

The Influence of the Political Situation
in Palestine on Arabic Poetry from 1917-1973.

by

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Abstract

This work is concerned with Arabic poetry influenced by the Arab-Israeli conflict regarding Palestine from 1917 to 1973.

Its main aim is to discuss how the subject of Palestine has, since 1917, been a source of inspiration to Arab poets, and to illuminate the various aspects of influence the conflict had on modern Arabic poetry.

The thesis is divided into two parts. Part one consists of three chapters and deals with the poetry written up to 1948.

The conclusion reached in this part is that Arab poets' concern about the political situation of Palestine in the period between 1917 and 1948 developed rapidly. Yet, aspects of influence of the conflict on poetry written during that period, are primarily limited to the level of introducing a number of themes as well as some new poetic vocabulary related to the subject.

Part Two consists of four chapters and deals with the poetry written from 1948 to 1973. The conclusion drawn from this part is that the conflict, unlike the period preceding 1948, has affected Arabic poetry in many ways with regard to mood, tone, attitudes and diction.

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Scheme of Transliteration

ا	,	(not transcribed in initial position)
ب	b	
ت	t	
ث	th	
ج	j	
ح	h	
خ	kh	
د	d	
ذ	dh	
ر	r	
ز	z	
س	s	
ش	sh	
ص	ṣ	
ض	ḍ	
ط	ṭ	
ظ	ẓ	
ع	‘	
غ	gh	
ف	f	
ق	q	
ك	k	
ل	l	
م	m	
ن	n	The short vowels are transcribed a, i,
ه	h	and u; the long vowels ā, ī, and ū ;
و	w	and the diphthongs ay, aw .
ي	y	

Notes:

- (1) ة at the end of words is not transcribed, e.g. وردة : warda.
- (2) The definite article is transcribed al- both before lunar and solar letters, e.g. الشمس : al-shams, القمر : al-qamar, etc.

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Introduction

Public themes, as Sir Cecil Maurice Bowra argues, have been common for centuries in many parts of the world, and the conscious avoidance of them by poets is more often the exception than the rule. He also adds that in our own century, with its "crowded records of wars international and civil, of social revolutions and awakening continents, poets can hardly be expected to keep clear of politics in the general sense of contemporary public affairs".¹

If these remarks apply, to some extent, to the poetry of many peoples, they are even more applicable to Arabic poetry throughout its history since the pre-Islamic period.

Throughout this century, Arabs have been involved in the thorny problem of Palestine. This problem needless to stress, is one of the most difficult and stressful in the contemporary world; many people, from both East and West, are familiar with this question, and they often have strong opinions about it.

Academic studies and scholarly works dealing with the many different aspects of the problem, the "Arab-Israeli conflict", as it is usually termed by Western writers, are numerous and readily available. Yet, as far as Arab literature is concerned, studies which discuss the representation of this conflict or its impact on Arabic literature are still far from sufficient.

The purpose of this thesis, therefore, is to provide a comprehensive perspective of Arab poets' responses to

¹ C. M. Bowra, Poetry and Politics, p.1.

the most serious problem their nation as a whole has ever faced in its modern history.

Poets -and this is still an accepted fact among the Arabs- are regarded as the "conscience of the nation". Their verses represent that inmost, authentic voice through which the emotions, feelings and aspirations of the nation are poignantly expressed.

Our aim also is to draw attention to the various influences the political situation in Palestine have had on modern Arabic poetry.

The thesis is divided into two parts. Part I deals with poetry written up to 1948, and comprises three chapters. Chapter I serves as a background to the first part, and outlines the Zionist threat against Palestine, as reflected in Arabic writing between 1897 and 1917. Chapter II discusses the major themes of poetry written on the subject by Palestinian poets, while chapter III discusses the themes and orientation of poetry written by non-Palestinian Arab poets.

The conclusion reached in part one is that the attention drawn to Palestine by Arab poets grew rapidly during the period 1917-1948, especially after 1929.

However, the influence of the political situation in Palestine on poetry written before 1948 is primarily limited to the introduction of a number of new themes, as well as to the adoption of new poetic vocabulary related to the subject.

Part Two consists of four chapters and covers the poetry written between 1948 and 1973. Chapter IV gives

a general picture of the development of Arab literary concern on the Palestine issue. Chapter V deals with the predominant themes generated by the loss of Palestine to the Jews. Chapter VI discusses the employment of new poetic tools, such as symbols, myths and folk-elements, in poetry written on the subject of Palestine. The final chapter deals with the effect of the conflict on contemporary Arabic poetry.

The conclusion drawn from the evidence set out in part II is that the conflict, unlike the period preceding 1948, has affected Arabic poetry in many ways, especially, with regard to attitudes, tone, mood and diction.

Research students are often faced with the problem of finding enough material relevant to their subject. In our case, the opposite holds true. Because of the mass of material available, difficulties arose regarding how to include as many as possible of the relevant poems, and how to sift the available poetical texts, since it was impossible to utilize all of them.

The criterion used for this selective process in our research was to choose the most representative examples relevant to each theme under discussion, irrespective of the writer's importance within the spectrum of modern Arabic poetry.

Regarding the historical material in the thesis, it was adjudged helpful to incorporate in it what we thought to be relevant to the poetry written on the subject. Perhaps even more importantly, the historical data given here express the Arab point of view, since the poetry

discussed is written by Arab poets and expresses the deep feelings and emotions that the Palestine issue arouses within them.

To understand fully the implications and underlying intensity of this poetry, it is important that the significance and emotive power of Palestine for not only Palestinians, but all Arab poets, be appreciated, and this can only be achieved by a knowledge of the historical factors which have given rise to these forces.

In translating from Arabic into English throughout this thesis an attempt has been made, wherever possible, to convey the literary richness and poetic imagination of the poems concerned, while not sacrificing the literal meaning, which has been scrupulously followed as long as it is understandable to the English reader.

CHAPTER I

The Representation of the Zionist Threat
to Palestine in Arab Writing: 1897-1917.

Any claim that the Zionist threat to Palestine was generated all of a sudden by the Balfour Declaration in 1917, would be evading a number of important facts and events preceding the issuing of that Declaration.

As a starting point we may mention that from the year 1839 onwards important changes in the situation of the Jews in the Middle East were beginning to occur. On the 3rd November of that year, the Ottoman Sultan 'Abd al-Majīd (1839-1861) issued an important decree (The Khaṭṭ-i Sherīf of Gulkhāne), assuring equal rights and security to the life and property of all subjects of the Ottoman Empire.¹ From then on, the Sultan made official the appointment of a Chief Rabbi, who was chosen by the Jewish Community; some Jews were appointed to Government posts; a number of Jewish schools were founded; and Government schools, too, were opened to Jewish students.²

Several years later, the Jewish colonization of Palestine began to develop, when in 1855, an estate near Jaffa was bought by Sir Moses Montefiore³ (1784-1885), scion of an old Italian-Jewish family.⁴

¹ Hayyim J. Cohen, The Jews of the Middle East, p.14.

² Ibid., p.10.

³ The Royal Institute of International Affairs, Great Britain and Palestine, p.3.

⁴ The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, vol. VI, p.1017.

In 1861, the London Hebrew Society for the Colonization of the Holy Land was founded in London. The same year also witnessed the establishment of an institution called the "Universal Israeli Alliance", founded for the protection and advancement of Jews in general, and of those in Europe and Muslim lands in particular.¹ The "Alliance" founded an agricultural school, called "Mikveh Israel", near Jaffa in 1870, with the settlement of Jews in Palestine as one of its main objectives.² Moreover, a movement called "Hibbat Zion" (Love of Zion) was founded in Russia in 1882,³ after the assassination of Tsar Alexander II of Russia and the persecution of the Jews that followed, with the aim of encouraging the Jewish colonization of Palestine. At that time Jewish settlements aroused Baron Rothchild's interest, and by 1899, nine settlements covering over two-thirds of Jewish-owned land in Palestine were dependent entirely on him.⁴

Regarding the Jewish aspirations for Palestine before the turn of the Nineteenth Century, it may be worth mentioning that, in 1879, an English Jew, Laurence Oliphant (1829-1888), who became a Member of Parliament in 1865, approached the Ottoman Government with a detailed plan for the creation of an immigration centre in Palestine for

¹ Abd al-Wahhab al-Kayyali, Palestine: Modern History, p.14.

² Ibid.

³ Encyclopaedia Judaica, vol.8, p.463.

⁴ Anne Ussishkin, "The Jewish Colonization Association and ^{Rothschild in} Palestine", Middle Eastern Studies, vol.9, October 1973, p.347.

European and Turkish Jews.

According to Oliphant's plan, the Jews were to be allowed to establish a company under the name of "The Palestine-Ottoman Company", for the purpose of buying lands in Palestine to be colonized by the Jews. The proposed company was to be under the protection of the Sultan and his Government.¹ A special council was set up to consider Oliphant's proposals. The council rejected the plan, recognizing that the Jews were hoping to settle one day in Palestine; therefore, permission to establish such a company "would lay the foundation stone for the creation of a Jewish state".² This, the council believed, would create many difficulties in the future for the Ottoman Empire.³

The "first milestone in modern Jewish history" was the First Zionist Congress⁴ held in Basle in August 1897. Theodor Herzl (1860-1904), a Viennese Jewish journalist and playwright, who played the leading role in the Congress, directed it to adopt his conception of the Jewish question and its solution, as discussed in his book The Jewish State. This question was summed up as follows: there is a people without a country, the Jews, and there is a country without a people, Palestine; and the problem could

¹ Ali Ihsan Bagis, The Jewish Settlement in Palestine and the Ottoman's Policy (paper read at the Third International Conference of the History of Bilād al-Shām, 19-24 April, 1980, Amman), p.2.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Chaim Weizmann, A Biography By Several Hands, p.143.

be solved (as seen by Herzl) by transporting "the landless people into the unpeopled land".¹

The Congress was so successful that Herzl wrote in his diary under the date September 3rd [1897]:

In Basle and on the way home, I was too exhausted to make notes, although they are more necessary than ever, because other people too, are already noticing that our movement has entered the stream of history.

Were I to sum up the Basle Congress in a word -which I shall guard against pronouncing publicly- it would be this: At Basle I founded the Jewish State. If I said this out loudly today, I would be answered by universal laughter. Perhaps in five years, and certainly in fifty everyone will know it.²

Herzl however, had been trying earnestly to gain the approval of Sultan 'Abd al-Ḥamīd for a plan to grant Palestine to the Jews, even before the First Zionist Congress was convened. In The Jewish State he writes: "Supposing his Majesty, the Sultan, were to give us Palestine, we could in return undertake to regulate the whole finances of Turkey".³

In June, 1896, Herzl went to Constantinople and tried to meet the Sultan, but the latter declined to meet him and addressed his aid, Philip Michael Newlinski* in these words:

¹ Nahum Goldman, The Genius of Herzl and Zionism Today, p.6.

² Theodor Herzl, The Complete Diaries, vol.II, p.58.

³ See p.30.

* Philip Michael Newlinski (1841-1899) was Herzl's diplomatic agent in Constantinople and the Balkan countries. Herzl contacted him in 1896, and persuaded him to work for the realization of Zionist aims. He became a zealous supporter of the Zionist Movement and served as Herzl's trusted adviser.

If Mr. Herzl is as much your friend as you are mine, then advise him not to take another step in this matter. I cannot sell even a foot of land... Let the Jews save their billions. When my Empire is partitioned, they may get Palestine for nothing.¹

However, up to his death in 1904, Herzl continued his efforts with Sultan 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, but without notable success.

Then the Young Turk Revolution took place on July 24th, 1908. The constitution of 1876 was restored and general elections to Parliament were held. In June 1909, the question of Zionism was raised in the Ottoman Parliament for the first time by the Arab deputy from Jaffa.² The official Turkish opposition to the Zionists -in spite of allegations raised by some Arabs that the Committee of Union and Progress (*جماعة الاتحاد والترقي*) was dominated by Freemasons and Jews³ - continued, with the exception of a short period "between the Autumn of 1913 and the Summer of 1914",⁴ when the Turkish Government was entertaining hopes of financial support from the Jews in Europe. But such opposition, whether during 'Abd al-Ḥamīd's reign or afterwards, was not effective in preventing Jewish infiltration into Palestine, and the acquisition of more lands there. By the outbreak of

¹ Theodor Herzl, op. cit., vol.I, p.378.

² Neville J. Mandel, The Arabs and Zionism before World War I, p.70.

³ Ibid., p.93; see also al-Machriq, vol.15, 1912, pp.79-80.

⁴ 'Abd al-'Azīz Muḥammad 'Awad, "al-Shakhṣiyya al-Filastīniyya wal-Istīṭān al-Yahūdī , 1907-1914", Shu'un Filastīniyya, no.36, August 1974, p.82.

World War I, the Jewish community in Palestine had risen to about eighty five thousand, according to some sources, and about forty settlements had been established. But after Turkey had entered the War as an ally of Germany, thousands of Jews left the country. By the end of the war the Jewish population as given in Israeli sources was about 60,000 out of a total of about 650,000.¹

An examination of the Arab reactions to the increasing Jewish penetration into Palestine shows that the Arabs in many cases had shown fear of and anxiety at such infiltration, even before the turn of the nineteenth century. The following pages may help to give an idea of those reactions up to the outbreak of the First World War.

In 1891, a group of Arab notables of Jerusalem cabled a demand to the Ottoman authorities asking that a decree should be issued forbidding Jews from owning lands in Palestine and preventing the flow of Jewish immigrants into the country.²

After the First Zionist Congress was held, more attention to the Zionist aspirations for Palestine began manifesting itself in some Arab journals in Egypt and Beirut.³

Al-Muqtaṭaf* and al-Manār** for instance, started

¹ Edwin Samuel, The Structure of Society in Israel, p.9.

² Anis Sayegh, Palestine and Arab Nationalism, p.24.

³ Ibid., p.25.

* Al-Muqtaṭaf: a scientific, literary journal, brought out in Beirut by Ya'qūb Ṣarrūf and Fāris Nimr in 1876. It transferred to Egypt in 1885, where it continued to appear until 1952.

** Al-Manār : a scientific, literary and didactic journal, published in Cairo. It was founded and edited by Muḥammad

discussing the danger of the Zionist Movement for Palestine within a few months of its formation. Six months after the First Congress, al-Muqtataf was asked by an Arab reader in Frankfurt about the reaction of the Arab press to the Zionist Congress, and what al-Muqtataf itself thought of it. In reply, the journal considered it unlikely that the Zionists could succeed in achieving their aims in Palestine, and attributed the failure to several reasons.¹

Two weeks after al-Muqtataf published its reply, Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā (1865-1935), a well-known Muslim reformer, reprinted the response in his journal al-Manār and made comments on it. In the comments, his indignation at the national revival of the Jews, and his grief at the Arab indifference to the danger were bitter and sharp, as seen in the following lines:

"أترضون [العرب] أن يسجل في جميع جرائد هذه الدول
[الأوروبية] أن فقراء أضعف الشعوب، الذين تلفظهم جميع
الحكومات من بلادها هم من العلم والمعرفة بأساليب العمران
وطرقه بحيث يقدرون على امتلاك بلادكم واستعمارها وجعل
أربابها أجراء وأغنيائها فقراء" !²

Will you [the Arabs] be satisfied when all [European] newspapers record that the poor of the weakest of all peoples, who are expelled by all world governments from their lands, have more knowledge of the methods of prosperity than you, so that they could take and colonize your country and turn its landowners into hirelings and its wealthy people into poor men!

Rashīd Riḍā from 1898 until his death in 1935. His brother-in-law continued its publication up to 1941.

¹ Al-Muqtataf, vol.22, 1898, pp.310-311.

² Al-Manār, vol.I, no.6, 1898, p.106.

Again, Riḍā wrote a long article in al-Manār,¹ shortly after the fifth Zionist Congress was held in Basle in 1902. In that article, he called on the Arabs to imitate the Jews in mastering modern arts and sciences and to amass capital if they wanted to be powerful. He also called for the establishment of organizations along the lines of Jewish ones, because that, he thought, was the only means through which a nation could achieve prosperity and success. Furthermore, he criticised the attitude of Muslim rulers to the Zionist threat, saying that they "could not be relied upon" (لا يعتمد عليهم).

Once more, in an article published in May 1903, he accused the Jews of preparing Palestine to be turned into an independent Jewish kingdom.² Such a fear as was mentioned by Riḍā in that article, was not in fact the first to be expressed in an Arab paper. A Lebanese journal, al-Machriq,^{*} for example, published an article in November 1899, about the Jews and their colonies in Palestine, in which the writer Henri Lammens the Jesuit (1862-1937) called attention to the Zionist efforts with Sultan 'Abd al-Hamīd to enable them to cultivate "600,000 hectares in Palestine", so that, the writer comments, they "could pave the way for their countrymen to establish an independent kingdom in

¹ Vol.4, no.21, 1902, pp.801-809.

² Ibid., vol.6, no.5, 1903, p.196.

^{*} Al-Machriq: a scientific and literary journal, founded in Beirut by the Syro-Lebanese Jesuits in 1898. It continued publication for nearly seventy-two years, broken only by the periods of the two World Wars. It ceased publication in 1971.

the Holy Land as it was before Christ".

" وكانت غايتهم بذلك أن يمهّدوا الطريق لأبناء جلدتهم لانشاء
مملكة مستقلة في الأراضي المقدسة كما كانت قبل المسيح " 1.

The most extreme article written by Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā on our subject, could be the one entitled " المسألتان : " (The Two Issues: The Eastern Question and Zionism), published in al-Manār in 1914. In that article he summed up his view, saying:

يجب على زعماء العرب أهل البلاد أحد أمرين : إما
عقد اتفاق مع زعماء الصهيونيين على الجمع بين مصلحة
الفريقين إن أمكن ، وإلّا جمع قواهم كلّها لمقاومة
الصهيونيين بكل طرق المقاومة ، وأولّها تأليف الجمعيات
والشركات ، وآخرها تأليف العصابات المسلحة التي تقاومهم
بالقوة ... وإنّما هو الكي ، والكي آخر العلاج كما يقولون 2 .

The Arab leaders of the country should choose one of these alternatives: reaching agreement with the Zionist leaders by looking for the joint welfare of the two parties if possible, or uniting all their power to fight the Zionists by every available means, starting from the establishment of societies and companies, and ending with establishing armed bands which could resist the Zionists by force ... this could amount to cauterization, and as is said (in the proverb): cauterization is the final remedy.

In regard to this article by Riḍā, an Algerian Arab journalist 'Umar Rāsim, the owner of an Algerian newspaper called Dhū al-Nūn, was not pleased by what Riḍā wrote. He, therefore, wrote a comment and published it in his newspaper, in which he says:

ان اتفاق زعماء العرب أهل البلاد مع اليهود مستحيل ، لأنه اعتراف

¹ Al-Machriq, vol.2, no.22, 15 November 1899, p.1094.

² Al-Manār, vol.17, no.4, 1914, p.320.

بزعماء اليهود . ولا يحق لغير العرب أن يملك الأرض ، ولا
 لغير راية الاسلام أن تخفق عليها ما دام فى عرق العرب
 دم ، وفى أجسام المسلمين روح .¹

Any agreement between the Arab leaders of the country and the Zionists is impossible, because such agreement would be a recognition of the Zionist leadership by the Arabs who (alone) have the right to own the country. Only the banner of Islam should wave there as long as there are Arabs and Muslims.

This could well be the best proof that the Zionist danger against Palestine was not only discussed by Arabs in the countries neighbouring Palestine, such as Egypt or Syria, but also in Arab countries further away, such as Algeria.

During the period under discussion, some Arab activists had paid attention to Zionist aspirations and plans for Palestine more than those we have mentioned. Among those activists is Najīb 'Āzūrī (ca. 1873-1916), a well-known figure in the Arab nationalist movement. 'Āzūrī published in French in 1905 Le reveil de la nation arabe (The Awakening of the Arab Nation), a book which has become a minor classic of Arab nationalist literature. In that book, he discusses Jewish activities in Palestine, benefiting from his previous experience as an Ottoman official there.² What can be seen as significant in 'Āzūrī's book, is his prediction, at that early stage, that the Zionist Movement and the Arabs were approaching a serious conflict over Palestine, by which the entire world would be affected. The

¹ Ṣāliḥ Kharfī, al-Jazā'ir wal-Aṣāla al-Thawriyya, p.35.

² From 1898 to 1904. See: Mandel, op. cit., p.49.

following lines, which sum up 'Āzūrī's views are often quoted by scholars:¹

Two important phenomena, of the same nature, but opposed, which have still not drawn anyone's attention, are emerging at this moment in Asiatic Turkey. They are the awakening of the Arab nation and the latent effort of the Jews to reconstitute on a very large scale the ancient kingdom of Israel. Both those movements are destined to fight each other continually until one of them wins. The fate of the entire world will depend on the final result of this struggle between these two people representing two contrary principles.²

Another active figure opposing Zionism in Palestine, up to 1914, was Najīb Naṣṣār (1862-1948). Naṣṣār used his newspaper al-Karmil* as a forum for attacking the Zionists and warning the Arabs against selling land to the Jews.³

Moreover, Naṣṣār attacked some Arab intellectuals of the time for their attitude towards the Zionist threat to Palestine. Among those thus attacked was Shiblī Shumayyil (1860-1917), who, in a number of articles, criticised anti-Zionist writings because of their emotional assaults on Zionism and their failure to find a constructive solution for the Arabs. In one of those articles published in

¹ See Albert Hourani, Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, p.279; also Mandel, op. cit., p.52.

² As translated by A. Hourani, op. cit., p.279.

³ Khayriyya Qāsimiyya, "Najīb Naṣṣār fī jarīdatih al-Karmil", Shu'ūn filastīniyya, July, 1973, pp.101-124.

* Al-Karmil was founded by N. Naṣṣār in 1908 in Haifa. It continued publication until 1933.

al-Muqattam newspaper* on May 1st, 1914, entitled " عَمِّرُوا واستعمروا فالأرض ميراث المجتهد " (Cultivate and colonize, because the land is for the industrious),¹ Shumayyil argued that the Arab complaint that they are victims of Zionist aggression was not of any effect, and would not give rise to a suitable solution, but could only "sharpen the weapon of Cain against Abel".² According to his view, the solution did not consist of accusing the Jews, but in acquiring and developing similar power, and in competing with them in constructive works.

In another article, Shumayyil again criticised the attitude of anti-Zionist writers because they did not call for more than warnings, and did not urge imitation of the Jews.³

Nasṣār replied to Shumayyil arguing that the Arabs were not weak as the latter might have thought, but that they lacked politically conscious leaders, while the Jews did not. Then he asked Shumayyil:

فلماذا لم تقتد أنت وصرف ونمر بهرتسل ونورد وغيرهم من زعماء
اليهود لتكوين رأى عام فى قومكم كما فعل أولئك فى قومهم؟
وتؤلفوا شركات ونقابات وجمعيات تعمل للعرب أفضل مما
تعمله الصهيونية لليهود 4 .

So why do you, Ṣarrūf and Nimr, not imitate

¹ Ibid., p.118.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., p.119.

* Al-Muqattam (1889-1952) was founded and edited by Ya'qūb Ṣarrūf and Fāris Nimr, both Lebanese living in Cairo.

Herzl, Nordau* and other Jewish leaders to create public consciousness among your people as those Jewish leaders did among theirs? Why do you not establish trading companies, unions and associations which work so as to be better than Zionism does for the Jews?

Nassār also launched, in a number of articles in his newspaper, a fierce attack on the outcome of the Arab Congress held in Paris in 1913, because of its ignorance of the Zionist threat to Palestine represented by immigration and land purchase.¹

The Congress was convened by a group of Arabs, all from Syria (in the broader sense) with the exception of two from Iraq,² with the aim of putting pressure on the Ottoman Government and strengthening Arab demands for reforms,³ though still stressing loyalty to the Empire.⁴

On the agenda of the Congress was an item called "migration from and to Syria". The Zionists suspected that the issue of Jewish immigration to Palestine might be presented through the delegates' speeches.⁵ Thus Shaykh

¹ 'Abd al-'Azīz Muḥammad 'Awad, "al-Shakhsiyya al-Filastīniyya wal-Istīṭān al-Yahūdī (1870-1914)", Shu'ūn Filastīniyya, no.36, August 1974, p.79.

² Albert Hourani, op. cit., p.283.

³ Ibid.

⁴ For more details about the Congress and its decisions, see: Nicola N. Ziadeh, "Recent Arabic Literature on Arabism", The Middle East Journal / The Middle East Institute-Washington 7, vol.VI, 1952, pp.468-473.

⁵ Mandel, op. cit., p.160.

* Max Nordau(1849-1923) co-founder of the Zionist Organization, met Herzl for the first time in 1892.

Aḥmad Ṭabbāra who was to make the main speech about immigration, avoided all direct references to Jewish immigration to Palestine.¹ But, three weeks later, a declaration was made by the Chairman of the Congress 'Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Zahrāwī,* and published in a French journal, in which he spoke of the Jews, considering them "Syrian emigrants like the Syrian Christians" who were living in America or elsewhere. In that declaration he also asked the Jews "in the whole world" to give the Arabs their support for their cause with Turkey.²

All previous quotations show that the subject of Zionism and its danger to Palestine, had been much discussed by many Arab intellectuals during the years preceding World War I. Such being the case, one would expect this subject to be voiced loudly in the poetry during that period, since Arab poetry has been all along its history "the record of the Arabs", as has been said often. But, as research has revealed, Arab poets at that stage of the conflict were preoccupied with another issue, namely, the Arab-Turkish tension, which, as many know well, became a prominent issue from the second half of the nineteenth century, and reflected itself clearly in the literature of that period.

Ibrāhīm al-Yāzījī's (1847-1906) poems, in this regard, are well known and quoted by many, especially the verses in

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid., p.162.

* 'Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Zahrāwī (1871-1916), an active Syrian politician reformer, was born in Homs. He was elected to the Ottoman Parliament after the Coup d'état of 1908. On May 6, 1916, he was executed with others by Jamāl Pasha.

which he says:

تنبّهوا واستفيقوا أيها العرب فقد طغى الخطب حتى غاصت الركب
... ..

أقداركم في عيون الترك نازلة وحققكم بين أيدي الترك مغتصب¹

Arise, you Arabs, and awake. The calamity
is in full flood, and covers your knees.
The Turks are looking at you contemptuously,
usurping your rights.

Or the other poem which caused enormous annoyance to
the Turkish authorities in Syria when it was published
anonymously in a Syrian paper,² in which he says:

فالترك قوم لا يفوز لديهم إلا المشاكس
... ..

كم تأملون صلاحهم ولهم فساد الطبع سائس³

Only the quarrelsome can win against the
Turks. How often you think good of them,
though they are vicious in their hearts.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the tension
became greater. Then came the Young Turk Revolution in
1908, and the deposition of 'Abd al-Hamīd in 1909. These
two events, in particular, gained the close attention of
the Arab poet of the time. In an article published in
al-Machriq,⁴ Liwīs Shīkhū al-Yasū'ī (1859-1927), item-
ized, with quotations, about seventy poems dealing
with those events, composed by more than fifty poets

¹ Anīs al-Khūrī al-Maqdisī, al-Ittijāhāt al-Adabiyya
fil 'Ālam al-'Arabī al-Hadīth, p.108.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Vol.12, 1909, pp.81-96 and pp.641-664.

from (Greater) Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Tunis and al-Mahjar.¹

Among the many poets who were deeply moved by the deposition of 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, was Fāris al-Khūrī (1877-1962). Rejoicing the event he says:

الله أكبر فالظلام قد طموا لأئى منقلب يفضي الأئى ظلموا
لقد هوى اليوم صرح الظلم وانتفضت أركانه وتولت أهلها النقم²

God is almighty! now the oppressors know
to what destiny they are heading.
Today, the palace of oppression has fallen
down, its bases are shattered, and its
people have been afflicted by curses.

Then he addresses the deposed Sultan reminding him of
the misery and sufferings of the Arabs during his reign:

حملتنا ما تنوء الراسيات به كيف الصنيع وأنت الخصم والحكم
فكم شكونا ولم تسمع شكائتنا وكم دعونا وحظ الدعوة الصمم
ماذا فعلت بأحرار البلاد وما جنوا على الدين والدنيا وما اجترموا
خلفية الله قد خالفت ما أمرت به الشريعة والتنزيل والكلم

You burdened us with what mountains could
not bear; yet we could do nothing while
you were both the adversary and the

¹ In his prefatory remarks to the article Liwīs Shīkhū says: "Were all the poetry written on these events gathered together, it would form volumes". The same phrase came also in al-Muqtataf, vol.33, 1908, p.905.

Anīs al-Khūrī al-Maqdisī also confirms this fact saying:

"ولا نبالغ اذا قلنا انه ما من حدث حرك الاقلام الحرية كهذا ، فقولنا
قل من شهد بعينه تلك الحال وعرف باختباره شعور الناس وشاركهم
فى غبطتهم العامة وآمالهم الواسعة ."

(See, al-Ittijāhāt al-Adabiyya ..., p.45.)

² Sāmī al-Kayyālī, al-Adab wal-Qawmiyya fī Sūriyya, p.113.

arbitrator. How often have we complained without you hearing us. How often have we appealed while you turn a deaf ear to us. Look back to what you did to free men who had committed no crime against religion or humanity.
O Caliph! You have disobeyed what the Holy Law and the Qur'ān call for.

When the Arabs' hopes for major reforms concerning their status within the Ottoman State were frustrated by the policy of the Union and Progress Committee which gained full power after deposing Sultan 'Abd al-Hamīd and installing his brother Muḥammad Rashād (1909-1918) in his place, Arab poets focussed much of their attention on this precise point. Sulaymān al-Tājī al-Fārūqī (1882-1958) for example, addresses the new Sultan reminding him of the unforgettable deeds of the Arabs on behalf of the Ottoman Empire, and pointing out that the Constitution which the Arabs had been waiting for failed to comply with any of their demands:

سيوف ملكك والأقلام والكتب	الحرب لا شقيت في عهدك الحرب
لكن إذا مسهم ضيم النفوس أبوا	هم الجبال فما حملتهم حملوا
بل أي فضل أتى لم يحو العرب	وكل فضل أتى فالعرب مصدره
بفارغ الصبر ذاك اليوم نرتقب	كنا نحلل بالدستور أنفسنا
¹ ولا استجيب لنا في مطلب طلب	حتى إذا جاء لم يحدث لنا حدثا

May the Arabs, who are the swords, the pens and the records of your rule not be oppressed in your reign!
They are as tolerant as mountains in bearing your burdens, but they refuse to be humiliated!
All the virtues are due to the Arabs; hardly is there a virtue which is not found among them!

¹ 'Abd al-Rahmān Yāghī, Ḥayāt al-Adab al-Filastīnī al-Ḥadīth, p.173.

We were impatiently awaiting the day when the constitution would be restored, expecting much of it.

But when that day came, nothing concerning us was changed, nor have any of our demands been fulfilled.

Apart from poetry, the events of 1908-1909 in Turkey became the subject of three Arabic novels, all by Lebanese writers:

- 1- **حسنا سالونيك** (The Beautiful Girl of Salonica)(1909) by Labība Mikhā'il Ṣawāyā (1876-1916). The writer prefaced her novel with an acknowledgement to the members of the Union and Progress Committee, who made the Revolution.¹
- 2- **الانقلاب العثماني** (The Ottoman Coup D'état)(1911) by Jūrjī Zaydān (1861-1914).²
- 3- **بين عرشين** (Between Two Thrones) by Farīda 'Aṭīyya (1867-1918), based on the circumstances that led up to the Revolution.³

Thus, up to the end of the First World War, Turco-Arab relations were given priority in literary writings, to the extent that other subjects such as the threat to Palestine was completely ignored. This had been noted also by another writer, Sāmī al-Kayyālī in his book al-Adab wal-Qawmiyya fī Sūriyya.⁴

Nevertheless, the Arab poets' neglect of Palestine at that stage does not apply equally to Palestinian poets, some of whom expressed their fear and anxiety on the future of

¹ Muḥammad Yūsuf Najm, al-Qiṣṣa fil-Adab al-'Arabī al-Hadīth, p.173.

² Ibid., p.204.

³ Ibid., p.206.

⁴ P.103.

their country in a number of poems.

As far as we know, Muḥammad Is'āf al-Nashāshībī (1885-1948) was the first poet to write a poem dealing with the Zionist threat to Palestine. The poem, entitled فلسطين والاستعمار الجديد (Palestine and the New Colonization) appeared in al-Nafā'is al-'Aṣriyya* in October 1910.¹ It expresses the Palestinian Arabs' fears, aroused by widespread land purchases by the Jews. In this poem, al-Nashāshībī shows overwhelming pessimism about the future of Palestine, since he feels that the country was about to be completely bought by the Jews. The following selected verses illustrate how pessimistic the poet was:

يا فتاة الحيّ جدى بالدماء	بدل الدمع اذا رُمّت البكاء
فلقد ولّت فلسطين ولم	يبق يا أخت العلى غير دماء
سوف تشكين وتبكين دما	يوم لا يجدى ولا يغني البكاء
ان الاستعمار قد جاز المدى	دون أن يعده عن سير عدا
إن هذا الداء قد أمسى عياء	فتلافوه سريعا بالصداء
إنها أوطانكم فاستيقظوا	لا تبيعوها لقوم دخلاء ²

O young woman of our homeland! Shed blood instead of tears if you want to cry.
Sister of exaltedness! Palestine is lost; nothing but blood is left now.
You will suffer and weep with blood, when weeping tears becomes of no avail.

¹ 'Abd al-Rahmān Yāghī, op. cit., p.167.

² Ibid.

* Al-Nafā'is al-'Aṣriyya: a monthly, literary, humorous and historical journal, founded and edited by Khalīl Baydas in 1909. It was published in Haifa until 1911, then in Jerusalem until the outbreak of the First World War. During the War it ceased publication, then appeared from 1919 to 1924.

Restrain your rancour, people! give up
 your hatred and enmity!
 The colonization (of Palestine) has gone
 too far with none to stand out against it.
 This disease has become grave. You should
 overcome it with (real) remedies.
 Awake! It is your homeland. Do not let
 it be sold to the strangers!

The kind of fears expressed by al-Nashāshībī were similarly felt by other writers, as we pointed out before, but al-Nashāshībī pictures the danger more expressively when he says that "Palestine is lost" and "nothing but blood is left", or when he predicts that the Palestinian Arabs would "suffer and weep with blood".

Seeing such pessimism in a poem written at that stage of the conflict, one would think that Palestine, by that date, had been already acquired by the Jews. But, in order to understand the motives behind the poet's extreme anxiety and fear, we may presume that the poem has a close connection with a famous land-selling bargain which had taken place in the same month (October 1910).

In that month, the lands of two villages, Fūla and 'Affūla,* totalling "over ten thousand dunams"¹ were sold to the Jews by Ilyās Sursuq, a feudal lord from Beirut. That deal raised an enormous storm among the Arabs, not only in Palestine, but also in Beirut and Damascus, as well as in the Turkish press to some extent.² The storm arose during the course of negotiations and after their

¹ Mandel, op. cit., p.103.

² Ibid.

* Two villages between Nazareth and Jinīn .

completion because the land of the two villages was "the best agricultural land in Palestine". In addition to that, it contained a historical fortress founded by Saladin, the Arab hero famous for his victories against the Crusaders. Shukrī al-‘Asalī,* qā'immaqām** of Nazareth at that time did all in his power to prevent the sale, but failed.¹

Neville J. Mandel, in his book The Arabs and Zionism Before World War I, discusses this deal in detail.² And in order to illustrate the long-continued storm raised then by the deal, he photocopied a caricature printed on April 7, 1911, in a Beirut weekly magazine called al-Himāra (the She-Ass). The caricature shows Saladin threatening a Jew who is pouring gold into the palm of "either an Ottoman official or an Arab landowner". Under the caricature the following short dialogue is written in Arabic and Turkish.

ص[صلاح الدين]: ابعد عن هذه القلعة يا خداع والّا سلطت
عليك جنود أحفادی ، ولا تقرب قلعة
فتحتها بدماء المسلمين .

¹ Khayriyya Qāsimiyya, "Najīb Naṣṣār fī Jarīdatih al-Karmil", Shu'ūn Filasṭīniyya, July 1973, p.105.

² See pp.90-92, 103, 106.

* Shukrī al-‘Asalī (1868-1916), a Syrian politician and an active figure in the Arab national movement at the beginning of the century. He was elected to the Ottoman Parliament in 1911. During his campaign in the elections, his slogan was "I will fight Zionism to the last drop of my blood". He was executed by Jamāl Pasha in 1916. See Rashīd Khālīdī, "al-Qawmiyya al-‘Arabiyya fī Sūriyya", Majallat al-Fikr al-‘Arabī, July, 1978, p.42.

** Qā'immaqām: governor of a qaḍā' in the vilayet organization.

خ [الخواجة]: وأنا ماذا يهمني طالما في جيبي البسابورط
 وورائي خمسة عشر مليوناً من الليرات أشبع بها بطن
 أعيان البلاد الجائعة وأداوى بها معدة كبار
 المأورين من الجرب • فكل يوم لي " فولة " •

S. [Saladin]: Keep away from this fortress,
 you swindler; otherwise I shall set my
 descendents' soldiers upon you; and do not
 even come near a fortress I have conquered
 with the blood of Muslims.

Kh. [al-Khawāja]: What does that matter to
 me as long as I have my (foreign) passport,
 with fifteen million pounds behind me. with
 which I can satisfy the hungry bellies of
 the notables of the country, and with which
 I can cure the itch of the high officials'
 stomachs? Every day I'll have a "Fūla".

Al-Nashāshībī's poem could accordingly be viewed as
 another example of the intense bitterness caused by the
 selling of the Fūla and 'Affūla land, although the
 actual names are not mentioned in the poem.

Another Palestinian poet, Sulaymān al-Tājī al-Fārūqī,
 mentioned before, wrote a Mukhammas* in which he shows a
 remarkable awareness of the Zionist threat to Palestine.
 The poem was written in 1912 after the Tenth Zionist Con-
 gress held in Basle that year. Al-Fārūqī's criticism of
 his countrymen is sharp and filled with anger, he maintaining
 they were turning a blind eye to this vital danger:

غَرَّهم صبرنا عليهم زمانا حاولوا سلبنا البلاد امتهانا
 فاذا لم نمت ولم نتفان واذا لم نقم لهم برهاننا
 سلبونا والله تلك البقية

* Mukhammas: a five-line stanza of different rhyme schemes
 of which the aaaa b form is the most frequent.

نمت يا شعب واستطبت المناما ورضيت الحياة ذلاً وداما
 رحم الله في التراب عظاما عشن ما عشن وارتحلن كراما
 أترأها هانت على الذرية
 يا فلسطين طال هذا المطال ويح قومي أليس فيهم رجال
 طال ظلما أعداؤنا واستطالوا ورأونا نغضى الجفون فصالوا
 واستهانوا بنا وبالوطنية
 يا فلسطين عقق الأبناء يا فلسطين ذم فيك البقاء
 أترى الأرض أعقت والسما أم لماذا لا تنبت العظماء
 ربّ رحماك بالبلاد الشقية

Misled by our patience with them for some time, they disdainfully tried to steal our country. And so, if we do not prove to them our willingness to die (for our land), I swear they will snatch what is left from our hands.

People! You have been enjoying your sleep, satisfied with humility and a disgraceful life. May God have mercy upon the dead who lived and died honourably.

I wonder if the dead have ceased to be worthy in the eyes of their descendents!

O Palestine! This situation has lasted too long.

Woe unto my people, are there no more men among them?

Our enemies have gone too far in their iniquity. Thus, when they found us careless they became more aggressive, looking down upon us and our patriotism.

Palestine! Your children have been unfaithful to you. Living in you has become blameworthy. I wonder, have Heaven and Earth become sterile? If not so, why do they not give birth to great men?

O God! Have mercy upon the distressed land.

A second poem by al-Fārūqī on this subject appeared in the Filastīn newspaper in November 1913.² As in the

¹ Ya'qūb al-'Udāt, al-Adīb, May, 1966, p.26.

² Mandel, op. cit., p.175.

first one, he shows full awareness of the danger facing his country. The poet starts his poem with a stereotyped description of the Jews' love of money, asking them to stop dreaming of possessing Palestine:

Jews, sons of clinking gold! stop your deceit!
 We shall not be cheated into bartering away
 our country.
 Shall we hand it over, meekly,
 While we still have spirit left?
 Shall we cripple ourselves? 1

Another stereotyped feature of the Jews -as depicted by Arab writers- which portrays the Jews as "the weakest and the least of all peoples", is not forgotten by al-Fārūqī:

The Jews, the weakest of all peoples and the
 least of them, are haggling with us for our
 land. 2

The poet admits the Jews' riches might help them in reaching their aims:

We know what they want, and they have the money,
 all of it. 3

Then he turns to the masters and rulers, by whom he obviously means the Turkish authorities who could have done a lot to protect Palestine, but who did not stand firm to prevent Jewish immigration and land purchases:

¹ Because we could not obtain the Arabic text of the poem, we are relying here on Mandel's translation of the poem. Ibid., pp.175-176.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

Masters, rulers, what is wrong with you?
 What ails you?
 It is time to awake, to be aware.
 Away with this heedlessness, there is
 no more time for patience.

While you said nothing our enemies were
 encouraged.
 Now you must speak, to put them to flight
 and us to ease.
 The danger is clear. Can no one resist it?
 Is there not an eye left to shed a tear
 for our country? ¹

The poet develops a sharply-worded theme when
 addressing the rulers, reminding them that they are obliged
 to carry out their duties to the nation as long as they
 hold power:

Send the rulers a message for me, to alarm and
 dismay the bravest of hearts:
 If they do not do their duty as leaders, why
 do they hold power, and why do they sit in
 high places? ²

Palestine, being a Muslim country, has a right to the
 protection of the Caliph of the Muslims against danger;
 the poet, therefore, ends his poem by addressing the Turkish
 Caliph, urging him to defend the "blessed land", so that
 the faithful will not lie wounded:

And you, O Caliph! guardian of the faithful,
 have mercy on us, your shield.
 Ours is a land whose frontiers God has blessed.
 We are people rejoicing in the merit of
 religions.
 We are worthy of the mercy you can show.
 Without it the faithful will lie wounded and
 afflicted in their holy places.

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

Bearer of the crown! does it please you that we should witness our country being bought from us, wrenched from us? ¹

We may conclude, then, that Zionist aims and activities in Palestine up to this point in time were discussed by many Arab writers of the time, especially in periodicals and newspapers.

Some of those writings were of considerable value when interpreting the newly-born conflict as a struggle between the Zionist Movement and the 'awakening Arab nation', and when predicting that the conflict would last until one of them won, (i.e. Najīb 'Azūrī).²

The importance of those writings lies, in the first place, in their expression of Arab opinion about the Zionist threat in its first stages, before the Zionist Movement attained the Balfour Declaration in 1917.

