

THE
PALESTINIANS
PALESTINIANS

**A Political
Masquerade**

by **ARTHUR KAHN** and **THOMAS F. MURRAY**

"There are no differences between Jordanians, Palestinians, Syrians and Lebanese. We are all part of one nation. It is only for political reasons that we carefully underline our Palestinian identity, because it is in the interest of the Arabs to encourage a separate Palestinian identity in contrast to Zionism. Yes, the existence of a separate Palestinian identity is there only for tactical reasons. The establishment of a Palestinian state is a new expedient to continue the fight against Zionism and for Arab unity."

Zuheir Mohsen, head of the Saiqa terrorist organization, head of military operations for the PLO and a member of its Supreme Council as interviewed by James Dorsey in the Dutch daily *Trouw*, March 31, 1977.

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Increasingly what President Carter has called "a Palestinian homeland," what others more openly call a Palestinian state, has become identified as the key to the solution of the Arab-Israel conflict. If President Carter has only recently enunciated American support for the idea, European statesmen have been openly espousing this "solution" for several years. Visiting Egypt in 1975 Valery Giscard d'Estaing announced that "the Palestinian people have the right, like others, to an independent homeland") Austrian Chancellor Bruno Kreisky asserted there was a chance for peace provided a Palestinian state was created on the West Bank and in Gaza. Now not merely the individual states within it but the European Common Market as a body has endorsed Carter's call for a homeland for the Palestinians.

The oil weapon in part explains why it has become axiomatic that the solution to the Arab-Israel conflict is a state in the West Bank and Gaza for the Palestinians. The nations of the world are more willing to back Arab demands at the expense of Israel and less ready to examine them carefully than they were prior to 1973. But it is also a propaganda victory, a triumph of words as weapons. For the Arabs have been able to redefine the conflict, seen for so many decades as one in which eighty million Arabs and fourteen Arab states sought to destroy three million Jews and one small Jewish state, as one in which the oppressed Palestinian people seek to assert their national rights to their homeland, Palestine.

WHO WERE THE PALESTINIANS?

To appreciate the extent of this triumph one must remember that until recently the Jews—not the Arabs—were considered Palestinians. In 1928 "The View of a Palestinian" was published in *New Palestine*, the journal of the Zionist Organization of America, by the founder of *The Palestine Post*, the English-language newspaper of Jews in Palestine (now called *The Jerusalem Post*); the author was describing a problem of Zionist politics? In his autobiographical sketches, Jacob Tsur, the retired head of the Jewish National Fund, describes how "with a willing heart" he became a citizen of Palestine, received a laissez-passer with which he traveled to France, where he became President of the Palestinian Club of Paris, a Zionist club whose invitation cards were printed in Hebrew and French.³ And so it went. The Anglo-Palestine Bank, the Palestine-British Bank, the Palestine Electric Company, the Palestine Foundation Fund, the Palestine Workers' Fund, the Palestine Philharmonic Orchestra, the Palestine Maritime League, the Palestine Potash Company—all those were organized and run by Palestinian Jews.

In the United States Jewish young people in the 1920's and 30's sang "Palestine, My Palestine," "Palestine Scout Song" and "Palestine Spring Song" and record companies and music publishers distributed collections entitled "New Palestine Songs" and "Songs of the Palestine Pioneers." Jewish schools celebrated the fifteenth day of the Hebrew month of Shvat as Palestine Arbor Day. Americans established a plethora of organizations to support the Jewish community of Palestine including, for example, The League for Labor Palestine, The American Jewish Palestine Legion, the Palestine Histadrut Campaign, the National Committee for Labor Palestine, the American Trade Union Committee for Palestine, The American League for a Free Palestine, the Council on Palestine, The Federated Appeal for Palestine Institutions, the Hebrew Educators Committee for Labor Palestine, The Palestine Economic Corporation, and the United Palestine Appeal. Palestinian Jewish products were sold through "Palestine House."

And yet so completely has the meaning of "Palestinian" been altered in public consciousness that when Golda Meir, in objecting to the claims of Palestinian national identity being advanced by the PLO, announced "We, the Jewish pioneers were the Palestinians," most people, including many Jews, were bewildered, and she was accused of insensitivity and blindness to reality. Perhaps more people in the United States would have understood what Mrs. Meir meant if *The New York Times* had seen fit to print the following letter sent to it by a member of Kibbutz Kfar Blum in July 1975.

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Dear Sir:

Your newspaper frequently uses the term "Palestinian" to describe a section of the Middle East population which is Arab, to differentiate it from the Israeli Jews. As the holder of a Palestinian Identity Card and a Certificate of Discharge from a Palestinian Unit of the British Army, I find this practice annoying and certainly untrue....

We Palestinian Jews wore the uniform of the British Army, and on our shoulder epaulettes the single word, "Palestine" in English. We tried to get permission to wear Hebrew insignia, fly the Jewish flag and be recognized as Palestinian Jews, but—no, Palestinian meant Jew and Arab, and who cared if there were fewer than 3000 Arabs as compared to the 36,000 Jews in khaki? In British Army nomenclature, the equivalent of a GI is BOR, meaning British Other Rank. We were formally known as POR, Palestinian Other Ranks.

So we fought the war as Palestinians, set up the Jewish Brigade as Palestinians, and I'll be damned if I agree that only Arafat and his assassins are Palestinians.

As a Palestinian, I was arrested by the British on suspicion of smuggling immigrants into the country. As a Palestinian, I had the honor of commanding the 329th Palestinian Company of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME—all Jews). There were no equivalent Arab units. Once a British general said to me, "Migawd! I have so many things to dislike you for, for being a Jew, American born, a Palestinian—and you don't even know how to handle a knife and fork!"

So cut it out, please. Call them what you will, but not Palestinians.

Yours truly,
Joe Criden

ORIGIN OF THE TERM PALESTINE

Until the establishment of the state of Israel Palestinian Arabs were generally simply called "Arabs" precisely because they lacked any national feeling toward Palestine. Indeed, for the Arabs, Palestine did not exist as a country before 1918. The name Palestine is derived from the Biblical *Peleshet* designating the coastal plain in which the Philistines

(Pelishtim) settled in the course of their twelfth century B.C. expansion into the eastern Mediterranean. This term, which the Hebrews gave to their adversaries, and which lingered long after the disappearance of the Philistines as an identifiable population, entered into Greek and Roman usage. In 135 A.D. after their conquest of Judea, which had rebelled against its Roman overlord, the Romans renamed the country Syria Palaestina, in order symbolically to cancel out the Jewish claim to the land. Destroyed Jerusalem, rebuilt as a Roman city, was renamed Aelia Capitolina. The Romans divided the country into three administrative districts and except under the Crusaders no part of Palestine was to become independent until the Jewish state was established 1800 years later. Between the seventh and tenth century the Arabs established military-administrative districts which divided the land into the Jund of Damascus, the Jund of Urdun (Galilee and Gilead), and the Jund of Falastin.⁴ It is possible that the Jund of Falastin was based on the Roman-Byzantine terminology. However this military district was not identical with the Byzantine province. Ramleh, the capital chosen by Sulayman b. Abd el Malik and generally believed to have been founded by him, had been known as Tlulaya d'falistini (Sand Hills of Philistia) by its pre-Arab Jewish population and its subsequent name Ramleh (sand hills) may be a direct translation.⁵ Moreover the Arabs used Falastin alternatively for Ramleh throughout the Middle Ages and the usage is even encountered in the nineteenth century. Thus it appears that a city which in ancient Jewish tradition was identified with the Philistines bestowed the name Falastin on the Arab military district which it administered.

Under a long series of rulers terminating with the Ottoman Turks Palestine was carved repeatedly into segments attached to larger administrative units. The Turks in the eighteenth century divided the regions under their control into *vilayets* which were subdivided into *sanjaks*. Palestine was partly within the *vilayet* of Damascus, partly in the *vilayet* of Sidon; Safed and Acre, like Beirut, were *sanjaks* in the *vilayet* of Sidon; Jaffa, Gaza, Nablus and Jerusalem, on the other hand, were *sanjaks* within the *vilayet* of Damascus.⁽⁶⁾ As Y. Porath notes in his sympathetic chronicle of the development of Palestinian Arab nationalism, this was not conducive to the rise of a specifically Palestinian national feeling.⁷

ARABS REJECT TERM PALESTINE

It was only under the British that Palestine once again became a distinct political-territorial entity. Even the Palestine National Covenant of the terrorist organizations is compelled to recognize this fact and defines Palestine as the land that was under the British Mandate. Since it was difficult to be a "Palestinian" if there was no "Palestine" it is easily understood why the Arabs, even after the Mandate overnight created a country with that name, continued to call themselves "Arabs" rather than "Palestinians." They perceived the territory of Palestine as part of Syria for most of the territory of the British Mandate, under the Turks, had been part of the *vilayet* of Damascus. The biographer of Mussa Alami, describing Jerusalem in 1897, writes: "This, for them, was not in 'Palestine.' For the Arabs (and Turks) the whole of the region lying between the Taurus Mountains and the confines of Egypt, and between the Mediterranean and the edge of the desert, was 'Syria,' a term which had been in use since remote antiquity."⁸

