revolt).

The petty-bourgeoisie in general (small traders, shopkeepers, teachers, civil servants and craftsmen) had no leadership. As a class they had had no influence and no importance under the Turkish regime, which depended on the effendi class, to which the Turks gave the right: of local government, due to the fact that it had grown in conjunction with the feudal aristocracy.

The labour movement was newly established and weak and was, as a result, exposed to oppression by the authorities, crushing competition from the Jewish proletariat and bourgeoisie, and persecution by the leadership, of the Arab nationalist movement.

Before the Arab Higher Committee was' formed, with, Hajj Amin al-Hussaini at its

But they were surprised by the following events. All who were closely associated with the events of April 1936 admit that the outbreak of violence and civil disobedience was spontaneous and that, with the exception of the acts instigated by the surviving Qassamists, everything that happened was a spontaneous expression of the critical level that the conflict had reached.

Even when the general strike was declared on 19th April 1936 the leadership of the nationalist movement lagged behind. However, they soon got on the bandwagon before it left them behind, and succeeded, for the reasons already mentioned in our analysis of the social-political situation in Palestine, in dominating the nationalist movement.

From the organisational point of view the Palestinian nationalist movement was represented by a number of parties, most of which were the vestiges of the anti-Ottoman movements that had arisen at the beginning of the century. This meant both that they had not engaged in a struggle for independence (as was the case in Egypt, for example) and that they were no more than general frameworks, without definite principles, controlled by groups of notables and dependent on loyalties rooted in and derived from the influence they enjoyed as religious or feudal leaders or prominent members of society; they were not parties with organised bases. Apart from al-Qassam himself (and the Communists, naturally) not one of the leaders of the Palestinian nationalist movement at this time possessed any organising ability; even Hajj Amin al-Hussaini, who had unusual administrative abilities, had no conception of organisation as applied to struggle.

Organisational responsibilities were most often based on individual talents in the subcommittees and among the middle cadre. However, they were usually incapable of transforming their abilities into policy.

On the eve of the revolt the situation of the representatives of the nationalist movement in Palestine was as follows: with the dissolution of the Arab Executive Committee in August 1934 six groups emerged:

1. The Arab Palestine Party, in May 1935, headed by Jamal al-Hussaini; it more or less embodied the policy of the Mufti and represented the feudalists and big city merchants.

2. The National Defence Party, headed by Raghib al-Nashashibi; founded in December 1934 it represented the new urban bourgeoisie and the senior officials.

3. The Independence Party, which had been founded in 1932, with Auni Abd al-

movement.
However, whatever view is held of al-Qassam, there is no doubt that his movement (12th-19th November 1935) represented a turning point in the nationalist struggle and played an important role in the adoption of a more advanced form of struggle in confrontation with the traditional leadership which had become divided and splintered in the face of the mounting struggle.

Probably the personality of al-Qassam in itself constituted the symbolic point of encounter of that great mass of interconnected factors which, for the purposes of simplification, has come to be known as the "Palestine problem." The fact that he was "Syrian" (born in Jabala on the periphery of Latakia) exemplified the Arab nationalist factor in the struggle. The fact that he was an Azharist (he studied at Al-Azhar) exemplifies the religious-nationalist factor represented by Al-Azhar at the beginning of the century. The fact that he had a record of engaging in nationalist struggle (took part in the Syrian revolt against the French at Jabal Horan in 1919-1920 and was condemned to death) exemplified the unity of Arab struggle.

Al-Qassam came to Haifa in 1921 with the Egyptian Sheikh Muammad al-Hanafi and Sheikh Ali al-Hajj Abid and immediately started to form secret groups. What is remarkable in al-Qassam's activities is his advanced organizational intelligence and his steel-strong patience. In 1929, he refused to be rushed into announcing that he was under arms and, in spite of the fact that this refusal led to a split in the organization, it did succeed in holding together and remaining secret.
According to a well-known Qassamist67, al-Qassam programmed his revolt in three stages, psychological preparation and the dissemination of a revolutionary spirit, the formation of secret groups, the formation of committees to collect contributions and others to purchase arms, committees for training, for security, espionage, propaganda and information and for political contacts - and then armed revolt.

Most of those who knew al-Qassam say that when he went out to the Ya'bad hills with 25 of his men on the night of 12th November 1935, his object was not to declare the armed revolt but to spread the call for the revolt, but that an accidental encounter led to his presence there being disclosed, and in spite of the heroic resistance of al-Qassem and his men, a British force easily destroyed them. It appears that when he realized that he could no longer expand the revolt with his comrades, Sheikh al-Qassam adopted his famous slogan: "Die as Martyrs."
It is due to al-Qassam that we should understand this slogan in a "Guevarist" sense, if we may use the expression, but at the ordinary nationalist level, the little evidence we possess of al-Qassam's conduct shows that he was aware of the importance of his role as the initiator of an advanced revolutionary focus.