If this expression of literary concern at this stage was not up to the extent of the danger itself, this was due, in the first place, to the writers' preoccupation with the growing tension between the Arabs and the Turks, which lasted until the end of the First World War.

¹ Ibid.

² See p.12.

CHAPTER II

The Place and the Poetry

(1) Political Events and Historical
Milestones, 1917-1948.

By the outbreak of the First World War, the tension between Arabs and Turks was shaping itself into serious conflict, and the few years between 1909 and 1914 witnessed the emergence of a number of Arab societies, some of which both secret and very active, such as: al-Qaṭṭāniyya and al-Jam'iyya al-'Arabiyya al-Fatāh.¹ The conflict culminated in the Arab Revolt against Turkey which broke out on June 10, 1916, led by Sharīf Ḥusayn b. 'Alī (1856-1931) who was encouraged by a British promise of Arab independence, after a long correspondence between him and Sir Henry MacMahon, the British High Commissioner in Egypt.² The area that this independence would cover was a main concern of the Sharīf. In a letter sent to Sir Henry MacMahon, dated July 14, 1915, the area, he said, should be bounded:

On the north by Mersina and Adana up to the 37° of latitude, ... on the east by the borders of Persia up to the Gulf of Basra; on the south by the Indian Ocean, with the exception of the position of Aden to remain as it is; on the

¹ Mahmud al-Samra, The Impact of Western Civilization and Christian Missionaries on Syrian Writers (1860-1918), p.280.

² The correspondence took place between July 1915 and March 1916. See The Royal Institute of International Affairs, Great Britain and Palestine (1915-1945), p.4.

West by the Red Sea, the Mediterranean Sea
up to Mersina. 1

In Sir Henry's reply to that letter, the following
passage is found:

The two districts of Mersina and Alexandretta
and portions of Syria lying to the West of
the districts of Damascus, Homs, Hama and
Aleppo cannot be said to be purely Arab and
should be excluded from the limits demanded.
... Subject to the above modifications,
Great Britain is prepared to recognize and
support the independence of the Arabs in all
the regions within the limits demanded by the
Sharif of Mecca. 2

This definition in Sir Henry's letter was regarded
by the Arabs as their "Magna Carta"; they argued that
Palestine was clearly included in the area which would have
independence, since Damascus was the southernmost point
mentioned in Sir Henry's letter; but the British Government
have always contended that Palestine was from the first
excluded.³

¹ Ibid., p.5.

² Ibid.

³ During the Palestine Conference, held in London in February
-March 1939, the Committee of British and Arab
representatives, which was set up to consider the MacMahon
Correspondence, failed to reach agreement upon the question
of its interpretation. The British representatives informed
the Arabs that Great Britain had always regarded the phrase
"portions of Syria lying to the west of the districts of
Damascus, Homs, Hama and Aleppo" as embracing all that
portion of Syria (including Palestine) lying to the west
of the administrative area known as the Vilayet of Syria.
For more details about these two different views see:
Ibid., pp.5-6.

Simultaneously with the Husayn-MacMahon Correspondence, Great Britain and France were involved in secret negotiations through their Foreign Ministers, Sir Mark Sykes and Monsieur Georges Picot. According to the agreement, known as the Sykes-Picot Agreement, reached by the two countries in May 1916,¹ the area between the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf was divided into five distinct parts: "part was to be under British control, part under French, part to be a British sphere of influence, and part of French sphere of influence, and Palestine would fall into a special category".²

The revelation of the Sykes-Picot Agreement by the Soviet Government, after the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, brought about a high tension in the Arab forces who were fighting the Turks. Faysal (later King: 1921-1933), the Sharīf's son, telegraphed his father saying that he could not continue the war in such circumstances, Sharīf Husayn cabled to London; after receiving a reassuring message from there, he telegraphed to his son in Syria.³

As for Palestine, the most important event that affected its future took place in 1917, when, on November 2, Great Britain issued the famous Declaration which came in a form of a letter, sent by Arthur Balfour, the British Foreign Secretary, to Lord Rothschild. The letter reads as follows:

¹ Ibid., p.7.

² Ibid.

³ Mrs. Steuart Erskine, Palestine of the Arabs, p.34.

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet.

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

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation. 1

It is not our aim here to seek out the underlying factors which made Britain issue the Declaration, but the suggestion was afterwards made that the Declaration was formed to "induce the rich American Jews to use their influence to make the United States Government enter the war".²

From 1917, when General Allenby occupied Palestine,³ to 1920, the country was under a British Military regime. But after Great Britain was entrusted by the Supreme Council of the Allied Powers, held at San Remo in April 1920, to be the Mandatory Power on Palestine,⁴ a civil administration was established there on July 1, 1920, with

¹ Leonard Stein, The Balfour Declaration, p.549.

² The Royal Institution ..., Great Britain and Palestine, p.9.

³ General Allenby entered Jerusalem on December 11, 1917.

⁴ Harry Charles Luke and Edward K-R, The Handbook of Palestine and Transjordan, p.30.

an English Jew, Sir Herbert Samuel, as the High Commissioner.

Three months before the establishment of the Civil Administration, (i.e. in March 1920) Syrian and Palestinian leaders held a congress in Damascus and declared King Faysal King of Syria (including Palestine). The Congress also refused to accept the Balfour Declaration, Jewish immigration or the creation of a Jewish Commonwealth, or the separation of Palestine or Lebanon from Syria.¹ Britain and France on their part refused to accept the decisions of the Congress, and Faysal was expelled from Syria by the French troops who entered Damascus on July 25, 1920. Great Britain installed him as King of Iraq, which like Palestine came under the British Mandate. On the other hand, Husayn's second son the Amīr 'Abdullah (later King: 1946-1951) was given Transjordan by Britain, on condition that he abandon any campaign against the French in Syria.²

The final draft of the Mandate for Palestine was confirmed by the League of Nations Council on July 22, 1922.³ The Palestinian Arabs, finding themselves under a mandate committed to a declaration with obligations of facilitating the country to be the "Jewish National Home", opposed the Mandate and its policy throughout its whole period; their demands from the beginning, concentrated on three main issues:

¹ Albert Hourani, Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, p.291.

² Joseph Jermiah Zasloff, Great Britain and Palestine, p.8.

³ The Royal Institute ..., Great Britain and Palestine, p.14.

- 1- cessation of Jewish immigration.
- 2- prohibition of the transfer of Arab lands to Jews.
- 3- establishment of a democratic government, in which the Arabs would have a majority share according to their numerical superiority.¹

Their opposition was expressed through different means: appeals, arguments, demonstrations, riots, strikes and revolt. In 1920 for instance, riots took place in Jerusalem on Eastern Sunday, where the Jewish quarter of the city was attacked by Arabs.² Again in May 1921, disturbances spread in Jaffa and its suburbs; this time martial law was declared, and Jewish immigration stopped for a short period.³

The more serious disturbances, known as the Burāq (the Wailing Wall) clashes, took place all over the country in 1929. This Wall represents Holy Ground for Muslims and Jews alike. The Jews pray on one side because it formed part of the Western Wall of the Temple; the Arabs venerate it because it is part of the Haram al-Sharīf, where al-Burāq, the winged steed of the Prophet, was tethered on the night of al-Isrā' wal-Mi'rāj. Under Turkish rule, the Jews had established a certain limited right of access. The Jews wanted to extend ~~the extent of~~ this limited privilege, and began bringing screens and seats to be placed there. The Arabs complained, and their

¹ Sami Hadawi, Palestine in Focus, p.31.

² The Royal Institute ..., op. cit., p.38.

³ Ibid., p.39.

complaints caused the Palestine Government to remove all Jewish innovations on the Day of Atonement in 1928. This act engendered high feeling among the Jews in Palestine. A year later, on August 15th, 1929, a Jewish demonstration, organized by enthusiasts from Tel-Aviv, was held at the Wailing Wall. On the next day, Arab demonstrators did likewise. Disturbances subsequently took place all over the country in which many Arabs and Jews were killed. The number of casualties on both sides shows how serious the clashes were.¹

During the subsequent proceedings before the Court of Final Instance, twenty-six death sentences were confirmed, twenty-five on Arabs, and one upon a Jew. All but three of these sentences - all on Arabs - were commuted to terms of imprisonment.²

After the al-Burāq events, Arabs outside Palestine became more sympathetic to and enthusiastic for the cause of the Palestinian Arabs. This wide-spread sympathy and enthusiasm was reflected in the consciousness of Arab poets in such a manner that Palestine became a familiar theme in their poetry, as will be discussed in chapter III.

By 1933, Palestinian opposition had developed into clashes with the government as well as Jews. That was the first time the Palestinians had clashed with the Mandate

¹ On the Jewish side, 133 were killed and six colonies completely destroyed; on the Arab side, 116 were killed. See Ibid., p.45.

² For more details of the Wailing Wall events see Mrs. Steuart Erskine, Palestine of the Arabs, pp.124-134.

forces.¹

The period between 1936 and 1939 witnessed serious opposition to the Mandate authorities, when a revolt starting with a six-month general strike spread all over the country. Additional British troops arrived from Egypt and Malta, but they could not restore order. The campaign of violence continued for three years, until the outbreak of World War II. In that revolt, according to Arab sources, the number of casualties among the Palestinians was 5,032 killed and 14,760 wounded.²

However, during the years of the Second World War, the country was on the whole quiet. The League of Arab States were founded in March 1945, and Palestine then became the main concern of that institution.³

The final steps which determined the future of Palestine came with Britain's intention to end her Mandate over the country. On April 2, 1947, Britain requested the Secretary General of the United Nations to include the question of Palestine among the issues to be discussed by the General Assembly at its next regular session.⁴ A special Committee set up by the United Nations arrived in Palestine, and stated that the only way to solve the problem was to partition the country. The plan was put to the vote

¹ Ibid., p.85.

² See Abd al-Wahhab al-Kayyali, Palestine: A Modern History, p.231. Some Israeli sources, however, put the number at 2,287 killed and 1,477 wounded. See Israel Cohen, The Zionist Movement, p.216.

³ Anis Sayegh, Palestine and Arab Nationalism, p.31.

⁴ Sami Hadawi, op. cit., p.39.

in the United Nations, and on November 29, 1947, it was accepted by 33 states to 13.¹

The Arabs refused the partition plan and disorders broke out in the country. When Britain declared that she would withdraw from the country by May 15, 1948, the Secretary-General of the Arab League cabled his counterpart in the United Nations on 14 May 1948 that the Arab States were being compelled to intervene to restore peace and security and to establish law and order in Palestine.² Thus Arab armies from Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt and Iraq, and volunteers from Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Sudan and Libya,³ took part in the fighting against the Jews.

On 22 May, 1948, the Security Council of the United Nations adopted a resolution calling for a cease-fire. On July 9, 1948, fighting was resumed and a Second Cease-fire was accepted on July 18. And in 1949, Armistice Agreements were signed between Israel on the one hand and Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria, on the other.⁴

As a result of these agreements, Israel took 77.40 per cent of the total area of Palestine, instead of the 56.47 per cent allotted to the Jewish State by the United Nations according to the 1947 plan.⁵

By the time the last Armistice Agreement had been

¹ Pamela Ferguson, The Palestine Problem, p.54.

² Sami Hadawi, op. cit., p.49.

³ Anis Sayegh, op. cit., p.35.

⁴ Sami Hadawi, op. cit., p.49.

⁵ 8,000 square miles out of a total of 10,435 square miles came under Israel's control. See Ibid., p.62.

signed, the total number of Palestinian refugees who were expelled to neighbouring Arab countries was about 750,000.¹ On the other hand, about 160,000 Arabs remained in Israel, representing about 13.6% of total population of Israel.²

(2) Palestinian Poetry (1917-1948).

The poetry written by the Palestinian poets, about the events, sufferings, aspirations, etc., which their country passed through, since going from the "Turkish frying pan" into the "Mandate fire" and from then till the creation of the Jewish State in 1948, is characterized by the following three features in the main:

Firstly, those poets had been living in the country concerned and had witnessed the threat in close-up, and their poetry therefore expressed the emotions, feelings and reactions of the Palestinian Arabs who were directly affected by these events.

Secondly, a great deal of their poetry concentrated on particular themes, such as the sale of land to the Jews and the Palestinian leadership of the time, which were not voiced in the poetry of Arab poets living in neighbouring Arab countries.

Thirdly, as one part of their role was to widen the struggle against the Mandate and the Zionists inside Palestine, so the other part of that role was to draw the attention of the Arabs outside Palestine to the vital

¹ Ibid., p.62.

² Sabri Jiryis, The Arabs in Israel, (Table 1) p.289.

danger threatening the future of an Arab land which had a special religious importance for them.

In this chapter, the poetry written during that period will be discussed according to its main themes. The themes are classified as follows: the image of Great Britain, the Balfour Declaration, elegies on dead fighters, land-sales, criticism of the traditional Palestinian leadership, and finally the prediction of the "disaster".

The Image of Great Britain.

The British Army which captured Palestine from the Turks received much praise from many Palestinian poets of the time. Great Britain as a state was also described in those poems as a faithful ally to the Arabs, which had rescued them from Turkish oppression.

When celebrations marking the first anniversary of the occupation of Palestine by British troops took place in the country, on December 24, 1918, a reception was held in Government House in Jerusalem, at which several speeches and poems were delivered.¹ Among which was a poem by Shaykh 'Alī al-Rīmāwī (1860-1919),² in which he described the Turkish period as a dark one. The victory of the British army, as he put it, brought happiness to the inhabitants, because it ended the darkness, and replaced oppression by justice:

¹ Palestine News (Weekly newspaper), no.38, Thursday, 26-12-1918.

² 'Alī al-Rīmāwī, born and died in Bayt Rīmā (a village near Ramallah), graduated from al-Azhar, See al-Adīb, April, 1966, p.16.

وحلّ محلّ الظلم عدلٌ مُحَبَّبٌ وقد لاح من بعد الظلام لنا فجر
فكلّ ضمير بالهناء متّسع وكلّ يراع فى مهارقه حُرّ

A welcomed

Justice has superseded oppression, and after
the dark we have begun to see the dawn.
Thus every heart is bathed in pleasure, and
every pen has freedom to write.

Then he described Great Britain as the "defender of
the oppressed", attributing the victory she gained in the
war to this role. Britain also, the poet went on, was
known (to the Muslims) to be favourable and respectful
towards Islam:

عهدناك للمظلوم أعظم ناصر فمن أجل هذا جاءك الفوز والنصر
عهدناك للإسلام أكرم دولة عهدناك والعمران دينك والبر

You, as we know, have
been a great defender of the oppressed.
That is why you gained the victory. You,
as we know, have a high opinion of Islam.¹
You worship prosperity and beneficence.²

At the same reception, the vicar Ibrāhīm Bāz al-Haddād
recited a poem expressing the general feelings of happiness
which had overwhelmed the country after its getting rid of

¹ Palestine News, no.38.

² It is probable that with regard to this idea, al-Rīmāwī
was copying Aḥmad Shawqī (later 'The Prince of Poets')
when the latter attributed this characteristic of the
British, in a poem entitled "Shakespeare", in which he
says:

يستصرخون ويرجى فضل نجدتهم كأنهم عرب فى الدهر عرّاء
وكان ودهم الصافي ونصرتهم للمسلمين وراعيهم كما شاءوا

the Turks, who had ruined the Arab homeland, encouraged disunity and enmity, and tried to Turkify the Arabs. Great Britain, the poet believed, had rescued the country; therefore, her presence was welcomed by the Palestinians:

وفخر لا يزول مع الزمان	فلبطانيا العظمى سلام
زمان ما له في العمر ثمان	ويوم جيوشها وصلت إلينا
وما إلا أخبار عنه كالعيان ¹	سرور عم أهل القدس طرا

May Great Britain enjoy everlasting peace and glory. The day in which her forces reached us was an incomparable day. Yet words fail to describe the joy that pervaded Jerusalem then.

Stressing the oppression practiced by the Turks on the Arabs and comparing it with the new auspicious rule are themes of other poems too. Iskander al-Khūrī al-Baytjālī (1890-1973) for instance, in a poem written in 1918, portrays Palestine during the Ottoman period as a thin, weak girl. But, after the British Occupation, the girl became full of youthful energy and activity:

وتغلغل في الخاصرة	سرت القوى في جسمها
كانت فتاة ضامرة	ملئت حياة بعد ما
بالأمس كانت حائرة	هذي فلسطين التي
للترك كانت صاغرة	هذي البلاد كما ترى
عهد الأعارب ناضرة ²	ذبلت وقد كانت على

Strength has spread through her body and penetrated deeply into her bosom. She was revived after being weak and thin. This is Palestine, who until recently was at a loss and humiliated by the Turks. She had become languid, while she was bright at the time of the Arabs.

¹ Palestine News, no.38.

² Palestine News, no.12, 27-6-1918.

Pinning great hopes on the British, the poet calls on Palestine to "forget the bitter past" after being rescued by those who came from "the unconquerable country"

[England].¹

'Alī al-Rīmāwī, again, recited a poem during the annual festivals of al-Nabī Mūsā (the Prophet Moses), in which he expressed high optimism for the future of Palestine. He also praised Colonel Storrs,² saying:

واسلم ودم يا حليف الحرب ذا فرح ولم نزل منك في صفو واقبال³

May you, ally of the Arabs, be safe and sound,
with a joyful life.
May we, by your aid, always live at ease and
in prosperity.

Another poem was composed by the same poet, in 1918, on the occasion of King George V's birthday. The poem reminds the reader of the traditional eulogistic poems in Arabic, where the person praised was commonly likened to the sun, the moon, the rain, etc.

King George, in this poem, was the "King of all mankind" (ملك الأنعام). The poet was not sure whether King George was "a king or an angel". Not only that, but he went on to say:

ما الناس إلا ما حيت برحب فضلك أو ظباك

¹ ايه فلسطين اطربي وانسي العصور الغابرة
ها قد أتاك النمقذون من البلاد القاهرة

² Colonel Ronald Storrs, the British Military Governor of Jerusalem during the Military Administration (1917-1920).

³ Palestine News, no.5, 13-6-1918.

والأرض إلا ما ملكت بحسن عدلك أو قواك
أعطاكها الله القدير وقبل أعطاها أباك¹

People are protected by none other than your grace or sword. Territories are ruled by none other than your justice or your power. God Almighty has granted it to you, as it was granted to your father before.

As for Palestine, the poet continued, she was "enjoying King George's justice"; Jerusalem, on its part, was feeling the same pleasure as London on that occasion. In this poem al-Rīmāwī went on to say that it was not only Palestine who pinned her hopes on King George, but the Arabs as a whole:

العرب أنت رجاءها والحرب ليس لها سواك
حالفها فرضاءها فيما تشاء لها رضاك
فأعد لها تاريخها ذاك القديم فقد دعاك

For the Arabs, you are the only hope. Since you allied yourself with them, their satisfaction lies in what you please to choose for them. They call upon you to restore their glorious past.

This pleasant image of Britain did not last for long, especially after the British policy of easing the transformation of the country into a "Jewish National Home" was pursued openly.

Besides, such a friendly attitude towards Great Britain does not imply the nonexistence of unfavourable attitudes on the part of some other poets, who expressed much doubt about the British and their good will towards the Arabs in general and to Palestine in particular. For instance, when a play

¹ Ibid., no.10, 13-6-1918.

entitled فتاة عدنان وشهامة العرب (The Daughter of 'Adnān¹ and Arab Chivalry), was presented in Jerusalem by a literary Muslim group at the Rashīdiyya school club in April 1918², a big relief map of Palestine was displayed at the entrance of the club, with some verses under the map, showing clearly that clouds of doubts and fears regarding the future of the country were gathering among the Palestinians. The verses read as follows:

أرض فلسطين التي بورك
يا خير أرض الله لا تيأس
أنا سنفديك بأرواحنا
حتى ترى كالشمس في خدرها
أرض اليامين بني يعرب
ما لي عن حبك من مذهب
ونرتقي مستعصب المركب
تضيء في الشرق وفي المغرب³

Palestine, the Blessed land, is the land of Banī Ya'rub. Oh, best land of all! do not despair. You are the only love we have. We shall surmount difficulties and sacrifice our souls for your sake, until you become like the sun ^{in her retreat} giving light in East and West.

The best example on this point can be found in the several poems written by Wadī' al-Bustānī* (1888-1954),

¹ 'Adnān was believed to be the ancestor of the North Arabs.

² Palestine News, no.3, 25-4-1918.

³ Ibid.

* Wadī' al-Bustānī, a Lebanese, came to Palestine and was with the British Government until 1930, when he resigned. The poet gained Palestinian nationality and lived in Palestine until 1948, when he left for Lebanon. Al-Bustānī was an active figure in the "Palestine Arab Executive", then in the "Istiqlāl Party". As far as we know, he is the first Arab poet who published a collection of poems on Palestine. The Dīwān entitled al-Filastīniyyāt was published in 1946 in Beirut.

during the first years of the British occupation.

In the same month in which the Balfour Declaration was issued (November 1917), al-Bustānī, who was a civil assistant of Colonel Parker in the Military Administration, saw a door-plate on a door of a room in Government House in Jaffa, on which was written الجمعية اليهودية - الرئيس الملائم مكروري¹ (The Jewish Society-Lieutenant Macrory).

Having seen the door-plate, he wrote a poem in which he addresses the British saying:

فتحنا لكم صدرا مددنا لكم يدا	واني لأخشى أن تدبروا لنا ظهرا
أرى هوة تزداد عمقا سحيقة	على عدوة أنتم ونحن على الأخرى
أرى الوطن القومي يعلو بناؤه	أرى غرفة فى القصر تحجبه قصرا ²

We opened our hearts to you, extended our hands;
but I suspect that you may turn your back on us.
I perceive an increasingly widening gulf
separating us, you being on one bank and we on
the other.
In a room in this "Government House" I see
concealed a rising palace of the "National
Home".

Again Wadī' al-Bustānī sums up his suspicions of British policy in a poem entitled الخلافة العربية (The Arabian Caliphate)(1918). He also compares the favourable policy of Britain towards the Jews against the deceptive one towards the Arabs:

وقد قامت سقيفتهم تعلّى	ورايتم على سطح السقيفة
وقمنا حولها وناسؤال	تردده عقيدتنا الضعيفة
أقصراً فى الهوا أم بيت شعر	ستبني للشريف يد الحليفة ³

¹ Al-Filastīniyyāt, p.82.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., p.86.

Their room rose steadily, with your flag on its roof.

We went around this room with our faith quaking repeating the question: Will it be an imaginary palace or a bedouin tent that the Ally is going to erect for the Sharif?

The events of al-Burāq in 1929 and its results marked an essential change in the attitude of the Palestinian Arabs towards Great Britain. By then, the Palestinians had become convinced that "Britain was the real sponsor and defender of Zionism in Palestine".¹ It was after experiencing the British attitude during those clashes that the first Arab guerrilla bands emerged to fight against the British Mandate and the Jewish colonists as well.² The serious disturbances of 1933 were also a "manifestation of Arab feeling against the Government, as well as the Jews".³

This attitude towards Britain acquired more extension when the "Istiqlāl (Independence) Party", the first Arab political party to be founded in Palestine, was formed in 1932. The main argument in that party's understanding of the enemies of Palestine was that Jews were not the important enemy, but the British. The Jews were described as the branch of a tree, while the British were the trunk. If the branch is cut, another will grow, therefore, it is the trunk that should be cut.⁴

¹ Abd al-Wahhab al-Kayyali, Palestine: A Modern History, p.229.

² Ibid.

³ The Royal Institute . . . , Great Britain and Palestine, p.85.

⁴ Michael Assaf, The Arab Movement in Palestine, p.45. See also Rony E. Gabbay, A Political Study of the Arab-Jewish Conflict, p.21.

Furthermore, al-Qassām's* rebellion in 1935 was, in the first place, against the Mandatory Government. The bad relations between the Palestinian Arabs and the Government culminated in the revolt of 1936, ^aAs we mentioned before.

However, a comparison between the poems composed in praise of Britain, soon after the British army occupied Palestine, and others written in the late twenties or thirties, shows how far that pleasant image had changed. The "rescuers" who came from the "unconquerable country" became merciless. Instead of giving the help it hoped for, they humiliated Palestine:

فالفاتحون وما بهم من رحمة لم يعطوا إلا على اذلالها¹

The conquerors, devoid of mercy, did nothing but humiliate it.

¹ Abū al-Iqbāl Salīm al-Ya'qūbī, from a poem written in 1930. See Yāghī, Ḥayāt al-Adab al-Filastīnī ..., p.234.

* Shaykh 'Izz al-Dīn al-Qassām (1880-1935), Syrian-born, emigrated to Haifa (Palestine) in 1921, after the failure of the Syrian revolt against the French occupation. In 1932, he joined the "Istiqlāl Party". After the events of 1933, he started preparing for a revolt against the Government. On October 12, 1935, he, with a group of his armed associates, left Haifa and headed towards Jinīn to call for Jihād against the British. An accidental clash between al-Qassām and his group and the police alerted the authorities. The area was surrounded with police and troops. Al-Qassām and his associates refused to surrender. He and two of his men were killed, five were captured, and the rest escaped. See Abd al-Wahhab al-Kayyālī, Palestine ..., pp.180-182.

Another poet, Ibrāhīm Tūqān (1905-1941), began to blame himself for his previous friendly feeling towards the British:

الذنب ذنبي يوم همت بحبهم يا موطني هذا فؤادي فاطعن¹

O my homeland! It was my fault that I loved them; here is my heart, I offer it to you to stab.

And Ibrāhīm al-Dabbāgh (1880-1946), addresses the British comparing between what the Palestinian Arabs hoped of them and what they received at their hands:

لما انتدبتم حسبنا خير مندب موفق وابتلينا شر مندب

When you were appointed (as the Mandatory Power) we thought that you would be the best mandate, but you turned out to be the worst.

The new image of Great Britain as an oppressor and unjust power which became dominating in the poetry of that period can be illustrated further by many poems. Hardly was a poet who did not draw a line in that picture. Kamāl Nāṣir (1925-1973) a young poet then, saw the mandated Palestine as suffering from two concerns: "British injustice" and the "Jewish flood". In a poem entitled فلسطين: الأبية (Palestine: the Proud)³ he addresses Great Britain through Mr Ramsay MacDonald: a former prime minister, reminding him of his previous understanding of the Palestinian Arabs'

¹ Ibrāhīm Tūqān, Dīwān Tūqān, p.34.

² 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Kayyālī, al-Shi'r al-Filastīnī..., p.96.

³ Kamāl Nāṣir, al-Āthār al-Shi'riyya al-Kāmila, p.29.

demands:¹

ترى تناسيت المودة والعهود

يا "مكدونالد" ترى تناسيت المودة والعهود
أيام كنت لنا الحليف وكنت ذا الخل السودود
يا ليت شعري هل غت تلك الوثائق والوعود

O MacDonald! have you forgotten the Friendship and the pledges when you were a friend, and ally to us? I wish I knew whether those promises and pacts have altogether vanished?

Then the poet urges Great Britain to exert pressure on the "expelled people" (the Jews), to stop them harming the Palestinians. He also urges Britain to give real justice in Palestine, "so that it might be said that the British had predominated by the weapon of justice, not by carrying out threats".²

When three Palestinians were hanged in Acre on 17 June 1930, after the Burāq clashes, Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Ḥājj 'Īsā (1900-1974), in a poem entitled **أيوم الثلاثاء** (Now then, Tuesday!),³ put all the responsibility of the "unjust" act on Britain. Addressing the High Commissioner of Palestine, the poet asks him to send the following message to the British Government:

أيهذا الساكن الطور تحييه الوفود

¹ The poet was referring to the British White Paper of October 1930, when Mr. Ramsay MacDonald was the Prime Minister. That White Paper provoked a storm of criticism from the Zionist leaders. See The Royal Institute of International Affairs, Great Britain and Palestine, pp.81-82.

² فيقال 'ساد الإنجليز يحدّ لهم لا بالوعد

³ Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Ḥājj 'Īsā, Dīwān min Filastīn wa-ilayhā, pp.15-16.

قل لمن فى " لندن " آواهم القصر المشيد
 أبهذا حكم العدل وهل ترضى اليهود ؟
 أم لديكم بعد قتل النفس بالجور مزيد ؟
 بينما الحرب تمنيمهم من الغرب الوعد
 فإذا الوعد وعيد وإذا الشعب سويد
 وإذا هذا سجين وإذا ذاك شهيد

You who are lodging in al-Ṭūr,* saluted by delegations! Say to those in the grand palace in London:
 Is this the rule of justice? Will this satisfy the Jews?
 Is there anything more, other than killing (us) unjustly, that you intend to do?
 While the Arabs cherish the hopes given to them by the West, all of a sudden the promises turn into threats. The fox becomes a wolf and (our men) become either martyrs or prisoners.

Ibrāhīm Ṭūqān on his part, portrayed Britain in many poems. In some of them he resorts to irony, believing that this method would have greater effect and would draw more attention to the plight his country was in. One of those poems is a qit'a entitled أَيُّهَا الْأَقْوِيَاءُ (You, the strongest!)¹ written in 1935. Speaking on behalf of the Palestinians, Ṭūqān began mocking at the British and their "merits" saying:

قد شهدنا لعهدكم بالعدالة	وختمنا لجندكم بالبسالة
وعرفنا بكم صديقا وفيئا	كيف ننسى انتدابه واحتلاله
وخجلنا من لطفكم يوم قلتُم	وعد بلفور نافذ لا محالة
كلُّ أفضالكم على الرأس والعين	وليست فى حاجة لدلالة
ولئن ساء حالنا فكفاننا	أنكم عندنا بأحسن حالة

¹ Ibrāhīm Ṭūqān, Dīwān Ṭūqān, p.5.

* A quarter in Jerusalem.

We acknowledged your justice. We admitted that your soldiers were courageous. We experienced your being sincere friends, whose occupation and mandating of the country cannot be forgotten. We were embarrassed when you said the Balfour Declaration would be put into effect at all costs. We deeply appreciate your favours [to us] which require no proof. Even if our condition becomes worse, we shall be satisfied that you are living at ease among us.

Then he ended the qit'a by asking the British:

غير أن الطريق طالت علينا وعليكم فما لنا والإطالة
أجلاء عن البلاد تريدون فنجلو أم محققا والازالة

However, the way for both you and us has become long; but it would not be so, if you told us frankly whether you wanted us to leave the country. If so, we will do it. Or do you want us to be eradicated?

The Balfour Declaration.

By the time the Palestinian Arabs felt that the Mandatory Government was determined on facilitating the creation of a "Jewish National Home" in Palestine, the Balfour Declaration had become a central theme in their poetry, as well as in poetry written by Arab poets elsewhere. At first, however, they generally made little of it, showing their confidence that it would not enable the Zionists to achieve their goals in Palestine.

Iskandar al-Khūrī al-Baytjālī, in حول وعد بلفور (About the Balfour Declaration),¹ thought of the

¹ The poem was composed when Lord Balfour visited Palestine in 1925, to participate in the celebrations held on the opening of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

Declaration as intended to deceive the Jews rather than the Arabs. In his opinion, Great Britain gave this promise to the Zionists only to anaesthetize Jewish nervosity all over the world:

وعد ولا هو كالوعد خدعوا به أم اليهود
 أم تنوم طفلها والطفل يُخدع بالنشيد
 كالمُغرم المفتون يقنح بالتعلل بالوعد
 والختل في شرع السياسة ليس بالأمر الجديد¹

A unique Declaration, meant only to deceive the Jews, as a mother lulls her baby to sleep, deceiving him by her singing. Like a lover, satisfied by being put off with promises. In political life trickery is not something new.

Another poet Ibrāhīm al-Dabbāgh was more realistic in several of his poems when he spoke of the Declaration. In the poem *صوت فلسطين* (The Voice of Palestine), he argued logically, saying that "Palestine is not a gift that can be transferred from hand to hand, nor are the Palestinians the property of the Mandate".²

In another poem, he says:

ما وعد بلغور من أمر السماء ولا في الجذب من أرضنا زرع لمحتطب
 ما حكمه بعد أحكام السماء ولا يرضى به بعد حكم الله غير غبي³

The Balfour Declaration is not a commandment of God, nor should the [strange] woodcutter

¹ Kāmil al-Sawāfirī, al-Ittijāhāt al-Fanniyya fil-Shi'r al-Filastīnī, p.75.

² ليست فلسطين في البلدان عارية تهدي وتمنح بين العير والهير
 وليس أبنائها ملكاً لمنتدب

'Abd al-Raḥmān Yāghī, Ḥayāt al-Adab al-Filastīnī..., p.249.

³ 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Kayyālī, al-Shi'r al-Filastīnī..., p.163.

avail himself of our land, even in a time of drought. In no way is its ruling as obligatory as God's, so none but a fool would accept it.

Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Ḥājj 'Īsā treated this subject from a different angle in his poem **عودى لخدرك يا أخت المها** (Go Back to Your Home, You Beautiful Woman [sister of the oryx]). He attributes all the misery the country was suffering to the Declaration, on the grounds that it was the Declaration that had created the Zionists' aspirations and greed for Palestine. The poet, doubtless, shows confidence in the Jews' failure, since God had sent down upon them His anger and detestation:

أعوذ بالله من شؤم المواعيد
أرض مباركة الأعمار والبيد
لعهد يوشع أم أيام داود
ما حيلة العبد في تقدير معبود
معاقبون بتكليل وتشريد

كم كان وعدك يا " بلفور " مشاة
جر البلاء وأسباب البلاء الى
ظن اليهود بأن الوعد أرجعهم
وما دروا أن مقت الله حل بهم
وأنهم أينما حلوا أو ارتحلوا

O Balfour! how evil your Declaration was.
May God save us from the bad fortune of such
declarations. It is the Declaration that
has brought calamity to a blessed land.
The Jews thought the Declaration had
returned them to the days of Joshua and David.
How can it be, when God has sent His hatred
on them, and made it their destiny to be
tortured and exiled?

The most important point in Muḥyī al-Dīn's poem is his conviction that the Balfour Declaration was the origin of the Zionists' aspirations in Palestine. This way of thinking, it may be said, does not take into consideration

¹ Dīwān min Filastīn wa-ilayhā, p.34.

the point that the Declaration was the fruit of persistent efforts on the part of Zionist leaders since the formulation of the Basle Programme at the First Zionist Congress. In that Programme the Zionists listed four means of enabling their Movement to attain its objective in creating "for the Jewish people a home in Palestine secured by public law".¹ The fourth of those means was the following: "Preparatory steps for the procuring of such Government assents as are necessary for achieving the object of Zionism".²

From the beginning England was nominated to give such Government assent. Although it was not until 1902 that the Zionists turned to the British Government,³ Theodor Herzl had, from the start, attached great importance to Britain and the British Jews. A few months after the establishment of the Zionist Organization, Herzl sent a message to a Jewish conference in London, saying:

From the first moment I entered the movement, my eyes were directed towards England, because I saw that by reason of the general situation of things there it was the Archimedean point where the lever could be applied. ⁴

The poet in question was not the only Palestinian poet who was of the opinion that the Balfour Declaration was the origin of the Zionists' aspirations in Palestine. It can safely be stated that this was the predominant view among

¹ Israel Cohen, The Zionist Movement, p.73.

² Ibid.

³ Leonard Stein, The Balfour Declaration, p.18.

⁴ Ibid.

Arab poets as a whole. Besides, a poet -we are aware of this fact- is not supposed to be concerned with only politics in the first place. What we aim to point out is that the Palestinian poets as well as other Arab poets were concentrating on the impact of the Declaration on the Palestinian Arabs and its injustice, and neglecting other aspects closely connected with it, such as the factors that gave the Declaration its strength, its effectiveness, its continuity, etc.

A third poet, 'Abd al-Rahīm Maḥmūd (1913-1948), treated this subject in a poem entitled وعد بلفور (The Balfour Declaration)¹ from a moral point of view. He started the poem by stating that the Arabs, by nature, do not receive humiliation in silence, nor do they accept contemptible treatment. Then he recalled Anglo-Arab relations during World War I in order to elucidate that the British victory over the Turks was due, in the first place, to the aid of the Arabs:

رجحت موازين الحليف ومن نكن معه يرجح بالعظيم الأكبر

The scales of the ally were tipped in their favour, because whom ever we aid, will triumph.

Speaking of the reward the Arabs received from that ally, the poet terms it betrayal:

غدر الحليف وأى وعد صانه يوماً وأية ذمة لم يخفر
لما قضى وطراً بفضل سيوفنا نسي اليد البيضاء لم يتذكر

The ally deceived us, and no wonder,

¹ 'Abd al-Rahīm Maḥmūd, Dīwān 'Abd al-Rahīm Maḥmūd, p.117

considering that he at no time had kept his promise or covenant. [with us].
When, thanks to our swords, he attained his aim, he quickly forgot (our) beneficent hand.

This act of the ally is considered by the poet as an offence against morals. It increased the Palestinian Arabs' anger. Therefore, he warned the British of a storm coming soon:

تغلي الصدور وليس في غليانها إلا نذير العاصف المتفجر

Breasts are seething with anger. When this is so, there is no doubt an explosive storm is approaching.

In 1929, on the anniversary of the Balfour Declaration, when the Palestinians went on a one-day-strike, Ibrāhīm Ṭūqān composed his poem *البلد الكئيب* (The Sad Country)(1929)¹ concentrating on the man who gave the Declaration his name, Balfour.

In that poem, Ṭūqān portrayed Lord Balfour as having a drink, with a glass in his hand full, not of wine, as usual, but of the blood of Palestinian Arabs. The bubbles on his glass, also, are not wine bubbles, the poet whispered to Balfour, but the spirits of Palestinian victims who had lost their lives as a result of his Declaration:

بلفور كأسك من دم الشهداء لا ماء العنب
لا يخدعك أنها راقية وكلها الحبيب
فحبابها الأرواح قد وثبت إليك كما وثب

¹ Ibrāhīm Ṭūqān, Dīwān Ṭūqān, p.82.

Balfour! that in your glass is not wine
 but the martyr's blood.
 Do not be deceived by its appearance and
 the bubbles crowning it.
 These bubbles are the spirits ('of victims)
 leaping towards you.

Elegies of the Dead.

The Palestinian poets devoted special attention to the self-sacrifice and brave acts of the Arabs who were killed in Palestine during the Mandate. One of the most famous elegies on Palestinian martyrs in that period is that composed by Ibrāhīm Ṭūqān, commemorating the hanging of three Palestinians at Acre, in 1930, as a result of the Burāq disturbances mentioned previously.

The poem **الثلاثاء الحراء** (the Bloody Tuesday),¹ is very elaborate, consisting of three parts: "prologue" **مقدمة**, "the three hours" **الساعات الثلاث**, and "the epilogue" **خاتمة**. The prologue comprises eight stanzas. In the first one, Ibrāhīm Ṭūqān describes the "evil Tuesday", on which the three men were hanged:

لَمَّا تَعَرَّضَ نَجْمُكَ الْمُنْحَسِرُ وَتَرْتَحَتِ بَعْرَى الْجِبَالِ رُؤُوسُ
 نَاحِ الْأُذَانِ وَأَعْوَلَ النَّاظِرُ فَالْجَلِيلُ أَكْدَرَ وَالنَّهَارُ عَبُوسُ
 طَفَقَتْ تَتَوَرَّعُ عَوَاصِفٌ وَعَوَاطِفُ
 وَالْمَوْتُ حِينَا طَائِفٌ أَوْ خَائِفُ
 وَالْمَعُولُ الْأَبْدِيُّ يَمْعَنُ فِي الشَّرَى لِيَرُدَّهُمْ فِي قَلْبِهِ الْمُتَحَجِّرُ

When your evil star appeared and heads swayed
 in the nooses, the adhān wailed and the
 bells tolled.

¹ Ibid., p.97.

The night was an ill one and the day grim.
 Fury and fierce emotions were rampant.
 Death was everywhere, sometimes prowling,
 sometimes fearful.
 The eternal spade cut down, deeper and
 deeper into the earth, to bury them in its
 stony heart.

In the second stanza, the personified Tuesday asks some gloomy days in history whether any of them had witnessed similar cruelty to that done on Tuesday. A day representing the period of "Inquisition Courts" appears to give the following testimony:

... ..

ولقد شهدت عجائباً وغرائباً
 لكنّ فيك مصائباً ونوائباً
 لم ألق أشباهها لها في جورها فاسألُ سِوَايَ وكم بها من مُنْكَرٍ

I have seen strange and striking things, but
 your disasters are unique. Try asking other
 evil days.

In the third stanza another gloomy day, representing the times of slavery, expresses its complete surprise on finding that those who put an end to slavery in the past had resumed it in modern times.

(فسمعتُ مَنْ مَنَعَ الرِّقَّ يَبِيعُهُ نَادَى عَلَى الْأَحْرَارِ يَا مَنْ يَشْتَرِي)

In the fourth stanza, the day of 21 August, 1915, when Jamāl Pasha executed eleven leading personalities in the Arab national movement in Beirut,¹ puts forward the

¹ The victims were from different parts of Syria: from Damascus, Hama, Beirut, Baalbek and Jinīn. Among them was Muḥammad Maḥmaṣānī, one of the founders of the secret society, al-Fatāh. See George Antonius, The Arab Awakening, pp.186-187.

view that the cruelty then was less than it was on that Tuesday.

The poet concludes in the fifth stanza that:

(اليوم) تنكره الليالي الغابرة وتظلّ ترمقه بعين حائرة

Past nights disown this Tuesday and stare at it in perplexity.

Stanzas six, seven and eight describe the futile efforts made by several Arab personalities who urged the British High Commissioner to commute the three death sentences.

The second part of the poem consists of three personified hours giving a description of the hanging of the three martyrs: Fu'ād Hijāzī in the first hour, Muḥammad Jamjūm in the second, and 'Aṭā al-Zīr in the third. By the completion of the execution, the high tension which is maintained throughout the poem reaches its end.

The last part of the poem is a consolatory stanza, expressing the belief that the three men became martyrs, while their souls ascended to Paradise:

أجسادهم فى تربة الأوطان أرواحهم فى جنة الرضوان
وهناك لا شكوى من الطغيان وهناك فيض العفو والغفران
أجسادهم فى تربة الأوطان أرواحهم فى جنة الرضوان
وهناك لا شكوى من الطغيان وهناك فيض العفو والغفران
لا ترجعوا من سواه هو الاله بحر
وهو الذى ملكت يداه كلّ جاه

جبروته فوق الذين يغرهم جبروتهم فى برهم والأبحر
land. there are no complaints about oppression,
where forgiveness and remission abound.
Forgiveness should be sought only from God;
only from Him whose hands possess dignity
and honour.
His omnipotence is greater than the power
of those who are vain because of their power
on land and sea.