There was resistance to any redefinition. In the Turkish *sanjaks* that were to become Palestine even Arab nationalism had not attracted the Arab elite and during the war there was no active opposition to the Ottoman regime.⁹ After the British conquest, the Arab elite declared Palestine was an inalienable part of Syria and should be united with it under the rule of the Emir Faysal, whose army had reached Damascus in 1918.¹⁰ (Syria was soon to become a French protectorate but temporarily a military administration with Emir Faysal at its head had been set up there subordinate to the English General Allenby.) The First Congress of the Muslim-Christian Associations which met in Jerusalem in 1919 and brought together thirty delegates from various parts of Palestine adopted the resolution "We consider Palestine as part of Arab Syria as it has never been separated from it at any time. We are connected with it by national, religious, linguistic, natural, economic and geographical bonds." In view of this, the resolutions continued "we desire that our district Southern Syria or Palestine should not be separated from the Independent Arab Syrian government..." When Faysal was crowned in Damascus a wave of demonstrations swept the cities of Palestine and there were recurring reports of preparations for a general rebellion in the country intended to achieve unity with Syria.⁽¹²⁾

With the collapse of Faysal's rule in Damascus in July 1920 and the confirmation of the British Mandate over Palestine the active promotion of political linkage to Syria ceased. Even then, so difficult was it for the Arab elite in Palestine to think in terms of Palestinian nationalism that

although the British, anxious to cut off the agitation for Syrian rule, tried to persuade the Palestinian Arabs to use the slogan "Palestine for the Palestinians" in their struggle against Zionism," the Arabs now turned to their former suzerain, Turkey. In late 1922 a group of Jerusalem notables called for the reinstatement of Turkish rule in the form of a mandate and appealed to the Kemalist-Turkish delegation at the Peace Conference in Lausanne to work for this goal." This initiative collapsed for lack of support from Turkey. Under the influence of the Husseini family, the dominant elite in Palestine then became pan-Arabist, never imagining a Palestinian as distinct from a much larger Arab entity." In its 1937 report, the Peel Commission, set up to investigate the Arab disorders in Palestine, reflected continued Arab attitudes when it referred to "Palestine—or more strictly speaking, Syria, of which Palestine had been a part since the days of Nebuchadnezer." In 1946 Arab spokesmen were still vehemently objecting to the use of the very word Palestine. Professor Philip Hitti, probably the most famous modern historian of the Arabs, who represented the Institute of Arab American Affairs before the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, one of the last in the endless series of commissions sent to Palestine to "investigate" the situation insisted:

The Sunday schools have done a great deal of harm to us, because by smearing the walls of the rooms with maps of Palestine they are associating it in the mind of the average American—and I may say perhaps the Englishman too—with the Jews. Sir, there is no such thing as Palestine in history, absolutely not."

Professor John Hazam also affirmed to the Committee: "Before 1917, when Balfour made his declaration, there was never any Palestine question, or even any Palestine as a political or geographical entity..."¹⁸ The Arab Office statement to the Committee similarly noted: "Geographically Palestine is part of Syria; its indigenous inhabitants belong to the Syrian branch of the Arab family of nations."¹⁹ In May 1947 Arab representatives asserted in a formal document presented to the UN General Assembly that Palestine was part of the province of Syria and that "politically, the Arabs of Palestine [were] not independent in the sense of forming a separate political entity."⁽²⁰⁾ The rejection of partition by the Arab Higher Committee, the representative body of Palestine's Arabs, was of course in part rejection of any suggestion that western Palestine be divided, but as Avner Yaniv points out "the rejection of the partition plan also manifested the unwillingness, inability, or both of the Palestinian Arab community to lay claim to a distinct national character."²¹ It is worth observing that as far as Syria is concerned nothing has

changed: in March 1974 President Assad said: "Palestine is a basic part of southern Syria."²²

It was this absence of Arab national identification with Palestine that led, ironically in view of the current meaning of the term, to the use of the word "Palestinian" in contradistinction to the Arab resident of Palestine. Thus the report of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry in 1946 included the following item: "A Palestinian put the matter thus: 'In the hearts of us Jews there has always been a fear that some day this country would be turned into an Arab State and the Arabs would rule over us.'²³ The very use of the word "Palestine" implied acknowledgement of Jewish rights. Thus Walter Laqueur in his *A History of Zionism* observes: "In September 1947, Sami Taha, a prominent Haifa trade union leader, was killed; his society had declared itself in favour of a Palestinian, not an Arab state, acknowledging that the Jews too had certain rights."²⁴ Ben Gurion seized upon this Arab perspective in his own testimony before the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry. He quoted Professor Hitti's statement that there was no Palestine:

"I agree with him entirely; there is no such thing in history as Palestine, absolutely, but when Dr. Hitti speaks of history he means Arab history, he is a specialist in Arab history and he knows his business. In Arab history there is no such thing as Palestine. Arab history was made in Arabia, in Persia, in Spain and North Africa. You will not find Palestine in that history, nor was Arab history made in Palestine. There is not, however, only Arab history; there is world history and Jewish history and in that history there is a country by the name of Judea, or as we call it, Eretz Israel, the land of Israel. We have called it Israel since the days of Joshua the son of Nun. There was such a country in history, there was and it is still there. It is a little country, a very little country, but that little country made a very deep impression on world history and on our history. This country made us a people; our people made this country. No other people in the world made this country; this country made no other people in the world. Now again we are beginning to make this country and again this country is beginning to make us⁽²⁵⁾

RECENT IMMIGRATION OF ARABS TO PALESTINE

The absence of national feeling among the Arabs living in Palestine in 1918, the sense of belonging to a larger framework, can also be explained in part by the short period for which most Arabs had been living there.

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The PLO has, of course, created a myth according to which "Arab people were engaged in farming and building, spreading culture throughout the land for thousands of years, setting an example in the practice of freedom of worship, acting as faithful guardians of the holy places of all religions."⁽²⁶⁾ It is hard to imagine a description that stands in *harsher* contrast to the facts. For while archaeological evidence suggests that Palestine possessed one of the largest populations and most varied economies in its history during the sixth century, the Arab invasion of the seventh century inaugurated a period of over a thousand years, where except for brief breathing spells, Palestine settled into a period of deep decline punctuated by periodic massacres of its remaining population.

After the Arab conquest pressure was put upon the indigenous Jewish and Christian population. As an Israeli scholar reports: "The Arabs...soon made clear their intention to make the Land of the Jews a land of permanent Arab settlement. More and more Arabs began to come into Palestine, and it was apparent that they intended to take over the sanctity of Jerusalem and the rest of Palestine. At first Jews and Arabs had equal rights to all Jewish Holy Places (notably Jerusalem and Hebron). But after a while, the Jews were edged out altogether. Jewish privileges on the Temple Mount, for example, were gradually curtailed. At first Jews were permitted to make pilgrimages there and to hold regular services; and on the Feast of Tabernacles they were even allowed to erect booths there. But in the end they were denied these rights, and barred from the site..."²⁷

What happened to Jewish religious rights soon happened to Jewish rights to the land. "...In theory all Jewish holdings in Palestine belonged to the state, and...the Jews were either tenants or subtenants. The caliphs could thus claim that they were simply evicting random settlers—whereas in actual fact they were stealing, and divorcing a nation from its soil. The Jewish farmers, faced with servitude to the military colonists, preferred to leave their villages."²⁸ So heavy did the burden of taxation and fanaticism become that "Jews were prompted to cry out: 'The Almighty will hear the people's lamentation over the deeds of the sons of Ishmael in the Land at the End of Days.' In the second half of the ninth century a Gaon (the religious leader of a community) referring to earlier Gentile theft of Jewish property proclaimed the principle that land stolen from Jews in this way *was* still legally theirs..."²⁹

With the emigration of non-Muslims, including both Christians and Jews, with the increase in conversions, sometimes by force, more often to escape disabilities and enjoy a greater measure of freedom and security,

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and with the influx of Arabs and other Muslims, the Land's character began to change.

"Nevertheless, the formation of an integrated Arab majority in the land was a slow process. Arab historians like Ya'qubi and Ibn Hauqal writing at the end of the ninth and at the beginning of the tenth century indicate that the Arabs did not constitute a majority even in this period, and that the population was still divided into separate ethnic groups. The Jews, on the other hand, were always conscious that theirs was a history of unbroken settlement in the Land, and since they had managed to remain there through the thousand or so years after the destruction of the Second Temple, they felt sure that they would 'no longer know exile'."⁽³⁰⁾

It was during the two centuries which preceded the first crusade that the main emphasis of Palestinian history passed from the Christian and Jewish communities to the Muslims, and they too passed into ever-increasing obscurity, poverty and decline.

The conquest of the country by the Seljuk Turks in 1070 brought devastation to the land. The Crusader conquest only a generation later destroyed what remained. From Jerusalem Godfrey of Bouillon wrote to the Pope that his men were "riding in the corridors and in the temple of Solomon...the blood of the Saracens as high as the fetlocks of their coursers."³¹ It was the blood of the Jews as well. "On the third day after the victory, at their commanders' orders, the Crusaders carried out a dreadful massacre of all the people who still survived in the city."³² An Arab source put the number of dead at 70,000, an Armenian at 65,000.³³ Similar fates awaited the inhabitants of many of the other major towns in Palestine conquered by the Crusaders. And after the Crusaders, there were to be waves of Mongol tribes. As Philip Hitti reports: "The slave dynasty of nondescript Mamluks was superseded in its rule, or rather misrule, by the Ottoman Turks. The blackout continued until the middle of the nineteenth century." International lawyer Ernst Frankenstein, reviewing the history of invasions, massacres and other disasters between the initial Arab conquest and the beginning of the modern period found

"an almost uninterrupted story of wanton destruction of human life and property, which finally reduced the country to an arid and nearly empty desert. When in the nineteenth century the wars and massacres ceased, the land and population were exhausted. In such conditions, it is highly improbable that any considerable part of the

population should have survived from the time of the Arab conquest. The masses perished in wars, massacres and epidemics, were sold into slavery or died from starvation, while the empty places were repopulated with foreign soldiery."³⁴

Many of the empty places simply stayed empty. In 1835 Alphonse de Lamartine could write: "Outside the gates of Jerusalem we saw indeed no living object, heard no living sound, we found the same void, the same silence...as we should have expected before the entombed gates of Pompeii or Herculaneum...a complete eternal silence reigns in the town, on the highways in the country...the tomb of a whole people."³⁵ Mark Twain, coming to Palestine thirty years later, traveled the length of the country and found no improvement. "Desolate country whose soil is rich enough, but is given over wholly to weeds—a silent mournful expanse...A desolation is here that not even imagination can grace with the pomp of life and action. We reached Tabor safely...We never saw a human being on the whole route."³⁶ By 1800 the entire population of what was to become Mandatory Palestine, once in the millions, had sunk, it is estimated, to as low as 250,000 people.