This slogan was to bear fruit immediately. The masses followed their martyr's body 10 kilometres on foot to the village of Yajur. But the most important thing that happened was the exposing of the traditional leaders in the face of the challenge constituted by Sheikh al-Qassam.

These leaders were as conscious of the challenge as was the British Mandate. According to one Qassamist, a few months before al-Qassam went into the hills he sent to Hajj al-Amin al-Hussaini, through Sheikh Musa al-Azrawi, to ask him to coordinate declarations of revolt throughout the country. Hussaini refused, however, on the ground that conditions were not yet ripe.68 When Al-Qassam was killed his funeral was attended only by poor people.

The leaders adopted an indifferent attitude, which they soon realized was a mistake. For the killing of al-Qassam was an occurrence of outstanding significance which they could not afford to ignore. Proof of this is to be found in the fact that representatives of the five Palestinian parties visited the British High Commissioner only six days after the killing of al-Qassam, and submitted to him an extraordinarily impudent memorandum in which they admitted that "if they did not receive an answer to this memorandum which could be regarded as generally satisfactory, they would lose all their influence over their followers, extremist and irresponsible views would prevail and the situation would deteriorate."69 They obviously wanted to exploit the phenomenon of al-Qassam to enable them to take a step backwards.

However, by his choice of the form of struggle al-Qassam had made it impossible for them to retreat, and this in fact is what explains the difference between the attitude of the Palestinian leaders to the killing of Sheikh al-Qassam immediately after it happened, and the attitude they adopted at the ceremony held on the fortieth day after his death. During these forty days they discovered that if they did not try to mount the great wave that had been set in motion by al-Qassam, it would engulf them. They therefore cast off the indifference they had displayed at his funeral and took part in the rallies and speeches at the fortieth day ceremony. Clearly Hajj Amin al-Hussaini was to remain aware of this loophole in later times. Even more than twenty years later the magazine Filastine, the mouthpiece of the Arab Higher Committee, tried to give the impression that the Qassamist movement was nothing but a part of the movement led by the Mufti, and that the latter and al-Qassam had been "personal friends." 70

As for the British, they told the story of al-Qassam in the report on the incidents of 1935 that they submitted to Geneva as follows:

"There were widespread rumors that a terrorist gang had been formed at the inspiration of political and religious factors, and on November 7, 1935, a police sergeant and a constable were following up a theft in the hills of the Nazareth District, when two unknown persons fired on them, killing the sergeant. . . This incident soon led to the discovery of a gang operating in the neighborhood under the leadership of Izz al-Din al-Qassam, a political refugee from Syria who enjoyed considerable prestige as a religious leader. He had been the object of strong suspicion some years before, and he was said to have had a hand in terrorist activities."

"Sheikh al-Qassam's funeral in Haifa was attended by very large crowds, and in spite of the efforts made by influential Muslims to keep order, there were demonstrations and stones were thrown. The death of al-Qassam aroused a wave of powerful feelings in political and other circles in the country and the Arabic newspapers agreed in calling him a martyr in the articles they wrote about him."71

The British, too, were aware of the challenge represented by the killing of al-Qassam, and they too tried to put the clock back, as is shown by the view expressed by the High Commissioner in a letter he wrote to the Minister for the Colonies. In this letter he said that if the demands of the Arab leaders were not granted, "they would lose all their influence and all possibility of pacification, by the moderate means he proposed, would vanish".72

But it was impossible to put the clock back, for the Qassamist movement was, in fact, an expression of the natural pattern that was capable of coping with the escalation of the conflict and settling it. It was not long before this was reflected in a number of committees and groupings, so that the traditional leadership was obliged to choose between confronting this escalating will to fight among the masses or to quell their will and to put them under their control.

Although the British took rapid action, and proposed the idea of a legislative assembly and mooted the idea of stopping land sales, it was too late: The Zionist movement, whose will began to crystallise very firmly at that time, played its part in diminishing the effectiveness of the British offer. All the same, the leadership of the Palestinian nationalist movement had not yet decided its attitude, but was extraordinarily vacillating, and up to April 2nd, 1936 the representatives of the Palestinian parties were prepared to form a delegation to go to London to tell the British government their point of view.
However, things blew up before the leadership of the nationalist movement intended, and when the first flames were ignited in Jaffa in February 1936, the leaders of the Palestinian nationalist movement believed that they could still obtain partial concessions from Britain through negotiations.