When 'Abd al-Raḥīm al-Ḥājj Muḥammad* was killed, one of rebels under his command, 'Abd al-Raḥīm Maḥmūd lamented him in a poem entitled **البطل الشهيد** (The Martyr Hero)(1939)¹ describing his death as a heavy loss for all the Palestinians.

إِنَّ يَوْمًا قَدْ رَزَّئْنَاكَ بِهِ جَاعِلَ أَيَّامِنَا سَوْدًا بِسُودِ
كُلِّ بَيْتٍ لَكَ فِيهِ مَأْتَمٌ يَنْدُبُ النَّاسُ بِهِ أَغْلَى فَقِيدِ

The day on which we lost you has turned our days into times of hardship. Every house is mourning your death, you being the dearest of all deceased.

Another Palestinian rebel, Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ al-Ḥamad, was killed in a battle with the Mandate forces on May 18, 1938. 'Abd al-Karīm al-Karmī (known as Abū Salmā : 1911-1981) elegized him in a poem entitled "Abū Khālīd",² in which he on his part, described the death of that hero as a great loss for Palestine:

فلسطين سارت خلف نعش محمد تشيخ في الخارات من كان حاميا

Palestine walked behind Muḥammad's bier, paying the last honours to a man who was a shelter in times of incursions.

Al-Qassām and Shaykh Farḥān al-Sa'dī, were two names which came to be crowned with glory by the Palestinian Arabs. the story of their martyrdom was repeated many times by the

¹ 'Abd al-Raḥīm Maḥmūd, Dīwān 'Abd al-Raḥīm Maḥmūd, p.132.

² Dīwān Abī Salmā, p.68.

* 'Abd al-Raḥīm al-Ḥājj Muḥammad: leader of the Palestinian rebels in the 1936 revolt in the area of Tūlkarm. He was killed on 26 March, 1939. See Ṣubḥī Yāsīn, al-Thawra al-'Arabiyya al-Kubrā fī Filastīn, pp.196-198.

poets. 'Abd al-Raḥīm Maḥmūd found his ideal in al-Qassām's way of life, of which he says in his poem عيد الجامعة العربية (The Arab League Anniversary)¹:

هذى طريقك للحياة فلا تحد قد سارها من قبلك القسام

This is your road to life so do not deviate from it. Al-Qassām has walked it before you.

The two, al-Qassām and al-Sa'dī were elegized also by Muṭlaq 'Abd al-Khāliq (1901-1937), who by way of defending them against the Government's accusations that they were "law-breakers", says:

ما هم أشقياء لكن شقي كل من قال عنهم أشقياء
هم ضحايا أوطانهم وأسود لفظتهم من جوفها الصحراء
زهدوا في الحياة لا تستبيهم كأس خمر أو غادة هيفاء
فقراء لا يطلبون ثراء غير أن يلحدوا وهم شرفاء²

They were not law-breakers. He who so describes them is himself a law-breaker. They, like lions springing out of the depths of the desert, sacrificed themselves for their country. They renounced pleasure in worldly things, not attracted by a cup of wine or a slim girl. Poor, they were; yet their concern was not to be rich, but to die honourably.

Abū Salmā, in his fiery poem لهب القصيد (Flame of Poetry)(1936)³ through his severe attack on the Arab Kings and rulers who called upon the Palestinians to end the strike in 1936, and to restore peace, addresses those Kings and rulers asking them to appreciate the sacrifice made by

¹ 'Abd al-Raḥīm Maḥmūd, Dīwān 'Abd al-Raḥīm Maḥmūd, pp.144-149.

² 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Kayyālī, al-Shi'r al-Filastīnī..., p.139..

³ Abū Salmā, Dīwān Abī Salmā, pp.21-25.

al-Qassām, Farḥān al-Sa'dī and other martyrs, whose blood calls for revenge:

قوموا اسمعوا من كل ناحية يصيح دم الشهيد
 قوموا انظروا القسام يشرق نوره فوق الصرود
 يوحى الى الدنيا ومن فيها بأسرار الخلود
 قوموا انظروا فرحان فوق جبينه أثر السجود
 يمشي الى جبل الشهادة صائما مشي الأسود
 سبعون عاما في سبيل الله والحق التليد¹

Arise, hear the martyr's blood crying out on every side.

Arise, see al-Qassām's light shining on the top of the mountains, revealing to this world the secrets of immortality. Arise, see Farḥān with the sign of prostration in prayer on his forehead, walking to the rope of martyrdom like a lion.

Seventy years he spent in the service of God and Eternal Truth.

The death of a Syrian leader, Sa'īd al-Ās, who participated in the Palestinian revolt of 1936, caused deep sadness to the country.

Elegized² by Burhān al-Dīn al-'Abbūshī (1911-), the poet addresses the deceased's daughter (Su'ād), saying:

يا ابنة الحاص والشباب أخوك	أمك الشعب والخلود أبوك
عند قبر الخليل بعد الحلوك	خرّ ليث الجهاد شيخ الضحايا
ثم لبّاك اذ دعوت بنيك ³	قد دعته الشام يوما فلبّى

Daughter of al-Ās! The nation has become your mother, eternity your father, and all our youth, your brothers.
 (Your father) the lion of battles, the most

¹ It was said that Shaykh Farḥān al-Sa'dī refused to break his fast before he was hanged.

² Muṭlaq 'Abd al-Khalīq also composed an elegy on him entitled شهيد الخضر. See 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Kayyālī, al-Shi'r al-Filasṭīnī ..., p.142.

³ 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Kayyālī, Ibid.

honourable of all victims, fell dead at night
 near al-Khalīl's grave.
 When al-Shām appealed to him for help, he
 readily responded.
 Then when you / Palestine / called on your
 children, he did the same.

It is of considerable importance to demonstrate the
 image of the hero portrayed by the Palestinian poets at that
 stage, because this image was portrayed before essential
 changes had occurred in its representation after the defeat
 of 1948. This earlier heroic image was developed when the
 Palestinians and the Arabs as a whole retained hopes of
 victory over the Jews.

Generally, the hero was presented as being superior to
 other men; a noble, who knew no fear or hesitation; his
 primary aim consisted of defending his country by sacrificing
 himself.

Ibrāhīm Tūqān, in his poem "The Fidā'ī" (1930),¹
 portrayed his hero as carrying a shroud, ready to die. "His
 message has been touched with flames of Hell", even death
 fearing him:

لفظ النار والدماء	صامت لو تكلمنا
والردى منه خائف	هو بالباب واقف
خجلا من جراته	فاهدأى يا عواصف

Often silent, when speaking his words are
 fire and blood.
 He stands at the door frightening death
 itself.
 Tempests! subside in shame at his courage.

¹ Ibrāhīm Tūqān, Dīwān Tūqān. p.94.

In another poem الشهيد (The Martyr),¹ Tūqān pictures the hero in more detail; his bravery, his calmness, his aims, the smile on his face when he feels himself about to die:

عسى الخطب فابتسم	وطغى الهول فاقتحم
رابط الجأش والنهى	ثابت القلب والقدم
نفسه طوع همسة	وجمت دونها الهمم
تلتقي في مزاجها	بالأعاصير والحمم
تجمع الهائج الخضم	الى الراسخ الأشم
سارفى منهج العلى	يطرق الخلد منـزلا
لا يبالي مكبلا	نال له أم مجنـدا
فهو رهن بما عزم	

أى وجه تهـللا	يرد الموت مقبلا
صعد الروح مرسلا	لحنه ينشد الملا
أننا لله والوطن	

When disaster frowned, he smiled; when terror surged, he plunged into it, calm and fearless, firm of heart and foot. His soul was possessed by an ambition nobler than all others; its temperament was comparable to flames and tempests. Rough as the stormy sea, stable as the mountain, it was. He walked the path of glory, aiming to house himself in Paradise, no matter if he achieved his aim by falling dead or by falling into captivity. Oh! how jubilant his face was when he was passing to death; singing to the whole world: could I but sacrifice myself for God and my country.

In 'Abd al-Rahīm Maḥmūd's poetry, the image of the hero is similar to that in Tūqān's, with the difference that the former was portraying his own heroism. That was due to the fact that he himself was a rebel physically involved in the struggle. During the 1936 revolt, he

¹ Ibid., p.145.

fought under the command of 'Abd al-Raḥīm al-Ḥājj Muḥammad (the leader whom the poet once elegized).¹ When the campaign of violence ended in 1939, he fled to Iraq, where he stayed until 1941. In the Arab-Israeli War of 1948, he joined the Mujāhidīn, and was killed on July 13, 1948.²

In a poem entitled الشهيد (The Martyr),³ he portrayed his heroism as follows:

سأحمل روحي على راحتي وألقي بها في مهاوى الردى
فأما حياة تسرّ الصديق وأما ممات يغيظ العدى
ونفس الشريف لها غايتان ورود المنايا ونيل المنى
لعمرك إني أرى مصري ولكن أغدّ إليه الخطى
أرى مقتلي دون حقي السليب ودون بلادى هو المبتغى

In my hand I will bear my soul, ready to
throw it into the abyss of death.
A man should live with honour and dignity,
otherwise he should die gloriously.
The soul of the noble man has but two aims:
either to die or to attain glory.
I swear I can see my fate, but I quicken
my steps towards it.
The only desire I have is to fall defending
my usurped rights, and my country.

In another poem دعوة إلى الجهاد (A Call for Jihād),⁴ he describes his reaction when his "slain homeland" called him. He "raced with the wind to sacrifice his soul" for his country. Then he turns to those cowards who were afraid of death, saying:

¹ See above, p. 62.

² 'Abd al-Raḥīm Maḥmūd, Dīwān 'Abd al-Raḥīm Maḥmūd, introduction.

³ Ibid., pp. 121-123.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 140-142.

وقلت لمن يخاف من المنايا أتفرق من مجابهة العوادي
وتتعد والحمى يرجوك عونا وتجن عن صاولة الأعداى
فدونك خدر أمك فاقتحمه وحسبك رخصة هذا التهادى

To him who fears death I said: Are you afraid of facing crises?
How can you stay still while your homeland cries for help? Are you too cowardly to fight enemies? If so, there is your mother's boudoir to break in. For you, this meanness is fair enough.

Muṭlaq 'Abd al-Khālīq sketched in one of his poems a different image of the hero. His sketch presents that hero as an ordinary man, who might experience feelings of weakness, such as fear, doubts, despair, etc:

أو ما رأيت الليث معتقلا يحنّ الى عرينه
انظر اليه وقد تبدّى النور يسطع من جبينه
وانظر الى دمه يسيل من الجراح ومن عيونه
حيران لا يدري أتمسكه الجراح الى منونه
أم تستبدّ به فيحيا فى جحيم من ظنونه
يرنو الى غده وليل الشك يظلم فى يقينه

Have you not seen the lion in his cage
longing for his den.
See the light shining from his forehead.
See the blood flowing from his wounds and
his eyes.
See him, living in a hell of doubt,
uncertain whether his wounds would lead him to
death, or would leave him disabled.
He, looking to his future, sees it darkened
with doubts.

Land-selling.

Before the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, the possession of land was of vital importance for both

¹ 'Abd al-Raḥmān Yāghī, al-Shi'r al-Filastīnī ..., p.261.

Jews and Arabs. During the Fifth Zionist Congress, held in Basle in 1901, the Jewish National Fund was established to purchase land in Palestine as an inviolate possession to the Jews.¹

By 1944, the Jewish National Fund had acquired 758,200 metric dunams, as compared with a holding of 16,379 metric dunams in 1917.² Some of this area had been what Britain considered "State-owned land" which the Fund rented for nominal sums under ninety-nine-year leases.³ Other land was bought from absentee owners living in Syria and Lebanon who had been isolated from their properties by the British and French Mandate boundaries. By the termination of the British Mandate in May 1948, the Jews were holding a total area of 372,925 acres (the acre equals about 4 dunams), or 5.67 per cent of the total land area of the country.⁴ Moreover, the Palestinian Government estimated, in 1946, that the Jews were holding over 15 per cent of the cultivated area of Palestine.⁵

For the Arabs, the land purchase by Jews was horrifying. They believed that whoever owned the land would, in the long run, hold the whip hand. If the Jews were able to gain possession of most of the land, they could force the Arabs out of the country. If, on the other hand, the Arabs

¹ Rony E. Gabbay, A Political Study of the Arab-Jewish Conflict, p.26.

² Ibid.

³ Fred J. Khouri, The Arab-Israeli Dilemma, p.18.

⁴ Sami Hadawi, Palestine in Focus, p.28.

⁵ Ibid.

"maintained possession of the land, they could not only remain in Palestine, but limit Jewish immigration".¹

The Palestinian poets, on their part, focussed a great deal of attention in their poetry on this issue. Hardly was there a poet who did not treat this subject in more than one poem.

When the Arab inhabitants of Wādī al-Ḥawārith* were evacuated in 1933, after it was sold to the Jews by Āl al-Tayyān, a feudal Lebanese family, Abū Salmā bade farewell to that land in a poem entitled حمام الوادى (The Doves of the Valley),² in which he shows his deep feelings about the loss of that land:

ألوى الزمان بغصنك المياد	ودّع ظلالك يا حمام الوادى
نمّ في الهجير وأنت طاو صاد	من بعد سرحته وعذب نميره
هل في حمى الوادى حمام شاد	أرسل نواحك يا حمام وقل لنا
إن البكاء يهون عند بعاد	وابك النسيم ندية أردانه

O doves of the Valley! bid farewell to your home. Time has dried up the succulent branch you had.
After a pleasant life among its trees and wholesome water, sleep now hungry and thirsty under the midday heat. Wail and tell us: are there still any cooing doves in the valley? Weep over the loss of the breeze there; weeping becomes so easy in leave-taking.

Of Sursuq (another Lebanese feudal lord), who sold land in Marj Ibn 'Āmir, Burhān al-Dīn al-'Abbūshī says:

وباع سرسق تبّا لاسمه قطعاً من ملكنا وعيون الساكنين ترى

¹ Fred J. Khouri, The Arab-Israeli Dilemma, p.18.

² Abū Salmā ('Abd al-Karīm al-Karmī), Diwan Abī Salmā, pp.13-14.

* A fertile tract of land between Haifa and Jaffa.

لهفي على المرح قد جلت مصيبتهم ولم يجد من بني الأوطان من ثارا 1

Sursuq, may evil befall his name, sold pieces of our land, while the inhabitants witnessed the sale in the sight of their eyes.

How sorry I feel for the Marj, seeing it become an area of great disaster, with nobody to revenge it.

Again Burhān al-Dīn al-‘Abbūshī, seeing Nazareth, the "Messiah's city, surrounded by colonies of strangers", was filled with grief. As for the Arabs in that area, the poet sadly admits:

لم تبق للعربي فيه بقية إلا الشّاب وقعة جرداء 2

Nothing but mountain-paths and desolate plots had been left there for the Arabs.

In his verse play وطن الشهيد (The Martyr's Country) (1947), through a Jewish character in the play, al-‘Abbūshī says that the Jews "set foot in Palestine and the Arabs were unheeding". Not only that, but "still they (the Arabs) do not give a damn about the Jews". Of the aim of the Jews, the poet goes on to say:

سوف نجلي أهلها عنها الى بيدهم قسرا ونسقيهم حمام 3

And soon, we'll throw them all out of the country, chase them away to their desert and water them with death.

Muhyī al-Dīn al-Hājī addressed the members of the

¹ ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Kayyālī, al-Shi‘r al-Filastīnī ..., p.116.

² Ibid., p.84.

³ Ibid., p.85.

Islamic Conference, which was held in Jerusalem in 1931, turning their attention to the bitter fact that the area still owned by the Arabs was decreasing quickly:

فلسطين ذاقت صنوف الأذى	وكاد البراق بها يذهب
وأضحت على ضعفها سلعة	تباع وتشترى وتستوهب
فلم يبق للعرب فيها سوى	بقاع لقد أوشكت تسلب ¹

Palestine has suffered all sorts of harm. al-Burāq was almost about to depart with it. So weak has it become that it became a commercial article, which could be sold, bought and gifted. In it, nothing but a few plots of land are left for the Arabs. Even those plots are about to be snatched as well.

Of the land selling, Ibrāhīm Tūqān was more concerned with attacking the sellers and the brokers, and warning the people of the danger of selling land to Jews. In several poems he made it clear that land selling would cost the Palestinian Arabs dearly, as in his poem *فلسطين مهد الشهداء* (Palestine, the Cradle of Martyrs),² where he says:

هيئات ذلك إن في	بيح الثرى فقد الثراء
فيه الرّحيل عن الرّوع	غداً إلى وادي الغنّاء
فاليوم أمرج كاسيما	وغدا سأنبذ بالعراء

It goes without saying that selling the land causes poverty. It leads to the valley of perdition. If I am strutting about clothed today, tomorrow I shall be stripped to the open sky.

The poet admits the bitter fact that it was his own people "who should be blamed for causing this misfortune".

¹ Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Ḥājj 'Isā, Dīwān min Filastīn wa-ilayhā, p.20.

² Ibrāhīm Tūqān, Dīwān Tūqān, p.147.

In 1932, when a group of Palestinians called for the establishment of a project called صندوق الأمة with the purpose of buying lands, so that should not be bought by Jews, some Palestinian papers called for the project to be backed, and so did Ibrāhīm in a poem entitled اشترى الأرض (Buy the land; it protects you against oppression).¹

In a qit'a entitled السماسرة (The Land-brokers) (1935),² Tūqān attacked that group angrily, accusing them of betrayal.

What made the tribulation greater for the Palestinians, the poet says, is the fact that among those land-brokers were notables pretending to be intent on the welfare of the country:

أما سماسرة البلاد فحصة	عار على أهل البلاد بقاؤها
يتنعمون مكرمين كأنما	لنعيمها عم البلاد شقاؤها
هم أهل نجدتها وإن أنكرتهم	وهمو وأنفك راغم زعماؤها
وحمايتها وسهم يتم خرابها	وعلى يديهم بيعها وشراؤها

As for the brokers of the country, it is a disgrace to its people that such a band survives. They live honoured and in luxury, as if the misery of the country only existed for their welfare.

They are its leaders, the ones who chivalrously want to save it, no matter what you might think or say.

They are its defenders also. Thanks to them it will be completely ruined, bought and sold at their hands.

¹ An interesting confession by the poet came later on in a letter sent by him to his Lebanese friend 'Umar Farrūkh, declaring that he felt sorry he had supported that project, since it had become known that eight members were land-agents to the Zionists.

See Yāghī, Ḥayāt al-Adab al-Filastīnī al-Ḥadīth, p.283.

² Ibrāhīm Tūqān, Dīwān Tūqān, p.156.

Cynical poems criticising the Palestinian leadership.

Arab political activity in Palestine during the Mandate was dominated by personal and selfish struggles between the big families of the country, through the political parties they formed. Thus there existed the following main parties:

The Istiqlāl (Independence) Party, which was founded in 1932 by certain well-known personalities under the leadership of 'Awnī 'Abd al-Hādī, the former private secretary of King Fayṣal.

The National Bloc Party (1933), which was founded and headed by 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Ṣāliḥ.

The Iṣlāḥ (Reform) Party (1933), founded by Ḥusayn Fakhrī al-Khālidi.

The National Defence Party (1934), founded and headed by Rāghib al-Nashāshībī.

The Palestine Arab Party (1935), which was founded and led by Jamāl al-Ḥusaynī, the Muftī's (Ḥājj Amīn al-Ḥusaynī) political protagonist.¹

Personal and selfish motives "behind the proliferation of those parties and the ceaseless bickering between them" proceeding from family interests, "exposed them to an enormous public derision"² and criticism. The poets as well, mounted several attacks against this traditional

¹ Rony E. Gabbay, A Political Study of the Arab-Jewish Conflict, pp.21-22.

² Abd al-Wahhab al-Kayyali, Palestine: a Modern History, p.178.

leadership. Such momentous accusations as that by Burhān al-‘Abbūshī, that those "wicked leaders had sold the country (Palestine) for a whore and for a job",¹ were unusual or execeptional.

Al-‘Abbūshī, in another poem, attacked the Palestinian leadership represented in the political parties, and called the youth of the nation to take over the leadership:

تقدّموا يا شباب الجيل وانتزعوا زعامة الشعب فالأحزاب تخدعه
قد مزقوه وباعوه وما ندموا ولم يجد واحداً منا يشيعه

Youth of the nation! go ahead and take over the leadership; for the Political Parties are deceiving us.
They, with no regret, tore the nation apart and sold her, while we didn't even pay her the last honours.

‘Abd al-Raḥīm Maḥmūd composed a poem entitled الى كل متهاود (To Every Indifferent Person) after the Peel Commission published its report on 7 July 1937 about the 1936 revolt.³ In this poem he accuses those leaders who were still showing confidence in the British policy of anticipating personal benefit as a result of that rapport:

يا من تولّه بالحبيب هناك قد رجس الحبيب
لقد انتظرت ايابه شوقا فما هو ذا يؤوب
لك في حقيته نصيب فاخر بئس النصيب
فلتنتظر غدا الكراسي ساكتاً وغدا قريب

¹ (قد باطك الأشرار يا وطني بحاهرة وكيسي)

² ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Kayyālī, al-Shi‘r al-Filastīnī..., p.109.

³ Ibid., p.107.

⁴ For the detail of this report, see the Royal Institute..., Great Britain and Palestine, pp.97-104.

⁵ ‘Abd al-Raḥīm Maḥmūd, Dīwān ‘Abd al-Raḥīm Maḥmūd, p.127.

Oh you! who are mad with their [the British] love, your beloved has returned.
 You have been longing to see him coming back; here he is!
 In his (diplomatic) pouch you have a splendid fortune.
 What an evil fortune!
 Wait till tomorrow - how near tomorrow is - then you will be granted your post!

Then the poet turns to the Palestinians, showing his compassion for their calamity and calling them the "miserable people" because they had "entrusted the key positions to such men who cannot restore usurped rights". Events in Palestine, the poet stated, should make the Palestinians "smell a rat".¹

Another poet, Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Ḥājj 'Īsā, summed up the ills of the Palestinian political body in several poems. In the poem اجتماع صاخب (Angry Assembly),² composed immediately after a conference held in Nablus in 1932, he describes the chaotic atmosphere of the Conference and the obvious mutual hatred of the participants. He says:

قد اجتمعوا وما جمعوا لهم أمراً فما صنعوا
 فكلم صالوا وكم قالوا وما صدقوا وما نفعوا
 وبانت فيهم الأحقاد والشر الذي رضعوا
 فهذا ينصب الأشرار يبغى من بها يقنع
 وذاك يسفّه الأحلام والآراء تبتدع
 وآخر يدعي الاخلاص وهو الكاذب الجشع
 أمور تبعث الأحرار ليت القوم ما اجتمعوا

1

قلدت أملك من بهم لا يرجع الحق الغصيب
 يا شعب يا مسكين لم تُكَبِّ بنكبتك الشعوب
 لهفي عليك ألا ترى يا شعب حولك ما يسريب

² Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Ḥājj 'Īsā, Dīwān min Filastīn wa-ilayhā, p.26.

They met but failed to come to terms.
 How often they went into the attack, and
 talked a lot; but liars and useless
 beings they were.
 Among them the hatred and evil-intent
 (which) they had sucked at (since babyhood)
 came to light.
 Some set traps for others to walk into; some
 made fun of others' dreams. New ideas were
 invented.
 Others pretended to be faithful while they
 were liars and greedy.
 Such things cause great grief. If only they
 had not met.

In another poem entitled ضاعت الطاسة (The Bowl got lost)¹ and composed in the same year (1932), Muḥyī al-Dīn gives a full description of the political atmosphere prevailing among the Palestinians: Every citizen in the country claims to be superior and intelligent; none is ignorant of politics and its various aspects. Not only do they know about politics, there is nothing in this universe which they are ignorant of. Every one is a commander and a politician.

There is none among them who does not strive to attain leadership, or want others to fear his power and his influence, or raise his axe only for wrecking others' plans. If someone prays, another comes and steps on him. If someone is drinking, someone else breaks his cup.²

¹ Ibid., pp.29-30.

² The following verses are representative:

ضاعت الطاسة حتى ليس بالحمام طاسة
 فادعى الناس جميعا كل فضل وكياسة
 ليس فيهم من غبي في أفانين السياسة
 لم يقم شيء بهذا الكون لم يدروا أساسه

The traditional leadership of the notables was subject to the most violent attack by Ibrāhīm Ṭūqān. Helped by a distinguished talent, Ṭūqān showered them with bitter criticism in several poems and qit'as. In most of those poems he resorted to irony, a method he often employed when treating political or social themes.

In 1934, some of the Palestinian notables took the decision to hold peaceful demonstrations after the Friday-Prayer, each time in a different city. The police arrested them and they were brought to trial. In court they were given a choice between imprisonment or signing an obligation not to hold any demonstrations. They all signed the obligation, except Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Muẓaffar, who preferred imprisonment. On that event, Ṭūqān composed an ironic qit'a entitled الى الأحرار (To the Freeman),¹ scoffing at their cowardice and calling them "the heroes of protest". The following verse illustrates how harsh he was in his attack:

بل حكمة الله كانت في سلامتكم لأنكم غير أهل للشهادات

It was God's wisdom that you were saved,
because you are not qualified for martyrdom.

فاستوى الكل فصار الكل أمّاراً وساسه
لا ترى فيهم سوى الطالب كرسي الرئاسة
وسوى الراغب في أن يرهب الآخر بأسه
وسوى الرافع للهدم وللتخريب فاسسه
فاذا هذا يصلي جاءه ذاك وداسه
واذا ما كان يسقى كسر الآخر كاسسه
يحسب الماسة فحماً ويخال الفحم ماسه
فاذا دمنّا على ذى الحال قل يا للتعاسه

¹ Ibrāhīm Ṭūqān, Dīwān Ṭūqān, p.146.

In another qit'a أنتم (You!),¹ he again employs irony to criticize their insincerity to the nation and the ineffectiveness of their deeds:

أنتم المخلصون للوطنية	أنتم الحاملون عبء القضية
ويان منكم يعادل جيشا	بمعدات زحفه الحربية
واجتماع منكم يرد علينا	غابر المجد من فتوح أمية
وخلاص البلاد صار على الأبواب	وجاءت أعياده الوردية
ما جحدنا أفضالكم غير أننا	لم نزل في نفوسنا أمية
في يدنا بقية من بلاد	فاستريحوا كي لا تطير البقية

You are the faithful of the nation, who carry the burden of the cause.
A declaration issued by you is as effective as an army with all its batteries.
An assembly held by you can restore the ancient glory of the Umayyad conquests.
The deliverance of the country is at hand.
Joyful celebrations will be inaugurated soon.
We do not deny your favours, but there is one single wish still in our hearts:
A remnant of a country is still in our hands; rest a while, so that this remnant does not fly away.

In the poem يا رجال البلاد (O Men of the Land!)² written in 1933, he called the notable leaders as auctioneers' band (عصابة دالين) with whom Palestine was afflicted. Moreover, they should not be considered as "men" but as "animals", the poet believed.

The art in which they were talented was that of speeches on platforms", and nothing more. "The sick" (the Palestinian-Arabs) were vainly waiting for "the drug which that band could not provide". The verses read as follows:

(وطني مبتلى بعصابة دالين لا يتقون فيه الله)

¹ Ibrāhīm Tūqān, Dīwān Tūqān, p.163.

² Ibid., p.135.

حُسيبوا في الرجال هل كانت الانعام الا لملهم أشباها
 عرف الناس والمناير والأقلام أفضالكم فيها توا ——— واها
 كلکم بايع بليخ — بحمد الله — طب بحالنا ودواها
 غير أن المريض يرقب منكم هذه الجرعة التي لا يراها

Prediction of disaster.

Although the Palestinian poets, in the period we are dealing with now, showed confidence that the Palestinian Arabs would overcome their problems with the Mandate and the Zionists, they showed, at the same time, considerable fear of losing the country to the Jews.

Aspects of weakness in Palestinian Arab Society, as seen previously, could have been the main factor in creating a noteworthy pessimism among the Palestinians, and this was accordingly reflected in the poetry of that period.

Anticipation of a difficult future, prediction of disaster and reviews of the Muslim withdrawal from Spain, were frequent themes of the Palestinian poets.

When Prince Sa'ūd Ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz (later King) was on a visit to Palestine in 1935, 'Abd al-Raḥīm Maḥmūd recited his poem نجم السعد (The Lucky Star)¹ in the prince's presence when the city of Tulkarm was holding celebrations in honour of the prince. After praising him in the opening verses, the poet put the following question to the guest:

¹ 'Abd al-Raḥīm Maḥmūd, Dīwān 'Abd al-Raḥīm Maḥmūd, p.114. It is said that this poem raised the poet, yet unknown, to immediate fame. See S. K. Jayyusi, Trends and Movements ..., vol.I, p.296.

المسجد الأقصى أجئت تزوره أم جئت من قبل الضياع تودّعه ؟

The Aqṣā Mosque! have you come visiting it,
or bidding it farewell before it is lost?

That was not simply an accidental thought which occurred to the poet in an emotional moment, but a fear, emphasized by the poet in another verse:

وغداً وما أدناه لا يبقى سوى دمع لنا يهمني وسنّ نقرعه

And tomorrow, how near tomorrow is, nothing will remain for us but wailing and gnashing of teeth.

The same fear was repeated by Ibrāhīm Ṭūqān in several poems. In the poem يا قوم (People)(1935),¹ his attack on the Palestinian leaders and his comparison between the strenuous efforts of the Zionist leaders and the selfishness of the Palestinian leadership, reached the following bitter prediction:

يا قوم ليس عدوكم ممن يلين ويرحم
يا قوم ليس أمانكم إلاّ الجلاء فحرّموا

O people! your enemy is not the sort of enemy that can be tender or merciful.
O people! start packing. You have no choice but evacuation.

Once again, in a qit'ā entitled مناهج (Methods) (1935),² Ṭūqān prophesied the fate of the Palestinian Arabs, saying:

¹ Ibrāhīm Ṭūqān, Dīwān Ṭūqān, p.153.

² Ibid., p.162.

أمامك أيها العربي يوم
مصيرك بات يلصقه الأعدائي
تشيب لهوله سود النواصي
وسار حديثه بين الأفاصي
لساكنها ولا ضيق الخصاص
فلا رحب القصور غدا بيباق

For you, an Arab, a terrible day is coming,
in which hair will turn grey.
Your fate is sensed by those around you and
the news of it is on everyone's lips even
in the farthest countries.
Neither spacious palaces, nor humble huts
will remain in the hands of their
inhabitants.

The poet was able to envisage this fate by taking into consideration the fact that the two powerful enemies of the Palestinian Arabs (i.e. Great Britain and the Zionists) had united in their aim to crush and exterminate the Palestinians:

لنا خصمان ذو حول وطول
تواصوا بينهم فأتى ومالا
وأخسر ذو احتيال واقتناص
وإذلالا لنا ذاك التواصي
وبالحسنى تنفذ والرصاص
مناهج للإبادة واضحات

We have two enemies: one is mighty and powerful, the other, a swindler and an opportunist.
From the friendship they have maintained with each other, we have reaped humiliation and evil.
Our eradication has been planned according to lucid methods and carried out sometimes by force, sometimes gently.

Burhān al-Dīn al-'Abbūshī linked the Arabs' departure from Spain with their probable evacuation of Palestine:

يا ابن البلاد وأنت سيد أرضها
ما من أندلسا يمستك مثله
يوم الجلاء اسمع نعيق غرابه
فابذل له تلحقه قبل ذهابه¹

¹ 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Kayyālī, al-Shi'r al-Filastīnī..., p.119.

You, native of the country and the master of
its land!
Listen to the raven's croak, fortelling the
day of exile.
What happened to al-Andalus could happen to
you. Sacrifice (for the sake of your country)
before it is too late!

In another poem, al-'Abbūshī urges his people to awake,
before they find themselves thrown out of Palestine. He
reminds them of the Arabs' glory at the times of Khālīd
b. al-Walīd, and Saladin:

فأفيقوا يا قوم قبل جلاء عن بلاد فيها عظام الجدود
ما تقولون إن نرحم صغاراً ليصلاح وخالد بن الوليد¹

Awake people, before you are expelled from
a country, where the bones of your ancestors
are buried!
What would you say to Saladin and Khālīd
b. al-Walīd if you were meekly expelled?

Muḥammad Ḥasan 'Alā' al-Dīn tells of a ghost often
seen by him. Each time the poet chases that ghost away,
it soon came back to fill the poet with horror. It was the
ghost of the Arab exodus from Palestine:

شبح الرحيل خست من تمال يزجي الى قلبي رؤى الأهوال
شبح الرحيل أما تكف عن الأذى شبح الرحيل أما تني تغشى لي²

Ghost of the exodus, go away! You are
squeezing visions of horror into my heart.
Ghost of the exodus! Won't you stop
hurting me? Aren't you tired of appearing
to me?

Predictions of disaster are seen also in many poems

¹ Ibid.

² 'Abd al-Rahmān Yāghī, Ḥayāt al-Adab al-Filastīnī...,
p.251.

written by other Arab poets during the thirties and forties, especially by Egyptian and Iraqi poets. But in such poems the predicted disaster is attributed merely to the Arabs' negligence and remissness towards Palestine.¹

¹ Some examples of this are mentioned in chapter III, p.122.

CHAPTER III

The Widening Circle

(1) Arab Concern about the Palestine Problem, 1917-1948.

As has been mentioned before, the Palestine problem has been the subject of enormous Arab concern since the foundation of the Arab League in 1945, and this has continued right up to the present time. Because of Palestine, the Arabs have had three wars with Israel during a period of twenty-five years only (i.e. 1948, 1967, 1973). The balance between the size of this small country both in area and population,¹ and the attention given to it by the Arabs may appear totally out of proportion, and does not make any easier the comprehension of the claim that the problem of Palestine has been a serious problem for all Arabs.

However, special mention should be made here to the development of this concern during the period preceding the foundation of the Arab League and to the factors underlying it, since it sheds light on the attention paid to the problem by Arab poets.

To explain why this problem has been a major concern of the Arab countries, we may isolate three main components.

¹ Palestine comprises 10,249 square miles as compared to the 4,786,689 square miles which are the area of the rest of the Arab World. This means that its area constitutes about 2/1000 of the total area of all the Arab countries. The Palestinians constitute about 2% of the total Arab population.

Anis Sayegh, Palestine and Arab Nationalism, p.9.

1- Religious Factors.

It is known that Palestine is a "Holy Land" for the adherents of three religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Although Islam emerged in the Arab Peninsula, Palestine (i.e. Jerusalem) became, soon after the emergence of this religion, the first of the two qiblas for Muslims in their prayers, the second qibla being Mecca. Furthermore, Jerusalem gained a particular holiness among Muslims as a result of the Prophet Muḥammad's night journey to it from Mecca on al-Burāq. On this event the Qur'ān reads:

"سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا مِّنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَى الَّذِي بَارَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ لَنُرِيَهُ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ" 1.

"Glory to Him, Who carried His servant by night from the 'al-Ḥaram' Mosque to 'al-Aqṣā' Mosque the precincts of which We have blessed, that We might show him some of Our signs. He is the All-hearing, the All-seeing".

Al-Aqṣā Mosque in Jerusalem and its sacredness for Muslims was also the subject of a number of Prophetic Ḥadiths, among which was:

لَا تُشَدُّ الرِّحَالُ إِلَّا إِلَى ثَلَاثَةِ مَسَاجِدَ : الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ ، وَمَسْجِدِ الرَّسُولِ ، وَمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَى 2 .

No ritual journey can be made to any place but three mosques: the Sacred Mosque (of Mecca), the Mosque of the Prophet (in Medina) and the Aqṣā Mosque (in Jerusalem).

Since the Islamic conquest in 638 A.D. and until

¹ Qur'ān, 17:1.

² Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Kitāb Faḍl al-Ṣalā fī Masjid Makka wal-Madīna, 20:1.

1917, Palestine was in the hands of Muslims, with the exception of a short period when it was ruled by the Crusaders.¹

The Jews, whose image in the Qur'ān is displeasing,² being the other party in the struggle for the possession of Palestine, gave religious factors a particular importance especially during this stage of the conflict.

The Arabs (the majority of them Muslims) believed that to give up Palestine to the Jews would mean that they had not been faithful to their religion, since it was of great religious significance to all Muslims. This belief was

¹ In 1099 A.D. the Crusaders advanced to Jerusalem via Acre and captured the city from the Fatimids after a five weeks' siege. Saladin's victory at the battle of Hittin (1187 A.D.) paved the way for him to capture Jerusalem from the Crusades. The final ejection of the Crusaders from some coastal cities was completed by the end of the 13th century and the whole of Palestine was finally incorporated in the Mamlūk Sultanate of Egypt until the Ottoman conquest in 1517.

² The following verses of the Qur'ān are examples of the same image:

In Sūra 3:181;

” لقد سمع الله قول الذين قالوا ان الله فقير ونحن أغنياء سنكتب ما قالوا وقتلهم الأنبياء بغير حق ونقول ذوقوا عذاب الحريق ”

In Sūra 5:82;

” لتجدن أشد الناس عداوة للذين آمنوا اليهود والذين أشركوا ولتجدن أقربهم مودة للذين آمنوا الذين قالوا انا نصارى ذلك بأن منهم قسيسين ورهبانا وأنهم لا يستكبرون ”

In Sūra 60:13;

” يا أيها الذين آمنوا لا تتولوا قوما غضب الله عليهم قد يئسوا من الآخرة كما يئس الكفار من أصحاب القبور ”

voiced loudly in Arab thinking and writings. Ṣaḥīfat al-Ikhwān al-Muṣlimīn in Egypt, for instance, by way of concentrating on the great significance of Palestine to the Muslims, and that the Palestinian Arabs were no more than guards of its holy places, used to emphasize that he who does not fulfil his religious duty towards Palestine by defending her against the Jews is a renegade (مارق في دينه) and is a disavowal of his Arabhood (ومتكّر لعروته).¹

Another Egyptian newspaper with Islamic inclinations, Kawkab al-Sharq, attributed the struggle between the Arabs and the Jews over Palestine to "merely religious reasons".² With this concept underlying its way of reasoning, Kawkab al-Sharq wrote in 1933 calling upon Arabs and Muslims to stand by the Palestinian Arabs during the disturbances of that year in Palestine:

The echo of the demonstrations in Jerusalem has reached the two worlds, the Arab and the Islamic, announcing to the Muslims that their Holy Places were in danger. The Jews are coveting the demolition of the Blessed Aqṣā Mosque, the first of the two qiblas and the third Holy Place, so that Solomon's Temple can be built on its ruins.³

Several other papers with Islamic inclinations were founded in Egypt during the period under discussion, such as al-Fath (1926) by Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb, Nūr al-Islām (1929) and al-Jihād al-Islāmī (1929) by Ṣāliḥ Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ, al-Jāmi'a al-Islāmiyya (1932) by 'Alī 'Abd al-Raḥmān Khamīs, and Hudā al-Islām (1934) by Muḥammad Aḥmad

¹ 'Awāṭif 'Abd al-Raḥmān, Miṣr wa-Filastīn, p.274.

² Ibid., p.125.

³ Ibid., p.225.

al-Sayrafī.

By way of accounting for the growth of religious trend in Egyptian literature after the First World War, an Egyptian writer Sa'd al-Dīn al-Jīzāwī, counted 45 papers of Islamic tendency which appeared in Egypt between 1920 and 1956. Of this number 21 papers were founded between 1925 and 1935.¹ He also noticed that between 1925 and 1939, several religious (Islamic) societies spread in Egypt, some of which gained world-wide fame (e. g. the Muslim Brethren).²

Another writer 'Abd al-'Azīm Ramadān, states that the noticeable attention paid by "the Muslim Brothers" and "Miṣr al-Fatāh Group" (The Young Egypt Group) to Palestine since the late twenties had been a major factor in making Egyptian public opinion sympathetic to the Palestinian Arabs.³

In another Arab country which is geographically far removed from Palestine, namely Algeria, religion was the main factor in attracting Algerian attention to what was happening in Palestine. "The Muslim Algerian 'Ulamā' Society"

(جمعية العلماء المسلمين الجزائريين) played a leading role in familiarizing Algerian public opinion with the problem by fiery articles and declarations published in al-Baṣā'ir,⁴

¹ Al- 'Āmil al-Dīnī fil-Shi'r al-Miṣrī al-Ḥadīth, p.225.

² Ibid., p.210.

³ Taṭawwur al-Ḥaraka al-'Arabiyya fī Miṣr, vol.2, p.352.

⁴ See for example Nos:

1st year: No.42, (6 November, 1936) p.6.

No.43, (13 November, 1936) p.6-7.

No.45, (27 November, 1936) pp.3,6.

No.48, (25 December, 1936) p.3.

the weekly paper of the society, and in al-Shihāb paper.

'Abd al-Ḥamīd b. Bādīs (1889-1940), one of the leading 'Ulamā' of the society mentioned above, for instance, writes in al-Shihāb describing what was happening in Palestine in 1936 as an "insult to all Muslim countries and a degradation of Arabism".¹ Then he goes on to say:

How could Muslims allow this to happen while a remnant of religious dignity or Arab chivalry still exists among them, and while they still have souls or wealth?

Al-Ṭayyib al-'Aqbī and Muḥammad al-Bashīr al-Ibrāhīmī (1889-1965) two leading personalities in the society just mentioned were also injecting public opinion in Algeria with enthusiasm for Palestine by their articles. The latter once described the hardship of Palestine in 1947 in an article published in al-Baṣā'ir as a "test set up by God in order to examine the Muslims and the Arabs' faith", and stressed the view that Palestine belongs to all Arabs and not only to the Palestinians.²

Moreover, Algerian public hostile reactions towards the Jewish community living there, as happened in the summer of 1934, when disturbances took place in Constantine (in north-east Algeria) in which a number of Jews were killed, were

2nd year: No.78, (13 August, 1937) pp.1-2, 6.

No.79, (20 August, 1937) pp.2,6,8.

3rd year: No.131, (19 September, 1938) p.1.

¹ Muḥammad al-Tammār, Tārīkh al-Adab al-Jazā'irī, p.377.

² Muḥammad al-Ṭāhir Fuḍāla, al-Imām al-Rā'id Muḥammad al-Bashīr al-Ibrāhīmī fī Dhikrāh al-Ūlā, p.222.

seen by some Arabs as resulting from a growing mood of anger against the Jews in regard to what was happening in Palestine at that time.

The Mahjarī poet, Īliyā Abū Mādī (N. America:1889-1957) commented on those disturbances in an article entitled فتنة قسنطينة : نعمة المقهور (Constantine : The Resentment of the Indignant) and published it in al-Samīr* in August, 1934. Al-Shihāb in Algeria republished the article shortly after its publication in al-Samīr. Abū Mādī in the article says that the Zionist Movement was the sole reason that made the Islamic countries change their attitude towards the Jews, because when the Zionists were "armed with the Balfour Declaration" they turned into usurpers, their aim being to expel the Arabs from Palestine and to establish a Jewish Kingdom there. The Zionist Movement -the writer goes on- was formed on a religious base, therefore it was not strange that the Muslims rose to fight it with the same weapon. Then he concludes that the "Muslim revolt" -as he called it- in Constantine was a revolt of the indignant.¹

2- National Factors.