Into the emptiness of Palestine as the nineteenth century progressed came people from all over the Mediterranean region. In 1829 10,000 Egyptian fellahin, fleeing conscription, made their way across Sinai to Palestine. On the pretext of returning them to Egypt, Muhammed Ali sent an army, which retained control of the area as far north as Aleppo until 1840. Eight new villages were founded on the coastal plain, and Egyptians settled in the existing towns of Bet Shean, Nablus, Irbid, Acre and Jaffa. Attracted by the existing Egyptian settlements, fellahin continued to come from Egypt.³⁷ Recently Dr. Gideon Kressel, an Israeli anthropologist who interviewed large numbers of Palestinian Arabs, found them aware of an Egyptian ancestor.⁽³⁸⁾

JEWISH SETTLEMENT ATTRACTS ARABS

The great impetus for immigration to Palestine *for Arabs* came, ironically, with the development of Jewish settlement in the last two decades of the nineteenth century and, most important, *in* the twentieth century under the auspices of the Zionist movement. We can estimate only in the most imprecise way how many Arabs immigrated into Palestine during this period. Before 1918, when the *Turks ruled*, Arabs coming into what became Mandatory Palestine were traveling from one part of the Ottoman Empire to another and were not subject to any

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restrictions. Most Jewish immigrants entered from foreign countries and were subjected to the attentions of Turkish officials. After 1918, under the British Mandate, while Jews were required to have passports and visas and meet various increasingly stringent economic requirements, Arabs continued to enter the country almost without hindrance.⁽³⁹⁾ In the Minutes of the Permanent Mandates Commission Lord Lugard reports that *La Syrie* had published on August 12, 1934 an interview with Tewfik Bey El Huriani, Governor of the Hauran (in Syria), who said that in the previous few months from 30 to 36,000 Hauranese had entered Palestine." Often these new immigrants were the most vociferous in hostility to the Jews whose economic activity had attracted them to Palestine. According to a contemporary account:

"One always finds in Palestine Arabs who have been in the country only a few weeks or a few months...Since they are themselves strangers in a strange land, they are the loudest to cry: 'Out with the Jews!...Amongst them are to be found representatives of every Arab country: Arabs from Transjordan, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Egypt, the Sudan and Iraq. The Yemenites have had to come the furthest. Arab dhows in the Red Sea took the news of Palestinian prosperity as far as the little Yemenite harbour towns of Hodeida and these dhows brought back enterprising Yemenites to Palestine. These landed at secluded spots on the coast and once they were in the country they could not be expelled. An Arab, after all, is an Arab, no matter whether he comes from Syria or from Yemen. They have no passports or documents to show their place of origin.'"

Arab immigration into Palestine, which continued throughout the 1930's, probably increased in the 1940's. An UNRWA publication noted:

A considerable movement of people is known to have occurred, particularly during the Second World War years when new opportunities of employment opened up in the towns and on military works in Palestine. These wartime prospects and, generally, the higher rate of industrialization in Palestine than in neighboring countries attracted many immigrants from those countries, and many of them entered Palestine without their presence being officially recorded.⁴²

Albert Memmi, the Algerian-born writer, notes that 300,000 Arabs migrated to Palestine during the period of the Mandate. And the question he asks bears consideration: "...since the Jewish refugees are constantly asked to justify their rights, why is this never demanded of the Arabs...? Or else, if the idea is that any Arab is at home anywhere in all the regions

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of the world where Islam predominates, then why speak of Arab refugees?"⁽⁴³⁾

The brevity of the period in which most of Palestine's Arab inhabitants had lived in the country helps to explain not only the lack of 'Palestinian' national consciousness but also the readiness with which the Arabs of Palestine fled from their homes in 1948. Approximately five hundred and forty thousand Arabs fled, although Palestinian Jewish leaders asked them to remain. To be sure, the masses were demoralized when they saw that the leadership was the first to flee; they were encouraged to leave by Arab broadcasts urging them to remove themselves while what Azam Pasha, the Secretary of the Arab League in 1948, called "a momentous massacre' that would 'purge' the Holy Land of its Jewish inhabitants," was in progress; and they were frightened by rumors of Jewish atrocities that reflected the vivid Arab imagination and rather accurately portrayed the treatment the Arabs planned for the Jews. Nonetheless such massive flight without real cause is unusual for a peasant people rooted in their homeland. Dr. Gideon Kressel concludes that it was the large numbers of Arabs of Egyptian origin who were the first to flee, while those who had been for generations in the country, particularly those in the Nazareth area and the Jerusalem corridor, were ready to fight and then to surrender, but in all events were determined to remain." According to Israeli writer Eliezer Livneh: "The exodus of Arab refugees was to a great extent composed of immigrants who had entered the country after World War I and their descendants."

THE REFUGEES NEVER LEFT PALESTINE

It has frequently been noted that the Arab refugees have been unique in being treated so badly by their own people. More than thirty million refugees have been resettled since the end of World War II, and most of them were absorbed by countries with far fewer resources than the Arab states. Israel absorbed more Jewish refugees from the Arab states than the Arab states were asked to absorb refugees from the territory that came under Israeli sovereignty. But the Arab refugees are also unusual in that *the vast majority never left the country from which they are supposedly refugees*. They fled their homes but not their homeland, moving a few miles, but remaining within the territory of Mandatory Palestine, which comprised what we currently call Israel, Judea and Samaria (the West Bank), Gaza and Jordan. An Israeli source estimates the number of Arabs of Western Palestinian origin today as 2,717,000—of whom 2,158,000 are still in Palestine." Seventy-three per cent are

citizens of either Jordan or Israel." If we bear in mind the tenacity with which both the Syrians and the Arabs of Palestine claimed the country was southern Syria, and that Syria also claims that Lebanon is an integral part of Syria, even fewer Arabs can be considered to have left their country, for almost 300.000 Arabs from Palestine are in Syria and Lebanon.

It is little wonder that for twenty years no one thought to call the Arabs who fled from one part of Palestine to another (and even including Jordan Palestine is a small country, the size of Pennsylvania) "a nation dispossessed from their homeland." In 1967 Security Council Resolution 242 referred only to solving the refugee problem.

WHY THE ARABS RENAMED THE REFUGEES "PALESTINIANS"

The shift in definition stemmed from an enabling circumstance and a tactical decision. The enabling circumstance was Israel's conquest of Judea and Samaria and of the Gaza Strip. From 1948 this territory had been controlled by Jordan and Egypt respectively. If the Arabs of Judea, Samaria and Gaza had been defined as a nation prior to 1967 Jordan and Egypt would have been expected to give up territory. Once Israel was in control, however, nothing stood in the way of claiming it—along with Israel itself—as the "national homeland" of the Palestinian Arab.

The tactical decision was the result of the increasing untenability of the old formulations. A world which soon tires of refugees, leaving them to the mercies, sometimes tender, sometimes the reverse, of the countries in whose borders they find themselves, has shown enormous patience with the Arab refugees, supporting them for thirty years without insisting that the Arab states integrate them or even, despite their vast wealth, contribute meaningfully to their support. The 1976 budget of \$139.7 million pledged to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees included \$26,700,000 from the United States, \$6,069,445 from Sweden, even \$1,000,000 from Spain. From the Arab oil countries there was \$11,200,000 from Saudi Arabia, \$20,000 from Bahrain, \$270,000 from the United Arab Emirates, \$25,000 from Oman, \$600,000 from Kuwait, \$600,000 from Libya, \$60,000 from Qatar, and nothing at all from Iraq, Dubai and Abu Dhabi." On the other hand the Arab oil states can quickly find money for the refugees, when their political purpose is in danger of being undermined. Several years ago,

when it appeared that a camp in Lebanon which had been bombed in an Israeli retaliatory raid against the terrorist base incorporated into the camp might have to be evacuated and its inhabitants settled as ordinary dwellers in the area, Kuwait quickly offered one million dollars for reconstruction of its buildings. The Arab League's special representative in 1976 was frank about the reasoning behind such generosity: "It has been a basic Arab policy since 1948 not to uproot a Palestinian refugee camp unless they have the right to return to Palestine."⁵⁰ In this bizarre vocabulary, integration of the refugee in the land where he lives is "uprooting" him. And yet even the patient Western world, its wealth drained by the Arab oil states that refused to make more than token contributions to the upkeep of their fellow Arabs, was beginning to grow restive. As the deficits of the European nations mounted and the surpluses of the Arab oil states grew (by the end of 1975 the foreign exchange reserves of Saudi Arabia had reached 21.1 billion), the notion that the bill for the Arab refugees should constitute yet another Arab tax upon the West became increasingly unappealing.

Moreover, as long as the Arabs were refugees, the nagging question was always present as to why they could not after all be "uprooted" from the camps to be settled permanently. As early as 1957, Elfan Rees, advisor on Refugees to the World Council of Churches, said:

"...I hold the view that, political issues aside, the Arab refugee problem is by far the easiest postwar refugee problem to solve by integration. By faith, by language, by race and by social organization, they are indistinguishable from their fellows of the host countries. There is room for them, and land for them, in Syria and in Iraq. There is a developing demand for the kind of manpower that they represent. More unusually still, there is the money to make this integration possible. The United Nations General Assembly, five years ago, voted a sum of 200 million dollars to provide "homes and jobs" for the Arab refugees. That money remains unspent, not because these tragic people are strangers in a strange land, because they are not: not because there is no room for them to be established, because there is; but simply for political reasons..."⁵¹

The situation prompted a former head of UNRWA to say sharply the following year: "Arab leaders don't give a damn whether the refugees live or die."⁵²

With the vast increase in wealth of the Arab oil states, there was not only room in other Arab states for the refugees, but a genuine *need* for the

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manpower they represented. In 1975 Saudi Arabia produced a five year plan calling for an increase in the work force of 500,000 above and beyond what the Saudi population could provide.⁽⁵³⁾ In its drive to increase its numbers Saudi Arabia has resorted to such measures as making smuggling birth control pills or contraceptive devices into the country an offense punishable by six months imprisonment. Monthly stipends are paid to wives, with additional payments for each child." Similarly, in Kuwait, the *Times* describes "a severe manpower shortage which is a main checkrein on its development."⁵⁵ And yet the Arab refugees were not acceptable to Arab states for meeting their manpower shortage. Libya has its own "Law of Return' to encourage Arab immigration which stipulates "the provisions concerning immigration for the purposes of naturalization under this law shall not be applicable to Palestinians."⁵⁶ For in the words of the Egyptian government radio station "Voice of the Arabs':

The refugees are the cornerstone of the Arabs' struggle against Israel. The refugees are the solid rock upon which all the imperialists' plots to thrust Israel in the heart of the Arab homeland are shattered. The refugees are the armament of the Arabs and Arab nationalism.⁵⁷

That armament was not worth dissipating for merely economic goals.

Nonetheless, as long as the Arabs were defined as "refugees,' the rest of the world could not help but look askance at enormously rich countries which, thirsting for manpower, refused to accept the most obvious available source. But once the refugees are redefined as a nationality inextricably tied to a homeland, the Arab states' refusal to absorb them is understandable. The Arabs could even convert their refusal to integrate the refugees who had managed to leave the camps into evidence of the Palestinian Arabs' insistence upon preserving their identity. Thus *The New York Times* reports from Beirut that refugees in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Kuwait "throughout the years...have refused integration with the local Arab population, insisting on repatriation to their original homes in Palestine."⁵⁸ What this report omits is that none of these states have offered the Arabs of Palestine citizenship. The reporter cannot know what Palestinian Arabs would do if, say Kuwait, with the highest per capita income in the world, were to offer them citizenship. When Kuwait was indeed rumored to be considering giving citizenship to anyone rendering the country services—and there are many Arabs from Palestine in Kuwait's civil service and oil industry—the Arab League asked Kuwait not to give citizenship to any Palestinians living in Kuwait whether they had Jordanian passports or stateless travel documents.⁵⁹

THE PALESTINIANS

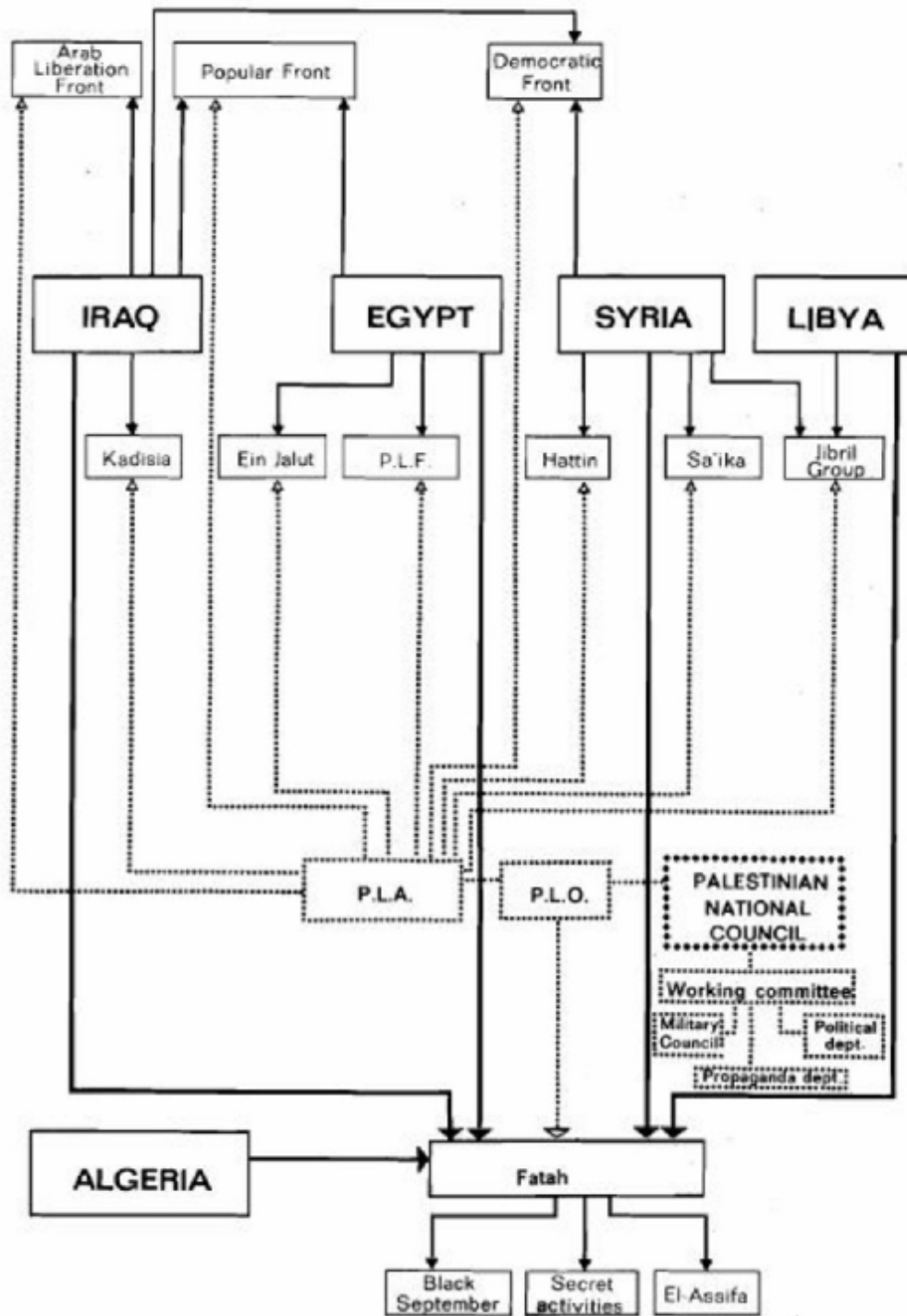
There was yet another consideration after 1967 prompting the redefinition of the refugees as a separate nation. The Arabs had espoused an ideology of pan-Arabism which claimed that all Arabs belonged to a single nation; the charismatic Nasser, through persuasion and subversion, had come closest to success of all those who tried to unite the Arab world under their leadership. Unions, federations and confederations (of which the union of Syria and Egypt is perhaps best remembered) rose and fell. But the vested interests of the separate leaderships, dramatic differences in wealth that made the rich reluctant to be merged with the poor, different experiences under imperial powers, all impeded unification. The battle to remove what was seen as an alien entity—Israel—from the map became crucial in the drive for unity; this was a bond that united all the Arab states when divergent interests and rivalries threatened to—and did—tear them apart. And yet the difficulty with all this from the point of view of convincing outsiders of the justice of the Arab case was that it forthrightly pitted *all* the fourteen Arab states and all the Arab people against one tiny country and one small people. It was Goliath against David and the world was not ready to shed tears for Goliath when the slingshot unexpectedly had effect. Announcements by Ahmed Shukairy, then Saudi Arabia's UN representative, that the Arabs would "throw the Jews into the sea" did nothing to change this image of the conflict. The Arabs were advised by an American public relations firm and no doubt by others that if a shift in world public opinion was sought, a shift in the world's perception of the nature of the conflict was essential. The time was ripe in other ways as well. With the burgeoning of movements for national liberation and the coming to independence of a great number of new states in Asia and Africa—the membership of the UN grew from fifty states in 1948 to 124 in 1975—national self-determination of a people, however small and however newly identified, became a slogan sure of winning the support of a highly influential segment of opinion everywhere.

And so the Palestinian refugees became an instant nation, a small oppressed people of have-nots pitted against a powerful, if small, modern state. The Arab states could now interpret their own hostility to Israel as a function of her failure to meet the "legitimate" demands of the Palestinians. When Abie Nathan sought to sail through the Suez Canal delivering large quantities of flowers contributed by Israelis for the Egyptian people as token of their desire for peace, the Foreign Minister of Egypt, in refusing permission, said: "If Mr. Nathan is really seeking peace *he* should convince the leaders of Israel to recognize the Palestinian people's rights to a national homeland."⁶⁰ Similarly the Saudi Arabian Minister for State for Foreign Affairs could now say "The whole problem

in the area stems from disregard of Palestinian rights."⁶¹ When Hussein spoke at Georgetown University in 1967 he suggested that the world ask Israel: "Does she recognize the right of the Arabs to exist?"⁶² This sounded silly. In 1975 Hussein could announce that peace was as simple as recognition of "the legitimate rights of the Palestinians,"⁶³ which sounds reasonable. For supporters of the Arabs in this country the redefinition of the conflict provided a way of justifying that support. Thus Senator James Abourezk said: "During the Mid East war in 1967 I can remember cheering for the Israelis. But my support for the Israeli underdog eventually turned to a sense of rage over the way they have treated the Palestinians."⁶⁴ Redefinition of the conflict was indeed the public relations coup of the century.