It happened that when Arab nationalism as a movement with political aims and importance emerged towards the end

¹ Ṣāliḥ Kharfī, al-Jazā'ir wal-Aṣāla al-Thawriyya, p.38.

* Al-Samīr: a monthly magazine founded by Īliyā Abū Mādī in New York in 1929. In 1936 it became a daily newspaper. It continued to be published up to the death of Abū Mādī in 1957.

of the nineteenth century, Zionism also was born as a movement, with explicit aims and aspirations. Ironically enough, both movements, Zionist and Arab nationalism, counted on the help of Great Britain to assist them in achieving their objectives: the Arabs hoped to establish an independent Arab kingdom under the leadership of the Sharīf of Mecca (Sharīf Husayn), and the Jews, to gain support for the "national Home" they felt they needed.

Nevertheless, by the end of the First World War, Greater Syria and Iraq were separated, and Syria itself was divided into four parts, two of which came under the French Mandate (i.e. Syria and Lebanon) and the other two under the British Mandate (i.e. Palestine and Transjordan). In short, the hopes of Arab nationalism were frustrated, while those of the Zionists gained encouragement and protection.

It has been mentioned before, that the conflict between the two movements was predicted as early as 1905 by the Syrian Najīb 'Āzūrī. But after the War, when the Arabs became aware of the implications of "the Balfour Declaration", and when they found that the relation between Zionism and some western countries, especially Great Britain, was so firm, the Zionist threat to the idea of Arab nationalism became certain.¹

Imīl Zaydān, for example, in an article entitled ^١ قضية فلسطين (The Palestinian Cause is a Pan-Arab

¹ For further discussion on this point, see Najīb Sadaqa, Qaḍīyyat Filastīn, pp.321-337.

Cause) argued, as many Arab writers did, that the "Arabs' unity would not come into existence if Palestine lost its character as an Arab country".¹ Another writer, Muḥammad 'Awad Muḥammad was of the opinion that the "Zionist Movement was no more than a movement aiming at colonizing an Arab country, Palestine, by Slavonic and Germanic groups who were not in any way related to it". The writer went on to conclude that the Zionist Movement "represents the most hideous kind of imperialism, because it does not aim only at taking over the country politically, but also at enabling foreign immigrants to settle in the place of its native inhabitants". This sort of oppression was viewed by the writer as a unique phenomenon in the history of imperialism.²

Such ideas were expressed by many Arab writers, whether Christian or Muslim. For instance a Lebanese Christian writer, Qusṭanṭīn Zurayq, published a book معنى النكبة (The Meaning of the Disaster) shortly after the Arab defeat in 1948. In that book he republished two articles which had been written before the defeat. The first was entitled الصراع بين المبدأ والقوة في قضية فلسطين (The Conflict between Force and Principle in the Problem of Palestine), the other لماذا نجاهد في فلسطين (Why we participate in the Jihād in Palestine). In the two articles, Zurayq argues that the cause of Palestine is an Arab cause, because if a Jewish state were founded there, it would prevent unity and cooperation among Arab countries.

¹ Al-Hilāl, vol.53 (1945), p.13.

² Ibid., vol.55 (1947), p.29.

However, it seems likely that to many Arab writers the Palestinian cause had distinct role in the development of the concept of Arab nationalism, by opening the eyes of the Arabs to the Zionist threat, not only to Palestine but to other Arab countries.¹ Besides, it was the Palestinian problem which brought to Egypt the idea of Arab nationalism, as many Egyptian scholars state, after Egypt had kept itself away from that idea until the mid-thirties.² Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir, one of the "Free Officers Group" and president of Egypt (1954-1970), states that his Arab national consciousness began when he began to join demonstrations and strikes held by the Egyptians on each anniversary of the Balfour Declaration, in the late thirties and forties.³

According to the academic writer, Dr. Suhayr al-Qalamāwī, the Palestinian problem was an important factor behind the isolation and suppression of the chauvinistic ideas which appeared in some Arab countries, such as the Phoenicianism of Lebanon, the Pharaonicism of Egypt and the Babylonianism of Iraq.⁴

3- Political and Economic Factors.

Palestine lies at the centre of the Arab Homeland

¹ Anis Sayegh, Palestine and Arab Nationalism, p.42.

² 'Abd al-'Azīm Ramaḍān, Tatawwur al-Ḥaraka al-'Arabiyya fi Miṣr, vol.2, p.336. See also 'Awāṭif 'Abd al-Raḥmān, Miṣr wa-Filasṭīn. pp.72-76.

³ Falsafat al-Thawra, p.63.

⁴ "Al-Adab wal-Wihda al-'Arabiyya", al-Ādāb, no.3, March 1965, pp.12-15.

linking three of its four geographical regions: the Fertile Crescent , the Arab Peninsula and the Nile Valley. It, therefore, forms a bridge between these three regions. Having this strategic position, a Jewish state in this country was considered by the Arabs an imminent danger to the rest of the Arab world politically and economically. This point of view was emphasized by many Arab writers in different fields, whether politically, economically or militaristically orientated.

For instance at the "Bludan Conference" in 1937, the Egyptian Vice-Chairman, Muḥammad 'Alī 'Allūbā, stated that a Jewish state in Palestine would be as great a danger to Egypt as to the other neighbouring Arab countries.¹ Another Egyptian politician Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ḥaykal in his diaries on Egypt's policy during the thirties and forties, argues that the factors underlying the concern shown by the Egyptians with regard to the Palestinian question were of a religious, political and economic nature, since "a Jewish home on the borders of Egypt would threaten Egypt politically and economically".²

The belief that a Jewish State in Palestine would be a serious danger to the neighbouring Arab countries was indisputable. 'Abbās Maḥmūd al-'Aqqād (1889-1964) for instance, a well-known literary figure from Egypt, wrote several articles about Palestine and Zionism before the outbreak of the 1948 War. In one of those articles

¹ Albert Hourani, Arabic Thought ..., p.295.

² "Mudhakkarāt fil-Siyāsa al-Miṣriyya", vol.2, p.14.

بين طريقين (Between Two Roads), he argues that if Palestine fell into the hands of the Zionists, then an economic danger would befall neighbouring countries in the immediate future. Moreover, this economic danger -the writer says- would be followed by a political and military threat in a very short time.¹

Moreover, other Egyptian writers, in order to demonstrate this, went back to ancient history, declaring that all military expeditions against Egypt had come from the east through Palestine: the Hyksos, the Hittite, Persian, the Greek, and the Roman. The Muslims too, under the leadership of 'Amr Ibn al-'Āṣ reached Egypt by the same route.²

Another quotation from the pamphlet written by Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir, Falsafat al-Thawra (The Philosophy of the Revolution) may help us illustrate the Arab conviction of official levels that their involvement in the problem of Palestine was merely an involvement in a cause which affected their own security inside their countries. In that pamphlet, Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir writes about his feelings during the 1948 War:

¹ 'Abbās Maḥmūd al-'Aqqād, al-Ṣuhyūniyya wa-Qaḍiyyat Filastīn, (articles collected by al-Ḥassānī Ḥasan 'Abdullah), p.63.

² 'Ūda Buṭrus 'Ūda, al-Qaḍiyya al-Filastīniyya fil-Wāqī' al-'Arabī, pp.76-79.

Also Sulaymān Ḥazīn, "al-Jāmi'a al-'Arabiyya wa-Muqawwimātuhā. al-Jughrāfiyya wal-Tārīkhiyya", al-Kātib al-Miṣrī, no.4, January 1946, pp.529-542.

When the crisis started, I was entirely convinced that the battle in Palestine was neither a battle on a foreign land, nor an emotional urge, but rather an act of self-defence.¹

However, more quotations on this subject could be amply provided from various Arabic sources: books, articles, journals, etc.; but, it seems superfluous to emphasize this point further, since what has been quoted above gives sufficient evidence of the line of the argument.

(2) Development of Interest.

It may seem strange that Arab public concern in the cause did not emerge shortly after the Balfour Declaration was issued, but immediately after the outbreak of the Burāq events; although the Balfour Declaration was, to a greater degree, more dangerous for Palestine, and it was the Declaration which affected its future and not the events of 1929.

With regard to those events, religious societies and papers of Islamic inclination played a major role in arousing Arab public opinion, on the grounds that the Holy Places in Palestine were in danger.

As for a country like Egypt, for instance, a book was published recently in which the author 'Awāṭif 'Abd al-Raḥmān discusses in detail the development of the Palestinian cause in the Egyptian press between 1922 and 1948.² In her

¹ P. 63.

² Miṣr wa-Filastīn, Kuwait, 1980.

discussion she explains the attitude of public opinion, the political parties, the religious groups, the government and the "Palace" (السراى). When writing about the effect of the Burāq events on the Egyptians, 'Awāṭif says that those events gave Egyptian public interest in the cause a "strong push". It agitated Islamic and Arab national feelings, the latter being still obscure among the Egyptians. The reaction was overwhelming amongst religious circles. The writer goes on to say that the "Muslim Brothers Association" worked energetically and actively in collecting donations for the Palestinian Arabs.¹ Telegrams of protest were sent by the Association to the League of Nations. Three Egyptians (i.e. Muḥammad 'Alī 'Allūba, Aḥmad Zakī and 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Sa'īd) went to Jerusalem to defend the Palestinians' right of possession over the Wall² before the Commission appointed by the League Council in May 15, 1930 to study and determine the rights and claims of Jews and Muslims to the Wall.³

Al-Manār, the monthly Islamic journal, commented on these events in several numbers. In one of the articles written by Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, the writer explains how deeply Muslims, together with Christians all over the Arab countries, became sympathetic to the Palestinians. This sympathy was widely noted in the Arab press and among the Arabs, whether by protesting against the Mandate, or by

¹ Ibid., p:107.

² Ibid.

³ The Royal Institute of International Affairs, Great Britain and Palestine, p.47.

supporting and collecting donations for the Palestinians. The writer then goes on to say that the Burāq events made some Arab kings state frankly their sympathy with and support for the Palestinians, among whom was the King of Saudi Arabia and the Imam of Yemen.

It was the first time, Riḍā claims, that the Shaykh of al-Azhar, Muḥammad Mustafā al-Marāghī, was to announce openly his sympathy with the Palestinian Arabs, challenging by this act the Government's orders to clergymen not to express their opinions about political affairs.

Then Riḍā reveals that he had once before these events, urged Shaykh Abū al-Faḍl al-Jīzāwī, the Shaykh of al-Azhar at that time, to deliver a Fatwā (formal legal opinion) about the necessity for Muslims to protect al-Aqṣā Mosque, but he refused. When Riḍā pressed him to do so, Shaykh al-Jīzāwī got angry and addressed him saying:

Do you think that you are the only man who is faithful to Islam! We are faithful like you, but you can speak freely, while we cannot. You know that we are forbidden to discuss anything related to politics .1

Al-'Irfān, a Lebanese monthly journal of Islamic inclination also, as another example, wrote much about those events and the reactions to them among Muslims and Arabs.²

Two years after the incidents of al-Burāq, Hājj Amīn

¹ Al-Manār, vol.30, no.6, 1929, p.467.

² See for example: vol.17, no.1, 1929, p.119.
vol.17, no.2, 1929, p.277.
vol.18, no.4, 1929, p.532.
vol.19, no.2, 1930, p.156.

al-Husaynī, the Grand Muftī of Jerusalem and President of the Supreme Muslim Council of Palestine, assisted by some well known Islamic personalities such as Shawkat 'Alī the leader of the Indian Khilafat Committee, and others, succeeded in holding a General Islamic Congress at Jerusalem in December 1931.¹

The Congress was attended by a large number of non-official delegations from about twenty-two countries,² beside members representing various Muslims groups and associations. The opening date of the Congress was fixed to coincide with the anniversary of al-Isrā' wal-Mi'rāj.

By organizing this Congress, Ḥājj Amīn hoped to focus international Muslim attention on the Palestinian problem. Several decisions and recommendations were adopted by the participants, such as the establishment of an Islamic University at Jerusalem and an Islamic Land Company to save Arab lands from being sold to Jews. The Congress also declared the sanctity of the al-Aqṣā Mosque and its surroundings, the religious significance of Palestine to the Muslim world, and denounced Zionism and British policy in Palestine.³

It should be noticed that two other conferences of an Islamic persuasion were held before the General Islamic Congress of Jerusalem. In May 1926, a non-official Congress

¹ For details about the Congress see: H. A. R. Gibb, "The Islamic Congress at Jerusalem in December 1931", Survey of International Affairs, 1934, pp.99-109.

² Najīb Ṣadaqa, Qaḍiyyat Filastīn, p.159.

³ Abd al-Wahhab al-Kayyālī, Palestine: a Modern History, p.166.

was convened at Cairo by a committee of Egyptian 'Ulamā' to investigate the situation of the Caliphate. The second was the "Congress of the Islamic World" held at Mecca in June and July the same year (1926) for the same purpose. This Congress was attended by official delegations from the Governments of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Turkey and Afghanistan and from authoritative Muslim bodies and associations in other countries.¹ But in those two Congresses of 1926, the problem in Palestine was not discussed. This, therefore, gives the Congress of 1931 special significance as far as Palestine is concerned, although its decisions remained "mere ink on paper".

The revolt of the Palestinian Arabs which began in April 1936, signal^{led} a new stage in the development of Arab interest in the problem. Although some Arabs participated in some previous armed activities against the Jews and the Government, such as the Syrian Shaykh 'Izz al-Dīn al-Qassām, who was killed in 1935 -as mentioned above-² in a clash with the Government police,³ such involvement was limited. But in the 1936 revolt, hundreds of Arab volunteers rushed to the country from outside. Ṣubḥī Yāsīn, a Palestinian who participated in the fighting then, estimates the number of volunteers from Syria at 200; among them were Sa'īd al-'Āṣ, Fawzī al-Qāwuqjī, Muḥammad al-Ashmar, and Ḥamad Ṣa'b.⁴

¹ H.A.R. Gibb, "The Islamic Congress...", p.99.

² See above, p.49.

³ Two Syrians and one Egyptian were killed with al-Qassām. See Ṣubḥī Yāsīn, al-Thawra al-'Arabiyya al-Kubrā fī Filastīn, p.35.

⁴ Ibid., p.268.

From Iraq he estimates the number at 150,¹ from Transjordan about 250,² besides some volunteers from Lebanon, Egypt and Saudi Arabia.³

In addition to the fact that the Arabic attitude in this revolt acquired a practical nature, Arab official interest also existed openly, when, on October 11th, 1936, the Arab kings of Saudi Arabia and Iraq with the Emir 'Abdullah of Transjordan and the Imam of Yemen issued an appeal to the Arabs of Palestine and sent to the President of the Arab Higher Committee requesting an end to the strike and restoration of peace to enable the British Government to fulfil the ends of justice.⁴

In fact, Great Britain, as well as some Zionist leaders, was desirous of an official Arab involvement in Palestine. As for Great Britain, by encouraging the mediation of Arab States, it is obvious that she was working towards shifting the responsibility for this revolt from the hands of the

¹ Ibid., p.270.

² Ibid., p.266.

³ Ibid., p.270.

⁴ The appeal reads as follows:

We have been deeply pained by the present state of affairs in Palestine. For this reason we have agreed with our brothers the Kings and Emir ('Abdullah) to call upon you to resolve for peace in order to save further shedding of blood. In doing this, we rely on the good intentions of our friend Great Britain, who has declared that she will do justice. You must be confident that we will continue our efforts to assist you.

See Royal Institute of International Affairs, Great Britain and Palestine, p.96. Also, Najīb Sadaqa, Qaḍiyyat Filastīn, p.189.

Palestinian leadership and putting it in the hands of the Arab rulers who were on good terms with Great Britain.¹

Of the Zionist Movement, we may cite the following quotation from the Palestine Diary written by F.H. Kisch, who worked at the "Palestine Zionism Executive" and was the official spokesman of the Zionist Movement at Jerusalem for eight years (1923-1931):

It is, and always has been my conviction that the understanding which we have to reach with the Palestinian Arabs will be achieved only by our developing relations with the larger Arab world, that is, with the real leaders who enjoy unquestioned authority in the neighbouring Arab countries. 2

The Bludan Conference held in Syria in September 1937, marks a further step in the development of Arab interest in the cause. This Conference was attended by 411 members³ representing several Arab countries. Four main decisions were reached at the Conference among which was the rejection of the partition of Palestine and the demand for the cessation of Jewish immigration to Palestine.⁴ Only one year later, a Parliamentary Conference was held in Cairo, (October 1938) where the partition plan was also rejected.⁵

¹ Anis Sayegh, Palestine and Arab Nationalism, p.33.

² P.361.

³ The delegates were distributed as follows: 160 from Syria, 65 from Lebanon, 12 from Iraq, 6 from Egypt, 39 from Transjordan, 1 from Saudi Arabia and 128 Palestinian Arabs. See 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Kayyālī, Tārīkh Filastīn al-Ḥadīth, p.334.

⁴ Najīb Ṣadaqa, Qadiyyat Filastīn, pp.214-215.

⁵ Ibid., 226.

In the same year, the interest of other Arab states in the problem was formally recognized by the British Government, when she sent invitations to the Arab States of Egypt, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Transjordan, to send delegates to the "Round Table Conference" to be held in London. Invitations were also sent to the Jewish Agency in Palestine and to the Palestinian Arabs.¹ The Conference failed, and the British proposals as issued in what became known as the 'White Paper' on May 17, 1939, satisfied neither the Arabs nor the Jews.²

In March 1945, the Arab League, formed then of seven states,³ came into being. Since the formulation of this league, the Palestinian problem became the main cause of the Arabs in their contemporary history.

¹ Royal Institute of International Affairs, Great Britain and Palestine, p.119.

² Ibid., p.125.

³ The States are: Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Transjordan, Saudi Arabia and Yemen.

(3) Arab Poetry on Palestine, 1917-1948.

In this chapter, which deals with the poems written on Palestine during the period between 1917 and 1948, about 250 poems and poetical texts composed by more than one hundred poets from different Arab countries were consulted. The texts and the poets were distributed as follows: from Egypt 42 texts by 17 poets, from Iraq 78 texts by 28 poets, from the Arab Peninsula 14 texts by 9 poets, from Syria 21 texts by 8 poets, from Lebanon 49 texts by 22 poets, from Arab North Africa 15 texts by 8 poets, from the Mahjar (N. and S. America) 30 texts by 12 poets, and from Trans-jordan 3 poems by one poet.

The reasons for giving these figures in detail are two: first, to demonstrate by the figures that this subject had attracted the attention of Arab poets to an unprecedented extent, more than any other problem in their modern history; and second, that in spite of the large number of poems consulted here, we cannot claim that these poems were all that Arab poets composed on Palestine. There were poems we could not obtain, but, at the same time, we may fairly claim that what was available provides a clear picture of the poetical treatment of Palestine by Arab poets during that period.

Before starting our discussion of these compositions, it should be mentioned, moreover, that in the period under discussion, there were several distinguished Arab poets in whose work the problem of Palestine was not mentioned.

Aḥmad Shawqī for instance (1869-1932) who in 1927

was crowned as the "Prince of Poets" (أمير الشعراء), did not write a single poem on the Palestine issue. The same applies in the case of Muḥammad Ḥāfiẓ Ibrāhīm (Egypt:1871-1932). The poetry of those two poets, it must be stressed, was regarded as the most celebrated of the time, not only in Egypt, but all over the Arab world.

Another poet, Muṭrān Khalīl Muṭrān (1870-1949), a Lebanese who lived in Egypt and had established a great reputation in the Arab world, again did not give the Palestinian issue its due importance, although Muṭrān visited Palestine in 1924,¹ and was no doubt quite familiar with the current state of affairs and the problems underlying it. The only reference which can be said to have been directly made by Muṭrān to the problem exists in a poem composed during his above-mentioned visit to the country. After praising the Palestinian Arabs and their generosity the poet addresses Palestine, saying:

من يستبيحك والآساد رابضة
إنّ الثعالب لا تدنو من الأجم²

Who could ever dare to seize you while
your lions are there on the alert! Foxes
dare not approach jungles.

By way of accounting for the position taken by Shawqī and Ḥāfiẓ, it may be argued that they failed to involve themselves in the Palestinian issue because the problem was not familiar to the general Egyptian public until their deaths in 1932.

¹ Khalīl Muṭrān, Dīwān al-Khalīl, vol.3, p.46.

² Ibid., p.97.

However, such an argument could easily be refuted by the fact that a large portion of the general public in Egypt had become acquainted with the problem since the Burāq events in 1929. Moreover, prior to those events, some Egyptian poets, e.g. Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Ghanī Ḥasan and ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ‘Atīq (1906-) had referred to the Palestinian problem in their poetry. In 1928, and on the occasion of a visit to Egypt by a Palestinian educational delegation, the two poets just mentioned took the opportunity to express their sympathetic feelings towards their Palestinian brothers, Ḥasan in a poem entitled *نسيمة من فلسطين* (A Breeze from Palestine)¹ and ‘Atīq in a poem entitled *تحية الوفد الفلسطيني* (Greeting of the Palestinian Delegation).²

In the poem composed by Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Ghanī Ḥasan, he addresses the dawn breezes, asking them to deliver a message of love and sympathy to the Arabs in Palestine. What can be seen as a more significant feature of this poem is that he asks the breezes to bring back news to him secretly for fear that the authorities might learn of his sympathetic feelings towards Palestine. The poet goes on to say that everything had become subject to censorship and close control, not only with regard to what was said but also to what was wished.

(تحكم الخصم حتى في سامعنا لا بل تحكم حتى في أمانينا)

¹ Dīwān Nab‘ al-Ḥayāh, pp.96-97.

² Dīwān ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ‘Atīq, pp.143-147.

To go back to the attitude taken by Shawqī and Ḥāfiẓ, the preceding facts may be taken as an argument to prove that the two poets avoided reference to Palestine not because they were unaware of the problem, but rather because they were reluctant to upset the then authorities who were known for their passive attitudes towards the Palestinian problem. This claim can be supported by a number of facts. In 1925, for example, Ismā'īl Ṣidqī, the then Minister of the Interior, arrested a number of Palestinian Arabs living in Egypt, for no other reason than that they had demonstrated against Lord Balfour, who passed through Cairo on his way to Jerusalem where the Hebrew University was to be inaugurated.¹

Also when Ismā'īl Ṣidqī became the prime-minister in 1930, he ordered the closing down of the al-Shūrā newspaper, which took a sympathetic line towards the Palestinians Arabs, and whose editor Muḥammad 'Alī al-Tāhir (1894-1974) was Palestinian and an active supporter of the "Wafd Party".² On the other hand, another newspaper Israel, first issued in 1920 by Albert Mūṣīrī, which, as can be gathered from its name, advocated the viewpoints of the Zionist Movement, was allowed to continue its appearance.³

It should also be noted that, during the Burāq events, the Egyptian Government under Muḥammad Maḥmūd, the then

¹ 'Awāṭif 'Abd al-Raḥmān, Miṣr wa-Filastīn, p.110

² For more details about Muḥammad 'Alī al-Tāhir's activities, See the article written by Khayriyya Qāsimiyya, published in Shu'ūn Filastīniyya, no.39, November 1974, pp.150-163.

³ 'Awāṭif 'Abd al-Raḥmān, op. cit., p.110

prime-minister, did not take a positive attitude towards politically active Palestinians living in Egypt. The Siyāsa newspaper, which represented the views of the government at that time, used to threaten the Palestinian activists living in Egypt with deportation, accusing them of arousing agitation among the Egyptian public.¹

All these factors may help form an idea about the factors behind Shawqī's and Ḥāfiẓ's avoidance of making any mention of the subject of Palestine. Of Muṭrān Khalīl Muṭrān, the same factors probably provide some explanation of his negligence of the subject, but only for the period preceding the midthirties when the official Egyptian attitudes towards the Palestine problem was not sympathetic. After Egypt changed her policy in the late thirties and joined the Arab bloc in this respect, such barriers which might have made the poet reluctant to upset the authorities had been removed completely and, therefore, it is not easy to understand why Muṭrān continued the same attitude up to his death in 1949.

The passiveness of those poets Shawqī, Ḥāfiẓ, and Muṭrān seems to have been deeply felt by some contemporary Palestinian poets, such as Ibrāhīm Ṭūqān who expressed his regret at the fact that these poets failed to add their voices to those of others in defence of the Palestinian cause. In عاب الى شعراء مصر (A Reproach to the Poets of Egypt)(1929)² he blames them for disregarding the

¹ Ibid.

² Dīwān Ibrāhīm Ṭūqān, pp.188-189

miseries of his country, while they were moved by matters far removed from their immediate problems, saying:

كم بلاد تهزكم ليس فيها	لكم جيرة ولا اخوان
خطبنا لا يهز شوقي ولكن	جاء روما فهزّه الرومان
خطبنا لا يهز حافظ ابراهيم	هيم لكن تهزّه اليابان
ما لمطران يا فلسطين شأن	بك لكن له بنيرون شان

How many a country with which you have
neither ties of neighbourhood nor brother-
hood move you deeply!
Our cause does not affect Shawqī, though
he was deeply moved by the Romans when
he saw Rome.
Our cause does not affect Ḥāfiẓ. Only
Japan can do that!
Alas Palestine, Muṭrān has nothing to do
with you, but only with Nero! 1

Jamīl Ṣidqī al-Zahāwī (Iraq: 1862-1936) for his part, did not write a single poem in which the problem of Palestine was treated as the main subject. The only mention he made of this topic came in a single verse whereby way of surveying East-West relations, he stated that all Arabs feel angry with Balfour because of the harm he caused them by issuing his famous declaration.²

(سبعون مليون ممن جدهم عرب عليك في الشرق يا بلفور غضبان)

Another Iraqi poet, Maʿrūf al-Raṣāfī (1875-1945), a contemporary of al-Zahāwī, composed a poem in 1920 entitled الى هربرت صموئيل (To Herbert Samuel)³ on the

¹ Tūqān refers in these verses to the following poems composed respectively by Shawqī, Ḥāfiẓ and Muṭrān:

نيرون and زلزال سيناء , روما

² Dīwān Jamīl Ṣidqī al-Zahāwī, the poem entitled الغرب

والشرق, pp.468-469.

³ Dīwān al-Raṣāfī, pp.327-331.

arrival of Sir Herbert Samuel in Palestine as the High Commissioner of the British Mandate. Al-Raṣāfī recited the poem at a party held by the Mayor of Jerusalem, Rāghib al-Nashāshībī, in honour of Sir Herbert. The poem, as well as the poet, were severely criticized in the Arab press in Palestine, which is said to have forced the poet to leave Palestine subsequently.¹

However, it seems that the criticism which al-Raṣāfī's poem faced was not wholly justifiable. The opening verses of the poem praise Sir Herbert Samuel and another guest, Yahūda, for their acknowledgement of the role the Arabs had played in world civilization. The poet then moves to explain to the High Commissioner that the Arabs in modern times have been deeply oppressed, and by no means, the poet says, can they endure such oppression.

In fact al-Raṣāfī warns the High Commissioner gently that if he wants to win the Arabs onto his side, then he should not force them to accept injustice:

فمن سامنا قسرا على الضيم يلقنا مصاعب لا نعطي المقادة بالقسر

Anyone who treats us unjustly will find that
we are stubborn and cannot be ruled by force.

The verses that aroused the storm of anger against the poet are those concerning the Jews. But it should be fairly said that al-Raṣāfī in those verses defends the Arabs against the accusation of being hostile to the Jews. At

¹ 'Abd al-Rahmān Yāghī, Ḥayāt al-Adab al-Filastīnī al-Ḥadīth, p.184.

the same time, he expresses clearly Palestinian fears that they would be evacuated from the country if Britain maintained her declared policy regarding Palestine and the Jews:

ولسنا كما قال الألي يتهمونا
وكيف وهم أعمامنا وإليهم
ولكننا نخشى الجلاء ونتقي
نعدى بني اسرال في السر والجهر
يمت باسماعيل قدما بنو فهر
سياسة حكم تأخذ القوم بالقهر

We are not hostile to the Israelites as some accuse us, neither secretly nor publicly.
How can we be while they are our paternal uncles, and while the "Banū Fihir"* are related to Ishmael.
But evacuation is what we fear, and to be ruled by force is what we try to avoid.

Al-Raṣāfī's poem was ordered by a government official at Jerusalem to be published in al-Karmil newspaper. Najīb Naṣṣār, the editor of al-Karmil, seems to have preferred not to publish the poem before it had been refuted by another poet. He therefore presented the poem to Wadī' al-Bustānī whom he thought was qualified for that task. However, neither al-Raṣāfī's nor al-Bustānī's poem appeared in al-Karmil, but were published in the Syrian newspaper Alif Bā'.¹

In his reply to al-Raṣāfī's poem, al-Bustānī points out that the former, though talented in composing love poetry, was not equally qualified to compose on political affairs. He also adds that the Palestinians were not suspicious of the local Jews (those who were originally

¹ 'Abd al-Raḥmān Yāghī, op. cit., p.183.

* Banū Fihir: Quraysh, one of the Arab tribes in Mekka in ancient times.

living in Palestine), but rather of those who were flowing into the country from abroad.

أجلّ عابر الأردن كان ابن عمنا ولكننا نرتاب في عابر البحر¹

Indeed! that one who crossed the Jordan River was our cousin, but, we suspect the one who is coming now across the sea.

As far as we know, al-Raṣāfī's poem which we have just discussed is the only one composed by the poet on the subject of Palestine.

A close study of the poetry produced in the period under discussion reveals that, when composing on Palestine, Arab poets were motivated by two major tendencies; religious and nationalistic, as we mentioned earlier.

The religious tendency influenced those poems reflecting their authors' strong religious enthusiasm through which they aimed at stressing the importance of the religious bonds connecting them with their brethren in Palestine. Such poems tend to show that the nature of the struggle between the conflicting parties is a conflict based in the first place on religious factors. Besides, poetry in this category stresses the great religious significance of Palestine, whether from the point of view of Muslims or Christians. Support for Palestine according to this view

¹ By " عابر الأردن " the poet is referring to the Jews who crossed the Jordan River with Joshua after Moses death, and by " عابر البحر " he refers to the European Jews who flooded the country after the Balfour Declaration was issued (1917).

was regarded as a religious duty, and participation in defending it was considered as Jihād (Holy War) for the sake of Islam.

As regards poems characterized by nationalistic tendencies, authors of such works stressed the fact that Palestine was part of the Arab world, and that the struggle going on there was between the Arabs on the one hand and Zionism and Imperialism on the other. Aggression towards Palestine was seen by such poets as action aimed at keeping the Arabs weak and divided. Poems of this category also stressed the idea that in losing Palestine to the Jews, Arab hopes of unity would dissolve into fantasy.

It should be noted, however, that what has been said above need not imply that the two tendencies which are the subject of our discussion in the following pages were kept completely separate, either within the poetry of one and the same poet, or even in the same poem.

Religiously Orientated Poetry.

The role played by religion in attracting the poets' attention towards Palestine may be easily comprehended when the large number of poems characterized by this trait are considered, and the extent to which poets were enthusiastic towards that country is taken into account.

It may be worth our while here to mention that the great extent of the role played by religion in respect of our subject can be further illustrated by the fact that even a non-Arab Muslim poet, the well-known Indian poet and philosopher Sir Muḥammad Iqbāl (1875-1938), makes special

mention of the Palestine problem in a number of poems. These poems reflect his sympathy, and voice the feeling of an individual Muslim related to the Palestinian Arabs through bonds of religion.

In a poem entitled *شام و فلسطین* (Greater Syria and Palestine).¹ Iqbāl argues that if the Jews claim rights over Palestine, then the Arabs according to this logic have the right to claim sovereignty over Spain.*

In another poem, *فلسطینی عرب سے* (The Palestinian Arabs),² he stresses the belief that Europe was not qualified to find a solution to the problem of Palestine, because Europe, the poet believes, was greatly influenced by the Jews.**

Once more, in *یورپ اور یہود* (Europe and the Jews),³

¹ Dīwān Darb-i-Kalīm, p.159.

The dīwān was translated into Arabic by 'Abd al-Rahmān 'Azzām in 1953.

² Ibid., p.163.

³ Ibid., p.141.

*

ہے خاکِ فلسطین پہ یہودی گما اگر حق
ہسپانیہ پر حق نہیں کیوں اہل عرب کا؟

If the Jews are the rightful owners of the land of Palestine, so, by the same standard, why may not Arab claim rights over Spain?

**

تیری دوانہ جینوا میں ہے نہ لندن میں
فرنگ کی رگ جاں نخبہ یہودی میں ہے!

A remedy (for the problem) is not to be found in Geneva or in London, because the juglar vein of Europe is in the hands of the Jews.

Iqbāl goes on to accuse Europe of being dominated by the influence of the Jews, stating that European civilization was on the brink of death.*

As we mentioned earlier, Arab poets paid great attention to the religious status of Palestine and its significance to both Muslims and Christians. As for its religious significance to the Jews, it is natural why that was ignored by these poets. ^{As a result of the poets' concentration on this point,} many terms such as أولى القبلتين (The First of the two Qiblas), مهد الأنبياء (The Prophets' Home), مهد المسيح (Cradle of Jesus), مهد القداسة والنبوة (The Land of Holiness and Prophecy), ثالثة الحواصم (The Third Holy Place) etc., became formulae repeated in many poems and by all poets whether Christians or Muslims.

Besides, the danger surrounding Palestine was seen by the poets as a threat to all Holy Places there. Therefore, Muslims and Christians in the Arab world were all ready to sacrifice themselves for a country which had gained great significance by being the place where Jesus was born, and to which Muḥammad travelled in the night of al-Isrā', as a Muslim poet points out.¹

¹ Sulaymān Zāhir in a poem entitled وقفه على شلال عين أبي زاد (1937), Dīwān al-Filastīniyyāt, pp.21-25, in which he says:

يغار مسيحيّ عليها ومسلم وكل لها فيما يحتوى فادى
تسامت بأسراء النبي كما سما به قبله عيسى بأشرف ميلاد

تاریک ہے افرنگ مشنوں کے دھوکوں سے
یہ وادی امن نہیں بتایاں تھیں
ہے نزع کی حالت میں یہ تہذیب جوان مرگ
شاید ہوں کلیسا کے یہودی متولی!

*

This short-lived civilization is in a dying state. It may well be the Jews who will become keepers of the Christian Church.

Similarly, when a Christian poet, Bishāra 'Abdullah al-Khūrī, known as al-Akḥṭal al-Ṣaghīr (Lebanon:1884-1968) pictures Palestine in تحية فلسطين (A Salute to Palestine)(1942)¹, he does this by portraying "Mecca Kissing Nazareth". What he means by this is easily understood.

On the grounds of this religious significance, an Egyptian poet, Maḥmūd Muḥammad Ṣādiq addresses the Pope in a poem written in 1947,² complaining of the sufferings that overwhelmed the Christians as well the Muslims in Palestine. What makes these sufferings more painful, the poet says, is the fact that the West, which is Christian, is aiding the Jews and encouraging them to usurp Christ's Home. The poet then points out that the Arabs proved to be the honest guardians of this home. They even consider Jesus as theirs:

فدعوا موطن المسيح بخير وسلام فآته عيسانا
نحن حراسه القدامى وهذى آينا فيه فاسألوا الفرقانا³

Let Christ's Home live at ease and in peace! Thus Jesus is ours. Of this home we have been the guards from times of old. Consult the Qur'ān and you will find its verses about it.

It has been a tradition among Muslim poets to compose poems celebrating religious events connected to the biography of the Prophet, Muḥammad, such as the al-Isrā'

¹ Dīwān al-Hawā wal-Shabāb, pp.163-164.

² "Ilā Filastīn al-Shahīda", published in al-Ahrām newspaper, no.22430 (28 November, 1947).

³ Ibid.

wal-Mi'rāj event, the Prophet's birthday, al-Hijra (the emigration of Muḥammad from Mecca to Medina in 622 A.D.), etc.

After the problem in Palestine began to impose itself on Arab public interest, many poets began to include this cause in poems composed originally for religious occasions. Furthermore, Sa'd al-Dīn al-Jīzāwī attributes the large quantity of poems composed by the Egyptian poets during the thirties and forties, on the occasion of al-Isrā' wal-Mi'rāj to the Palestinian problem, because of the close relation between the two subjects.¹ What was noted on this matter by al-Jīzāwī, corresponds greatly to the emergence of many poems composed by other Arab poets for that occasion as well as other religious festivals.

On the arrival of Ramaḍān in 1937, Muḥammad al-ʿId al-Khalīfa (Algeria: 1904-) composed a poem in which he discussed the benefit of Islam to mankind. In the poem, al-Khalīfa expresses his deep grief at seeing Arab countries overwhelmed by disaster and hardship, among which the hardship in Palestine constitute a major part of the poet's grief:

وفي القدس الباكي الحزين فظائع توات وأنكاد طغت ومآتم
فيا شهر هل في الأرض يكشف كرمنا ويبعث فينا مجدنا المتقادم

In weeping Jerusalem atrocities continue;
misfortunes and obsequies have overwhelmed
us.

Oh (blessed) month! when will it happen
that our distress may come to an end, and
our glorious past is resurrected?

¹ Al-ʿĀmil al-Dīnī fil-Shi'r al-Miṣrī al-Ḥadīth, p.296.

² Dīwān Muḥammad al-ʿId al-Khalīfa, p.138.

On another religious occasion, 'Īd al-Fiṭr after Ramadān in 1933, a Christian poet, Rashīd Salīm al-Khūrī, known as al-Shā'ir al-Qarawī, (S. America: 1887-) composed two poems.¹ In both he disapproves of the exchange of congratulations by Arabs on such occasions. The reasons that underlie this attitude by the poet are expressed in the following verses:

أرى تفاح هذا العيد جمرًا	ولو قطفوه من جنات عدن
والمس ناعم الأزهار شوكة	وأنشق عطرها نتنا بنتن
أأرضى والرسول قتيل غيظ	وأفرج والمسيح شهيد حزن
أمسخرة الشعوب لعنت شعبا	ذليلا لست منك ولست مني
تعيد لي وأنت تبيح أرضي	وعرضي لليهود اليك عني 2

To me, the apples of this feast are nothing but embers, even if they are picked from the Garden of Paradise.

The softness of flowers I feel thorny, and their fragrance to me is stinking.

could I be pleased while Muḥammad is dying of fury, and Jesus is dying of grief!

Damn you! a nation has become obsequious and an object of ridicule to all other nations; I do not belong to you nor do you belong to me!

You congratulate me when you are ceding away my land and my honour to the Jews! Away with you!

On the anniversary of the Prophet Muḥammad's birth in 1355 A.H. / 1936 A.D., celebrations in al-Najaf* were held in the Ḥaydarī- Mosque, where speeches and poems were delivered. Among them was a poem composed and recited by the Iraqi poet Muḥammad 'Alī al-Ya'qūbī (1895-1968), entitled فلسطين المستغيثة (Palestine Calling for Help).³

¹ See Dīwān al-A'āṣir, p.253 and p.108.

² Ibid., p.253.

³ Dīwān al-Ya'qūbī, vol.1, pp.14-16.

* A Shiite cultural centre in central Iraq.

Al- Ya'qūbī in the poem shows deep grief for Palestine, and calls upon Muslims to increase their help to their Palestinian brethren.

More than any other Islamic occasion, the anniversary of al-Isrā' wal Mi'rāj acted -as we have mentioned- as a motive for some Arab poets to fuse the two subjects into one theme. Sulaymān Ṣāhīr (Lebanon: 1873-1960), for instance, in ذكرى المعراج (Memory of al-Mi'rāj)(1931)¹, recalls the Prophet's journey to Jerusalem in order to remind the members of the General Islamic Congress that they were holding sessions on a "Blessed Night" and in a "Blessed Place". This, therefore, requires that the actions to be taken for the rescue of Palestine, should rise to equal the significance of that religious event.

Another poet from Egypt, Muḥammad al-Sanūsī Muqallid acknowledges in a poem written in 1936, that al-Isrā' Night arouses feelings of sadness in him, because it reminds him of "Palestine and its noble people who reached the ideal in self sacrifice".²

On this point also, two poems by an Iraqi poet, Muḥammad al-Hāshimī al-Baghdādī (1898-) may be considered. The first اطلبوا غير هذه الدار دارا (Seek Another Homeland)³ was delivered by the poet at a celebration party held by the "Islamic Right-Guidance Society" (جمعية الهداية الإسلامية) in Baghdād on the al-Isrā' anniversary

¹ Dīwān al-Filastīniyyāt, pp.12-15.

² Sa'd al-Dīn al-Jizāwī, al-'Āmil al-Dīnī..., p.296.

³ Dīwān al-Baghdādī, pp.375-376.

in 1936. In this poem al-Baghdādī recalls the Prophet's journey to Heaven, in order to remind his audience of the hardships of Palestine. In the second one entitled **وحي الاسراء** (Inspiration from al-Isrā') (1947),¹ he also reviews the Prophet's night journey to Jerusalem. Finishing this, he shifts to attacking the Jews severely by surveying their history since ancient times. The image by which he presents them is stereotyped, such as was commonly portrayed by Arab poets during the period preceding 1948.

Fear and anxiety over the future of Palestine as an Arab country is a noticeable feature in poetry written on Palestine until 1948. This fear can be easily seen spreading through many poems, showing itself in several ways among which the recollection of the Muslim departure from Spain was often present.

Concerning this point, it may be said that poets who recall the Muslims' experiences in Spain, comparing them to the current state of affairs in Palestine, stress the point that Palestine might be lost due to Arab lack of vigilance regarding what was going on there.

As early as 1929, Muḥammad Maḥdī al-Jawāhirī (Iraq: 1900-) expressed this fear in a poem entitled **فلسطين الدامية** (Bleeding Palestine)², composed following the Burāq events, in which he draws an analogy between Palestine and "Andalus" (Spain). This analogy, as can be seen from the

¹ Ibid., pp.365-369

² Dīwān al-Jawāhirī, vol.1, pp.473-475.

poem, seems to have been activated by the state of inertia exhibited by the Arabs which was similar to that of the Muslims in Spain:

فاضت جروح فلسطين مذكرة	جرحا بأندلس للآن ما التأما
كانت كحالة حتى اذا انتبهت	عضت نواجذها من حرقه ندما
سيلحقون فلسطينا بأندلس	ويعطفون عليها البيت والحرما

The wounds of Palestine have overflowed, recalling a wound in Andalus that has not healed.