THE PLO AS PROPONENT OF THE PAN ARAB DREAM

And at hand to "represent" and "lead" the newly defined nation of the dispossessed Palestinians was the Palestine Liberation Organization. The PLO was not the product of any massive surge of national sentiment. It was created in 1964 by Nasser after consent was extracted from Hussein and other Arab leaders for use against Israel in its **pre-1967 borders**. The organization was supposed to have a military arm, the Palestinian Liberation Army, to be composed of units from each Arab country. The plethora of terrorist organizations that followed, and were ultimately to be included under the PLO "umbrella", were a reflection of the rivalry between Arab states as much as of conflicting revolutionary ideologies sweeping the Arab world. Ahmed Shukeiry was appointed as the first head of the PLO by Nasser and spent most of his time agitating against Hussein on Nasser's behalf. A number of Arab states sponsor more than one terrorist organization. When in 1965 Yasir Arafat, his Fatah organization then based in Syria, moved it to Lebanon, Syria created its own Palestinian organization called Saiqa. The Palestine Liberation Army, which was once an arm of the regular Egyptian army, is now also sponsored by Syria and headed by Syrian regular officers. Not to be outdone the Iraqi government created the Arab Liberation Front in 1968 to conduct terrorist activities in Israel.⁶⁵ Fatah's chief rival, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, led by George Habash, was created out of the merging of the Egyptian puppet Arab Nationalists' Movement and the Syrian puppet Palestine Liberation Front. The marriage was not long successful and the Syrian component broke away to form the Palestine Front for Liberation of Palestine—General Command under Syrian tutelage. The Iraqi Ba'ath regime sponsored the establishment of a third splinter which added the word "democratic" to become the Popular



Reprinted from: *P.L.O. (Palestinian Liberation Organization): A Profile*, by Avner Yaniv, Israel Universities Study Group for Middle Eastern Affairs, August 1974.

Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine under the leadership of Naif Hawatmeh.⁶⁶ Thus while ostensibly a distinctly Palestinian institution and one that participates in the Arab League as if it were a sovereign Arab state, in its own councils the PLO must seek consensus among bodies, many of which represent the official policy of different Arab states.⁶⁷

For all the PLO's apparent new concentration on fulfillment of a specific territorial nationalism, it is really the major embodiment in the Arab world today of the pan-Arab dream. Even before the creation of the PLO, Arabist Michael Hudson notes that the Arabs of Palestine were important in the movement for Arab unity while "almost politically inert with respect to the Palestine problem."⁶⁸ The PLO's pan-Arabism is reflected in both its leadership and in its ideology. Ahmed Shukairy, the first head of the PLO, was a lawyer in Jerusalem before 1948; as assistant secretary of the Arab League after the war, he became a Syrian; in 1956 he became a Saudi Arabian and was appointed that country's UN representative (in which capacity he told the Security Council it was common knowledge Palestine was nothing but southern Syria); after Saudi Arabia dismissed him, Nasser arranged for him to head the PLO. Much of the membership and leadership of the terrorist organizations is recruited throughout the Arab world and is no more "Palestinian" than the terrorist chieftains who harried Palestine in the years of the 1936 revolt. The first Arab terrorist gang leader of that uprising was Az-a-Din el Kasm, a Syrian, and the most famous of them, Fawzi Kaukji, who commanded Syrian and Iraqi mercenaries in a campaign against Jewish villages, was also a Syrian.

In the text of the Palestine National Covenant, the document binding together all the terrorist organizations, belief in Arab unity is stressed. Articles 12, 13 and 14 state that "the Palestinian people believe in Arab unity," that "Arab unity and the liberation of Palestine are two complementary objectives, the attainment of either of which facilitates the attainment of the other" and "The destiny of the Arab nation, and indeed Arab existence itself, depend upon the destiny of the Palestine cause." While Fatah has tried to "Palestinize" the struggle in the sense of at least putting first priority upon the "liberation" of Palestine, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and its offshoots see the struggle against Israel as inseparable from the struggle against "reactionary" Arab regimes. For the PFLP the struggle against Israel is a catalyst stimulating the development of revolution throughout the Arab world; the goal is not setting up yet another Arab state, but the establishment of a single pan-Arab "popular democratic" state." For the whole Arab world

then the PLO has become the focus, symbol and avenue toward fulfillment of the pan-Arab dream. Attachment to the PLO thus transcends the proximate goal of the destruction of Israel.

Stingy as the Arab states have been toward the Arab refugees, they have demonstrated generosity toward the terrorist organizations. Fatah terrorists are paid on a higher scale than Israeli or Jordanian soldiers⁷⁰ and a whole new class, the "professional Palestinians" are able to conduct a revolution from luxury apartments in Arab capitals. The conspicuous prosperity of the terrorists, often flaunted before the refugees in their camps, has been considered a problem even by the terrorist leadership.

THE BENEFITS OF SEMANTIC LARCENY

The effectiveness of redefining the conflict in terms of the needs of the "Palestinians" for a homeland goes beyond the reversal of the David and Goliath image. The very currency of the term "Palestinian" to mean Arabs exclusively is a propaganda triumph of the first order. Palestine is the geographic term with which the West is familiar; one assumes France belongs to the French, and England to the English; it does indeed then seem as if Palestine belongs to the Palestinians. If the "Palestinians" claim Palestine, there must be a struggle between the native population and foreign invaders. The statement by a PLO spokesman at Yale that the primary conflict in the Middle East is between the indigenous and the non-indigenous people then seems reasonable!

If on the other hand it is recognized that Arabs have lived there in greater or lesser numbers for 1,200 years and Jews also have lived there in greater or lesser numbers uninterruptedly for 4,000 years, the nature of the conflict appears different. When the British left Palestine, the new Jewish state adopted the name Israel. The Jewish community there ceased calling itself Palestinian and became Israeli. The organizations throughout the world which had been established to advance the interests of the Jewish community in Palestine dropped "Palestine" from their names and used "Israel" instead. Two states emerged in partitioned Palestine: one chiefly Jewish, called Israel, one entirely Arab possessing four-fifths of the territory of Mandatory Palestine called Jordan. Ironically, although the tactic of the PLO is now to call for a *third* state to be created in Palestine, what the terrorists really seek is a *single* Arab state in all of Palestine. Israel's right to exist is of course denied; less frequently noted is the fact that in March 1971 the National Council of the PLO ruled that the territory of Palestine to which the PLO lays claim

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includes the East Bank (Jordan) as well. While still in Jordan Arafat told journalist Oriana Fallaci: "What you call Transjordan is actually Palestine," and the day he left Cairo for New York to address the UN General Assembly sent a message to a student conference in Baghdad that said: "Jordan as well as Palestine is ours."⁷²

Each time the term Palestinian is used to mean Arabs only, the notion that the Jews took the land away from its rightful owners is reinforced. And yet increasingly this is done, not merely by the Arabs, but by writers with no sympathy for their position and even by the Israelis. For example in their study *The Israeli Army* Edward Luttwak and Dan Horowitz, describing fighting during the 1948 war, when Arabs and Jews were fighting about who should control parts of geographic Palestine, write: "...the Jews had consolidated their hold on the coastal strip and eastern Galilee while the Palestinians held most of Judea, Samaria and western Galilee."⁷³ The fashionable language of today is made the language of yesterday and given historical depth by scholars who have the warmest sympathy for Israel. Israeli leaders like Yigal Allon and Shimon Peres have themselves used the "new" language, presumably because it is easier to use terms that have become familiar. Thus for example Yigal Allon as Foreign Minister told the UN General Assembly: "I would not agree to a general settlement without including in it satisfaction of the needs of the Palestinians"⁷⁴ And once Israeli leaders use that language, there is less basis for criticizing the world's journalists and politicians for doing so. At a time when self-interest seems to the leaders of the West to require accession to Arab demands, it is essential that those demands not also seem reasonable. Solzhenitsyn may overestimate when he says that public opinion in Western countries practically determines government behavior,⁷⁵ but it certainly sets limits for decision-makers in those countries. For Israel winning public opinion is crucial; if the oil weapon is perfumed over with the legitimacy of national self-determination for an indigenous people, that battle too can be lost.

THE APPEAL OF THE "PALESTINIAN" SOLUTION

The Arab redefinition of the conflict as one between *Palestinian* and Jewish nationalism, rather than between *Arab* and Jewish nationalism is particularly harmful to Israel's interests in that it appeals to constituencies both hostile and friendly to Israel. For the hostile, the self-defined 'progressives', whether in the Soviet Union and its satellites, the third world, or the West, where sectors of opinion favor the aspirations of the undeveloped countries whose alleged purity is contrasted to the

supposed corruption of the technological empires, the slogan of the "Palestinians' calling for a "secular democratic state' to replace Israel is an attractive one. It was indeed devised by the terrorist organizations precisely to deal with the objections of foreign progressive allies to the lack of program for the Jews of Palestine apart from "repatriation' and "throwing them into the sea.¹⁷⁶

There is of course no reason to expect a PLO-run state to be the first Arab secular state. As Bernard Lewis has pointed out: "Islam is still the most effective form of consensus in Muslim countries, the basic group identity among the masses...As regimes come closer to the populace, even if their verbiage is left-wing and ideological, they become more Islamic." Indeed Fatah, the PLO group with the broadest base, normally begins its broadcasts with citations from the Koran.⁷⁸ The whole tenor of the Arab world is toward greater Islamic identification. Even in Egypt, whose laws are based on French legislation, according to *The New York Times* of July 17, 1977, the Justice Ministry is working on laws "designed to convert the country from secular to theocratic law.'