The then dreamy Muslims gnashed their teeth regretfully when they awoke. Like Andalus the Muslims will lose Palestine, and even make the Ka'ba and al-Haram follow.

This idea in al-Jawāhirī's poem is seen embodied in many poems by other Arab poets whether from Iraq or elsewhere. It was also embodied in several poems written by Palestinians as we mentioned in Chapter II. However, further discussion or quotations from such poems do not add much to what we have said, since the poets' approachment to the idea differs only in the way of wording it.¹

¹ 'Alī al-Jārim (Egypt: 1881-1949), for instance, phrased it as follows:

قلبي وفيض دموعي كلما خطرت
لقد أعاد بها التاريخ أندلسا
ذكرى فلسطين خفاق وهتان
أخرى وطاف بها للشر طوفان

(*Dīwān al-Jārim*; vol.4, p.181.)

By Muḥammad 'Alī al-Ya'qūbī it was phrased as:

وعهد أندلس وتلك جروحها لم تندمل
حيث العرومة قوضت فيها وسؤدد ها اضمحل

(*Dīwān al-Ya'qūbī*; vol.1, p.16.)

And in another poem, the same poet worded it as:

هذي فلسطين أضحت مثل أندلس
هذي فلسطين أضحت مثل أندلس
فصل — وإن شئت لا تسأل — عن الخبر

(*Ibid.*, p.18.)

When tracing religious elements in the poetry dealing with Palestine, it can easily be observed that the name of early Arab Muslim heroes, such as Khālīd b. al-Walīd, Saladin etc., occur fairly frequently. This may be explained by the fact that those names are found by the poets to be valuable sources of inspiration in that they may kindle the flames of courage, confidence and enthusiasm in the hearts of their fellow-countrymen. They are used as a reminder of the glorious past of their forefathers and their creditable achievements, at a time when such feelings were most needed so that the Palestinian cause might be properly defended.

According to this view, the Egyptian poet Aḥmad Muḥarrām (1871-1945) addressed the members of the Parliamentary Congress, which was held in Cairo in 1938, confessing to them that the state of affairs regarding Palestine in that period was in great need of resolution by a hero like Khālīd b. al-Walīd. He, therefore, was consumed with longing to see among the Arabs of the present another Khalīd:

Another Iraqi poet 'Alī Ḥusayn al-Ṣaghīr (1914-) says:

يا أمة قد فرقتها شيعة مصائب جرت عليها ونوب
بالأوس منها سلبت أندلس واليوم يجري في فلسطين السلب

(Filastīn fil-Shi'r al-Najafī al-Mu'āṣir, p.234.)

And so, a Jordanian poet, Muṣṭafā Wahbī al-Tall (1897-1949) addresses King 'Abdullah of Transjordan and reminds him of the lesson the Muslims should have learned from what happened to them in Spain, saying:

يا ابن النبي ألم عن أهل أندلس تأتيك دارة تروي حكايانا

(Dīwān 'Ashiyyāt Wādī al-Yābis, p.209.)

يا آل يعرب من يريثي خالدا يزجي الخميس ويستحث المقتبا
من شاء منكم فليكنسه ولا يقل ذهب القديم فانه لن يذهب¹

O sons of Ya'rub, let me see Khālīd among you, inciting the armies to fight! Anyone of you could be him; and do not let anyone say the glorious past is gone; it will never go.

If Aḥmad Muḥarrām found in Khālīd b. al-Walīd, an appropriate hero for this theme, a Lebanese Christian poet, Mārūn 'Abbūd (1886-1962) finds that many Arab Muslim figures should be mentioned when speaking on such topics. Therefore, when he considered what was happening in Palestine during the mid-twenties in a poem entitled *الحركة الفلسطينية الأولى* (The First Palestinian Movement) (1925),² he specified many distinguished personalities such as 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Dākhil, Hārūn al-Rashīd and Saladin.

Furthermore, some poets even went so far as to refer to non-Arab heroes of ancient times as examples which might be emulated by modern Arabs. For instance, Maḥbūb al-Khūrī al-Shartūnī (S. America: 1885-1931) in an early poem *دمعة على العرب* (A Tear-drop over the Arabs) (1920),³ when speaking about the Zionist threat to Palestine and the Jewish immigration there, threatens the Jews that the Arab nation is capable of giving birth to a hero who would follow

¹ The poem entitled *من أجل فلسطين*, Sa'd al-Dīn al-Jīzāwī, *al-'Āmil al-Dīnī* ..., p.327.

² Wilyam al-Khāzin, *al-Shi'r wal-Waṭaniyya fī Lubnān wal-Bilād al-'Arabiyya*, p.272.

³ *Dīwān al-Shartūnī*, p.82-88.

the example of Titus, the Roman leader who drove the Jews away from Palestine:

ولسوف يخرج من معد طيطس الدور موطئ خيله والهام

From among the Ma'addites,* a Titus will
be born whose horses will trample down
houses and heads.

Among the heroes frequently referred to by Arab poets, special mention needs to be made of the great Muslim hero Saladin (Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn), since he is referred to far more than others.¹ This is clearly explained by the fact that Saladin's reputation derives from a splendid victory he won over the Crusaders in the battle of Hittīn (1187 A.D.), and it was he who recovered Jerusalem from them. Saladin, therefore was seen as the most prominent hero to be associated with Palestine and the attempts to protect it from the "new Crusaders".

By some poets, Saladin is called upon to rise from his grave in order to rescue the country he had rescued once before, and to teach the "new Crusaders" another lesson similar to that of the past, as al-Shā'ir al-Qarawī (Rashīd Salīm al-Khūrī) did in وعد بلفور (The Balfour Declaration)(1929),² in which he says:

¹ Concerning the references to Saladin by modern Arab poets, see the article written by Ṣāliḥ Jawād al-Ṭu'ma "Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Ayyūbī fil-Shi'r al-'Arabī al-Mu'āṣir", al-Adāb, no.11, (November) 1970, pp.17-22, 73-78.

² Diwan al-A'āṣir, pp.68-77.

* Ma'add: a collective name for certain Arab tribes, in the traditional usage for those of north Arabian origin in contrast to the Yemen tribes.

يدعوك شعبك يا صلاح الدين قم
نسي الصليبيون ما علمتهم
تأبى المروءة أن تنام ويسهر
قبل الرحيل فعد اليهم يذكروا

Saladin! Your people are calling upon you to rise from the dead; your chivalry would not allow you to sleep while they are on the alert.

The Crusaders have forgotten the lesson they received at your hands ^{before they departed}, so come back and remind them.

Or as another Mahjari poet, Jūrj Saydah (1893-1978) did in a poem entitled جهاد فلسطين (The Jihād of Palestine) (1938), in which he expresses deep sadness since he failed to see among the present Arabs a sword similar to that of Saladin's, when it was badly needed for the rescue of Palestine:

(فأين سيف صلاح الدين يردعهم أما له خلف في العرب كلهم)¹

Similarly, an Iraqi poet, 'Abd al-Qādir Rashīd al-Nāṣirī (1920-1963), seeing that the "disasters have been rushing madly upon the Holy Land", dreams of a second Saladin who could drive away the enemies and put an end to those disasters.²

Another aim behind such references to Saladin seems to have been to warn the pro-Zionist western powers that the punishment the Crusaders had received at the hand of Saladin could very well be inflicted upon those pro-Zionist

¹ 'Azīza Muraydin, al-Qawmiyya wal-Insaniyya fī Shi'r al-Mahjar al-Janūbī, p.320.

² تكالبت الكوارث والرزاييا
شباب العرب هل فيكم صلاح
على وطن النبوة والمعاد
ليطرد من فلسطين الأعداى
Dīwān al-Nāṣirī, p.48.

states. According to this idea, Sulaymān Ṣāhir, for example, seized the occasion of the Bludan Conference to address the west, represented in Great Britain, which sided with the Jews against the Arabs, by saying:

وقل لبني السكسون لا تطمعوا بنا طرائد طه وابن عمران والفادي¹

Tell the Saxons not to fill those who were expelled by the Prophets: Tāhā,* Moses and the Redeemer with greed for (our land).

Then the poet links the Modern and Medieval West, by expressing firm confidence that the failure which faced them in the past at the hands of Saladin would face them in the present:

ومن هزئوا قدما بابرار زحفكم
وصانوا حماها يوم سدت جيوشكم
فهل يحفلون اليوم منكم بارعاد
مناذ أغوار فساد وأنجاد
ورث صلاح الدين فيه جموعكم
كما ردّ راعي الابل شارد أذواد²

Those who, in the past, scoffed at the lightning coming from your marching troops; those who saved the country when your armies covered all its highlands and lowland; and those whose Saladin drove you back like a camel-herdsman driving back a runaway she-camel, will not be scared of the thunder coming from you now.

To the same effect, Abū al-Faḍl al-Walīd (1889-1941), in *المقدسيّة* (The Song of Jerusalem) asks Jerusalem to remind the West of what had happened to their armies when they invaded the country, filled with hopes and

¹ Dīwān al-Filastīniyyāt, p.24.

² Ibid.

* Tāhā : the Prophet Muḥammad.

aspirations, but gaining death and failure.¹

As we mentioned earlier, the call for a Jihād to defend Palestine against Zionist plans, represents a distinguishable trait of the poems reflecting a religious orientation. When we trace this element in the poetry written during that stage of the conflict, we find that it emerged after the Burāq events in 1929. In fact, those events indicate the close attention paid by Arab poets to that country. Although the years preceding 1929 had witnessed some active opposition from the Palestinian Arabs towards Mandate policy, demonstrated by riots, demonstrations, protests and clashes between Arabs and Jews, all those happenings failed to attract great attention among Arab poets, whereas the Burāq events did.

In regard to this idea which became voiced loudly by the poets, a rallying song written by an Egyptian poet, Abū al-Wafā Maḥmūd Ramzī Naẓīm entitled في هوى الاسلام (For the Sake of Islam)(1929),² represents an early poetical call for a Jihād for Palestine. Naẓīm, in the song, blames the Muslims, who, as he accuses them, seem unaware of the dangers besetting Palestine. Therefore he warns them that their properties are seriously threatened by the Jews, and calls upon them to sacrifice themselves for

¹ The lines concerned go as follows:

وذكرى الحليج عهدا فيه عسكره	بعد الأمانى لاقتنه منايك
لما تعدى الصليبيون واثمروا	وما مكرت ولا أسررت نجواك
جردت سيفاً قد اعتادت مضاربه	هام الحليج فخروا منه صرعاك

Dīwān Abū al-Faḍl al-Walīd, p.94.

² Sa'd al-Dīn al-Jīzawī, al-'Āmil al-Dīnī fil-Shi'r..., p.325.

the sake of Islam and Palestine which, according to him, represent the same.¹

During the thirties and forties, this theme became the dominant one, especially after the news of the Palestinian Arab revolt in 1936 began to reach other Arab countries. That revolt, as many poems show, moved Arab poets deeply, even in far away Arab countries, and made them speak more about the Jihād for Palestine. Ṣaqr al-Shabīb (1896-1963) for example, a poet from Kuwait, which at that time was still a backward country culturally and politically, expresses in more than one poem his deep sorrow at being blind and unable to participate physically in a Jihād. In بلا وحدة : ضياع (Disunity is Loss) (1938)² he says:

وددت بجذع الأنف لو كنت مبصرا	قديرا على حمل القناة أو العضب
لأشرك من باتت فلسطين همهم	من القوم في طعن الطغاة أو الضرب
فلست أرى القول المجرد مقنعا	وان كان عذري غير خاف على ربي
فليس الفتى من يخمد الجبن سيفه	وينكص ان عن الجهاد على العقب

¹ The verses concerned are:

حطّموا الأقداح	أسكتوا الرنين
انه أنيس	
لا تخالوا الراح	تسعد الحزين
ليس للأنس الى القلب سبيل	فدعوا الأحزان مّا تشتفي
صدفت عن حظّها نفس العليل	فدعوها في أساها تختفي
أيها التّوّام	شرقكم قد راح
ملككم مباح	
في هوى الاسلام	قدموا الأرواح
نزل الويل بيت المقدس	وتمشى الشرفى تلك الرنوع
وابتلينا كلنا بالخرس	واكتفينا بنواح ودموع

² Dīwān Ṣaqr al-Shabīb, pp.105-108.

I wish -at the cost of having my nose cut off- that I was endowed with eyesight, able to hold a sword or a spear; then I could fight the oppressors and join those for whom Palestine has become their deep concern.

Thus, words -even by man excused by God- if not supported with actions, cannot be convincing.

I believe that a man is one who does not retreat in the time of Jihād, who does not keep his sword sheathed through cowardice.

Al-Shabīb again expresses the same wish in another poem entitled *أو يشفي من الكلام* (Do Words heal Wounds?) (1940),¹ and states that he who can fight for Palestine and refrain from so doing is a sinful person:

ليت أني إن عزّ ذاك بصير	يحسن الضرب في يدي الصمصام
ففعودي لو استطعت قياما	معك عن واجب الجهاد حرام
وحسبي شهادة أو بقاء	يتقيني فيه الطغاة الطغام

Would I were not blind, then, a sword in my hand could fight well.
Had I been able to fulfil the duty of Jihād for you and abstained, then I would have been committing a sin.
To die as a martyr, or, if not, to live feared by the oppressors and mean people, is all I want.

While Ṣaqr al-Shabīb was sad because his blindness prevented him from practical Jihād, some Algerian poets were embittered by being unable to join the fight in Palestine, because circumstances in their country, which was under French control, prevented them from doing so. Muḥammad Juraydī for instance, addresses Palestine, apologizing for his non-appearance in the fight by saying:

¹ Ibid., pp.406-407.

فلسطين إني الابن والابن طائع
فان صدودي عن حماك جنائية
فإننا اذا رُمنّا لأرضك سفرة
فها أنذا أعصي فهل فيك غفران
وان قعودي عن فداك لعصيان
يعارضنا بالمنع والردع طغيان¹

O Palestine! I, unlike an obedient son, have disobeyed you. Am I forgiven (this sin) ?
I am fully aware that my absence from defending you is a serious crime; but, how could I come to you while the oppressors bar the way ?

The above idea came also in some other poems by Algerian poets, such as 'Alī al-Zawwāq² and al-Rabī' Bū Shāma.³

Regarding the call for Jihād, we now turn to consider in some detail a widely celebrated poem, by 'Alī Maḥmūd Tāhā (Egypt: 1901-1949) entitled نداء الفداء أو أنشودة الجهاد في تحرير فلسطين (Call for Self-Sacrifice or the Song of Jihād for Liberating Palestine).⁴ The poem was written before the armies of several Arab countries were about to enter Palestine in the 1948 War.⁵ It is worth mentioning here

¹ Ṣāliḥ Kharfī, al-Jaza'ir wal-Aṣāla al-Thawriyya, p.51.

² In a poem entitled فلسطين للعرب أشد العرين, published in al-Baṣā'ir, no.145, 3rd year (23 December, 1938), p.7.

³ See Muḥammad al-Tammār, Tārīkh al-Adab al-Jazā'irī, p.305.

⁴ 'Alī Maḥmūd Tāhā : Shi'r wa-Dirāsa, pp.222-223.

⁵ In 'Alī Maḥmūd Tāhā's Dīwān, published by Dār al-'Awda (Beirut, 1972), the poem seems to have been inattentively dropped.

Our reference regarding the poem, therefore, is the poet's dīwān as published by Dār al-Yaqza al-'Arabiyya lil-Ta'līf wal-Tarjama wal-Nashr (Damascus, 1962).

The poem, however, was published in the Lebanese periodical al-'Irfān in December 1947 (vol.34, p.162) consisting 12 verses only, whereas it consists 20 verses as came in the above Dīwān.

that this poem was set to music and sung by Muḥammad 'Abd al-Wahhāb (Egypt), one of the most famous Arab singers and musicians of the time. Being a highly moving and patriotic song-poem, it soon gained wide-spread publicity throughout the Arab world.

In the poem, eight of the twenty verses are initiated by the word **أخي** (brother), which is commonly used by Arabs when addressing one another in their everyday conversation. It seems that the poet's aim in repeating that word so many times is to invoke the strong unifying concept underlying it which was already established among the Arabs.

At the start of his poem, the poet points out that the oppressors (i.e. the Zionists) had exceeded all limits in their persecution of the Arabs in Palestine. He therefore sees Jihād as inevitable:

أخي جاوز الظالمون المدى فحق الجهاد وحق الفدا

Brother! the oppressors have overstepped all bounds, so Jihād has become obligatory and self-sacrifice necessary.

Then the poet poses the following question to his hearers:

أنتركهم يخصبون العسرة مجد الأبهة والسؤدد
وليسوا بغير صليل السيوف يجيبون صوتا لنا أو صد

Should we let them deprive Arabism of pride and nobility?
Nothing will make them answer our calls for justice but the clash of swords.

And since the poet is speaking as an Arab to Arabs, who feel as he does, and is aware of their answer to the question, he calls upon them to:

فجّر دحسأك من غمده فليس له بعد أن يغمدا

Unsheathe your swords; the time of sheathing
it is still too far hence.

In another verse, the poet goes on to justify his call
for Jihād on the grounds that Jerusalem, the Holy City,
was in a critical situation:

أخي انّ في القدس أختا لنا أعدّ لها الذابحون المدي

Brother! the enemies are sharpening their
knives to slay our sister, Jerusalem.

Tāhā makes it clear that both Christianity and Islam
were threatened by the Jews. It is therefore natural that
Muslims and Christians fight side by side for their common
cause.

أخي قم الى قبلة المشرقين لنحي الكنيسة والمسجدا
يسوع الشهيد على أرضها يعانق في جيشه أحمدا

Brother! hurry to the qibla of East
and West to protect Church and Mosque.
There, Jesus, the martyr -through the
army of his adherents- is embracing
Ahmad.*

The poet then states, in the form of a will applying
to those fighters who would be killed in the battlefield,
that when one falls another should continue the fight and
keep the cause alive.

أخي ان جري في ثراها دمي وأطبقت فوق حصاها اليدا
ونادى الحمام وجن الحسام وشب الضرام بها موقدا
ففش على مهجة حرة أبت أن يمر عليها العدا
وخذ راية الحق من قبضة جلاها الوغى ونماها الندى
وقبل شهيدا على أرضها دعا باسمها الله واستشهدا

* One of the names attributed to the Prophet Muḥammad.

Brother! if fighting flares up and swords are crazed with killing; if her soil runs with my blood and my hand grasps tightly some pebbles of that soil; if I am dead, find me; I, a noble soul who refused to be trampled upon by the enemies. Receive the banner of justice from a hand proven in battles and self-sacrifice, and bid the kiss of the last farewell to that martyr, who before dying invoked God for her (Palestine's) safety and passed away.

To end his poem, 'Alī Maḥmūd Ṭāhā stresses the determination of the Arabs to defend Palestine, and make it their ultimate aim either to live or to die for it:

فلسطين يفدى حماك الشباب وجيل الفدائي والمفتدى
فلسطين تحميك ما الصدور فأما الحياة وأما الردى

Palestine, for you our youths will sacrifice themselves! You and they are sublime. Palestine, with our heart's blood you will be protected, since our aim is either to die or live in dignity!

By way of concluding our discussion to the idea of a Jihād for Palestine, and before we turn to discuss the national factors in the poetry of that period, it should be mentioned that focussing on this theme was not confined to Muslim poets only; Arab Christian poets as well, used the term Jihād frequently and according in its Islamic sense, as can be seen in many poems by al-Akḥṭal al-Saghir (Bishāra 'Abdullah al-Khūrī), al-Shā'ir al-Qarawī (Raḥsīd Salīm al-Khūrī), Ilyās Farḥāt and others.

The National Factor.

Whereas in religious terms poets considered the Zionist threat against Palestine as a threat to their religion in

the first place, as we have seen, other poets, or even the same religiously orientated ones, stressed in other poems, the point that the Zionist danger in Palestine threatened the Arabs as a nation and their aspirations for revival and unity.

Likewise, poems of religious inclination linked the Jewish present threat to Palestine with Muslim wars in the past (i.e. the Crusaders), while poetry of national inclination stressed the firm relation between the Zionists and the West, especially Great Britain, classifying the two under one category, namely that of Imperialism.

Furthermore, as religion was the main factor in attracting a large number of Arab poets to write on Palestine, national feeling also played a motivating role among them, and made the subject of Palestine flow from their lips. To those poets, Arabism was regarded as an ideal which bonds and unifies the Arabs throughout their countries, or, as phrased by the Sudanese poet, Ja'far Hāmid al-Bashīr, is "the Arabs' mother"; and since every mother has rights over her children, Arabism in this respect "has her rights over her children, the Arabs".

(انّ العروبة أمّنا الكبرى وكم للأُمّ من حقّ على الأشبال)¹

So when this poet considered the Palestinian Arabs during the events of 1948, he found in the idea of Arabism a strong incentive to express his deep concern about what was happening there.

¹ 'Abd al-Majīd 'Abdīn, Dirāsāt Sūdāniyya, p.148.

By another poet, this time from Yemen, Muḥammad Maḥmūd al-Zubayrī (1909-1965), Arabism is seen as a body; if one of its organs is in pain, other organs would be in pain simultaneously.

(انّ العروسة جسم انّ يئنّ له عضو تداعت له الأعضاء تنتقم
 انّ يضطهد بعضه فالكل مضطهد أو يهتضم جزؤه فالكل مهتضم)¹

It is obvious here that al-Zubayrī is adopting the same concept of Muslim society as defined in the following "Prophetical Ḥadīth" :

" ترى المؤمنين في تراحمهم وتوادهم وتعاطفهم كمثل الجسد اذا
 اشتكى عضوا تداعى له سائر جسده بالسهر والحمى " ²

You see the believers in their mercy towards one another and expression of love and kindness among themselves, resembling one body, so that, if any part of the body is not well, then the whole body shares the sleeplessness (insomnia) and fever for it .

Following this concept, al-Zubayrī wrote في سبيل فلسطين (For the Sake of Palestine) (1940), after Great Britain published the "White Paper" of 1939,³ in which he stresses the view that what happens in Palestine affects all Arabs with no exception.

Arab Christian poets, on their part, expressed their adherence to the idea of Arabism frequently and enthusiastically, to such an extent that Mārūn 'Abbūd (1886-1962), a Lebanese Christian entitled one of his poems composed in

¹ Dīwān al-Zubayrī, p.261.

² Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Adab, Ḥadīth no.27.

³ 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Maqālīḥ, al-Shi'r al-Mu'āṣir fīl Yaman, p,81.

1926 "Muḥammad Mārūn".¹ This title, by itself, makes more explanation regarding the poem unnecessary. In another poem composed in 1933, the same poet says:

عربيّ قبل المسيح وطه وعليها سأطبق الأهداب²

I am an Arab even before Christ and Tāhā came. And likewise I am going to die.

Another Lebanese poet and clergyman, Yūḥanna Ṭannūs in a poem called يا روح يعرب (O Soul of Ya'rub!)(1933) expresses extreme enthusiasm for Arabism by addressing Muslims thus:

لا تعجبوا يا بني الاسلام من هوسي أنا أنا من صميم العنصر العربي³

O Muslims! do not be astonished at seeing my ecstasy (for Arabism), hence, I am a genuine Arab.

Al-Qarawī, for his part, describes himself as the "Singer of Arabism" (صَدَّاحُ العروبة), one who is fond of talking about Arabism, and devoting most of his poems to recalling its past glory.

(إني لصدّاح العرومة طاب لي شدوي على سرواتها وتنقّلي
ووقتُ الحاني على المجد الذي أبلى الزمان مع العظام وما بلي)⁴

Through the poets' concentration on the danger besieging Palestine, they were voicing the belief that this danger was decisive and vital. It even could put an end to the whole idea of Arab nationalism, as 'Alī al-Jārim (Egypt:

¹ Wilyam al-Khāzin, al-Shi'r wal-Waṭaniyya..., p.282.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., p.284.

⁴ Dīwān al-Shā'ir al-Qarawī, vol.2, p.583.

1881-1949) says in his poem فلسطين (Palestine)(1948)¹ :

إن لم تصونوا فلسطينا وجبهتها ضاعت عرونتنا وانفض نادينا

If you do not protect Palestine and its front, then our Arabism would be perished and our union would be dispersed.

At the stage under discussion, the Palestine problem is widely believed to have played a distinct role in the development of the idea of Arab Nationalism by opening the eyes of the Arabs to the Zionist danger directed at them, as it was directed at the Palestinians. In this regard, Arab poets devoted a vast number of their poems to stressing the point that the Zionists' aims were not limited only to Palestine. Therefore, unity between the Arab countries was seen by them as an effective means of facing the threat.

Moreover, they found in the firm relation between the Zionist and the West a favourable theme to concentrate on, through which they stressed the belief that the Imperialist West, for fearing any unity between the Arab countries, was doing its best to facilitate the creation of Palestine as the Jewish home, in order to prevent such unity. Of this the Iraqi poet Muḥammad Mahdī al-Jawāhirī says in فلسطين الدامية (Bleeding Palestine)(1929)²:

سور من الوحدة العصماء راعهم فاستحدثوا شجرة جوفاء فانثلموا

They, seeing in Arab unity an insurmountable wall, made a gap in it that cannot be closed.

¹ The poem was broadcast by Cairo radio during the 1948 war. Al-'Irfān, vol.35, no.8, August 1948, pp.1148-1149.

² Dīwān al-Jawāhirī, vol.1, pp.473-475.

In regard to the poets' concentration on the West's evil intent towards the Arabs, and that the Zionist danger would not be limited to Palestine, it may seem a strange claim that the best examples could be the poems written by the Kuwaitian poet Ṣaqr al-Shabīb, of which some will be considered now.¹

According to al-Shabīb, Palestine represents a test set by the West through the Zionists to examine the Arabs; if the Arabs fail in that test and lost Palestine to the Jews, then other Arab countries will meet the same fate. The following verses quoted from the poem فلسطين (Palestine)² are fairly representative:

فليس لكم بأرضكم مقام	تَحَوُّوا أيها العرب الكرام
لهم عن أخذها تم المرام	فما تكفي فلسطين اذا ما
طموع ما لمطمعه ختام	ولكن جسنا النبض فيها
ولم يخصصه مأكلا الجرام	فقصد الخصم ان طابت وساغت
لكم طرّاً على الأثر التهام	ولذّ له عقيب المضغ بلع
فبعد العام عام ثم عام	وان أعياه ذاك خلال عام
وذاك مصير من وهنوا وخاموا	وتدريجاً سيأكلنا جميعاً
فإن مال كلّكم سلام	وان نشبت شجى في الحلق منه

For you, noble Arabs, there will be no room on your land, so leave.
Palestine would not be sufficient for them if they took her over.
There [] in Palestine [], an enemy filled with greed is sounding us out;

¹ Ṣaqr al-Shabīb devoted to the subject of Palestine before 1948, seven long poems, all of which were written between 1936 and 1940; as dated in his dīwān. The poems are:

صرخة ثانية بعد انتهاء (1936), صرخة في العرب في أثناء جهاد فلسطين
الاعمال لا الأقوال, (1937) مصر وقضية فلسطين, (1936) فلسطين الاضراب
أو يشفي, (1938) فلسطين, (1938) بلا وحدة ضياع, (1937)
(1940) من الكلام الكلام.

² Dīwān Ṣaqr al-Shabīb, pp.403-406.

If he finds it a titbit easy to swallow
 he will turn to you.
 And if he can't do it now, then he'll
 do it shortly, and step by step he'll
 swallow you all. Such a fate is what
 weak and inactive people deserve.
 But if he is choked when swallowing her,
 all your countries will be saved.

Such being the case, al-Shabīb reiterates, whether in the above poem or in others such as *صرخة في العرب في أثناء* (A Call upon the Arabs during the "Jihād" of Palestine)¹ and *مصر وقضية فلسطين* (Egypt and the Palestine Cause),² that the cause of Palestine is not separated from the Arab cause as a whole. His belief is that the organic unity of the two causes is too firm and does not leave any grounds for doubt. Al-Shabīb makes it clear in another poem, *بلا وحدة ضياع* (Disunity is Loss),³ that danger and hardships normally cause unity between those who undergo them. Accordingly, if the Arabs' hardship in Palestine, which is unique and incomparable, could not succeed in uniting the Arabs, then their hoped-for unity would remain only fantasy.⁴

¹ Ibid., pp.270-272.

² Ibid., pp.278-283.

³ Ibid., pp.105-108.

⁴ The following verses from the poem represent the concerned ideas:

خيالا على رغم المنى وحدة العرب
 اذا لم توحّد بينهم شدة الخطب
 كريم ويطوى القلب منه على ندب
 فلسطين من كرب شديد الى كرب

ستبقى على الأحقاب حقبا الى حقب
 وأى أمور الناس وحسد بينهم
 ولا خطب يبلي صبر كل أخى نهى
 كهذا الذى يضحى ويمسى محسولا

Relevant to the factor we are discussing is the concern shown by some poets to defend the Arabs' claim to possess Palestine. But, regarding this matter, it should be pointed out that most of the poets who spoke about it discussed it expeditiously and briefly through other themes. This can be explained by the fact that those poets were addressing the Arab public, which shared them the same belief and did not need more conviction.

However, when speaking about this point, some of the poets traced the Arabs' prior claim back to Canaanite times, such as Khālīd al-Faraj (Kuwait: 1898-1954), who, in a poem entitled وعد بلفور (The Balfour Declaration) (1929)¹, argues that Palestine had been inhabited by Arabs for a long time before the Jews, on the grounds that the Canaanites themselves were originally Arabs.

(والدار دار جدودهم من عهد كنعان البعيد)

Similarly, but without mentioning the Canaanites, the Egyptian poet Maḥmūd Muḥammad Ṣādiq, mentioned before, says, in the poem إلى فلسطين الشهيدة², that the relationship between country and people (the Arabs) goes back to the oldest times. Moreover, it was the Arabs who made her prosperous, the poet believes.

(في بلاد لم يبين فيها سوانا وسوانا لم يعمر البنيانا
من قديم الزمان والأزل المعين يوم الوجود احتوانا)

¹ 'Awāṭif al-'Adhbī al-Ṣabāḥ, al-Shi'r al-Kuwaytī al-Ḥadīth, p.145.

² See above, p.117.

Sulaymān Zāhir refers to this point in two poems, but from different angles. In the first one وعد بلفور (The Balfour Declaration) (1929),¹ he reminds the Jews that if the Wailing Wall agitates their remembrance of Palestine, then the Muslims have something more significant there, i.e., the Aqṣā Mosque and al-Burāq. Then he goes on to say that drawing a parallel between the Aqṣā Mosque and its Burāq and the Wailing Wall is completely illogical, being like comparing a lizard to a whale.²

In the second poem, written in 1936, the poet admits that Palestine is the "Promised Land", but for the Arabs, not the Jews. The reasons for such claim are explained in the following verses:

للألى ما رموا بنقض العهد	وهي أرض الميعاد حقا ولكن
وأقاموا للعدل أرسى عمود	للألى دؤخوا الممالك طرّا
لهم الفخر طارفا عن تليد	للألى لم تزل فلسطين تروى
3 قد أبت أن تذوق طعم الهجود	حرسوها بأعين يقظات

Truly it is the "Promised Land", but, for those not characterized by breaking covenants; for those who conquered empires, all without exception, and established firm justice; for those whom Palestine still speaks of their regenerated glory, and for those who guarded it alertly.

Looking to some poems speaking about the point under discussion and written by some Mahjarī poets, we may

¹ Dīwān al-Filasṭīniyyāt, pp.5-8.

² The verses go as follows:

زهو الغنى بالمطاعم المطاعين	ان هاج ذكراكم المبكى وأطمعكم
على مفاخرهم بادی العناوين	فان المسجد الأقصى لهم حرما
ودون ذلك جمع الضب والنون	وما يراحم مبككم بـراقهم

³ Ibid., p.16.

consider two: the first "The Song of Jerusalem" by Abū al-Faḍl al-Walīd, mentioned before,¹ the other فلسطين (Palestine)² by ʿIliyā Abū Mādī (N. America: 1890-1957).

In "The Song of Jerusalem", Abū al-Faḍl al-Walīd bases the prior Arab claim to Palestine on race and religion, i.e. Arabism and Islam:

(... .. فبالعروبة والاسلام أنت لنا)

Then he sets forth this idea in detail, saying:

قد أثبتتها من الأجيال أربعة وعشرة وهي منذ الخلق مجراك
3 بالأثر والحرث والسكنى لنا حجج

Apart from being our home since the universe was created, fourteen centuries leave no doubt about our right in owning her. Thus our right is proved by inheritance, culture and residence.

Meanwhile Abū Mādī approaches this matter differently. Addressing the Jews he says that Balfour should have given them a British territory, not an Arab one, because Britain is larger than Palestine, and the Jews, above all, are more favourable to the British people.

(ألا ليت بلفور أعطاكم بلادا له لا بلادا لنا
فلندن أرحب من قدسنا وأنتم أحب إلى "لندنا")

It is interesting to notice that Abū Mādī in the poem, uses the same logic -but from the Arab point of view- which has been expressed afterwards frequently by many

¹ See p.128.

² Dīwān al-Khamā'il, pp.166-169.

³ Dīwān Abū al-Faḍl al-Walīd, p.93.

Israelis that the Arab world is vast, and the Palestinian Arab refugees could easily settle in one Arab country or another. According to the poet, Palestine is indispensable for the Arabs, while the Jews can dispense with it, since they have been settling for many centuries in other countries.

(وَأَنْ لَكُمْ بِسَوَاهَا غِنًى وَلَيْسَ لَنَا بِسَوَاهَا غِنًى)

Concluding his argument, the poet says addressing the Jews:

وَكُنْتَ لِأَجْدَادِنَا قَبْلُنَا وَتَبْقَى لِأَحْفَادِنَا بَعْدُنَا
فَلَا تَحْسِبُوهَا لَكُمْ مَوْطِنًا فَلَمْ تَكْ يَوْمًا لَكُمْ مَوْطِنًا

As we inherited it from our forefathers,
so we shall keep it for our grandsons.
At no time was it your home,
so do not count on it being yours now.

It has been mentioned above that Egypt kept herself away from the Arab National Movement until the mid-thirties. But soon after joining that movement Egypt gained a leading role, especially in the forties and after the Arab League was formed (1945). The Arab poets, for their part, watched attentively as Egypt gave the Arabs' cause in general, and the Palestinian problem in particular, more strength.

When a Parliamentary Congress was held in Cairo in 1938 in support of the Palestinian Arabs, Muḥammad 'Abd al-Ghanī Ḥasan composed a poem entitled فلسطين المجاهدة (Palestine, Fighting for Freedom)¹ in which he addresses the members of the Congress, assuring them that Egypt will be a "high platform" from which the voice of Palestine

¹ Dīwān Nab' al-Ḥayāh, pp.98-99.

could travel a long way.

Another Egyptian poet, Muḥammad al-Asmar (1900-1956) in *الى الحلفاء* (To the Allies)¹ addresses his country, Egypt, shortly before the Arab-Israeli War of 1948, by saying:

يا مصر أدّي للعروبة حقّها	هي قدّمك لأمرها فتقدّمي
سيرى الى عليها وتتبعي	خطوات أجداد لنا وترسمي
لا تبخلي فيها بأى دم لنا	ومالنا ديناره والدرهم

O Egypt, do your duty towards Arabism!
It is you to whom she gave the lead.
Lead her to loftiness by following the
steps of our forefathers.
Do not stint of our blood for her, nor
of our wealth, great or small.

Relevant to this point, we now turn to consider a one-act verse play, written by the Egyptian poet and playwright 'Azīz Abāza (1899-1973) which clearly illustrates what was commonly felt by the Arabs, whether inside or outside Egypt, of the role which could be played by Egypt concerning Arab affairs, among which was the Palestinian cause.

The play was written in 1946, and was performed in the presence of King Fārūq (1936-1952) at a party held at Princes Shuwīkār's palace to celebrate the King's birthday.² The cast in the play consists of seven characters: Abū al-Hawl (The Sphinx), the East, an Iraqi poet, a Lebanese poet, a Palestinian poet, a Syrian poet and a Saudi poet.

¹ *Dīwān Muḥammad al-Asmar*, pp.200-203.

² The play was published in the Egyptian periodical *al-Kitāb*, vol.1, no.6, April 1946, pp.858-864.

The curtain rises showing the Sphinx sitting, with the Pyramids behind him. A middle-aged man dressed in Arab traditional dress, looking strong and venerable, enters. He is the East. Addressing Abū al-Hawl, the East extends thanks to Egypt, the "home of the Pharaohs", in which "culture and art" had flourished. Thus the East confesses in his speech, that he finds "security and safety" in the present time, after Egypt had turned her attention to him.

This speech gladdens Abū al-Hawl, who surprised, asks who the speaker is. When the East introduces himself to Abū al-Hawl, the latter is astonished, because to the best of his knowledge the East is weak, contemptible, usurped and:

إن دعا كان أخفت الناس صوتاً أو مشى دبّ كالشيخ دبباً

When calling upon someone, his voice comes out as the faintest of man's voices. When walking, he crawls like a powerless old man.

The East replies saying that such an image was his, but only in the past; now, things were changed, especially after the Arab League was formed, with its centre at Cairo.

During this dialogue, noises from off stage can be heard. Abū al-Hawl asks the East who are coming and what they want. The latter tells him that they are Arab poets come on behalf of their countries, to congratulate King Fārūq on the occasion of his birthday.

The Iraqi poet enters first, then the Lebanese, Both of them extend the greetings of their countries to the king, and express the grateful feelings of their people in Iraq

and Lebanon to him for his attitude towards the Arabs and their cause.

Following them the Palestinian poet enters. He starts his speech by saying that on a pleasant occasion like this, speeches should reflect pleasure and gladness, but, because Palestine is overwhelmed with grief, he cannot hide sadness, and therefore he apologizes.

Explaining to King Fārūq what has been going in Palestine, the poet says:

نحن جرحى إنَّ الجريح ليشفي	نفسه إنْ شكا لصدر حنون
نحن في عقد دارنا غرياء الـ	دار والجنس والهوى والدين
غبتنا الدنيا ويا ربَّ غبن	آثم شدَّ صولة المغبون
قيل : فابقوا واسكنوا القوم محكم	كيف نحيا في بيتنا المسكون
قيل : وعد، قلنا : فهل صدر الوعد	د برأى منا وعلم مبين
وعدوكم في مصر سبعين وعدا	أترى يصدقون في التسعين ؟

We, being wounded, need a sympathetic man to complain to, so that our pain may be soothed.

We have become strangers in our home, subjugated racially, culturally, and religiously.

We have been deceived by the whole world; but many a time deceit has strengthened determination in the deceived.

We were told to stay and let them [the Jews] share our home.

How on earth could we live in a house which is already inhabited?

Again we were told that the (Balfour) Declaration must be valid.

But neither did we have knowledge of it nor were we consulted.

Here in Egypt, you were given seventy deceptive promises by them [the British]; thus, would their nintieth promise to you be truthful?

The poet goes on praising the King and putting too much confidence in his aid for the Palestinian Arabs and their cause:

أنت ظللتنا بجاهك واستمكت عنا بحقنا المضمون
نحن عرب وأنت للعرب راع لا تذرنا بغير راع أمين
لن يراع العرين بالكيد يا فاروق يوما وأنت ليث العرين

You have been constant to our rights, keeping
us shaded under your aegis.
Since we are Arabs, and you are a protector
of the Arabs, do not leave us unguarded by an
honest shepherd.
O Fārūq! the lair will not be frightened by
plots as long as you are its lion.

After his speech is finished, the Syrian poet, then
the Saudi, each delivers his speech which does not differ
from those given by the Iraqi poet or the Lebanese.

What has been said in front of Abū al-Hawl convinces
him that the image of the Arabs which he held before, has
truly changed. And on this note the play ends.

Throughout our previous discussion to the religious and
national factors in the poetry preceding 1948, many central
themes have been discussed, such as the religious signifi-
cance of Palestine, the Zionist threat, the Balfour
Declaration, etc. Yet, two more themes which received much
attention by the Arab poets during that period should be
considered now:

- 1- the Palestinian Arabs combat with the British Mandate.
- 2- condemnation of the Arab leadership.

The Palestinian Arabs combat with the British Mandate:

The Palestinian Arabs' revolt in 1936, as referred to
in Arabic sources, attracted the greatest enthusiasm among
Arab poets, who saw in it the development of what they were
calling for frequently and repeatedly in their poems, i.e.,

the adoption of Jihād in defence of the county.

As a result of this feeling, Arab poets commended the Palestinian Arabs for their courage and sacrifice in numerous poems. Besides, Arab poets, unlike the Palestinians who devoted many poems to consideration of critical aspects of Palestinian political and social structure, ignored completely any reference to those topics. Instead, they directed their criticism towards passive aspects shown by the Arabs outside Palestine towards the problem, as will be considered when discussing the second theme mentioned above.

Filled with high admiration for the deeds of the Palestinian Arabs, al-Jawāhirī in يوم فلسطين (Palestine's Day)(1938)¹ addresses the Syrian Capital "Jillaq"/[Damascus] to see how generously the Palestinians were in shedding their blood for their country. This, according to the poet, is the only way for nations to free themselves and achieve their aims.

In the poem, al-Jawāhirī builds up a highly affecting picture of the Palestinians by portraying them as emulating each other, young and old, women and men, in their effort to die in the combat:

يسقط الطفل على والده	واردا مورده معتقلا
وتمر الأم غضبي ساءها	في سباق مثله أن تسبقا
نسق للموت لم نسمع به	ليتنا نعرف هذا النسقا

The child falls dead over his father's dead body, meeting the same fate, dying for the same cause.

And so the mother, upset at being left behind in the race for death, competes with her child and her husband.

¹ Dīwān al-Jawāhirī, vol.2, pp.341-342.

Dying in such a manner is something we haven't heard of before. If only we (other Arabs) knew this style.

Images that portray the Palestinians as careless of death and fearless of fighting the British troops, which surpass them in numbers and equipment, are found in many poems. For example, Mūsā al-Zayn Sharāra, a Lebanese poet, pictures them in هذى فلسطين (This is Palestine)(1938)¹

as:

يتهاقن على المنون كأنها كأس عليهم بالرحيق تدار

As if death is a bowl filled with nectar,
they are all competing to gulp it down.

Shiblī al-Mallāt (1875-1961), also Lebanese, expresses in a poem entitled لبنان في العراق (Lenanon in Iraq)(1939) feelings of deep affection mixed with admiration at seeing the Palestinians' blood watering the land throughout the country:

والجو يُمطرها المهلك والثرى يزجي الحديد ويقذف الأجنادا
حتى سقى أبطالها بدمائهم أرض النبوة قمّة ووهادا 2

The sky kept showering it with death, while
the earth hurled upon it bombs and troops,
until the land of prophecy, high and low was
watered with the heroes' blood.

Egyptian poets, for their part, spoke frequently of this subject. In ذكرى وعد بلفور (The Anniversary of the Balfour Declaration)(1939), Aḥmad Muḥarram's enthusiasm reaches its climax when stating that Palestine, by this

¹ Al-'Irfān , vol.29, 1939, p.29.

² Wilyam al-Khāzin, al-Shi'r wal-Waṭaniyya, p.354.

revolt, had written a peerless book on the subject of Jihād. It has also clarified the ambiguous meaning of the term Jihād:

بك يا فلسطين البلاد تعلّمت أدب الجهاد وكان معنى مبهما
هذا كتابك ليس يبلغ شأوه من نَمَّق الكتب الحسان ونمنا¹

Palestine! you have taught other countries the literature of Jihād; which so far was obscure. Thus the book you have written is unique of its kind.

A similar idea is to be found in a poem written by Muḥammad al-Asmar, in which he says:

هذا الجهاد الحق فاستمعوا له وخذوه كلّ الأخذ عن أستاذ ه²

This is the true Jihād. Listen carefully to it, and learn it entirely at the hands of an expert teacher.

In a beautiful image, the Mahjarī poet Ilyās Farḥāt (1891-1976) envisages the grass in Palestine as higher than the cedar trees. What made it higher, the poet explains, is the blood that was shed by Palestinians, which watered the soil:

قدّست أرضك الدماء التي سا لت عليها وأكسبتها ملابسا
وغدا الحشْب فيك أسمى من الأر ز الذي شقّ في السمو السحابا³

¹ Kāmil al-Sawāfirī, Filastīn fil al-Shi'r al-'Arabī..., p.246.

² "Filastīn" (1939), Dīwān Muḥammad al-Asmar, p.195.

³ Muḥammad Qurrah 'Alī, "Filastīn fī Adab al-Mughtaribīn", al-'Irfān, vol.35, no.6, 1948, p.895.

That shed blood on your soil sanctifies it
and fills it with the "al-Malāb"* scent.
On your land grass has become higher than
the cedar trees, which tower up to the
clouds.

Al-Qarawī (Rashīd Salīm al-Khūrī) also, in منطق الغرب
(The Logic of the West)(1939),¹ expresses extreme admir-
ation for the Palestinian Arabs because of their bravery
in fighting. He also scoffs at the British troops in
Palestine, who, in spite of their powerful weapons, could
not silence the Palestinians' guns. Addressing the British
he says:

كالجبال الشواهد	خذلتكم دوائر
كان فوق البيارق	وهوى البيرق الذى
تحت أقدام ساحق	د حرجت كبرياؤكم
لجميع الخلائق	وغدا الليث هزأة

فتكوا بالفيالق	يا لهم من شرادم
لأتوا بالخواارق	لو أصابوا عتادكم

(Your) battleships, as high as mountains,
have disappointed you. The flag which has
been above all other flags has tumbled down.
Your pride has been humiliated and trampled
under crushing feet. And the (British)
Lion became a laughing-stock to all nations.
Oh, what gangs they are, those who assaulted
the mighty troops! Had they got the weapons
you have they would perform miracles.

An Iraqi poet, Muhammad Bahjat al-Atharī, reveals in
يا فلسطين (Oh Palestine!)² that he was afraid that

¹ Dīwān al-A'āshīr, pp.208-212.

² Dīwān Malāhim wa-Azhār, pp.130-133.

* Al-Malāb: a particular kind of scent similar to that of saffron.

Palestine would become a titbit for Britain and the Jews. But after seeing the death-defying Palestinian Arabs defending their country, and seeing their women joining with men in the fight, all his fears had disappeared.

A widely-known poem composed by the Lebanese poet Bishāra al-Khūrī, entitled يا جهادا صفق المجد له (What a Jihād, that won the Applause of Glory)¹, and devoted primarily to praising the Palestinian Arabs for their actions during the revolt, can be taken as an outstanding example of the point we are discussing.

This poem was criticised by 'Umar al-Daqqāq from an aesthetic point of view, on the grounds that it represents short-comings common to the Arabic patriotic poem before the 1950s.² Here, however, we refer to the main ideas in the poem, which are relevant to our theme, rather than its aesthetic and poetic value.

Al-Khūrī wrote the poem to be delivered by him at a gathering that was to be held in Homs (Syria) for the support of the Palestinian Arabs. The gathering was cancelled by order of the French Mandate authorities in Syria. The Syrian magazine al-Ma'raḍ printed the poem in a pamphlet and sent the proceeds as a donation to the Palestinian rebels.³

The poet starts by boasting of the Arab character, especially their redemption of any promise or commitment

¹ Dīwān al-Hawā wal-Shabāb, pp.165-167.

² Naqd al-Shi'r al-Qawmī, pp.191-196.

³ See the explanatory remarks on the poem; Dīwān al-Hawā wal-Shabāb, p.165.

they make:

سائل العلياء عَنَّا والزَّمانا هل خفَرنا ذمةَ مَذ عِرفانا
المِروءات التي عاشت بنا لم تزل تجرى سعيَرا في دمانا

Ask high idealism about us, ask history:
have we ever broken a commitment?
Those noble deeds which we engendered,
still run in our blood.

By stressing this characteristic, the poet aims to show the great difference between the Arabs' attitude towards Great Britain, especially during World War I, and the lack of reciprocity from Great Britain for Arab help and trust. Therefore he reminds the British of what they have been doing to the Arabs, who although Muslim, sided with Great Britain against a Muslim state, i.e., Turkey. After devoting thirteen verses to discussing these two points, al-Khūrī moves to speak of the Palestinian Arabs. It should be pointed out that the picture of Palestine fighting a mighty power, as presented by al-Khūrī, does not differ from that presented by other Arab poets in the poems we have been discussing above. Like many other poets, he considers the fight in which the Palestinians were involved as a Jihād, saying:

يا جهادا صفق المجد له لبس الغار عليه الأرجوانا
شرف باهت فلسطين به وناء للمعالي لا يدانى

What a Jihād, to which glory gave warm
applause, and the laurel was dressed in
purple!
It is a sublime nobility and honour that
Palestine should boast of.

In order to deepen readers' affection, the poet resorts to sad images, portraying Palestine overwhelmed with

tears and blood, as in the following verse:

فإذا المهد غسيل بالدماء يسوع يذرف الدمع حنانا
 يذرف الدمع حنانا

The Holy Sepulchre is bathed in blood,
 and Jesus, in sympathy, is shedding tears.

In the poem al-Khūrī assures Palestine that all the Arabs, Muslims and Christians, are deeply concerned by the hardship it has been suffering; therefore, they are determined to give it limitless aid.

Addressing Great Britain again, he confidently says that however Britain reinforces its troops in Palestine, and showers the Palestinians with heavy fire, it will not be able to silence them.

انشروا الهول وصبّوا ناركم كيفما شئتم فلن تلقوا جباناً
 غدت الأحداث منا أنفساً لم يزد لها الحنف إلا عفواناً

Spread your terror, shell us with heavy fire
 as much as you can; you will find no coward
 among us.
 Your violence simply increased the vigour of
 our souls.

In the latest verses, al-Khūrī stresses the belief that the Palestinians, besides defending their country, are defending the common Arab cause. Therefore, he calls upon the Arabs to aid them both physically and morally.

A repeated image represents the Palestinians as resembling their glorious forefathers, the former Arabs, in noble aspects, and draws a parallel between the two; this image is obviously well-liked by Arab poets since it occurs constantly throughout many poems.

Maḥmūd al-Ḥabbūbī (Iraq: 1906-), for instance, includes this idea in فلسطين المجاهدة (Palestine resorts

to Jihād)¹ in which he says:

لهم رفعت عزّا به الجبهات	مغاويركم من موقف بعد موقف
وهم مثلهم للمكرات ينساة	أقام بناء المكرات جدودهم
إذا طاب غرس طابت الثمرات	وليس عجيبا أن يطيبوا فأنسه
عليهم فاحيوا ما تريد وماتوا	حموا بالدم الزاكي بلادا عزيزة

Being daring, their stands (in battle) time and again gave reason for their heads to be held high in pride.
They are doers of noble deeds, as their ancestors used to be.
They are as sweet fruit, which is not an odd manifestation, because the plant itself, that bears the fruit, has the same nature.
By defending their dearer home with their pure blood, they lost their lives in order to keep that home alive.

Ilyās Farḥāt also says:

فانبروا للعدى صفوفا صفوفا¹ يذكرون الأجداد والأحسابا

They came out line after line to meet the enemy, remembering their noble descent and their forefathers.

So does Ṣaqr al-Shabīb:

جهادا قد أعرب الكل منهم² لعرب الورى والعجم عن كرم الجذر

And al-Qarawī in جزى الله ... (May God bless...)

(1939),⁴ where he says:

ومن كان أجداده مثل خالد فمن آيه ما تبصرون وأكثر

¹ Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Ṣaghīr, Filastīn fil-Shi'r al-Najafī al-Mu'āṣir, pp.125-127.

² Muḥammad Qurra 'Alī, "Filastīn fī Adab al-Mughtaribīn", al-'Irfān, vol.35, no.6, 1948, p.895.

³ Dīwān Ṣaqr al-Shabīb, p.270.

⁴ Dīwān al-A'āṣir, p.160.

Those whose forefathers are like Khālīd (b. al-Walīd) are capable of doing what you have seen, and can do even more.

A peculiarly pagan image, that of blood giving birth to life for the nation and endowing the land with fertility, is also reflected in several poems composed in the period under discussion, but it is used in a very simple and direct way.

‘Umar Abū Rīsha (1908-), for example, likens the blood of Arabs who fall in the fight for Palestine to the rain which brings life to the fields:

ل وجفت سنابل وأقاحي¹ أنتِ دمع السماء، إنْ لهث الحق

You are the tears of the sky, O blood! when the fields become thirsty, when the ears of wheat and the camomiles become dry.

By Aḥmad Muḥarram, the image is presented as follows:

يسقون ما زرعوا دما في مخصب لولا الدم الجارى لأصبح مجدبا²

They are watering what they planted with blood. In fertile land, which without running blood, would be barren.

The Mahjarī poet, Naṣīb ‘Arīḍa (1887-1940), expresses the same image, saying:

وبالدم وهو نجيع الحياة سقيت الثرى جرعة مدهقة³

¹ From a poem entitled شهيد (1937), Dīwān Abū Rīsha, pp. 562-575.

² From a poem entitled من أجل فلسطين (1938), Kāmil al-Sawāfīrī, Filastīn fil-Shi‘r al-‘Arabī..., p.248.

³ From a poem entitled الى فلسطين من وراء البحار (1938), Dīwān al-Arwāḥ al-Ḥā‘ira, p.260.

Of blood which is wholesome to life, you
gave the land a brimming dose.

Al-Jawāhirī similarly sees sacrificial death leading
to resurrection; therefore he addresses Palestine saying:

ومدّى بالممات الى حياة تسروالعفاء الى ارتياح¹

Stride along the way of death to reach an
honourable life. Endure great loss so as
to have a life of ease.

This image attracted a great number of Arab poets since
the late fifties, especially among poets of the "Free Verse
Movement", who employ certain myths and symbols to build up
this image in a skilful way, as will be discussed in chapter
V.

Condemnation of the Arab Leadership.

In spite of the fact that Arab poets in general, when
composing on Palestine, used to include in their works a
great deal of boasting about the Arabs, their history,
character, etc., they paid at the same time great attention
to points of criticism in Arab political and social struc-
ture, by which Palestine was affected.

Regarding this subject, the poets concentrated in their
criticism either on pointing out that the Arabs, especially
at official level, were remiss in their duty towards
Palestine, or on accusing the Arab leadership of deliberately

¹ From a poem entitled ذكرى وعد بلفور (1946), Dīwān al-Jawāhirī, vol.3, pp. 131-134.

serving the West's plans and aspirations in the Area. Furthermore, some poets extended their criticism to include Arab neglect of the problem, which was thought to be the case at public levels.

The Iraqi poet, Muḥammad Maḥdī al-Jawāhirī, may be regarded as the most distinguished poet who paid great attention when writing on Palestine to the weaknesses and sickness in Arab political structure. Not only that, but his criticism is both extreme and painful. This phenomenon seen in the poetry of al-Jawāhirī may be due to two reasons: his deep involvement in the political life of modern Iraq and his refractory personality.

In the first poem written by him on Palestine, (Bleeding Palestine) (1929) mentioned before,¹ al-Jawāhirī directs his criticism at two points:

First, the way in which Arabs generally react towards the problems and hardships which threaten their countries. Such reactions, al-Jawāhirī claims, are reflected only in speeches. Condemning this way of facing the danger, he makes it clear that it is useless to rely on speeches without actions. To demonstrate his view, al-Jawāhirī gives as an example what happened to Iraq and Syria, of which neither words nor verbal protest had protected them from Britain and France. The poet says:

هو جاء نستصرخ القرطاس والقلم	أكلما عصفت بالشعب عاصفة
أو شاعر صان بغداداً بما نظماً	هل أنقذ الشام كتاب بما كتبوا

¹ See p.121.

Why is it that whenever a violent storm
shakes us thoroughly we resort to pen
and paper?
Did the writers or the poets rescue Shām
(Syria) or Baghdad by their writings?

According to this way of thinking, al-Jawāhirī stresses
the belief that only forceful action should be relied on by
the Arabs to face Britain and the Zionists. Therefore he
addresses the Arabs saying:

بالمدفع استشهدى إن كنت ناطقة أو رمت أن تسمعي من يشتكي الصمما
سلي الحوادث والتاريخ هل عرفا حقا ورأيا بغير القوة احترامما

Let the cannon testify to your words when
speaking or if you want your words to reach
the deaf.
Ask history and its events; has it ever seen
any right unprotected by force respected?

The second criticism voiced by the poet centres on the
Arabs' complete trust in Great Britain, "sponsor of the
Zionists and originator of the disasters that befell the
Arabs in their modern history". Britain, he argues, has
not been as faithful to the Arabs as they have been faithful
to her, but the poet makes it clear that it was the Arabs
themselves who encouraged Britain to maintain this attitude
towards them:

يا أمة لخصوم ضدها احتكمت كيف ارتضيت خصيما ظالما حكما
أعطت يدا للغريب بات يقطعها وكان يلثمها لو أنه لطمما
أفنت نفسك فيما ازددت من كرم ألا تكفين عن أعدائك الكرمما

You, a nation, gave your hand to a stranger
who went on chopping at that hand, whereas
he would have been kissing it had he been
slapped.
How could you allow an enemy of yours to be
the judge (of your cause) !
You have been ruined by showing more and
more generosity; can't you stop acting thus
towards your enemies?

In another poem *ذكري وعد بلفور* (The Anniversary of the Balfour Declaration)¹ recited by the poet at a gathering held in the 'Town Hall' in Baghdad in 1946, al-Jawāhirī openly accuses the leadership in some Arab countries, who remain nameless, of making bad bargains with western states. Those bargains, cooked up in Western Capitals and agreed to by Arab rulers, aimed at keeping the Arabs under the control of the West:

وربّة " صفة " عقدت فكانت	كتحريم الطلاق على نكاح
تدبر في العواصم من مريب	خبث الذكر مطعون النواحي
تفوح الخمر منها في اختتام	ويبدو التبر منها في افتتاح

Many a bargain has been concluded in such a manner that it resembles a law forbidding divorce.

Bargains are planned in the (Western) capitals by the suspicious, the infamous, and the disreputable.

Whereas it looks like gold at its opening, it smells of wine at its termination.

Because of the poet's distrust of that leadership, and because of his deep concern about Palestine, he advises the country not to rely on getting any real help from the Arabs. The only help it will receive is words and false tears:

ولا تعني بنا أنا بكاة	ندك بالحويل والصياح
...	...
ولن تجدي كإيانا نصيرا	يدق من الأسى راحا برّاح
ولا قوما يردّون الدواهي	وقد خرست بالسنة فصاح

Do not rely upon our help; we are no more than mourners who have nothing to offer but weeping and shouting.

¹ Dīwān al-Jawāhirī, vol.3, pp.131-134.

Thus you can never find a supporter like us,
 who can only wring his hands in sorrow.
 Nor could you find a people like us, who
 drive back disasters which have become mute
 by turgid language.

Again in **اليأس المنشود** (The Sought-after Despair)

(1947)¹, al-Jawāhirī showers the Arab rulers with severe criticism, accusing them of being tools of the West. Those rulers, the poet says, were given instructions to force their peoples to drink the poison arranged by their masters, and to drive their nations to despair.

<p>فيه كل يوم (زعيم) لم نجد خبرا أعطاهم (ربه) فيما أعدّهم كأسين : كأسا لهم بالشهد مترعة قتالة خوف أن لا تستساغ لهم</p>	<p>عنه ولم ندر كيف اختير واخترعا من الولا ئم صفوا فوقها المتعا وللجما هير كأسا سميها نقعا أوصاهم أن يسقّوهم بها جرعا</p>
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Every day a leader, of whom we know nothing, appears.

How he was chosen, how invented, we do not know.

Such leaders, apart from being provided with all means of pleasure by their 'master', were given two cups: one for them, filled with honey, the other for their people, but filled with poison.

So that the people could finish their deadly cup they should drink it in potions, the 'master' advised.

Al-Jawāhirī then compares the Zionist and the Arab leadership. The Zionist leaders, as seen by him, are active, faithful to their people, and even the leaders of powerful states fear them. On the contrary, the Arab leaders, in addition to what he had pointed out, are negligent of their duty and unfaithful to their peoples.

¹ Ibid., vol.3, pp.189-192.

Some of them are even worse: they have found in the problem of Palestine a source of personal benefit:

أو عابث من فلسطين ومحتتها ألفى معينا فألقى الدلو وانتزعا

Or an opportunist who found in Palestine and its severe trial a water-well, so he lowered his leather bucket and got a share.

Saqr al-Shabīb, for his part, gave vent to painful criticism of the Arab leaders because of their passive stand against the danger threatening Palestine. In the poem *الأعمال لا الأقوال* (1937), mentioned above,¹ he frankly accuses the Arab kings and rulers of being careless about the future of Palestine. The aid which Palestine receives from them does not overstep pompous speeches and false promises, he says. Al-Shabīb, when addressing the Arab kings and rulers, also argues that they do not lack money, nor do their peoples lack enthusiasm towards Palestine. The poet goes on to say that Arabs in different countries became disenchanted at seeing only words proffered by their rulers in support of Palestine.

Embittered and filled with anger, he addresses the rulers saying:

أفكرتم ملوك العرب فيما	يخفف عن ذويكم ما يؤود
أقاركم يُعاث بهم فساد	وأنتم عن معونتهم قعود
فكم عانت فلسطين خطوبا	يشيب من الصبيّ لهنّ فود
وليس الرأي إلا أن تقوموا	فان قتم فأمركم رشيد
فلم يعوزكم مال وجند	بمثليهما لكم توري الزند
فان شعوبكم أجناد صدق	وظل المال فوقكم مديد
وأن عاقت قيامكم أمور	فصدركلها أن لا تريدوا

¹ See p.139.

وَأَمَّا صَرْفُ قَوْلِكُمْ فَمِنْهُ
فَكَمْ كَلِمٌ بِذَرْتُمْ فِيهِ بَذَرًا
على الاخفاق أضجرنا الرديد
فما احلّولى لنا فيه الحصيد

O Arab kings! have you ever thought of relieving the burden upon your relatives? They have been subjected to terrible havoc while you continue to refrain from helping them.

The sufferings Palestine has undergone are too much, it makes even the hair on the temples of a boy turn white.

In my opinion you have to rise (to a man). If you do so, then you will be doing the right thing.

You lack neither money nor men; two devices by which you can kindle fire.

But if you do not rise for some reason or other then it is only because you are unwilling to.

We have been bored with your pointless speeches. Many a time they were seeded (with promises), but when reaping what had been sown we were disappointed.

Some Syrian poets, for their part, talked moderately and in general terms about Arab carelessness towards Palestine, as can be seen in *نكبة فلسطين* (1936)¹ by 'Abd al-Wahhāb Adham , *صيحة النبي*² by Shafīq Jabrī (1898-1980), and *الحلف والجار* (1938)³ by Khalīl Mardam (1895-1959).

Whereas many poets, as we have seen, made their criticism comprehensive or talked about the neglect of Palestine in general terms, other poets mentioned by name some of the Arab countries and prominent Arab figures who were thought to have left Palestine out of their considerations.

A Lebanese poet, Jūrj Ghurayyib (1920-), in a poem

¹ Kāmil al-Sawāfirī, *Filastīn* *fil-Shi'r al-'Arabī*..., p.253.

² Sāmī al-Dahhān, *al-Shi'r al-Ḥadīth* *fil-Iqlīm al-Sūrī*, pp.231-233.

³ Sāmī al-Kayyālī, *al-Shi'r al-'Arabī al-Mu'āṣir fī Sūriyya*, pp.150-151.

entitled **الصَّبَاحُ المَحْطَمُ** (The Shattered Dawn)¹, composed in the early thirties,² expresses deep sorrow because of the harm he, as a Lebanese, had done to Palestine. The poet does not say what sort of harm he had caused, but it is most likely that he is referring to the land bargains by which land was sold to the Jews by some Lebanese feudal landlords (e.g. Sursuq and Āl al-Tayyān). Addressing Palestine, Ghurayyib says:

يا ليتني في يومك فدية وفي رماح الفتح حدّ الرماح
عليك من أزرى مساء أنا ابن الأرض حطمت عليك الصُّباح

I wish I could be your ransom ! Of the spears of victory I wish I were the head!
You were over shadowed with the darkness caused by the cedar-trees of my country, through which I, a Lebanese, shattered your dawn.

Al-Qarawī (Rashīd Salīm al-Khūrī) found a critical point for attack in the attitude of the Lebanese Patriarch, 'Arīḍa, towards Palestine and the Jews. In **أقصى التجلّد** (The Utmost Endurance)(1933)³ al-Qarawī says that Patriarch 'Arīḍa, by delivering his many declarations calling for sympathy towards the Jews, and benefit from the Zionists' financial capital, is joining the enemy in the campaign against the Palestinian Arabs. Then he ironically addresses the Patriarch, saying:

يا سيّد الدّين هل يدعى معلّمكم عيسى بن مريم أم موسى وهارونا
لقد رحمت شعابين اليهود ألا فارحم خرافك واحسبهم شعابيننا
... ..
قال المسيح لنا حبّوا أعاديكم لكنّه لم يقل حبّوا الشياطينا
... ..

¹ Wilyam al-Khāzin, al-Shi'ir wal-Waṭaniyya ..., p.361.

² Ibid.

³ Dīwān al-Shā'ir al-Qarawī, vol.2, pp.479-483.

أَمَلْتُمُ الرِّزْقَ مِنْ أَرْزَى الْأَنَامِ يَدَا يَا لِلصَّبِيَةِ هَلْ صَرْتُمْ مَجَانِينَا
مَاذَا جَنَى الْقُدْسَ مِنْ لَاوِي وَاخْوَتِهِ إِلَّا الشَّقَاءُ وَإِلَّا الذُّلَّ وَالْهَوْنَا

Oh, Your Eminence the Patriarch! is your Master called Jesus, the Son of Mary or is he called Moses and Aaron? You showed mercy towards the Jews, the snakes; why don't you consider your sheep as snakes and show mercy towards them. Jesus did say to us "Love thy enemies!", but he did not say "Love devils!". You hoped to gain a livelihood from the most avaricious of people! Are you mad? What did Jerusalem gain from Levi* and his brothers other than humiliation, misery and degradation?

In another poem written in the same year (1933) in commemoration of King Fayṣal's death [he died in 1931], al-Qarawī again attacks the Patriarch 'Arīḏa and accuses him of becoming "Judaized".

The Sa'udī king, 'Abd al-'Azīz Āl Sa'ūd (1887-1953) was also criticised severely by al-Qarawī. In a poem entitled ¹ أهلاً بكاملة (Welcome to "Kāmila")** and written

¹ Dīwān al-A'āṣir, pp.225- 248.

* Third son of Jacob from his wife Leah.

** "Kāmila"; the name given by al-Qarawī to a poem written by the Lebanese Druze Emire, Shakīb Arslān. Its opening verse is:

قُلْ لِلْقَصَائِدِ كُلِّهِنَّ تَذَلُّلِي لِلشَّاعِرِ الْقُرُوبِ وَسَطِ الْمَحْفَلِ

Arslān wrote the poem as a reply to an earlier poem by al-Qarawī entitled أما الأولى (1945).

When al-Qarawī read Arslān's poem, he replied through the above-mentioned poem "أهلاً بكاملة". The three poems are in the same metre (al-kāmil) and the same rhyme (lām). The three poems also were printed in a pamphlet in 1947 by some of al-Qarawī's friends in Brazil in 1947, and the proceeds sent as a donation to the Palestinians.

See Ibid., p.225.

after the United Nations voted for the partition of Palestine in November 1947, he accuses the Saudi King of keeping silence and of restricting himself to a pleasant life in the Saudi Capital, Riyadh, while Palestine was suffering pain and death. Scoffing at the King he addresses him saying:

أهملت يا ليث العريضة بابها	يوم الحفاظ فذق جزاء المهمل
اذ كنت ترتع في رياضك هائثا	والمسجد الأقصى كقلب المرجل
أبللت أفواه الجراح بقطرة	ودم الشهادة كالغيوث الهطل
أرأيت يا عبد العزيز كد حرة الأسد المحق	أمام كلب مبطل
كلب يهددنا بناب "طرومن"	آنا وآونة بظفر "تشرتشل"
ما زلت توعده بخرصة شوحط	حتى تحدى اليوم حد المنصل

Oh, lion of the (Arab) home /literally: lair_7! since you were careless in guarding the gate, now suffer the punishment of the heedless.

While you were indulging in happiness in your Riyadh, the Aqsa Mosque was boiling like a cooking pot.

Oh, Abd al-'Aziz, haven't you seen how the lion who is in the right has been driven away by a lying dog?

A dog sometimes threatens us with Truman's* canine tooth, sometimes with Churchill's** nail.

Time and again you have threaten^{ed} him with a blow from your sword, but today there he is, challenging the sword.

Egypt was also criticised by some poets during the thirties. In fact some Egyptian writers such as 'Abd al-Qādir al-Māzinī and Muḥammad Husayn Haykal criticised the attitude of some Egyptian newspapers because of their stance towards the revolt in 1936.¹

¹ 'Awāṭif 'Abd al-Raḥmān, Miṣr wa-Filastīn, p.272.

* Truman (H.S.) the 33rd president of the United States (1945-1953).

** Sir Winston L.S. Churchill (1874-1965).

Strangely enough, two poets who criticised Egypt for her policy towards the problem in Palestine were from a region geographically far from the centre of the conflict. The first, Sālīm b. 'Alī al-'Uways (1887-1959), was from al-Shāriqa, the other, Ṣaqr al-Shabīb, from Kuwait, both on the eastern part of the Arab Peninsula.

Sālīm b. 'Alī al-'Uways, in a poem entitled *عَوَّلَ عَلَى خُمَصِ الْبَطُونِ* (Rely on Force [literally: on horses])(1930)¹, attacks Ismā'īl Sīdqī, the Egyptian Prime Minister at that time, and describes him as a "tradesman" who did not care about the welfare of the Arabs. Since that prime minister had taken office, Western influence dominated and directed Egypt's policy. Is it any wonder then, the poet asks, that such a passive stand is taken by Egypt towards many Arab causes?

The second poet, Ṣaqr al-Shabīb, devoted a poem entitled *مصر وقضية فلسطين* (Egypt and the Palestinian Cause) (1937)² to attacking Egypt's official silence towards the events of 1936-1937 in Palestine. Egypt was the only Arab country, the poet claims, which did not show strong condemnation of the question of partition in Palestine, which was posed for the first time in 1937.* What makes Egypt's

¹ *Dīwān Nidā' al-Khalīj*, pp.35-38.

² *Dīwān Ṣaqr al-Shabīb*, pp.278-283.

* The partition plan came in a report issued in July 1937 known as "The Peel Report".

For more details see: The Royal Institute of International Affairs, *Great Britain and Palestine* (1915-1945) pp.96-104, 160-164.

silence more painful is the fact that the Arabs consider it as the anchor of their hopes (مناط آمال العرب), it being more qualified than other Arab countries to play a leading role in defending Arab causes.

By way of isolating the reasons which compelled Egypt to maintain such a passive attitude regarding the problem of Palestine, al-Shabīb puts forward the plea that Egypt is preoccupied with freeing itself from British control, and believes that any interference by her in Palestine would affect her own cause with Britain. Al-Shabīb rejects such an excuse and says:

عن أن تقوم بواجب التحرّر	إن كان تحرير البلاد يعوقها
فضل على استعبادها المتوقّر	فعلى تحرّرها العفاء فما له
بمّزق من مجدنا ومبعثر	أيسر مصر أن ترمم مجدها
إن نازلت يوماً عدوا يجترى	ولعلنا نلقي لها أقوى يد

If freeing herself hinders her from doing what a free person has to do, then that is the end of her freedom. Freedom in that case is no better than the slavery already being suffered. Would Egypt be pleased if she rebuilt her glory at the price of our ruined and scattered glory? Isn't it very likely that we would back her strongly if she entered into battle against any daring enemy?

Addressing Egypt, and pointing out the great loss that she could incur by keeping herself away from Arab causes in general and the Palestinian cause in particular, he says:

ولهنّ مثل ودادنا لم يذخر	يا مصر أحداثُ الزّمان كثيرة
ينسى الشقيق شقيقه فتذكّر	ولئن نسيت وفاءنا في كل ما
فيما أراه على سوى المتكبر	يا مصر ما شرّ التّكبر عائدا
ولها كرام العرب أكرم محجر	أبدا فلسطين ستبقى مقلّة

Oh, Egypt! life is full of misfortune:
 for such times love is the best thing
 that can be offered.
 If you forget our fidelity to things that
 may be forgotten even by brothers, do
 remember that he who turns his back on
 (a relative) is the loser.
 Palestine will remain forever an eyeball
 of which noble Arabs are the socket.

In this poem, al-Shabīb also attacks "al-Azhar" in Egypt for the same reasons. This Islamic Institution, highly respected by Muslims, is capable of playing an important role in giving Palestine sufficient aid by declaring a Jihād for the rescue of Palestine. But al-Azhar, disappointingly, remained silent and motionless like an 'etherised' body, the poet says.

Al-Shabīb therefore addresses the Grand Muftī of "al-Azhar", saying:

أزيعنا الديني إن زعيمنا	بالحق من لزمنا لم يخفر
أظن أن يرضى زعامتك الألى	مهما دعاهم واجب تتأخر
ماذا رأى الاسلام من خدماته	عند الزعيم سوى المقال المضجر
...	...
أعط الزعامة حقها أو خلبها	وتنح عنها للأحق الأجدر
ما المجد ثرثرة ولكن غضبة	للحق ترضي صارما أو سمهري

O religious leader of ours, our true leader
 is he who does not violate our rights!
 Do you think that those who see you refrain
 whenever duty calls will consent to be led
 by you?
 What service has Islam seen you do other
 than to make boring speeches?
 Never was glory established by prattle,
 but by spears and swords angry for justice.
 Give the office its due or leave it to some-
 one more capable!

The preceding discussion illustrates that the concern
 of Arab poets at the political situation of Palestine

between 1917 and 1948 developed rapidly, especially after the disturbances over the Wailing Wall in 1929.

During that period only poetry expressed any enthusiasm or far-reaching concern for the Palestinian cause. Other literary forms -the short story, novel and drama- failed to show a similar preoccupation with the subject.

The large number of poems echoing anxiety and concern about what was happening in Palestine, written by Arab poets, whether living in the far north of Africa or farther away in the Mahjar, deep in the Arab Peninsula or in countries bordering Palestine, and also the big demonstrations that took place in many cities and capitals on the anniversary of the Balfour Declaration, support the suggestion that Arab public opinion in that period has become well aware of the Zionist danger to Palestine.

This makes unquestionable the conclusion that outbreaks of violence against Jews in Arab countries during that period, such as that in Constantine in 1933, and in Baghdad in 1941, were due mainly to events in Palestine.

Surprisingly enough, some scholars try to twist this fact and claim that such acts of hostility towards Jews were caused by mere anti-Semitic feelings among Arabs rather than by events in Palestine.

Bernard Lewis, for example, by way of referring to the 1941 events in Baghdad in which a number of Jews were killed, gives the impression that Iraqi public opinion in the early forties was still unaware of the Zionist threat to Palestine:

At the beginning of June 1941, Zionism could hardly have seemed a serious threat and one needs great faith to believe that the Baghdad mobs in June 1941 were moved to fall upon their Jewish compatriots because of a problem 600 miles away and a threat six years in the future.¹

Yet in Iraq in particular, demonstrations against the Zionists' activities and the policy of the British Mandate in Palestine had taken place annually since the early thirties on the occasion of the anniversary of the Balfour Declaration. In those demonstrations Iraqi poets such as Muḥammad Maḥdī al-Jawāhirī, Maḥmūd al-Ḥabbūbī, Muḥammad 'Alī al-Ya'qūbī and others used to recite poems echoing the general feeling and concern about events in Palestine.² and expressing fears about the future of that country as early as 1929, as witnesses al-Jawāhirī's poem فلسطين الدائمة (1928) mentioned earlier.

Besides, it was in Iraq that the first collection of poems dealing only with the subject of Palestine was published. The collection, entitled مجموعة الفلسطينيين, in which several Shi'ite Iraqi poets contributed, appeared in al-Najaf in 1939.

Furthermore, we have pointed out how riots against Jews in countries farther away than Iraq, and earlier than the forties, took place as a result of what was happening in Palestine, as was the case in Constantine in 1933.

¹ Bernard Lewis, Semites and Anti-Semites: Race in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, p.175.

² See Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Ṣaghīr, Filastīn. fil-Shi'r al-Najafī al-Mu'āṣir, p.125, 130, 139, 211, 344; also the Dīwān of al-Ya'qūbī, p.14, 18.

Moving to a consideration of the style of those poems dealing with our subject it is noticeable that rhetorical language and fiery phrases dominate. The words are vehement, capable of stirring up feelings of anger among the Arab public. Much in the poems also concentrates on Arab self-glorification and the splendour of the Arab past. Some of this vanity, however, is transformed into self-criticism in the works printed after the loss of Palestine in 1948 and the June defeat of 1967.

The tendencies expressed in the poems written during that period were restricted mainly to religious and national motives. Humanitarian feelings, that might be felt by any human being towards another unfortunate or oppressed person, irrespective of ties of religion and race were not a conspicuous element in poems written at that stage.

Besides, the poets concentrated on picturing the struggle over Palestine as a racial and religious conflict between the Jews and the West on one side and the Arabs on the other. It was not until 1948 and afterwards that a sympathetic human tendency began to make itself visible in works dealing with this subject, as can be seen from those expressing the misery of the refugees and their longing for the return.

It is observable also that poems composed at that period speak directly and without ambiguity about Palestine. Approaching the subject symbolically, for instance, was uncommon at that stage. From among the numerous poems written before 1948, only a few poems approached the subject symbolically. Nevertheless, the symbolism in those

poems is very clear and can be recognized immediately and without much effort.¹ This may be due to the fact that treating subjects symbolically has been rare not only in patriotic poems but also in Arabic poetry as a whole. Even the so-called Arab symbolism represented by the work of Sa'īd 'Aql (1912-), who tried to imitate the French nineteenth century symbolists, remained alien to the majority of Arab poets.

¹ See chapter VII, p.382.

CHAPTER IV

Reaping the Whirlwind

(1) The Spread of Arab Involvement: 1948-1973 .

The Arab defeat in 1948, and the loss of Palestine to the Jews have been frequently called the Nakba (the Disaster), sometimes the Ma'sā (the Tragedy), by Arab writers when they talk about this subject.

Soon after the defeat, a stream of publications appeared arguing for the creation of a unified Arab state, firstly, to develop Arab society for the overall good, but more urgently to ensure the ability to resist the actuality and further threat of military action and expansion by Israel. Besides, whereas many writers blamed other states, especially the United States and Great Britain, for their biased role in the conflict, others did acknowledge that the deficiencies of the Arabs themselves were also responsible for their misfortunes. Sāṭi' al-Ḥuṣrī (1880-1968), the foremost Arab nationalist writer of the midcentury, attributed the Arabs' defeat in that war to their disunity, saying:

It should not be said that the Arabs lost the battle although they were seven states, but rather they lost it because they were seven (separate) states.¹

The defeat was considered not only as a "tragedy for the Palestinians" but also for the whole Arab world, and, by some, even for "all of Islam". "It is a disaster in every sense of the word, and one of the harshest of the

¹ Sāṭi' al-Ḥuṣrī, Ārā' wa-Aḥādīth fil-Qawmiyya al-'Arabiyya, p.33.

trials and tribulations with which the Arabs have been afflicted throughout their long history", wrote Qusṭantīn Zurayq, in his book Ma'nā al-Nakba (The Meaning of the Disaster)¹.

By way of analysing the defeat, Zurayq pays special attention to the nature of the political and social structure of Arab society, attributing to it the main reasons for the defeat. The victory which the Zionists achieved in Palestine, he argues, lies "not in the superiority of one people over another, but rather in the superiority of one system over another". The roots of Zionism, the writer goes on to say, are grounded in modern Western life, while the Arabs "are still distant from that sort of life and hostile to it. The Zionists live in the present and for the future, while we continue to dream of the past and to stupefy ourselves with its fading glory".²

Zurayq's views of the Arabs' defeat in 1948 do not differ from the views expressed by many other writers who have written on this subject, whatever their political and ideological affiliations.³

¹ P.5.

² Ibid., p.42.

³ This point was also noted by Anis Sayegh, who chose four studies that also happen to be the first four books written on the defeat and examines how their authors analysed it. All four books appeared in first editions "between August 1948 and January 1950". The above-mentioned book by Zurayq is one of them. The other three books are عبرة فلسطين (The Lesson of Palestine) by Mūsā al-'Alamī, بعد النكبة (After the Disaster) by Qadrī Ṭūqān, and الطريق الى الخلاص (The Road to Salvation) by Jūrj Ḥannā. See Anis Sayegh, Palestine and Arab Nationalism, pp.77-84.

The defeat, disastrous and affecting as it was, had major effects on the political state of affairs in the Arab states, particularly in those who participated in the fight.

In Syria, it brought about considerable agitation against the then existing regime. In December 1948, anti-government riots forced the cabinet to resign.¹ On March 30th, 1949, the then president Shukrī al-Quwwatli was removed by a coup d'état led by Colonel Ḥusnī al-Za'īm.² More coups followed in Syria during 1949 and 1950.

In Transjordan, King 'Abdullah found himself facing serious unrest among the Palestinians, and on July 20, 1951, he was assassinated in Jerusalem by a Palestinian.

In Egypt, a group of young officers, aroused by their injured pride resulting from the events of 1948, and filled with hatred because of the corrupt and inefficient government of King Fārūq, overthrew the monarchy in July 1952 and turned Egypt into a republic.

The Royal family in Iraq survived a few years more until 1958, when a revolution led by 'Abd al-Salām 'Ārif and 'Abd al-Karīm Qāsīm turned Iraq, also, into a republic.

It is clear from the names of those who led the coups and revolutions in their countries against the old regimes, that they were all officers who had participated in the fight in 1948 and tasted the bitterness of defeat.

One of the most painful consequences of the Arab-Israeli war in 1948 and the creation of the Jewish State in

¹ Fred J. Khouri, The Arab-Israeli Dilemma, p.99.

² John Kimche, Seven Fallen Pillars, p.300

Palestine, was the exodus of about 700,000¹ Palestinian Arabs from their homes and lands which created many problems. It is even believed by some politicians that "it would be truer to say that the (Palestinian) refugees were the cause of the first Arab-Israeli war and not the result", as Anthony Nutting pointed out once when he addressed the American Council of Judaism in New York in November 1967.²

This problem in particular, more than the other consequences of the 1948 war, received world-wide attention. For example, in the period between 1950 and 1967, eighteen resolutions were adopted by the General Assembly, all affirming and reaffirming annually the right of the refugees to repatriation or compensation.³

Israel, on her part, has been rejecting such resolutions, sometimes arguing that the refugees left the country under the orders of Arab leaders,⁴ sometimes linking the refugee problem to the negotiation of a complete peace settlement with the surrounding Arab states.⁵

As for the first of these assertions, namely, that the Palestinians left the country under the orders of Arab leaders, this was denied by the Arabs and refuted by several neutral sources. For instance, Erskine B. Childers, an Irish journalist, made an intensive effort in 1961 to find

¹ Peter Dodd and Halim Barakat, River Without Bridges, p.4.

² Pamela Ferguson, The Palestine Problem, p.59.

³ Sami Hadawi, Palestine In Focus, p.62.

⁴ Erskine B. Childers, "The Other Exodus", in: Palestine, A Search For Truth, edited by Alan R. Talor and Richard N. Tetlie, p.90.

⁵ Albert Hourani, "The June War", *Ibid.*, p.161.

whether there was any proof that such orders were given. He interviewed Arab leaders and checked the records made by official British and American sources of all radio broadcasts made during the months concerned. Erskine Childers also asked Israeli officials to show him any documentary proof they might have of this claim. After his intensive investigation, Childers found that "there was not a single order, or appeal, or suggestion about evacuation from Palestine from any Arab radio station, inside or outside Palestine, in 1948". Childers added that in fact there was "repeated monitored record of Arab appeals, even flat orders, to the civilians of Palestine to stay put".¹

Another source, Sir John Bagot Glubb, former officer commanding the Arab Legion in the 1948 War, refutes this claim in his book A Soldier With The Arabs.²

As for the second point, which links the refugee problem with the whole framework of a peace settlement with the surrounding Arab countries, this is viewed as illogical by some scholars, on the grounds that the peace settlement and the refugee problem are two different matters having no moral connection.³

The Palestinian refugees were scattered among several Arab countries. Israel, as well as the Western Powers, has been anxious to see them absorbed into the surrounding Arab

¹ Erskine B. Childers, "The Other Exodus", Palestine: A Search For Truth, pp.89-97.

² P. 251.

³ Albert Hourani, "The June War", Palestine: A Search For Truth, p.161.

countries, so that the problem of Palestine as a whole would cease to exist. But this did not happen, because, on the one hand, the refugees themselves did not want to be absorbed within the Arab states, and on the other, the Arab states did not want to absorb them, for several reasons, political and social. All the host countries, with the exception of Jordan, encouraged the Palestinians to maintain their distinctive identity.¹

The period between 1948 and 1967, insofar as Arab-Israeli conflict on the Palestine issue was concerned, was marked by the following major factors:

- 1- During that period, clashes between the two sides along the demarcation lines did not cease.²
- 2- The Palestinian Fidā'īyyīn activities inside the Israeli territories increased and figured among the several other factors that led to the June War (1967).³
- 3- The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was formed in 1964, when the Arab rulers assembled at the first Summit Conference in Cairo (1964).
- 4- After the Egyptian revolution in 1952, President Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir dominated the Arab political scene. The Egyptian leader became a charismatic symbol of Arab unity and nationalism. The "Tripartite Attack" launched by

¹ Don Peretz, A Palestine Entity, p.28.