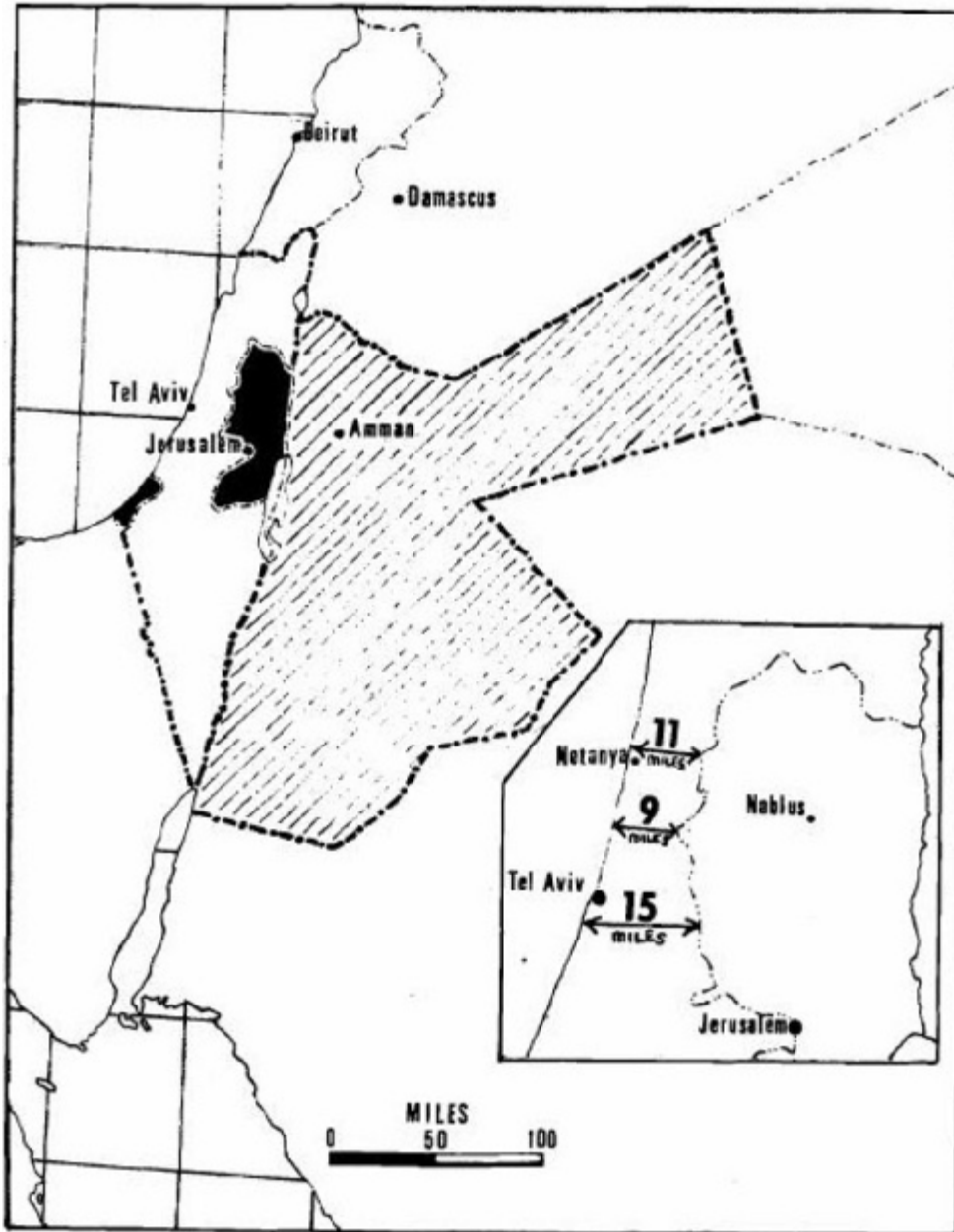
Nor is there any reason to expect such a state to be democratic. In a recent Freedom House study, not a single one of the Arab states merited the classification "free' and fully 75% were baldly labeled "not free." In other words the old-fashioned word tyranny describes the normative political condition of the Arab world. Actually the terrorists do not even use democratic in the way familiar in the West. The Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine asserts: "When we speak of democracy it must be clear that we do not mean liberal democracy in the manner of 'one man, one vote.'⁸⁰ That a squabbling group of brigand chiefs, which is what the competing leaderships of the terrorist organizations would become once Palestine was theirs, should inaugurate the first democratic state in the region must strain the imagination of any dispassionate observer. In any event, among themselves the majority in the PLO have rejected the notion that the democratic secular state slogan is anything but propaganda for the West." Article 6 of the Covenant remains governing, which says that "Jews who were living permanently in Palestine until the beginning of the Zionist invasion will be considered Palestinians.' (The beginning of the Zionist invasion is sometimes identified as 1917. Arafat in his UN speech defined it as 1881.) The "progressives" of the world are not concerned with examining the slogan too closely. Israel will cease to exist and a fine sounding phrase will replace it.

For those who are friendly to Israel and are attracted by the idea of a Palestinian homeland (in this conception presumably to be confined to Judea, Samaria, and Gaza), its appeal is in the apparent capacity of this step to confine and narrow the Arab-Israeli conflict and thus more readily solve it. Here too there are pressures not to examine the "solution" too closely. This is what the Arab states insist be done; the Arab states threaten oil supplies; the Arab states provide an enormous market for American products (especially weapons). And beyond the pressures, the "solution" appeals to the pragmatic, rational, problem-solving, model-building approach with which American decision-makers are trained to confront problems.

A PALESTINIAN STATE MAKES THE PROBLEM INSOLUBLE

What the well-intentioned exponents of the Palestinian "homeland" ignore is that in their attempt to make the problem more tractable they will—should they be successful in implementing their plan—only make it absolutely insoluble. The Palestinian National Covenant, which provides the ideological common ground upon which the otherwise mutually hostile terrorist groups can unite, excludes the possibility of any compromise with Israel. Armed struggle is not a means to the goal, but a goal in itself, the avenue through which the Palestinian Arab people find redemption. The goal is total: Article 21 asserts "The Palestinian Arab people, in expressing itself through the armed Palestinian revolution, rejects every solution that is a substitute for a complete liberation of Palestine, and rejects all plans that aim at the settlement of the Palestine issue or its internationalization."

The Covenant simply asserts that "any claim of a historical or spiritual tie between Jews and Palestine does not tally with historical realities" and calls Zionism "a racist and fanatical movement in its formation; aggressive, expansionist and colonialist in its aims; and Fascist and Nazi in its means." The establishment of Israel is "entirely illegal regardless of the passage of time." Novels and poetry of the Arabs of Palestine express the same total rejection. A popular book *Return Ticket*, published in Beirut in 1962, combines expressions of attachment to the soil of Palestine with the bitterest antagonism: "I shall see the hatred in the eyes of my sons and your sons...Their homeland is dear to them, but revenge is dearer. We'll smash Tel Aviv with axes, guns, hands, fingernails and teeth." The more central the role and the greater the weight given to the most bitter and relentless carriers of the conflict, the less chance there is for any sort of modus vivendi to be worked out between Israel and her Arab neighbors.



IS A THIRD STATE IN PALESTINE A SOLUTION?

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Nor can it plausibly be argued that the PLO does not represent the Palestinian Arabs and were a Palestinian state established on the West Bank and in Gaza a different democratically elected leadership would take over. The PLO has the recognition of all the Arab states as the legitimate leadership of the Palestinians; it would have the glamour of being the group that won statehood; and above all it would have the will to impose itself by terror upon the population. No doubt a struggle for power would break out between the various factions within the PLO—the one which prevailed would not be the least ruthless among them. Even with Israeli control of Judea and Samaria, and in the framework of free elections, the Arabs of these areas voted in the last elections for a leadership that identified itself with the PLO. Among the Arabs of Palestine there is a record of extremist leadership coming to the fore which offers little encouragement. Within Mandatory Palestine, for example, in the struggle between the Husseinis and the marginally less anti-Zionist Nashashibi clan, it was the Husseinis, through a campaign of assassination against their rivals, who won out. The leader of the Husseinis, the Mufti of Jerusalem, Al Haj Amin al Husseinis spent World War II in Germany as a guest of Hitler urging the Nazis on in their murder of the Jews. The absolutely uncompromising leadership that won was unwilling to come to any accommodation with the Jewish Palestinians even when it would have worked to the benefit of Arab political interests. For example, when the British wanted to establish a legislative assembly that would have given the Arabs predominance over the Jews as the numerically stronger element, the Arab leadership refused, because they feared they would thereby implicitly be giving some recognition or legitimacy to Jewish nationalism.

An additional 'mini-state' on 4.5% of the territory of Palestine (Judea, Samaria and Gaza) far from being a solution to the Arab-Israel conflict, is a guaranteed source of subversion and continued warfare. It would merely divide the Arabs of Palestine between three states: the new mini-state, Israel and Jordan. Economically incapable of absorbing a population much larger than that which presently lives within it, its leadership ideologically committed to the destruction of *both* neighboring states, ideally suited for conversion by the Soviet Union into a fully-armed 'progressive' bastion against the 'reactionary' regimes of both Israel and Jordan, such a mini-state will solve no problems but only further undermine the interests of both Israel and the United States.