² For details on Arab-Israeli problems and clashes along the borders between Israel and the neighbouring Arab states, See Fred J. Khouri, The Arab-Israeli Dilemma, pp.191-204.

³ For more information about Israeli reprisals against Arab territories caused by the Fidā'īyyīn activities inside Israel. See Sami Hadawi, Palestine in Focus, pp.91-92.

Israel, Great Britain and France on Egypt in 1956, and the full unity between Egypt and Syria in 1958, raised Nāṣir's prestige to an all-time high, making him a hero to the Arabs. With regard to the problem of Palestine, the Arab masses, including the Palestinians, had high hopes, particularly before 1967, that Palestine would be liberated by his efforts.

Then came the June War in 1967. Israel's swift victory in it enabled her to occupy the Gaza Strip, the Sinai Peninsula, the Golan Heights in southern Syria and all of the West Bank. But, as the passing years showed, it is generally acknowledged that the June War did not settle any basic issues in the Arab-Israeli conflict, but rather added to them.¹

As for Israel, although she acquired more lands, a noticeable section of world opinion began "to realize that Israel is not a poor little defenceless" but rather "a very obstinate, arrogant state".² Besides, peace for Israel, too, remained far from being achieved. And, in the few months following the war, there were more frequent and bloody clashes between the two sides than had taken place for many years before 1967.³

As for the Arab states, the June War provided them with more and not less reason to think of Israel as an enemy and

¹ Fred J. Khouri, The Arab-Israeli Dilemma, p.291.

² Prof. Arnold Toynbee, (Interview by Louis Eaks), Journal of Palestine Studies, vol.II, no.3, Spring 1973, pp.3-12.

³ Fred J. Khouri, The Arab-Israeli Dilemma, p.291.

an expansionist state.¹ Their attitude towards Israel was not changed by their defeat. The Summit Conference held at Khartoum in the Sudan in September 1967 reiterated the policy of "no peace", "no recognition" and "no negotiation" with Israel.

As for the Israeli-Arabs (those who had been living in Israel since 1948), it was noticed that the June War had strengthened Arab nationalist sentiment among them and increased their hatred towards the State of Israel. In a survey conducted by Hebrew University sociologists after the war there was the question: "How in your view did the war influence the attitude of the Arabs (in Israel) to the State of Israel?" In answer to the question 73% wrote that their hatred rose, 23% their hatred remained the same and 4% answered that it fell.²

For the Palestinians many aspects of the new situation differed from those of 1948. After 1948, only about 160,000 Palestinian Arabs had remained in Israel. After the June War, about one million and a half Palestinians had come under Israel occupation.³ Besides, the June War was the main factor in the emergence of an active and influential Palestinian resistance movement. After the resignation of Aḥmad al-Shuqayrī on December 24, 1967⁴ as the chairman of the PLO, the leadership of this organization fell to

¹ Albert Hourani, "The June War", Palestine: A Search For Truth, p.165.

² Don Peretz, The Palestine Entity, p.47.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Fred J. Khourī, The Arab-Israeli Dilemma, p.358.

younger and more activist personalities headed by Yāsir 'Arafāt, the head of the Fath organization.

The Karāma battle between Israeli forces and the Palestinian Fidā'iyyīn marks a new phase in the development of the Palestine resistance movement.¹ On March 21, 1968, the Israeli army crossed the Jordan River and made a large-scale attack on the Karāma refugee camp and commando base. In fierce fighting, unexpectedly heavy casualties² were inflicted on the Israeli forces while the resistance movement acquired "a new suit which symbolically set it apart from the Arab setting".³ It gave the movement a great boost and made it a major element to be reckoned with in any attempt to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict.⁴

Furthermore, after the Karāma battle, volunteers from all parts of the Arab world poured in to join the Fidā'iyyīn. Throughout the Arab world, Palestine commando groups gained support and a wide following among university students, intellectuals, labour unions, religious groups and leftist organizations. Arab enthusiasm for the Fidā'iyyīn spread beyond the poor and middle classes, and reached the wealthy elite.

In Israel itself, the extent of underground opposition among Israeli Arabs to the Jewish States was affected by the resistance movement and was shown by the increased

¹ Don Peretz, The Palestine Entity, p.50.

² Fred J. Khouri, The Arab-Israeli Dilemma, p.359.

³ Edward W. Said, The Question of Palestine, p.158.

⁴ Fred J. Khouri, The Arab-Israeli Dilemma, p.358.

frequency of arrests amongst Israeli Arabs for collaboration with the Palestinian commando groups.¹ Among the Israelis, although the great majority continued to back their government's refusal to recognize the Palestinians as a separate national community, an increasing number began to hold a different opinion.²

Progress on behalf of the Palestinians was also made at the United Nations. Besides, from 1973 onwards, many states had begun to accept the PLO as the legitimate and representative organization of the Palestinians.

Thus, to conclude our general discussion on the impact of the Palestine problem on the Arab countries, it is no exaggeration to say that many of the significant political events which had taken place in the Arab countries since 1948 had been dominated by the question of Palestine.

It can also be said -as the events proved- that whatever their differences on other matters, the Arabs came near to being united in their attitude to Israel.

(2) The Development of Literary Concern for the Palestine Cause : 1948-1973.

(Reflection of the Problem in Novels, Short Stories, Plays and Poetry)

In previous chapters we have been discussing poetry composed on the subject of Palestine during a period in which the Arab-Israeli conflict was totally different from the

¹ Don Peretz, The Palestine Entity, p.47.

² Fred J. Khouri, The Arab-Israeli Dilemma, p.361.

period after the 1948 war, and the creation of the State of Israel.

During that phase in the conflict, only poets had shown much concern about the problems facing Palestinians. Arab novelists, short story writers and playwrights, with but few exceptions, devoted little of their work to this subject.

A few Palestinian writers wrote fictional works reflecting aspects of the problem before 1948. This can be seen in a number of short stories written by Maḥmūd Sayf al-Dīn al-Īrānī (1914-) such as **الظمأ** (The Thirst) which was inspired by the revolt of 1936 in Palestine, **حذاءه الجديد** (His New Pair of Shoes)¹ and **جراثيم** (Germs). This last criticizes Palestinian political parties for their personal and selfish motives.²

Najātī Ṣidqī (1905-1980) also reflects in some of his short stories the hardships which his country was undergoing in the forties. One moving short story is entitled **الاخوات الحزينات** (The Sad Sisters)(1947).³

Another writer, Ishāq Mūsā al-Ḥusaynī wrote a novel entitled **مذكرات دجاجة** (The Diaries of a Hen)(1943), in which he represents Palestine as a hen. The novel had a preface by Ṭāḥā Ḥusayn when it was published by Dār al-Ma'ārif (Cairo) in its series **Iqra'**, and gained some fame when it appeared.⁴

A verse play was written by Muḥyi al-Dīn al-Hājj 'Īsā

¹ 'Abd al-Raḥmān Yāghī, Ḥayāt al-Adab al-Filastīnī..., p.494.

² Ibid., p.474.

³ Ibid., p.500.

⁴ Ibid., p.519.

in 1947 called صراع كليب (The Death of Kulayb). The writer draws on pre-Islamic history in order to criticize Arab differences and disunity.

However, the loss of Palestine in 1948 deeply influenced Arab writers, and was reflected in numerous works: novels, short stories and plays. Then came the defeat of June 1967, which had an equally deep effect on Arab literary production, both in quantity and quality.

Although this thesis deals only with poetry, it would be of some value to give a general idea of how far the problem of Palestine or, in other words, the Arab-Israeli conflict, has been reflected in Arabic fictional works, whether novels, short stories or plays.

To start with the novel, appendix I illustrates that tens of novels inspired by the Arab-Israeli conflict had appeared in the period under discussion.

The novel Lāji'a (1952) written by Jūrj Hannā (1893-1969), a Lebanese Marxist doctor, is usually considered the first Arabic novel ever to be written by a non-Palestinian Arab on this problem. This claim (which is wrong) is repeated in all the books and articles that discuss the reflection of the Arab-Israeli confrontation in the Arabic novel.¹ As seen in the appendix, there are two novels written by non-Palestinian Arab writers before the fifties,

¹ For examples see:

Filastīn fil-Riwāya al-'Arabiyya, by Sālīh Abū Isḥāq, p.97.

The Arab-Israeli Conflict as Represented in Arabic Fictional Literature, by Howard Douglas Rowland, p.15.

"The Image of the Jews in Post World War II Arabic

one published in Baghdad in 1948 and the other in Cairo in 1949.

The novels written before 1967 share certain common characteristics, namely, a dominant strain of sadness, and a protagonist who is usually overwhelmed by despair and humiliation.¹

The Arab defeat in the June War, as was mentioned, had an enormous influence on the Arabic novel. To give some idea of this, it would be useful to sum up some of the more important observations in Shukrī 'Azīz Mādī's book In'ikās Hazīmat Hazīrān 'alā al-Riwāya al-'Arabiyya. The book, as its title indicates, discusses this subject in detail.

Mādī points out that the June defeat deeply affected the output of Arabic novels. Comparing the number of novels published in four of the Arab countries, viz., Egypt, Iraq, Syria and Jordan, in the six years preceding the 1967 war and in the six years following it, he states that between 1961 and 1967, only 92 novels were published in those four countries, but, during the six years which followed the war, the number reached 162.²

On examination, the average number of novels published yearly in each of these four countries, before and after the

Literature" by Trevor LeGassick, in : Al-'Arabiyya (Journal of the American Association of Teachers of Arabic), vol.II, no.1, and 2, 1978, p.75.

¹ Shukrī 'Azīz Mādī, In'ikās Hazīmat Hazīrān 'alā al-Riwāya al-'Arabiyya, p.33.

² Ibid., p.27.

June War, was seven in Egypt, three in Iraq, and in Syria four. After 1967, the average number became ten in Egypt, seven in Iraq and five in Syria. As for Jordan, Mādī points out that the novels published during a period of eighteen years (1948-1966) numbered only nine, while in the six years after 1967, the number jumped to 23.¹ This means that the average number of novels published before 1967, in Jordan, was one every two years, while it increased to four every year between 1967 and 1973.

Another noteworthy observation is to be found in Mādī's study regarding the reverberation of the June defeat in Arabic novels written in countries far removed from the epicentre of the Arab-Israeli conflict; one such is the novel entitled النار والاختيار (The Fire and the Choice) by the Moroccan Khunātha Bannūna.²

The novels inspired by the June War differ in their analysis of the defeat. In some novels it is ascribed solely to military causes, as indicated in فارس مدينة القنطرة (The Knight of al-Qanṭara City) by 'Abd al-Salām al-'Ujaylī

¹ Ibid.

² The central idea in the novel stresses the belief that the Arab defeat is not the responsibility only of Arab military institutions. Laylā, the protagonist of the novel, realizes that she had participated in bringing about the defeat as a television broadcaster. For a long time before the war, she had deceived the masses by spreading "false words" and "delusion" among them. Realizing this fact after the defeat, she chooses teaching as her new career, so that she should be able to rescue the new generation from duplicity and delusion.

and قارب الزمن الثقيل (The Vessel of Heavy Days), by 'Abd al-Nabī Hijāzī.¹ In others, it is attributed to the alienated state of the Arab intelligentsia resulting from the oppression practiced on them by ruling regimes, as in Taysīr Sabbūl's novel أنت منذ اليوم (You, from Today).² Some novels also ascribe it to the backwardness in the social, cultural and political structure of Arab society, as in عودة الطائر الى البحر (The Bird's Return to the Sea), by Ḥalīm Barakāt.³

An estrangement between the Arabs and the essence of their religion was a major factor behind their defeat according to some authors such as Amīn Shunnār in الكابوس (The Nightmare).⁴

After 1967 two main moods are reflected in the novels inspired by the Arab-Israeli conflict. Some writers saw in the defeat a collapse of the whole nation and therefore fell into complete despair and pessimism, as does Khudayr 'Abd al-Amīr in ليس ثمة أمل لجلجامش (There is no Hope for Gilgamesh) and Ḥaydar Ḥaydar in الزمن الموحش (The Desolate Time). Others did not sink into despair, considering the defeat as a temporary setback that could happen to any nation, especially in a conflict so complicated, severe and long-lasting as that between the Arabs and Israelis. This optimistic view is reflected in works such as الشمس في يوم غائم (The Sun on a Cloudy Day), by Ḥannā Mīna, أم ســـــــعد

¹ Ibid., p.41.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., p.57.

⁴ Ibid., p.61.

(Sa'd's Mother) and **عائد الى حيفا** (Returning to Haifa) by Ghassān Kanafānī, and many others.¹

As to short stories and the reflection of the Palestine problem in this medium, it should be pointed out that this fictional form has proved a greater favourite with Arab writers than either the novel or play for the purpose of depicting their feelings and views on this subject.

Accordingly, a great number of short stories have been written on the subject since 1948. They are scattered liberally in short story collections and literary periodicals. In some collections, all the stories deal with Palestinian themes, as in **التراب الحزين** (The Sad Soil) by Badī' Haqqī.² The author's dedication to the book is as follows:

"To the sad soil,
to Palestine
I dedicate these letters which are soaked
in blood and tears"³

But, unlike the novels, short stories (and also plays), have not been studied, as far as we know, except for R. D. Howard's study mentioned before, in which he devotes a chapter to short stories and another to plays.⁴

Of drama, it has been found possible to list the plays dealing with our subject, as was done with the novel, in order to illustrate how far the problem has been represented in that literary form.

¹ Ibid., p.33.

² Beirut, Dār al-‘Ilm lil-Malāyīn, 1960.

³ P.5.

⁴ Chapters II and III.

As can be seen from appendix II, some Arab playwrights were producing works on this subject even before than the novelists. Some Palestinian playwrights, indeed, wrote plays plainly and directly on this theme as early as 1933, (e.g., *في سبيلك يا وطن*, by Wadī Ṭarazī), and these plays are said to have been performed then.

Up to 1967 there were more than thirty plays on the subject. This may seem strange; the figure contradicts the statements of some writers who have claimed that only a few plays were written on the subject of the confrontation. R. D. Howard, for instance, states that until 1969 "research has turned up only nine dramas about the Palestine question".¹

In fact, all of the plays mentioned and discussed by Howard, except one, are one-act plays, and all were written after 1948.

Another writer, this time an Arab, claims that only drama among the fictional forms showed no concern for the Palestine problem.²

The appendix also shows that more than fifty playwrights from different Arab countries wrote one or more plays on the Palestine problem.

¹ The Arab-Israeli Conflict..., p.161.

² Ṣabrī Ḥāfiẓ in an article entitled "Nakbat Filasṭīn fil-Riwāya al-ʿArabiyya", published in al-Ādāb, no.4, April 1964, p.24.

Looking to the dates when the plays were written, the appendix specified shows that, by 1948, 10 plays had appeared, some of them having been performed on stage. Between 1949 and 1966 about 25 plays were published, but, during the six years following the June War, as many as 26 plays appeared. This shows clearly that the problem has been receiving more attention from Arab dramatists since the disastrous defeat in the June War.

Among those Arab playwrights who devoted some of their works to the Palestine question, special mention needs to be made of 'Alī Aḥmad Bā Kathīr's plays written before 1948 and shortly thereafter. He deserves special mention firstly because, as our research shows, he is the first non-Palestinian playwright to write on the Palestine problem; and secondly because he devotes five long and a number of short dramas to this subject, more than any other playwright does.

'Alī Aḥmad Bā Kathīr (1918-1969), son of a Ḥaḍramī father and an Indonesian mother, was born in Ḥaḍramawt, emigrated first to Indonesia, then to Ḥijāz, and finally to Egypt, where he stayed until his death.

His first play on the subject of Palestine is called **شيلوك الجديد** (The New Shylock) (1945); its structure and some of its central motifs are modelled on Shakespeare's play "The Merchant of Venice".

In Bā Kathīr's play, Antonio's body represents the

entire bloc of Arab states, the pound of flesh Palestine, and the agreement between Shylock and Antonio, the 1917 Balfour Declaration. The play, written before the loss of Palestine, reflects the author's optimism regarding the future of Palestine. He, therefore, ends his play by making Shylock commit suicide when he hears the decision of the International Commission of Arbitration, which assembled to find a solution to the Palestine problem, and gave a decision in favour of the Arabs'.¹

Bā Kathīr's second work on Palestine was entitled مسرح السياسة (Theatre of Politics). The book includes 12 one-act plays, written between 1945 and 1948, all on political themes dealing with Palestine and the Zionists,² such as نقود تنتقم (Money takes Revenge), راشيل والثلاثة الكبار (Rachel and the Big Three), ليلة ١٥ مايو (The Night of May 15th), معجزة اسرائيل (The Miracle of Israel), etc.

Of these plays, we shall give a summary of the first, Money takes Revenge, because of its unusual and peculiar subject.

The author has divided the play into six scenes. In the first we see the Secretary General of the United Nations in his home, listening to his wife, who is warning him that he will be endangered if he continues to be biased towards the Zionists' views of the Palestine problem. She claims

¹ For more comprehensive analysis of the play, see: Umberto Rizzitano, "Reactions to Western Political Influences in 'Alī Aḥmad Bā Kathīr's Drama", Historians of The Middle East, pp.445-447.

² 'Abdullah al-Tantāwī, Dirāsa fī Adab Bā Kathīr, p.58.

that she has recently heard the money they keep in their safe talking and threatening to take revenge on her husband, because of his partiality towards the Zionists.

In the second scene, the Secretary General takes his wife to a mental hospital to be examined by the doctors there, since she continues to claim that she had heard the money talking. The doctors find that the wife is completely sane. Moreover, they advise him to consider carefully what his wife says. He leaves the hospital dissatisfied both with the doctors' report and unconvinced by his wife's claims.

The third scene shows us the Secretary General lying ill in hospital, suffering from painful digestive troubles for which the doctors can do nothing but give ever larger doses of castor-oil. When his wife says that the money has started taking its revenge, her words infuriate him and he shouts at her, accusing her of having Arab blood in her veins.

In the next scene the consultants in the hospital are meeting to discuss the digestive troubles of the Secretary General, the like of which they have never experienced.

In the fifth scene, the Secretary General is visited by the Zionist M. Shartuk, who starts telling the Secretary General off and accusing him of becoming slack in the Zionists' interests. Shartuk's words anger the Secretary General, who shouts at him, claiming that because of his bias towards the Zionists, he is now lying in bed suffering from illness. He adds that he should ask the Zionists for compensation for the loss of his health.

In the last scene, the Secretary General goes to the Treasurer of the United Nations, asking him to cut off a percentage (supposed to be the money paid by the Arab States to that institution) from his salary. When the treasurer asks him why, he tells him the whole story. He also advises the Treasurer to do the same, otherwise he will be afflicted by the same disease.

It can be argued that this play reflects to some degree Bā Kathīr's awareness of the extent to which economics affect this conflict.

Soon after the 1948 war and the creation of the State of Israel, Bā Kathīr wrote his third work on the Palestine problem. The play is called *مأساة أوديب* (The Tragedy of Oedipus). In this play, Bā Kathīr adapts the Greek myth of Oedipus and employs it to express the sorrow caused him by the loss of Palestine.

In his book Fann al-Masraḥiyya min Khilāl Tajāribī al-Shakhṣiyya Bā Kathīr explains the circumstances in which he wrote the play, saying: "I was overwhelmed with despair and hopelessness at the future of the Arab nation. I felt that the Arabs, by losing Palestine, had also lost their dignity and honour. For a long time I went on suffering from that feeling, and trying hard to dispel it".¹

The Oedipus tragedy was judged by Bā Kathīr to be a suitable theme for the elucidation of his subject. He explains: "as Oedipus was directed by a power greater than he (viz., the Oracle of Delphi), without being aware of it,

¹ Ibid., p.94.

so also the Arabs were directed by a power greater than theirs". The Great Powers, he believes "had planned, since the Balfour Declaration was issued (1917), that Palestine should be a Jewish state, and all the time between the Declaration and 1948, the Arabs had been driven unknowingly to meet their defeat in Palestine".¹ This plan of the Great Powers succeeded, Bā Kathīr says, with the help of some of the Arab kings and heads of state.

Discussion of Bā Kathīr's other plays, or plays written by other dramatists, would need more time, space and specialization than the scope of this thesis allows. However, the two appendices show clearly that, since the early fifties, the Palestine question -as against the period preceding 1948- has been a source of inspiration for many Arab writers. They also illustrate that the number of fictional works written on this subject increased rapidly, especially after 1967.

A review of the poetry inspired by the Palestinian experience in the period after 1948 is more difficult than making a study of those written before this date. This is due to two main factors:

(1) After 1948, Arab poets belonging to "the Free Verse School", which emerged simultaneously with the 1948 Palestine 'tragedy', use different techniques in their approach to their subjects. Accordingly, a great deal of the poetry written since the fifties treats the Palestine question or the Arab-Israeli conflict indirectly and in a subtle and profound way.

¹ Ibid., p.104.

(2) After 1948, the impact of the loss of Palestine on poetry was restricted not only to themes; it became deeper and more complex. It created a new tone, coloured with bitterness, frustration and despair. The concept of commitment (التزام), furthermore, which became the rule rather than the exception in modern Arabic poetry from the mid-fifties, owes much of its appeal to the Palestine experience, a fact emphasized by most Arab critics.

Any discussion of the Palestine problem, therefore, and its representation in modern Arabic poetry would be superficial were it to neglect such areas of impact as those above, or restrict itself to works that speak directly of Palestinian refugees, or injured pride, or the liberation of the country, etc.

In view of this, attention will be given in the following chapters to the different ripples of influence believed to centre in the Palestine disturbance.

But before doing so, and in order to give, as far as possible, a general assessment of the recurrence of the Palestine theme in poetry of the period 1948-1973, it seems practical to choose a representative Arab literary periodical, examine the poems published in it, and then find out how far Palestine is represented in these poems.

The choice fell on al-Ādāb, a monthly literary magazine published in Beirut since 1953 which would seem to provide a good representative sample. Its founder was the Lebanese writer Dr. Suhayl Idrīs. The reasons for choosing this magazine are the following:

(1) Al-Ādāb has not suspended publication since its first

appearance in January 1953.

- (2) From the very beginning, al-Ādāb took the lead as the main literary mouthpiece of the "Free Verse Movement" and became a platform on which both writers and readers could express their views on literary subjects and on Arab culture. One writer even called it "the voice of the period";¹ another believed that it "more than any other helped to determine the course of modern Arabic literature".²
- (3) More than any other literary periodical, al-Ādāb was chosen by leading poets as the medium for poems, which became widely celebrated afterwards in the Arab world. To give only a few examples, we may mention the following poems: أنشودة المطر (Hymn to Rain)³ by Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb, مذكرات الصوفي بشر الحافي (The Diaries of the Ṣūfī Bishr al-Ḥāfī / Bishr, the bare-footed)⁴ by Ṣalāḥ 'Abd al-Ṣabūr, السندباد في رحلته الثامنة (Sinbad on His Eighth Journey)⁵ by Khalīl Ḥawī, خبز وحشيش وقمر (Bread, Hasheesh and Moonlight)⁶, هوامش على دفتر النكسة (Marginal Notes on the Book of Defeat)⁷ and فتح (Fath)⁸ by Nizār Qabbānī, among many others.

¹ Salma Khadra Jayyusi, Trends and Movements in Modern Arabic Poetry, vol.II, p.600.

² M. M. Badawi, (A critical introduction to) Modern Arabic Poetry, p.207.

³ No.6, June 1954, p.18.

⁴ No.7, July 1962, p.10.

⁵ No.6, June 1958, p.4, no.5, May 1960, p.19.

⁶ No.3, March 1955, p.1.

⁷ No.8, August 1967, p.2.

⁸ No.6, June 1968, p.1.

(4) The mission of al-Ādāb was, from the beginning, to promote literature committed to Arab political and social causes. This was announced by Suhayl Idrīs, the editor, in his editorial note to the first volume, in which he makes it clear that "the kind of literature which this review calls for and encourages is the literature of commitment which issues from Arab society and pours back into it".¹

This, therefore, makes it possible for us to draw parallels between the attention paid to Palestine by poets and that paid to other political causes.

After consulting all the poems in al-Ādāb from the time the first volume was published (January 1953) up to the end of 1973, it was found that after the June War of 1967 hardly a poem published in this review was not inspired in one way or another by that event and its consequences. The following statistics, therefore, deal only with the poems published between 1953 and 1967.

Between 1953 and 1967, it should be mentioned, the Arab world witnessed many important events, such as the rebirth and growth of "Nasserism" as the dominating type of Arab nationalism, the Algerian revolt against the French occupation (1954-1962), the Tripartite Attack on Egypt (1956), Egyptian-Syrian Unity (1958) and its collapse three years later, the revolt in North Yemen (1962), the emergence of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) (1964), and other events, all of which received attention from Arab poets.

¹ No.1, January 1953, p.1.

Year	Total Number of Published Poems	Palestine: Main Theme				Poems on Arab Political Events			
		Poems on Refugees	Poems on the Fida'i	On other Themes	Total	The Tripar- tite Attack	The Algerian Revolution	Other Events	Total
1953	96	5		14	19				
1954	102	4		14	18			4	4
1955	102	5	1	12	18		3	3	6
1956	79	4	3	10	17	4	19		23
1957	101	1		2	3	16	8	1	25
1958	90	1	1	3	5		11	20	31
1959	95	1	1	2	4	1	4	12	17
1960	100	2		6	8	2	6	10	18
1961	66	1		11	13		3	3	6
1962	76			10	10		7	6	13
1963	83	1		8	9		3	16	19
1964	90		2	38	40		1	1	2
1965	129	1	3	22	26		1		1
1966	127	3	5	23	31			3	3
1967	88		2	45	47				
	1424	29	18	220	268	23	66	79	168

In spite of the fact that the poems written on Palestine and published in al-Ādāb represent no more than a small proportion of what has been composed by Arab poets on this subject since 1948, we can come from these statistics to a number of conclusions which may help us to form a general idea of the increasing frequency of Palestine as a subject of more recent poetry.

(1) The statistics illustrate that the problem has been an inexhaustible source of inspiration for Arab poets since the loss of Palestine in 1948.

(2) A comparison of the first four years (1953-1957) and the four years following (i.e. 1957, 1958, 1959, 1960), shows that the number of poems written about Palestine fell rapidly from an average of 18 in the first four years to only 5 in the second four years. At the same time as this fall in number we may notice a big increase in the number of poems motivated by other political events that took place during those years. For instance, 23 poems were published on the subject of the Tripartite Attack on Egypt in 1956, 29 on the Algerian Revolt, and 43 on other political events, such as the revolt in Iraq which ended the monarchist regime in 1958, and the unity between Egypt and Syria in the same year.

This indicates that a great deal of the poets' attention moved towards such political events as affected the amount of attention given to Palestine.

(3) In the years 1961, 1962 and 1963, the number of poems on Palestine increased again, but did not reach the level of the first four years (i.e. 1953-1957). Nevertheless, in

1964 alone, 40 poems were published on Palestine. This sudden increase may be attributed, as we believe, to the establishment of the PLO by the Arab League in 1964. During 1965 and 1966, the poems on Palestine numbered 26 and 31 respectively. In 1967, the number reached 47, as a result of the June War. After 1967, the Arab defeat, the conflict with Israel, the Palestinian Resistance Movement and many other themes linked to the problem dominated poetical production, not only that published by al-Ādāb, but also, we may claim, by other periodicals and poetry collections.

(4) By dividing the themes related to Palestine into three groups; namely, those dealing with Palestinian Arab refugees, the Fidā'īyyīn, and, finally, a number of varied themes, such as the longing for Palestine or the call for its liberation, etc., we have been able to find evidence that, before 1967, writers concentrated on the refugee problem.

The theme of the Fidā'īyyīn at that stage was a minor one, due to the fact that it was only after 1967 that the Palestine resistance movement became an effective power in the struggle against Israel; but it has been the theme of an enormous number of poems since 1967. For instance, in 1969 alone, more than 40 poems concentrating mainly on the Resistance Movement or the Fidā'īyyīn were published in al-Ādāb.

(5) The statistics show that 268 poems out of 1424, all the poems published in fourteen years, have Palestine as their main theme.¹ These amount to about 19% of the total.

¹ Other poems in which Palestine occurs only as a minor

Meanwhile, poems written on all other political events totalled only 168 (about 12% of the whole number). This means that the Palestine problem caught the attention of Arab poets far more than all other important events that took place in the fifties and sixties.

Anthologies of Poetry and Separately - published Long Poems.

Since we have been concerned so far in this chapter with presenting a general outline of Arab literary output concerning Palestine after the establishment of the State of Israel, we turn now to consider two groups of poetical works: anthologies of poetry¹ and those long poems which appeared as separate publications.²

Of the poetry collections we may mention the following anthologies:

theme are not included in our statistics, such as:

في المغرب العربي by Bdr Shākir al-Sayyāb (no.3, March 1956, p.6). ثورتنا هناك by 'Alī al-Hillī, (no.12, December 1954, p.25), في بلادهم by Khalīl Ḥawī, (no.2, February 1957, p.10), اوراس by Aḥmad 'Abd al-Mu'tī Hījāzī, (no.2, February 1957, p.37), حروفي الجديدة by Fu'ād al-Khishin, (no.3, March 1964, p.40), and many others.

¹ Only anthologies of poems written by non-Palestinian Arab poets are considered here. Anthologies adopting their titles from Palestinian themes, but with poems not confined to the subject of Palestine, are excluded also.

² Before 1948, only two collections of poetry, bearing the title الفلسطينية and entirely devoted to themes related to Palestine, were published. The first appeared in al-Najaf in Iraq (1939), and contains a number of poems all by Shi'ite Iraqi poets. The second appeared in Lebanon in 1946. It is by Wadī' al-Bustānī.

(1) صوت فلسطين (The Voice of Palestine)¹ by 'Abd al-Qādir Rashīd al-Nāṣirī from Iraq (1920-1963). This collection contains 8 poems all speaking about problems relating to the events of 1947-1948.

(2) الفلطينيات (Poems of Palestine)² by Sulaymān Zāhir (Lebanon: 1873-1960). This dīwān comprises 30 poems written between 1929 and 1951, some of which have been quoted in chapter III.

(3) فلسطين حبي (Palestine is my Love)³ by Faraj Ṣādiq Maksīm from Egypt, consists of 12 poems dealing with different themes. Although the publication date of the Dīwān is not mentioned, and the poems themselves are not dated, their themes indicate that they were all written before 1967.

(4) التائهون (The Lost People)⁴ by Maḥmūd Ḥasan Ismā'īl, contains all the poems written by the poet on Palestine since the thirties. Quotations, however, will be made from this collection when we discuss the theme of the refugee in the following chapter.

(5) الشعر في المعركة (Poetry on the Battlefield)⁵ edited by Maḥmūd Ḥasan Ismā'īl, contains 40 poems, each written by an Arab poet on different Palestinian themes from the thirties to 1967. Some of these poems have been mentioned in

¹ Published by Maṭba'at al-Jāmi'a, Baghdad, 1948.

² Published by al-Maṭba'a al-'Aṣriyya, Beirut-Sidon, 1954.

³ Published by al-Dār al-Qawmiyya lil-Tibā'a wal-Nashr, Cairo, n.d.

⁴ Published by Dār al-Kātib al-'Arabī lil-Tibā'a wal-Nashr, Cairo, 1968.

⁵ Published by Dār al-Kātib al-'Arabī lil-Tibā'a wal-Nashr, Cairo, 1967.

the course of discussion in the previous chapters.

(6) الأوديسة العربية (The Arab Odyssey) by 'Adnān al-Rāwī (Iraq: 1925-1967), consists of two parts written between 1948 and 1951. The first part contains 4 poems dealing with the Palestinian Arab refugees, while the poems of the second part deal with other themes, such as injured pride, condemnation of the Arab leadership and complete trust in the new Arab generation who would have to regain Arab rights concerning Palestine.¹

Although the majority of the poems in these works were written after 1948, it is noticeable that, in many respects, they do not differ from poems written during the twenties, thirties and forties, especially in style and language. Both groups rely greatly upon the evocative power of words, and seem dominated by vehement words and fiery phrases.

The noticeable difference between those poems written before 1948 and those written after can be seen in the spirit of sadness caused by the defeat which pervades the later works.

Turning to the long poems, we shall consider the following works:

(1) ملحمة الحرب المقدسة (The Holy War Epic)² by Maḥmūd

¹ See 'Adnān al-Rāwī, al-Majmū'a al-Shi'riyya al-Kāmila, pp.390-425.

² The poem was published first in al-Ahrām newspaper on November 28, 1947 (no.22430) under the title الى شهداء فلسطين. It consists of 65 lines. In 1949 the poem was republished in a separate publication, this time consisting of 566 lines. See Sa'd al-Dīn al-Jīzāwī, al-'Āmil al-Dīnī ..., p.328.

Muhammad Sādiq, from Egypt. The poem is in monorhyme and written in al-khafīf metre. Its opening verse goes as follows:

خطب السيف أسكتوا صجانا يا لقومي وودّعوا حسانا

O my people! the sword has spoken, so let
Sahbān keep silence; and bid farewell to
Ḥassān!*

Although Sādiq regarded his poem as an epic, it cannot be claimed that, by any standards, it has any trait which characterizes that genre. It is no more than a number of stanzas on different themes, such as the religious significance of Palestine, the injustice done to the Palestinian Arabs, the Christian West and its bias towards the Jews, etc. Moreover, instead of describing acts of fighting, or speaking about the events that took place in Palestine and led to the debacle, the poet is merely interested in calling upon the Arabs and Muslims to liberate the country from the Jews.

(2) النّازحة (The Refugee Woman)¹ by Muḥammad Shams al-Dīn, from Lebanon. This poem consists of 190 monorhymed lines written in the mutaqārab metre. Its subject, as the title indicates, is the Palestinian refugees. In the poem, a refugee woman tells how, after the Israeli victory in 1948, she was forced to leave her home with her child and

¹ Published in Beirut, 1950.

* Sahbān Wā'il and Ḥassān b. Thābit both witnessed the appearance of the Prophet Muḥammad. The former's work is usually cited as an example of oratory speeches; the latter, a talented poet, is traditionally known as the "poet laureate of the Prophet".

old mother. Before reaching safety in a neighbouring Arab country, the old mother and the child died from exhaustion and starvation.

However, in spite of the fact that the poet enriches the poem with humanitarian feelings by letting the woman tell all about her calamity, the reader of the poem feels that it is the poet who is speaking and not the refugee woman. This is illustrated more clearly at the end of the poem, when the woman, amidst her personal grief caused by the death of her child and her mother, recalls the Muslims' loss of Spain, saying:

ومآسة أندلس الدائمة وعادت الى القلب غرناطة
وما أشبه اليوم بالبارحة¹ فأطبقت جفني على دمعـة

Memories of Granada, and the Spanish tragedy
reawaken in (my) heart.
Yet a tear in my eyes I held back, seeing
today as no more than a copy of that yesterday.

Such feeling is obviously artificial and false, because it is unconvincing that a simple and ingenuous character like that refugee should fuse her personal calamity with a national one which had happened hundreds of years before.

(3) المهزلة العربية (The Arab Comedy)² by Maḥmūd Salīm al-Hūt (Palestinian: 1916-). The poem is divided into 26 stanzas all in al-basīṭ metre, but each stanza has a different rhyme-scheme.

Being written by a Palestinian, the poem expresses the

¹ Kāmil al-Sawāfirī, Filastīn fil-Shi'r al-'Arabī..., p.605.

² Published in Baghdad in 1951

deep feelings of suffering among the expelled Palestinians. It also voices loudly the common belief, held not only among the Palestinians but also among Arabs generally, that it was the Arab regimes who let "Palestine fly from the Arabs' hands". The poem is also overflowing with nostalgia for the lost homeland.

Quotations will be made from this work in the next chapter when we discuss the theme of yearning for the return.

(4) أرض الشهداء (The Land of Martyrs)¹ by Ibrāhīm al-'Urayyid (Bahrain: 1908-). This epic, as it is called by its writer, can be regarded, in spite of a few shortcomings, as among the best poetical works on this subject. We shall then, discuss it at some length. The epic² is written in shi'r hurr (Free Verse), and consists of a prologue and five songs (أناشيد). The events described take place between 1947 and 19? , on the grounds that its end is still to come..

The characters in the epic are:

Zāfir: a Palestinian Arab shepherd.

Da'd : his wife.

Thāmār: a Jewish girl.

¹ Beirut, 1951.

² Following the concept of some modern critics who manifest little interest in theoretical matters concerning the epic poem and regard it as "A narrative of some length which deals with events which have a certain grandeur and importance and come from a life of action, especially of violent action such as war", /Princeton Encyclopaedia of Poetry and Poetics, enlarged edition 1974, p.246.7, we may refer to this work as an epic.

Thāmār's brother.

Thāmār's father.

Mārī : a Palestinian Christian woman, a neighbour of Thāmār.

Ḥamdān: a Palestinian Arab belonging to those who were called mujāhidīn.

In the first song entitled *جبل الزيتون* (The Mount of Olives) the poet introduces us to Zāfir, who was living a simple but pleasant life, grazing his cattle and sheep and playing his reed flute (*شبابة*) joyfully. But things have changed, and Zāfir becomes worried. Even the tune coming out of his flute sounds sad.

When Da'd comes to the pasture where Zāfir is grazing his cattle, bringing him his lunch, she immediately notices that her husband is distressed. When she asks him why, Zāfir relates to her that he saw in a dream his cattle being attacked by a wolf. The wolf managed to seize a sheep and kill it before he, Zāfir, could rescue it.

Da'd does not find anything strange in her husband's dream, and explains to him that what he saw reflects what is happening actually in their country. The wolf represents the Zionists and the sheep Palestine.

The second part *نشيد الانشاد* (The Song of Songs) speaks about the Zionists' preparations for declaring the birth of the Jewish State in Palestine. Thāmār's brother arrives home one night while his sister is chatting with Mārī, an Arab Christian woman who is visiting them. When Mārī leaves, Thāmār's brother tells his sister that the Jews have won the vote in the United Nations for the partition of Palestine and the establishment of a Jewish State.

Thāmār's father arrives home also carrying the news that the "Haganah"* organization, of which he is a member, will start operations against the Arabs in Palestine that very night.

The third song is entitled Bāb al-Wād, and speaks about the warfare of 1948. Zāfir joins the mujāhidīn; he, with some other men, among them one called Ḥamdān, prepares an ambush for an Israeli military unit. During the fight Zāfir is slightly wounded, but continues fighting. Then news comes that an Israeli force has succeeded in penetrating into Bāb al-Wād, a quarter in Jerusalem; Zāfir, with Ḥamdān and some other fighters, rushes to help the Arab defenders there and to try and stop the Israeli advance. They finally succeed and force the Israelis to surrender. The big surprise for Zāfir and his fellows comes when they find that that Israeli force is composed entirely of women soldiers, commanded by Thāmār.

After hours of strong argument on how they should treat their female prisoners, they finally release them on the grounds that "a female, even in soldier-dress, would not be capable of causing harm to men". Strangely enough, one may think, Zāfir is of this opinion. The attitude of Zāfir on this matter will be discussed after the summary of the epic is complete.

In the fourth song هیکل سلیمان (Solomon's Temple) the war continues. But, all of a sudden the Arab

* Haganah: a Zionist underground military organization functioning in Palestine from 1920-1948.

governments agree to a cease-fire; and then an armistice is agreed between Israel and the Arab countries who participated in the war. Thus, the "disaster" is completed and the majority of the Palestinian Arabs find themselves refugees in the neighbouring Arab countries.

This song speaks also about accusations which spread widely in Arab circles that King 'Abdullah had a major hand in the Arab defeat in that war, because of his desire to annex what might be left of Palestine to his kingdom.¹

Because of this belief regarding the role played by the King, Zāfir makes up his mind to assassinate him; therefore he says to Da'd:

أنا يا دعد له
لا خاني فيه زماني

¹ Pp. 102, 113, 114.

It is significant to note that King 'Abdullah *for* his part, as stated in his memoirs published in Amman in 1952, stresses that he was all the time working for the unity of the country (Palestine) with his Emirate for the purpose of preserving the rights of Palestinians.

Speaking on the 1948 war, he attributed the defeat to the unwarranted suspicions of the rulers of Egypt and Syria about his friendly relations with the British, and to the personal motives of the Saudi rulers, who were afraid lest the Hashimites should try to take back Ḥijāz. This, he goes on to say, led to a division in the ranks of the Arabs and prevented the formation of an effective military command for the war.

┐ See Adnan M. Abu Ghazaleh, "The Impact of 1948 on Palestinian Writers: the First Decade", Middle East Forum, vol. XLVI, no.2 and 3, 1970, p.88. _7.

لتراح القدس من غد رته
والحرمان¹

I am for it, O Da'd!
may time fail me not,
so that Jerusalem and the two Holy Places
may time faila and Medina)
can be relieved of his treachery.

The last chapter, entitled *قبة الصخرة* (The Dome of the Rock), speaks about events still to come. It is interesting to note that the poet predicted some of those events, namely, the assassination of King 'Abdullah. The poet, as mentioned in the first edition of the book, completed writing the epic on October 13, 1950,² and King 'Abdullah was assassinated in July 1951.

The poet, being optimistic about events yet to come, ends the epic by imagining a revolt following the assassination, in which all Arabs participate and gain the final victory against the Israelis.

By way of assessing this work, we may point out that al-'Urayyid has treated the characters of his epic successfully by making them develop in a natural way free from exaggeration. Besides, the poet was clever in indicating that there was a good relationship between the Palestinian Arabs and the Jewish inhabitants there. Such a relationship is indicated by the visit made by Mārī to her Jewish neighbour, Thāmār.

¹ P. 114.

² P. 139.

Moreover, the poet was truthful and honest when making Zāfir admit the fact that the chief reason behind the Arabs' defeat in the war was their underestimate of Israeli strenght:

إنّما قد صرّع العرب
من العجل بقرنه
منذ كانوا وهم
ماضون في توهين شأنه¹

Yet it was the bull's horn
that cast the Arabs down.
From times of old
they have been underestimating
his strength.

But, there are two important points which seem to have escaped the poet, both dealing with the two main characters in the epic; Zāfir is portrayed by the poet as a wise, sharp-witted and mature personality, yet, all of a sudden, the poet deprives him of these characteristics when his group captures Thāmār and her fellow women-soldiers; it was Zāfir who was of the opinion that those prisoners should be released because, as we have mentioned previously, a soldier-woman was not believed to be capable of fighting men.