TOWARD AN ARAB-ISRAELI MODUS VIVENDI

The only hope for mitigating and perhaps in time defusing the Arab-Israel conflict is in moving away from the "Palestinian" definition of the problem. While what passes for moderation in the Arab world at present is a media myth, it is important to remember that there is at least a history on the part of the leadership of several Arab states of a measure of acceptance of Zionism. The Emir Faysal, at the time of the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, had signed an agreement with Chaim Weizmann, representing the Zionist Organization, calling for cooperation between "the Arab State and Palestine." To Felix Frankfurter of the American Zionist delegation Faysal wrote: "We Arabs, especially the educated among us, look with the deepest sympathy on the Zionist movement" and "We will wish the Jews a most hearty welcome home."⁸² For much of the pre-state period Egypt was comparatively uninterested in the conflict in Palestine and there was in fact widespread sympathy for the Jewish revolt against what the Egyptians saw as British imperialism. Abdullah, King of Jordan, was slain by a "Palestinian" for planning to make peace with Israel. For the other Arab states, however hostile they may be to Israel, there are other problems, other neighbors perceived as threatening, other concerns that may become at a given time more central. And should Arab leaders ever decide to abandon the conflict with Israel, the Islamic doctrine of "ijma'a" which demands conformity by the public with the norms accepted by Muslim leadership, would pave the way for mass acceptance of the decision.

Is it fair to deprive even a newly burgeoning national consciousness of fulfillment? It is frequently said that the Jews above all people should be sympathetic to the plight of a people longing for nationhood. The answer would have to be that where a national consciousness can only be fulfilled through destruction of an existing nation, the world is better off if the aspirations of the newly emergent nationalism are not fulfilled. The Arabs of Palestine have allowed themselves to be defined as an "anti-nation," one that derives its entire meaning and purpose from the desire to destroy another nation. The conflict with Israel has become the central fact of their identity and they have allowed the elimination of Israel to become defined as a messianic goal. The nationalism which has developed through, lives in, and depends on opposition to Zionism and Israel" must develop a new and positive character if it is to flourish.

The Arabs of Palestine are peculiarly fortunate in that they possess a national homeland within the existing political framework. They have deliberately refused to acknowledge this (and thus prevented the world

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from realizing it) because of the centrality their leadership has given to the desire to dispossess the people of Israel from their land. Jordan is their national home. The only element that is not Palestinian in Jordan is its King and a small number of Bedouin whose origin is in the Hejaz. Hussein has recognized his role as King of the Palestinian Arabs by being the only Arab ruler to give citizenship to the refugees. Indeed in the 1960's Hussein offered Jordanian citizenship to *all* Arab refugees in whatever country they were." Abdullah, Hussein's grandfather, in changing the country's name from Transjordan, first wanted to call it Palestine, but was dissuaded by his British advisers who argued the name carried the stigma of colonialism.

There is no ethnic difference between the Arabs on one side of the Jordan and the other: as King Abdullah observed: "...the unity of the two banks is an ethnic and actual reality."⁸⁵ In September 1922 Transjordan, which comprised four-fifths of Mandatory Palestine, all of which had been promised by both the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate to the Jews, was arbitrarily removed from the provisions relating to establishment of a Jewish National Home by England although it remained part of Mandatory Palestine until 1946. England modified the Mandate to satisfy Abdullah, then a king without a throne, who threatened to upset England's relations with France by invading Syria in support of the claims of his brother, the Emir Faysal. The camel-mounted battalion of Bedouins that Abdullah brought with him, whose number has been estimated in the most generous calculations as 2,000, and their descendants, were scarcely sufficient to transform the ethnic character of eastern Palestine.

Hussein, while not a Palestinian Arab, is of the Hashemite dynasty, of the same family as Emir Faysal under whose sovereignty the Arabs of Palestine were so eager to come in 1920. If the Arabs of Palestine now feel that Abdullah's British advisers gave him poor advice, and that naming the country "Palestine" would more accurately reflect their sense of identity, nothing stands in the way of that change. If the majority of the country believe a different leadership more accurately reflects their self-conception, they will eventually obtain the leadership they desire.

What the Arabs have succeeded in doing in their pursuit of the mini-state and the "legitimate rights of the Palestinians" is remove the onus of solution of the Arab-Israel conflict from the Arabs. In western capitals Arab leaders can sound "reasonable" and "moderate" as they assert that all that is needed for peace in the region is for Palestinian demands for self-determination to be granted. In the West this sounds like a limited goal not infringing Israeli sovereignty in the 1949 borders. At the same

time, by endorsing the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinians, and underwriting the various terrorist groups that comprise it, the Arab states affirm their commitment to the goals of the PLO: the destruction of Israel, and the murder or expulsion of the vast majority of its inhabitants. Seemingly moderate in the West, they are understood in the Arab world to deny Israel any legitimacy. Within their own countries, Arab leaders abandon any pretense of "moderation." In December 1976 the government controlled Syrian radio announced: "The Arabs...are going to hand Israel an account that will include not only Jerusalem, Nablus, Gaza, Sinai and Golan—but, first of all, Tel Aviv, Haifa, Jaffa and Nazareth. The Arabs will demand not just the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, but their rights in all their lands occupied since 1948. The slogan of the Restoration of the Rights of the Palestinian Arab People and the slogan of the Liberation of Palestine—that is, the elimination of Israel—have one and the same meaning, and not two contradictory meanings."⁸⁶ In the vocabulary of the American administration Syria's President Assad is a "moderate." Sadat, in that same vocabulary the most moderate Arab of all, announced that he told President Carter that even after Israel's return to the 1949 borders and the creation of a Palestinian state on the West Bank and in Gaza, it was inconceivable that there be travel between countries, trade or diplomatic exchanges.⁸⁷ Finally the Arab states assert that it is the "Palestinians" (i.e. the PLO) who will determine when their rights have been restored and "peace" can ensue. This is yet another way of confirming their commitment to Israel's destruction.

What is defined as "moderation" in the Arab world is acceptance of a two-stage strategy in the elimination of Israel, by which she is first to be impelled by Western pressure to return to the 1949 borders and only thereafter finally removed from the map. The "moderates", belatedly following the advice of President Bourguiba of Tunisia (when he first suggested this strategy in 1965 he was given short shrift in the Arab world, which was then still intent on eliminating Israel in a single military confrontation), argue that the West's support can be won for the first stage and that if Israel's retreat can be achieved through Western pressure, as what the Arabs call a "reduced state", Israel will be psychologically as well as strategically at a great disadvantage when the Arabs are ready to move on to the next stage. "Extremists" among Arab leaders, "rejectionists" within the terrorist framework, oppose the two-stage strategy and cling to the notion that the Arab target should continue to be the traditional one of eliminating Israel in battle without interim stages that would necessarily involve Arab symbolic concessions, however temporary they might be, toward recognition of

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Israel's existence. Arafat, the "moderate", i.e., proponent of the two-stage strategy, in an interview with the Kuwaiti weekly *Al-Yazka* on April 11, 1977 said: "I am not a man for settlements or concessions. I will carry on the struggle until every inch of Palestinian soil will be retrieved...Our revolution is a revolution of liberation, not a revolution of concessions. We will not give up one inch of our lands, nor will we relinquish a single one of our rights."

It is Arab hearts and minds that must change if there is to be peace in the Middle East. And it is Western perceptions that must change if the Arab world is ever to be made to understand that the price for obtaining any territorial concessions from Israel is prior transformation of Arab attitudes—and proof of that transformation. A change in perception is needed to conform to changed realities. If Jordan is now the state of the Arab-Palestinians, Israel is now the state of Middle Eastern Jews. The majority of the population of Israel consists of refugees from Arab countries and their descendants. Most of those Jewish refugees from Arab countries lived in the Middle East for centuries before the Arab conquest. They have at least as much right to national self-determination as the Palestinian Arabs who claim two countries, Jordan and Israel; and Israel is now their land.

Even after its victory at great cost in the Yom Kippur war, Israel withdrew in the Sinai and in the Golan in hopes of starting the process of reconciliation through a unilateral gesture. It was a gesture admittedly made under United States pressure. But is it not time for the United States to insist upon a direct sign of Arab good intent before Israel is asked to make any further concessions? And what better sign of good intent could the Arab states make than integration of the Arab refugees? Henry Kissinger on his shuttle flights noted to reporters that the difficulty was that Israel was asked to make tangible territorial concessions while the Arabs were asked to make imponderable concessions like recognition of legitimacy. Integration of refugees is a tangible action that reflects upon the willingness to make imponderable concessions. Among the masses of Arabs in the refugee camps the sense of common identity different from a simple Arab identity has emerged in response to the isolation and suffering they experienced at the hands of their fellow Arabs, who treated them as political capital but human refuse. For many the sentiments that bad treatment created, good treatment can dissolve. For those to whom their new sense of national identity as "Palestinians" is important, the Palestinian state of Jordan offers the best home.

As long as the Arab states are unwilling to make the necessary

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simultaneously symbolic and practical gesture of integrating the refugees, it is an unmistakable sign that they are still unwilling to relinquish their dream of a single imperial Arab state stretching from the Taurus-Zagros chain bordering Turkey and Iran to the Atlantic coast of North Africa and from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean, an empire which it is believed will somehow be achieved through the destruction of Israel. It is only after the Arab states are willing to cease using the Arabs who fled that part of Palestine which became Israel as a cover for their own refusal to deny Israel legitimacy that there will be any hope for peace in the Middle East. And once the Arab states have come to that point, they will no longer need the refugees as "armament" but can come to see them as individuals who deserve a chance to contribute positively to Arab development in this period of unprecedented prosperity for a number of Arab countries, precisely those countries with the greatest need for the kind of skilled manpower the Palestinian Arabs can provide. In a very real sense it must be said that until the Arab states have eliminated the camps in their midst and given citizenship to the Arabs of Palestine who live among them there is no hope of a real peace coming to pass at Geneva.'

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THE PALESTINIAN NATIONAL COVENANT (1968)

This Covenant will be called "The Palestinian National Covenant"
(Al-Mithaq Al-Watani Al-Filastini)

ARTICLE 1

Palestine is the homeland of the Palestinian Arab people and an integral part of the great Arab homeland, and the people of Palestine is a part of the Arab Nation.

ARTICLE 2

Palestine with its boundaries that existed at the time of the British Mandate is an integral regional unit.

ARTICLE 3

The Palestinian Arab people possesses the legal right to its homeland, and when the liberation of its homeland is completed it will exercise self-determination solely according to its own will and choice.

ARTICLE 4

The Palestinian personality is an innate, persistent characteristic that does not disappear, and it is transferred from fathers to sons. The Zionist occupation, and the dispersal of the Palestinian Arab people as result of the disasters which came over it, do not deprive it of its Palestinian personality and affiliation and do not nullify them.

ARTICLE 5

The Palestinians are the Arab citizens who were living permanently in Palestine until 1947, whether they were expelled from there or remained. Whoever is born to a Palestinian Arab father after this date, within Palestine or outside it, is a Palestinian.

ARTICLE 6

Jews who were living permanently in Palestine until the beginning of the Zionist invasion will be considered Palestinians.

ARTICLE 7

The Palestinian affiliation and the material, spiritual and historical tie with Palestine are permanent realities. The upbringing of the Palestinian individual in an Arab and revolutionary fashion, the undertaking of all means of forging consciousness and training the Palestinian, in order to acquaint him pro-

foundly with his homeland, spiritually and materially, and preparing him for the conflict and the armed struggle, as well as for the sacrifice of his property and his life to restore his homeland, until the liberation—all this is a national duty.

ARTICLE 8

The phase in which the people of Palestine is living is that of the national (*Watani*) struggle for the liberation of Palestine. Therefore, the contradictions among the Palestinian national forces are of a secondary order which must be suspended in the interest of the fundamental contradiction between Zionism and colonialism on the one side and the Palestinian Arab people on the other. On this basis, the Palestinian masses, whether in the homeland or in places of exile (*Mahajir*), organizations and individuals, comprise one national front which acts to restore Palestine and liberate it through armed struggle.

ARTICLE 9

Armed struggle is the only way to liberate Palestine and is therefore a strategy and not tactics. The Palestinian Arab people affirms its absolute resolution and abiding determination to pursue the armed struggle and to march forward toward the armed popular revolution, to liberate its homeland and return to it, [to maintain] its right to a natural life in it, and to exercise its right of self-determination in it and sovereignty over it.

ARTICLE 10

Fedayeen action forms the nucleus of the popular Palestinian war of liberation. This demands its promotion, extension and protection, and the mobilization of all the mass and scientific capacities of the Palestinians, their organization and involvement in the armed Palestinian revolution, and cohesion in the national (*Watani*) struggle among the various groups of the people of Palestine, and between them and the Arab masses, to guarantee the continuation of the revolution, its advancement and victory.

ARTICLE 11

The Palestinians will have three mottoes: National (*Wataniyya*) unity, national (*Qawmiyya*) mobilization and liberation.

ARTICLE 12

The Palestinian Arab people believes in Arab unity. In order to fulfill its role in realizing this, it must preserve, in this phase of its national (*Watani*) struggle, its Palestinian personality and the constituents thereof increase consciousness of its existence and resist any plan that tends to disintegrate or weaken it.

ARTICLE 13

Arab unity and the liberation of Palestine are two complementary aims. Each one paves the way for realization of the other. Arab unity leads to the liberation of Palestine, and the liberation of Palestine leads to Arab unity. Working for both goes hand in hand.

ARTICLE 14

The destiny of the Arab nation, indeed the very Arab existence, depends upon the destiny of the Palestine issue. The endeavor and effort of the Arab nation to liberate Palestine follows from this connection. The people of Palestine assumes its vanguard role in realizing this sacred national (*Qawmi*) aim.

ARTICLE 15

The liberation of Palestine, from an Arab viewpoint, is a national (*Qawmi*) duty to repulse the Zionist, imperialist invasion from the great Arab homeland and to purge the Zionist presence from Palestine. Its full responsibilities fall upon the Arab nation, peoples and governments, with the Palestinian Arab people at their head.

For this purpose, the Arab nation must mobilize its military, human, material and spiritual capabilities to participate actively with the people of Palestine. They must, especially in the present stage of armed Palestinian revolution, grant and offer the people of Palestine all possible help and every material and human support, and afford it every sure means and opportunity enabling it to continue to assume its vanguard role in pursuing its armed revolution until the liberation of its homeland.

ARTICLE 16

The liberation of Palestine, from a spiritual viewpoint, will prepare an atmosphere of tranquility and peace for the Holy Land, in the shade of which all the holy places will be safeguarded, and freedom of worship and visitation to all will be guaranteed, without distinction or discrimination of race, color, language or religion. For this reason, the people of Palestine looks to the support of all the spiritual forces in the world.

ARTICLE 17

The liberation of Palestine, from a human viewpoint, will restore to the Palestinian man his dignity, glory and freedom. For this, the Palestinian Arab people looks to the support of those in the world who believe in the dignity and freedom of man.

ARTICLE 18

The liberation of Palestine, from an international viewpoint, is a defensive act necessitated by the requirements of self-defense. For this reason, the people of Palestine, desiring to befriend all peoples, looks to the support of the states which love freedom, justice and peace in restoring the legal situation to Palestine, establishing security and peace in its territory, and enabling its people to exercise national (*Wataniyya*) sovereignty and national (*Qawmiyya*) freedom.

ARTICLE¹⁹

The partitioning of Palestine in 1947 and the establishment of Israel is fundamentally null and void, whatever time has elapsed, because it was contrary to the wish of the people of Palestine and its natural right to its homeland, and contradicts the principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations, the first of which is the right of self-determination.

ARTICLE²⁰

The Balfour Declaration, the Mandate Document, and what has been based upon them are considered null and void. The claim of a historical or spiritual tie between Jews and Palestine does not tally with historical realities nor with the constituents of statehood in their true sense. Judaism, in its character as a religion of revelation, is not a nationality with an independent existence. Likewise, the Jews are not one people with an independent personality. They are rather citizens of the states to which they belong.

ARTICLE²¹

The Palestinian Arab people, in expressing itself through the armed Palestinian revolution, rejects every solution that is a substitute for a complete liberation of Palestine, and rejects all plans that aim at the settlement of the Palestine issue or its internationalization.

ARTICLE²²

Zionism is a political movement organically related to world imperialism and hostile to all movements of liberation and progress in the world. It is a racist and fanatical movement in its formation; aggressive, expansionist and colonialist in its aims; and Fascist and Nazi in its means. Israel is the tool of the Zionist movement and a human and geographical base for world imperialism. It is a concentration and jumping-off point for imperialism in the heart of the Arab homeland, to strike at the hopes of the Arab nation for liberation, unity and progress.

Israel is a constant threat to peace in the Middle East and the entire world. Since the liberation of Palestine will liquidate the Zionist and imperialist presence and bring about the stabilization of peace in the Middle East, the

people of Palestine looks to the support of all liberal men of the world and all the forces of good progress and peace; and implores all of them, regardless of their different leanings and orientations, to offer all help and support to the people of Palestine in its just and legal struggle to liberate its homeland.

ARTICLE 23

The demands of security and peace and the requirements of truth and justice oblige all states that preserve friendly relations among peoples and maintain the loyalty of citizens to their homelands to consider Zionism an illegitimate movement and to prohibit its existence and activity.

ARTICLE 24

The Palestinian Arab people believes in the principles of justice, freedom, sovereignty, self-determination, human dignity and the right of peoples to exercise them.

ARTICLE 25

To realize the aims of this Covenant and its principles the Palestine Liberation Organization will undertake its full role in liberating Palestine.

ARTICLE 26

The Palestine Liberation Organization, which represents the forces of the Palestinian revolution, is responsible for the movement of the Palestinian Arab people in its struggle to restore its homeland, liberate it, return to it and exercise the right of self-determination in it. This responsibility extends to all military, political and financial matters, and all else that the Palestine issue requires in the Arab and international spheres.

ARTICLE 27

The Palestine Liberation Organization will cooperate with all Arab states, each according to its capacities, and will maintain neutrality in their mutual relations in the light of, and on the basis of, the requirements of the battle of liberation, and will not interfere in the internal affairs of any Arab state.

ARTICLE 28

The Palestinian Arab people insists upon the originality and independence of its national (*Wataniyya*) revolution and rejects every manner of interference, guardianship and subordination.

ARTICLE 29

The Palestinian Arab people possesses the prior and original right in liberating and restoring its homeland and will define its position with reference to all states and powers on the basis of their positions with reference to the issue [of Palestine] and the extent of their support for [the Palestinian Arab people] in its revolution to realize its aims.

ARTICLE 30

The fighters and bearers of arms in the battle of liberation are the nucleus of the Popular Army, which will be the protecting arm of the Palestinian Arab people.

ARTICLE 31

This organization shall have a flag, oath and anthem, all of which will be determined in accordance with a special system.

ARTICLE 32

To this Covenant is attached a law known as the Fundamental Law of the Palestine Liberation Organization, in which is determined the manner of the organization's formation, its committees, institutions, the special functions of every one of them and all the requisite duties associated with them in accordance with the Covenant.

ARTICLE 33

This Covenant cannot be amended except by a two-thirds majority of all the members of the National Council of the Palestine Liberation Organization in a special session called for this purpose.