This way of thinking cannot be attributed to a realistic personality. However, one may argue that the poet, by doing so, aims at presenting Zāfir as a chivalrous character. Nevertheless, such an attitude, especially coming from one who himself criticized the Arabs' underestimation of

¹ P. 104.

Israeli strength, can be attributed to an inexperienced man rather than to a chivalrous one.

Of Thāmār it is unarguable that the poet is not sympathetic towards her, since he portrays her in the second song as a whore who does not mind sleeping even with her brother. Yet, by making her lead a group of fighters and conquer positions held by the enemy (the Arabs), he, undoubtedly, was unaware that he had made of Thāmār a heroine, capturing considerable sympathy and admiration from any reader, irrespective of his nationality or political orientation; an aim, we emphasize again, which was not in the poet's mind.

(5) لن نخون فلسطين (We will not Betray Palestine)¹, by Muṣṭafa Bahjat Badawī (Egyptian : 1922-). The poem consists of 33 pages and is written in shi'r ḥurr. Its themes are various, including the 1948 debacle and its psychological consequences for the Arabs, the Palestinian refugees and the injustice done to them, and finally the Arabs' determination to regain their rights in Palestine by force.

(6) أحلام العودة (Dreams of the Return)² by Aḥmad Fahmī. The poem is written in traditional metrical form, with mutaqārab as its metre. It is divided into 24 stanzas, each one bearing a different title and a different rhyme. Themes in the poem are various, but, because the writer is a Palestinian, nostalgia for home is clearly voiced.

¹ First published in March 1956. The second edition was published in June 1967 by Dār al-Kātib al-ʿArabī, Cairo.

² Published in Damascus in 1957.

(7) شهرزاد في خيام اللاجئين (Shahrazād in the Refugees' Tents)¹ by 'Abd al-Jabbār 'Abd al-Husayn Khudāyṛ from Iraq. This poem is the first work written by Khudāyṛ in his career as a poet, and consists of 482 lines written in shi'r ḥurr.

Explaining how scenes of the refugee camps has worked as an incentive for him to produce this poem, he says in the introduction:

From among the torn and worn rags in the
shaky encampments called refugee camps,
where ideas are born novel and unique,
and feelings are charged with pain and
bitterness, comes this poem.

However, in spite of this promising preface the ideas as well as the images of the poem have been expressed frequently by many other poets when writing on the refugees. The only novelty which can be seen in the poem is the poet's employment of a folk-tale character (e.g. Shahrazād) to tell the story of the refugees.

¹ Published in Karbalā' (Iraq) in 1966.

CHAPTER V

New Major Themes

The close study of the themes of poems written on the question of Palestine and the consequences of its loss in 1948, shows that many new topics found their way in the poetry written since then. In addition to those new themes, some previous themes which were reflected in the poetry written before 1948 continued to appear also, such as the Arabs and Muslims' duty towards Palestine, condemnation of the Arab leadership and the partial role of the West towards the Israelis.

However, more discussion on the themes prior to 1948 would not add basic ideas to what we had pointed out in chapter III; therefore, the discussion in this chapter concentrates on four predominant themes emerged after 1948. These are namely: the Palestinian Arab refugees; their longing for the return home; the bitter experience of two humiliating defeats; and finally the Fidā'ī.

The Palestinian Arab refugees.

It has been mentioned before that the 1948 Arab-Israeli War resulted in the uprooting of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Arabs, Christians as well as Muslims, from their land and homes, turning them into refugees in several Arab countries.

Over the years their numbers rose steadily, their bitterness and discontent intensified and their political influence increased throughout the Arab world. Then came

the June War of 1967, which did not improve the refugee situation; instead, another 400,000¹ and more were displaced from their homes, about half of them for the second time in less than twenty years.

Moreover, the refugee presence in the Arab host-countries was the most visible manifestation of continued Palestinian existence. On the one hand, their presence falsified the official Israeli claim that "there is no such thing as a Palestinian"², as was once claimed by Golda Meir, and on the other it served to remind the Arabs of the country they lost.

Writing on the Palestinian refugees attracted a vast number of Arab poets and prose writers. This can be easily seen from an examination of Arab literary production since the "disaster" (النكبة). As far as poetry is concerned, a quick look at the titles and content of many poetical works written after 1948 reveals that this theme received enormous attention from Arab poets, especially in the fifties and sixties. Even some poets who showed no interest in writing about Palestine before 1948, found themselves deeply moved by the tragedy of the Palestinian refugees. Aḥmad Zakī Abū Shādī (Egypt: 1892-1955), for instance, who is regarded as a pioneer in modern Arabic poetry³, wrote on Palestine only through this theme. His poem *اللاجئون*

¹ Don Peretz, A Palestine Entity, p.41.

² Pamela Ferguson, The Palestine Problem, p.115.

³ Salma Khadra Jayyusi, Trends and Movements ..., vol.2, p.370.

(The Refugees)(1949)¹ focusses on the misery of the refugees. Its opening verse goes as follows:

خرس فمن عن ويلهم يتكلم ومعذبون لهم تقام جهنم

Dumb they are; unable to speak for themselves about their calamity. They are suffering hell on earth.

The Iraqi poet, Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb (1926-1964), one of the earliest Arab poets to use free verse successfully (an innovation which became known afterwards as "The Free Verse Movement" in modern Arabic poetry), focussed his attention on this theme in a poem called قافلة الضياع (The Caravan of the Wretched)(1956)². In fact, this poem was the only one by the poet devoted solely and clearly to the Palestine problem. In other poems, the problem was recalled by al-Sayyāb through a variety of themes, as seen in his poem في المغرب العربي (Of Arab North Africa)(1956)³ written mainly on the Algerian revolt against French occupation (1954-1962).

When speaking about the refugees, Arab poets often reflect the common belief that the responsibility for the calamity the Palestinians had suffered had been veiled by lies, on the one hand by the Arabs themselves, especially their leaders, and on the other by the world community, particularly the West.

The Arab leaders, the poets claim, have been

¹ Dīwān min Wahy al-Samā', p.154.

² Unshūdat al-Matar, pp.59-65.

³ Ibid., pp.82-89.

indifferent, and have acted from selfish motives throughout their involvement with the problem. In fact, such accusations characterize many poems prior to 1948, as we discussed in chapter III, but what gives this element in the new poems more significance is the fact that the poets' criticism was now based on factual findings rather than fears and anxieties.

Besides, Arab poets in general became more extremist in accusing Arab governments of faithlessness towards Palestine; even poets from such countries themselves received much criticism and condemnation regarding the problem, voice loudly accusations of the Arab leadership. For instance, Sa'd al-Bawārdī (1929-) from Saudi Arabia, the country which was the subject of severe criticism by some Arab poets, particularly the Mahjari poet Rashīd Salīm al-Khūrī,¹ speaks plainly about the Arab leadership's betrayal of Palestine. In a poem entitled أغنية العودة (The Song of the Return)², written as a dialogue between a refugee woman and her child, the woman tells her son the following:

ولداه ، من أطماعهم نكبت فلسطين الشهيذة ،
كانوا بجانبها
وفي كيانها من طعنهم صور عديدة ،
كانوا حواليتها غشاء ، ولهم عواء ،
وجموعهم زفرت ولكن كالهباء
كانهم قطعان شاء .

...

ولداه أسلم بعضنا ما يملكون (ليملكون)

...

وقيت يا ولدى ، وأنت وبعضنا نرى الجوى .

¹ See above, pp. 166-167.

² Dīwān Ughniyat al-'Awda, pp.27-33.

Son! because of their greed
 Palestine was afflicted with disaster;
 they, while siding with her,
 filled her body with wounds.
 Scum they were, howling around her.
 Their troops were roaring, but
 dissolved into nothing.
 Like goatherds they were.
 Son! some of us gave away what they
 possess in order to reign;
 whereas you, I, and others were left to
 graze grief.

However, poets from other Arab countries, such as the Sudan,¹ Syria,² Lebanon,³ Tunisia,⁴ Iraq,⁵ and Arab poets in the "Southern Mahjar",⁶ used a great many similar accusations in their poems.

So much for the responsibility of the Arabs for the Palestine problem; but the West, too, is seen by the poets

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- ¹ See هميم فلسطين (1948) by 'Abdullah al-Ṭayyib, Dīwān Aṣḍā' al-Nīl, p.150; اللّاجئ by 'Abd al-Majīd Abū Ḥasabū, Dīwān al-Zilāl, p.11. and بني يعرب (1959) by Muṣṭafā Ṭayyib al-Asmā', Dīwān Laḥn wa-Qalb, p.119.
- ² See لاجئة في النظارة (1954), by Sulyman al-'Īsā, al-Majmū'a al-Kāmila, vol.I, pp.194-199 and 264-271. respectively.
- ³ See لاجئة (1948) by Kāmil Sulaymān, al-'Irfān, vol.35, no.10, October 1948, p.1400, الى قادة الأمة العزيرة (1949) by Sulymān Zāhir, Dīwān al-Filastiniyyāt, p.114.
- ⁴ See مشردون (1954) by Muḥammad al-'Arabī Ṣamādiḥ, al-Ādāb, no.4, April 1954, p.56.
- ⁵ See العرب اللّاجئون (1961) by 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Bayātī, Dīwān 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Bayātī, vol.I, pp.626-629, اللّاجئة by 'Adnān al-Rāwī, al-Majmū'a al-Shi'riyya al-Kāmila, pp.399-403. 404-410 413-416. respectively.
- ⁶ See 'Azīza Muraydin, al-Shi'r al-Qawmī fil-Mahjar al-Janūbī, pp.306-335.

to have a responsibility for the injustice done to the Palestinian Arabs, because it was the West which encouraged the Zionists and backed them in uprooting the Palestinians from their homes and lands by creating the Jewish State there.

The Egyptian poet Maḥmūd Ḥasan Ismā'īl, for instance, sees in اللاجئون (The Refugees)(1951)¹ that the "flimsy tent" which became all the refugee owned, "is designed and manufactured by the West according to a conspiratorial policy against the Arabs".

Another poet from Lebanon, Sulaymān Ḥāhir, compares the role played by Lord Balfour, the British foreign minister who issued the Balfour Declaration, with that played by Truman, the American President (1945-1953), who fully supported the creation of the Jewish State in 1948. The poet says in الى بلفور وترومان (To Balfour and Truman)(1951)², that these two men must bear a major share of responsibility for the exodus of the Palestinian Arabs.

Regarding the role of the United States in the Arab-Israeli conflict, it is noticeable that, after 1948, an ugly image of the United States began to replace that of Great Britain as a guilty party.

Among the many poems reflecting that image of the United States, is one by Ṣābir Falḥūt from Syria, entitled الخيمة والقمر (The Tent and the Moon)³. This poem

¹ Dīwān al-Tā'ihūn, pp.38-44.

² Dīwān al-Filastīniyyāt, pp.117-122.

³ Lamyā' al-Jābirī, Mukhtārāt min Shi'r al-Muqāwama, pp.308-313.

carries a message from a Palestinian refugee to the American astronauts who landed on the moon for the first time in history in 1969. The refugee reminds the astronauts of what the United States has been doing to the Arabs of Palestine. In addition, America's crimes against other countries, such as Vietnam, are recalled in the poem.

The poem makes it clear that however much the United States endeavours to project a good image of herself, whether by pretending to be a peaceful nation, or by demonstrating technical superiority in space, her bad deeds on earth remain the real, true characteristic features of her ugly image. Addressing the astronauts he says:

وتهتفون من على وسادة القمر
للأمن والسلام
لتخدعوا فصائل القطيع
من سوائم البشر .
تستوطنون الأرض بالهواء
في القدس والسويس والفيتنام
وترفعون الصوت بالهتاف والدعاء
للأمن والسلام
وشاهد الجريمة
أنيا بكم ، أظفاركم
في أرضنا الكليمة
في خيمي القديمة .

From up on the moon
you applaud peace.
But it was only the brutish mob
who could be deceived.
You, while filling the earth with disease
in Jerusalem, Suez and Vietnam,
raise your voice with cheers and praise
for peace.
Your canine teeth, your nails,
in our wounded land,
in my worn tent
are witnesses to the crime.

For the Iraqi poet Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb, the world community holds great responsibility for the injustice done to Palestinian Arab refugees. In the poem "The Caravan of the Wretched" mentioned before, he sees in the tragedy of the refugees an act of murder, similar to Cain's killing of his brother Abel. The heavens and stars therefore ask Cain:

— قابيل ، أين أخوك ؟ أين أخوك ؟
 جمّعت السماء
 آمادها لتصيح . كوّرت النجوم الى نداء :
 — قابيل ، أين أخوك ؟
 — يرقد في خيام اللاجئين .

- Cain! Where is your brother? Where is your brother?
 Heaven asked him burning with anger.
- Cain! Where is your brother?
 the stars curled up in a call.
- Lying in the tents of the refugees.

In this poem al-Sayyāb also focusses on the idea that the tragedy of the Palestinian refugees is not confined to their loss of land and homes, but also to the fact that they have been deprived of human rights. Life itself had become for them closer to that of animals rather than that of human beings: they lived in caves, howled when they felt hungry, and when they died their corpses remained under the open sky:

لم يخرجونا من قرانا وحدهن ولا من المدن الرخيّة
 لكنهم قد أخرجونا من صعيد الآدمية
 فاليوم تمتلئ الكهوف بنا ، ونعوى جائعين
 ونموت فيها لا نخلف بعدنا حتى قبور

Not only did they drive us out of our
villages and cities,
but also from the habitations of men.
Today caves are filled by us
howling for hunger,
and dying unnoticed,
with no graves left behind us.

The prevailing image of the Palestinian refugee soon became that of a lost, heartbroken and downtrodden person living in a flimsy tent, with many children around him suffering from hunger and illness; or as pictured by 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Bayātī (1926-) in العرب اللّاجئون (The Arab Refugees) (1961)¹:

اللاجئ العربي شحاذ على أبوابكم
عار طعين
النمل يأكل جسمه
وطيور جارحة السنين •

Naked and stabbed
the Arab refugee is begging at your doors.
Ants and the birds of wounding years
are eating at his flesh.

In an early poem, لاجئة (A Refugee Woman) (October 1948)², probably the first poem written on this theme, Kāmil Sulaymān, a poet from Lebanon, presents to us a refugee woman in the following touching picture:

والذلّ لفّعها للرأس والقـدم	تمشي مجلبة بالوهن والسقم
كأنّها هائم يمشي على الأـلم	مكدودة ، ذبلت نظراتها حسرا
جفت وغارت لما في القلب من ضمـر	بان الأسى في محياها ومقـلتها
روء قد برته شدّة السقم	تشدّ أسملا كيلا يرى أحد

¹ Dīwān 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Bayātī, vol.I, pp.626-629.

² Al-'Irfān, vol.35, no.10, 1948, p.1460.

She, dressed in weakness and sickness,
 overwhelmed with disgrace from head to toe,
 walks perplexed and exhausted, in much pain.
 Her face mirrors her grief, and the anger
 ablazing in her heart has dried up the tears
 in her eyes and made them hollow.
 She gathers rags tightly around an emaciated
 body, that once was pretty.

The poet, aiming at gaining more sympathy for the refugee, gives full details of the misfortunes and sufferings she has undergone: during the time of terror in her city, she was frightened half to death and managed to escape with two of her children. But in her fright and distraction she left her baby at home. Her husband, together with her uncle, was killed, and now she has been left with nobody to look after her and her children.

Another poem by Sulaymān al-‘Īsā (Syrian: 1922-) called *على الرصيف* (On the Pavement)¹ (1953) also represents a good example of the way the refugee was portrayed, more particularly in poems written during the fifties and early sixties. This poem consists of 84 verses, and tells the story of an old man, a refugee whom the poet saw lying on the pavement of a street in Damascus. Al-‘Īsā starts the poem by telling how he was walking back to his home on a dark freezing night when he ran across the old refugee and his children. The scene touched the poet deeply; he saw the whole "tragedy" of the Palestinian Arab represented in that refugee:

في هذه الخرق الجياع صير شعب قد أبدا
 في هذه الأسفل يفتش الثرى وطنا شهيدا

¹ Sulaymān al-‘Īsā, *al-Majmū‘a al-Kāmila*, vol.I, pp.194-199.

In these starving rags
the whole fate of a perished people is
concealed.
In these worn garments
a martyred country lies on the ground.

Since the poet himself was born in Iskenderun, a region taken from Syria and given to Turkey in 1936, he draws a parallel between the old Palestinian and himself, since both are refugees and both were expelled from their homeland:

أنا مثلك استلبوا ملاعب فجرى الأولى استلابا
... ..
أنا ليس لي دار ولا وطن أضمر به الرغابا

Just like you,
they usurped the pleasant surroundings of
my childhood.

... ..
Now I have neither home
nor homeland that can meet my wishes.

In another long poem *لاجئة في النظارة* (A Refugee Girl in Custody) (1954),¹ al-'Īsā tells the story of a young refugee girl, who because of poverty was forced to sell her body. The girl was caught by police and put in custody in order to be sent for trial. The poet expresses high sympathy towards her, seeing that jailing her is not only an illogical act but also unfair.

According to his view, the society to which he and the delinquent girl belong, could not claim any more honourable estate since it was this society itself which sold a whole country (i.e. Palestine).

¹ Ibid., pp.264-271.

Choosing a refugee woman to speak about her calamity and sufferings seems to have attracted many Arab poets. In addition to the above-mentioned poems, we may call attention to the following:

النَّازِحَةُ (The Refugee Woman)(1950)¹, by Muḥammad Shams al-Dīn, الأرملة اللّاجئة (The Refugee Widow)(1950)² and اليتيمة اللّاجئة (The Orphan Refugee Girl)(1951)³ by Ḥasan al-Zayn, اللّاجئة العذراء (The Virgin Refugee)(1950)⁴ by 'Adnān al-Rāwī (Iraqi : 1925-1967) اللّاجئة في العيد (The Refugee Woman at the 'Īd)⁵ by Muḥammad Mahdī al-Jawāhirī, مع لاجئة في العيد (With a Refugee Woman at the 'Īd)(1951)⁶ by Fadwā Tūqān, ليل ولاجئة (Night and a Refugee Woman)(1955)⁷ by Muḥyī al-Dīn Fāris (Sudanese : 1932-), في الحان لاجئة (On the Melodies of a Refugee Woman)(1955)⁸ by 'Alī al-Hillī, فلسطينية نازحة (A Palestinian Refugee Woman)(1956)⁹ by 'Azīza Hārūn (Syrian: 1923-), and اللّاجئات (The Refugee Women)¹⁰ by 'Abd al-Bāsīt al-Sūfī.

¹ For a brief review of this long poem (190 verses) see Kāmil al-Sawāfirī, al-Shi'r al-'Arabī al-Ḥadīth fī Ma'sāt Filastīn, pp.603-605.

² Al-'Irfān, vol.37, no.5, May 1950. p.555.

³ Ibid., vol.38, no.6, May 1951, p.630.

⁴ Al-Majmū'a al-Shi'riyya al-Kāmila, pp.399-403.

⁵ Dīwān al-Jawāhirī, vol.4, pp.115-123.

⁶ Dīwān Fadwā Tūqān, pp.140-143.

⁷ Al-Ādāb, no.6, June 1955, p.61.

⁸ Al-Ādāb, no.2, February 1956, p.49.

⁹ Al-Ādāb, no.5, May 1956, p.15.

¹⁰ Dīwān Abyāt Rifīyya, pp.168-169.

However, this representation of the refugee as a down-trodden person, whose reaction to his calamity does not go beyond shedding tears or uttering sighs of grief, did not last. In fact, from the late fifties, some poems began to reflect noticeable changes in the refugee character. During the sixties, and up to the 1967 War, such changes in character become clearer. The refugee first began thinking aloud: "For how long must I stay humiliated in my tent?"¹ or "Why are we dying silently and unnoticed in exile?"². Voices expressing the complete boredom of living in exile began to infiltrate many poems, then became frequent and sharp. The following verses quoted from a poem called لا سلام (No Peace)³ by Hārūn Hāshim Rashīd are fairly representative:

أقولها
أقول لا سلام
لأن ساكني الخيام
قد سئموا مذلة الخيام
قد سئموا العذاب والشقاء والسقام
قد سئموا الموت الذي يدب في العظام
قد سئموا الحياة كلها
... ..
لأنهم مشردون
ضاربون في القمام

¹ Kamāl Nāṣir, "Sarkhat al-Khiyām", al-A'māl al-Kāmila, pp.75-77.

² 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Bayātī, Dīwān 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Bayātī, vol.1, p.635.

³ Dīwān ḥattā ya'ūd Sha'bunā, pp.7-26.

Let it be known:
 there will be no peace,
 because the lodgers in the tents
 have become fed up of the humiliation of
 living there,
 become tired of suffering, misery and illness,
 bored with the death creeping in their bones,
 sick of life itself,
 ...
 because they are homeless,
 walking in darkness.

The refugee's rejection of the fate that makes him an unworthy loser, wandering from one place to another in exile while awaiting mercy from Heaven, began to be voiced loudly. His image gradually became that of one who burns with desire to achieve his destiny through his own efforts.

A poem called السيف والصدأ (The Sword and the Rust) (1964)¹, by Mamdūh 'Udwān presents the Palestinian refugee as a youth, filled with determination to regain his home through his own endeavours. He therefore asks his mother to give him back the sword left with her after his father was killed. The boy had waited fifteen years (symbolizing the number of years which had passed since 1948), and the sword had become rusty after all that time.

Now that the boy has become strong enough, he wants to take the responsibility of reshaping his destiny. He does not want to be a "guest" in other countries anymore. This shows that his image in such poems became totally different from that portrayed in earlier verses following the "disaster". Addressing his mother, the boy says:

¹ Al-Adāb, no.4, April 1964, p.49.

فلن أظلّ ضيف ،
بلا مشيئة الاله سوف أصنع القدر

... ..

هناك سوف أنتهي ، حيث انتهى أبي
لأنني انتظرت خمس عشرة . . ولم أعد صبي .

I will not remain as a guest.
Without a command of God I'll shape my fate.

... ..

There, where my father died, I'll die;
hence fifteen years passed by me, waiting,
and now I am no more a child. 1

It has been pointed out in chapter III that Arab poets, when composing on Palestine before 1948, were motivated by two tendencies: religious and nationalistic. At that stage these poets concentrated on picturing the struggle over Palestine or the Arab-Israeli conflict as racial and religious conflicts between Jews and Arabs.

The exodus of the Palestinian Arabs paved the way for a third tendency to appear in the poems written on Palestine

¹ Illustrations of this subsequently-developed image of the refugee can be amply provided from poems written during the sixties, as has been mentioned. The following are given only as examples:

= اللّاجئ وكثبان الرمل by 'Alī 'Uqla Khirsān (Syrian), al-Ādāb, no.9 (September) 1963, p.35.

= عودة التائه by 'Alī Hāshim Rashīd (Palestinian), Ibid., no.3, (March) 1964, p.70.

= الموءود by Amīn Shunnār (Palestinian), Ibid., no.6, (June) 1964, p.33.

= اللّاجئ والرييح والحريّة by Muḥammad Jamīl Shalāsh (Iraqi), al-Kitāb (published in Iraq), second year, Nos.3 and 4, (June-July) 1964, p.108.

= ايقاع الأجراس الصّدى by Badr Tawfīq (Egyptian), al-Ādāb, no.3, (March) 1965, p.58.

in general and the refugees in particular. by this we mean a feeling of common humanity, a sympathy and consideration that may be felt by any human being towards any other unfortunate person, irrespective of ties of religion or race.

We may fairly claim that writing on the Palestinian refugee theme gave Arab poets, even the Palestinians themselves, wide scope to represent in their poems human sentiments rarely seen in works prior to 1948.

Regarding this point we may consider a number of poems, among which is one entitled رقيّة (Ruqayya)¹ by the Palestinian poetess Fadwā Tūqān (1917-). In the poem Fadwā presents a highly touching picture of a refugee woman called "Ruqayya". At the same time, there is in the poem no trace of religious enthusiasm or racial fanaticism, although the poetess herself is Palestinian. What we find in the poem, instead, is an outpouring of human sentiments. Here are some representative verses picturing a few moments in the life of the refugee and her child:

على صدرها الواهن المرتعد	تعلق شيء كفرخ مهيض
وشدّت بأخر حول الجسد	وقد وسدت رأسه ساعدا
ولو قدرت أودعته حنايا الضلوع وضمت عليه الكبد	
ضراوة ذاك المساء المررد	عساها تقيه بدفء الحنان
تلاحق أنفاسها المطرد	وعانقها وهو يصغي إلى

تعيثان ما بين نحر وخد	وغنم أم وراحت يدها
روائح فردوسها المفتقد	فأهوت على الطفل تشتم فيه

¹ Dīwān Fadwā Tūqān, pp.144-150.

On her weak, shivering chest
 hung a little thing as powerless as a young bird.
 She held his head with one arm
 and embraced the body with the other.
 She would have laid him in her bosom
 had she been able to.
 Perhaps by the warmth of her love
 she would protect him against that freezing
 night.
 He, while listening to her even breaths,
 clasped his hands around her neck.

...
 Then he muttered: "Mother",
 his hands began fumbling at her neck and
 cheek.
 Smelling in the baby the fragrance of her
 usurped paradise,
 she heaped on him fervent kisses.

Another Palestinian poet, a Christian, Kamāl Nāṣir,
 expresses in صرخة الخيام (Cry of the Tents)¹ the sadness
 the refugees feel every time Ramaḍān comes to an end. This
 feeling does not emerge from religious sentiment but from
 human emotion. In Ramaḍān, the poet says, the refugees
 feel some sort of equality with those who are experiencing
 hunger, even if only during that month. They, therefore,
 wish the month to last longer:

رمضان يا شهر الصيام ، حزنت لفركتك الخيام
 حزن الجياع البائسون
 المفطرون الصائمون ..
 وتجاوت رغباتهم
 حتى يطول بك المقام

O Ramaḍān, month of fasting!
 the tents feel sad at your departure;
 so too feel those who are fasting
 through dire poverty.
 All their wishes come together
 wanting you to stay longer.

¹ Al- A'māl al-Shi'riyya al-Kāmila, pp.75-77.

The Iraqi poet, 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Bayātī, cannot conceive how the refugees have been forced to live in exile, why they, unlike other peoples, have no home. His poem لماذا نحن في المنفى (Why are we in Exile?)(1960)¹ poses on behalf of the refugee many questions, all based on human sympathy and justice, as can be seen in the following lines:

لماذا نحن في المنفى
 نموت
 نموت في صمت
 لماذا نحن لا نبكي ؟
 على النار ، على الشوك
 مشينا
 ومشى شعبي .
 لماذا نحن يا ربي
 بلا وطن ، بلا حب
 نموت
 نموت في رعب ؟
 لماذا نحن في المنفى
 لماذا نحن يا ربي ؟

Why do we die in exile
 unmourned by anybody?
 Why don't we cry as normal humans do?
 We walked on fire, on thorns,
 and so did all my people.
 O God! Why are we left with no home,
 with no love?
 Why do we die and die terrified?
 Why are we in exile?
 Why, Oh my God?

Reviewing all poems dealing with the refugee theme, or quoting from them all is clearly not practical, since many poets from most Arab countries devoted one poem or more to this theme. Such poems, however, are documented in appendix number III which may be consulted for further examples of the widespread recurrence of this theme.

¹ Dīwān 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Bayātī, vol. I, pp.635-636.

Longing for the Return.

"By the end of the disaster year (1948) which resulted in the most repulsive defeat that could befall a nation, the earth took two forms in the eyes of the Palestinian Arabs: "prison" and "exile". "Prison" included all land which came under the Israeli flag, while "Exile" included all lands elsewhere".¹

These lines were written by a Palestinian poet, Yūsuf al-Khaṭīb (1931-.) in 1968, in his critical introduction to an anthology of poems by "Arab poets living under Israeli occupation since 1948". This statement by al-Khaṭīb should not be underestimated, since it encapsulates a feeling which, since 1948, has been increasing among Palestine Arabs wherever they live.

Some, professedly writers and politicians, express extreme surprise as to why the Palestinian Arabs do not settle throughout the vast Arab world and reconcile themselves to the loss of Palestine.² In saying this, such writers give no consideration to the human element in the Palestinian tragedy, and ignore the obvious fact that the longing of the Palestinians for the country they believe to be their rightful home is not essentially material or political. It is first and foremost a deep spiritual aspiration which is just as strong whether they are living in a refugee camp or in a more comfortable situation.

In view of the fact that each Palestinian Arab, whether,

¹ Yūsuf al-Khaṭīb, Dīwān al-Waṭan al-Muḥtall, p.13.

² A. L. Tibawi, "Visions of the Return", The Middle East Journal, vol. XVII, 1963, p.509.

after 1948, he lived in Amman, Damascus, Beirut, Cairo, Baghdad or elsewhere, did not consider himself at any time other than an alien (غريب) in those countries, any argument that the Palestinian refugees would gladly and easily settle in other Arab countries but for the evil schemes of their leaders and politicians is a misrepresentation of the genuine feelings of the Palestinians.

When examining this in the poetry written by Palestinians since the fifties, we can find scarcely one poet whose works do not reflect it widely and sharply.

Jabrā Ibrāhīm Jabrā (1919-), for instance, was born in Bethlehem in 1919 and settled in Iraq after 1948. He is recognized as a leading novelist, poet and critic of the Arab world. Materially, he did not suffer poverty nor did he live in a refugee camp. At the same time he does not hide his feeling that he has been living in exile since he left Palestine,¹ and his literary works reflect this.

In بوادي النفي (Deserts of Exile)(1953)² Jabrā sees life outside Palestine's borders as merely a life in exile in the desert, where eyes are filled with "dust and rime".

في بوادي النفي ريعا تلو ريع
ما الذي نحن فاعلون بحبنا
وملء عيوننا تراب وصقيع

In the deserts of exile, spring after
spring passes..
What are we doing with our love
while our eyes are full of dust and rime!

¹ See "Ḥiwār ma' Jabrā Ibrāhīm Jabrā", Shu'ūn Filastīniyya, pp.77, April 1978, pp.176-192.

² Tammūz fil-Madīna, pp.61-63.

The poet then complains to his lost homeland about how miserable life has become for all the Palestinian Arabs, wandering in exile from one place to another:

آى أرضنا ...
 اذكرينا الآن مطوفين
 بين أشواك القفار
 مطوفين في صمّ الجبال ،
 اذكرينا الآن في
 هوج المدائن عبر البوادي والبحار •
 اذكرينا وملء الأعين منا
 غبار لا ينجلى من سرعة الحلّ والترحال •

O land of ours ...
 remember us now, wandering
 among the thorns of the deserts,
 wandering in rocky mountains,
 remember us now,
 in tumultuous cities across the deserts
 and oceans.
 Remember us with our eyes full of a dust
 that never clears in our ceaseless wandering.

Mahmūd Salīm al-Hūt (1916-), who was born in Jaffa and received the degree of Master of Arts from the American University of Beirut, describes himself in the sub-title of a long poem¹ as a "Palestinian Arab lost in faraway countries" (. (عربي من فلسطين ضلّ في الآفاق) . Addressing his "lost paradise" he describes his fellow refugees as people cast out of one country after another:

ما ضقت يوماً بنا يا جنة فقدت فكيف غصت بنا آفاق أقطار

 يا ويح شعبك أحاداً ممزقة من تحت كلّ خفوق النورسيّار²

¹ Al-Mahzala al-'Arabiyya.

² Ibid., p.11

O lost paradise! for us you were never
too small,
but now vast countries have become too
small for us.
Woe unto your people who were torn asunder,
wandering under every star!

Poems by another Palestinian poet, Hārūn Hāshim Rashīd (1930-), show the same feelings. The following lines , quoted from his collection of poems حتى يعود شعبنا (Until our People return), illustrate how gloomy and bitter the Palestinians' outlook on life became in their exile:

ضربنا في مآه القفر لا نور ولا أمل
وسرنا في مهبّ الرّيح والاعصار متّصل
حملنا فوق ما قد تحمل الدنيا وتحتمل
ولكن طالت الغيبة حتى اسودّت السّبيل¹

We went roaming through trackless wastelands
with no light, no ray of hope.
We walked in storms when they were at their
peak.
We suffered more than the whole world could
bear.
But there has been no sign of the Return,
and now the whole future looks black.

Many Palestinian poets too, have found in the Gulf states, such as Kuwait, Qatar, etc., a secure place to live^{ing} at least from a material point of view. But their poems also overflow with feelings of alienation and loss of identity. Hasan al-Najmī while living in Qatar, expresses

¹ P.60.

in أغنية الى الجنوب (A Song to the South)¹ the feeling that all countries had become bored with sheltering the Palestinian refugees, and wished them to leave:

سئمتك يا شعبي العواصم والقرى
ركلتك يا أنت الدروب
عشا نطوف في الصحار ...

O my people! all countries are bored
with you,
and roads are closed to you.
We are wandering uselessly in the deserts.

Another poet, Rādī Saddūq (1938-) who found a livelihood in Kuwait for some time,² explains in من أغاني القافلة الضائعة (Some Songs of the Lost Caravan)³ that the new generation of Palestinian Arabs, who have been or will be born in "exile", have no better future than their parents. Addressing his newly-born daughter Rulā, he says:

صغيرتي أنت هنا عالم من غير لون ، مستباح ، شريد
أنت هنا يا رلى بنت غريب مستذل طريد

My little baby! you are a whole world here,
but with no colour, downtrodden and vagrant.
O Rulā! Stranger you are,
and the daughter of a stranger who
is humiliated and a fugitive.

¹ Al-Ādāb, no.6, June 1960, p.17.

² He held numerous offices there: editor of the weekly paper al-Waṭan, political commentator for the weekly paper al-Hadaf and official in the Ministry of Defence. He left Kuwait in 1966. See al-Badawī al-Mulaththam, al-Adīb, no.11, November 1968, p.32.

³ Al-Aqlām, 1st year, no.4, December 1964, p.51.

All the previous examples, as well as so many others, show that the Palestinian poet could not see in any other country an alternative to his "lost homeland", since all countries remained alien to his heart. This, therefore, makes his longing for Palestine a natural and true feeling.

The following quotation from Maḥmūd Salīm al-Ḥūt's poem "al-Mahzala al-Arabiyya", mentioned before, speaks for itself. In fact it is one of many such statements that inevitably find their way into the writings of many Palestinian poets:

يافا ، لقد جفّ دمعي فانتحيت دما	متى أراك ؟ وهل في العمر من أمد ؟
أمسي وأصبح والذكرى مجددة	محمولة في طوايا النفس للأبد
...	...
ما بال قلبي اذا ما سرت من بلد	يصيح من وجدته في الصدر وا بلدى
مهما استقام له من عيشة رغد	وجدته هازنا بالعيشة الرغد

Jaffa! my eyes shed blood after the tears had dried.

Will I ever see you again?

My memory of you is fresh day and night, living within my innermost soul

...

What ails my heart! wherever I go it sadly cries:

Alas my homeland!

Whatever opulence in life he gains, derision for that life is only his response.

While expressing a longing for his homeland, the Palestinian poet often seeks news of it by inquiring about it from whatever he thinks has seen it or passed over it, such as the wind, the star, birds, etc.

A poem called بحيرة الزيتون (The Lake of Olive Trees) (1957)¹ by Yūsuf al-Khaṭīb may be considered a good

¹ Al-Ādāb, no.10, October 1957, p.17.

example of this; al-Khaṭīb, being much worried about his house and village after it had become Israeli property tries to appease his anxiety by asking the wind to tell him all about the state of his home and village. The wind reports bad news: the olive tree in the courtyard of their house had wilted. The house itself had become dreary and had sunk into despair after its owners had left.

Because it was necessary for the poet to indulge his worry, he turns to the stars asking them about the same thing. But the stars confirm what the wind has said. The poet, deeply depressed, pleads with the flocks of birds to carry the following message to his village:

أقريتنا ، نفرت اليك أسراب الحفافير
أقول لها : اذا وافيت عند النهر قريتنا
فحطّي بعض ساعات ، وشّي الدار لو عتنا
بأنا ما نعيش اليوم الا بانتظار غد
... ..

أقريتنا وحقّ شراك ما أغفى لنا جفن
يظلّ الشوق يسهدنا ، وينزف دمعنا البين
وأقمار السماء نظلّ في مرآتها نرنو
نطالع وجهك المحزون كم أودى به الحزن

Oh our village!
I sent to you flocks of birds.
To them I said:
When you reach our village beside the river,
alight awhile, and tell our home all about
our grief.
Tell it we would not be alive
were it not for our hope of tomorrow.

... ..
Oh our village! I swear by your soil
we have not tasted sleep,
wakeful through remembering you,
tearful because of our separation from you.
And all the time we gaze at the sky
observing your sad face.
Oh, how sad your face has become!

Among the poets who burn with thirst for the Return is Abū Salmā. His many poems on this theme are overflowing with passion for the "lost home", attachment to its soil and longing for reunion with it. In a poem entitled *سنعود* (We will return)¹ for instance, he imagines everything in his lost country; the shores, rivers, hills, plains, etc., beckoning him to return:

فلسطين الحبيبة كيف أحيا	بعيدا عن سهولك والهضاب
تناديني السفوح مخضبات	وفي الآفاق أثار الخضاب

Oh my beloved Palestine! How can I live
far from your plains and hills.
The feet of your mountains, dyed (with blood),
giving the horizon its redness, are calling me.

Fadwā Tūqān's poem *نداء الأرض* (The Call of the Land)(1954)², now under discussion, represents the longing for the Return in a more developed way than is seen in the above-mentioned poems. In Fadwā's poem the desire for the Return goes beyond sending messages home with the stars or winds, etc., and reaches the decision that a refugee must make a desperate effort to be reunited with the land from which he has been separated.

Describing his remembrance of the land which gave him in the past "all its treasures", and the miserable situation in which he lives at present, the poetess says:

¹ Dīwān Abī Salmā, pp.172-174.

² Dīwān Fadwā Tūqān, pp.153-161.

تمثل أرضاً نمته و غذته من صدرها الشريخا و طفلا
 تمثل وهو يلوب انتفاض ثراها اذا ما الريح أهـلا
 و مـاج بعينه كنز السنابل يحضنه الحقل خيرا مـلا
 و لاح له شجر البرتقال وهو يرق عيرا وظـلا
 و هاجت به فكرة كالعواصف لا تستقر
 أتغصب أرضي؟ أيسلب حقي وأبقى أنا
 حليف التشرد أصحاب ذلة عارى هنا؟
 أأبقى هنا لأموت غريبا بأرض غريبة؟

He recalled a land which had raised him and fed him generously from her breast since his infancy.

He, nostalgically, recalled the sight of the trembling soil in spring, and saw the field of wheat undulating in the breeze, treasuring wealth for him.

He saw the orange trees flickering and spreading fragrance and shade.

Then a stormy idea flared up in his mind:

how can I see my land, my rights usurped, and remain here, a wanderer filled with shame?

Should I live here and die as a stranger in a foreign land?

With such emotions taking full command of his being, the refugee leaves his tent one spring night, lit by stars in a clear sky, and heads for his land. He could see in the far distance the lights of Jaffa. He also could smell the air fragrant with the scent of orange blossoms.

Reaching the border-fence which separates him from his land, he stops. He knows for certain that crossing the fence will cost him his life. But he does not care. What he cares for is to die on its soil. Therefore he crosses the fence without hesitation and realizes his dream. The following lines represent the climax:

وأهوى على أرضه في انفعال يشم ثراها
 يعانق أشجارها ويضم لآلي حصاها
 وممّغ كالطفل في صدرها الرحب خدا ومم

وألقى على حضنها كلَّ ثقل سنين الألم
وأصغى إلى قلبها وهو يهيم همسة عتب
— رجعت اليّ ؟

— رجعت اليك ، وهذى يدي
سأبقى هنا ، سأموت هنا ، هيئي مرقدى

... ..

وكانت عيون العدو اللئيم على خطوتين
رمته بنظرة حقد ونقمة

... ..

ومزّق جوف السكون صدى طلقتين •

He fell passionately on his land, smelling
the soil, kissing the trees and grasping
the precious pebbles.

Like an infant he pressed cheek and mouth to
the soil, shedding there the pain he had
borne for years.

He listened to her heart whispering tender
reproof:

- You have come back?

- I have, here is my hand.

Here I will remain, here I will die, so
prepare my grave.

... ..

Two paces away, sentries of the ignoble enemy
were lurking; their eyes were darting arrows
of hate.

Then two shots ripped the silence of the night.

Optimism is a common trait of poems speaking on this
theme. This observation does not imply that pessimistic
feelings concerning the return of Palestinian Arabs to
Palestine did not permeate certain poems; it simply means
that such pessimistic poems do not form the major portion
as compared with other, more optimistic, poems. Even after
the Arab defeat in the June War of 1967, Arab poets in
general soon regained confidence in the future and expressed
a firm faith in the capability of the Arabs to regain

their rights in Palestine.¹

Quotations illustrating this can be amply provided, whether from poetry written by Palestinians or that composed by poets from other Arab countries. It is not strange, then, to come across lines such as these:

أَتَى سِرْتِ أَخْطَاهُ	مَعِيَ مِفْتَاحُ بَابِ الْبَيْتِ
وَالْأَحْزَانُ أَنْقَلَاهُ	وَعَبْرُ مَفَاوِزِ الْأَشْجَانِ

The key of my house is on me wherever I go.
I always carry it throughout my wandering
in the deserts of grief.

Just as the Arab poets did not lose faith in the Return, Palestine, for her part, is still waiting for the return of her "children", in spite of the continual frustration of this hope.

Her confidence in their return induces her to make them their favourite drink, tea with mint leaves, as she sits waiting for them every night:

وَأُمِّي أَيْقَنْتْ أَنِّي سَأَرْحَلُ ، أَمَّا قَالَتْ
تَعُودُ غَدًا •
وَتَنْتَظِرُ الشَّفِيقَةَ لَا تَزَالُ ! وَتَجْمَعُ التَّعْنَاعَ ..

¹ This idea has been emphasized by many Arab critics; for examples see: Iḥsān 'Abbās, "Aṣābi' Ḥazīrān wal-Adab al-Thawrī", al-Ādāb, no.5, May 1970, pp.33-40, 66-68; Shukrī 'Ayyād, al-Adab al-'Arabī ba'd al-Khāmis min Ḥazīran". Ibid., no.5 May 1969, pp.3-6; and Muḥammad al-Nuwayhī, "Ḥarakat al-Shi'r al-Jadīd fi Daw' al-Hazīma", Ibid., no.6 June 1969, pp.2-8.

² Hārūn Hāshim Rashīd, Hattā ya'ūd Sha'bunā, p.119.

أحباب شرابهمو كؤوس الشاي بالنعناع يأتون لها
العشيّة 1... ..

Seeing me leaving, my mother said:
You will come back.
Ever since she has been waiting and storing
up mint leaves in case her dear ones, who
like their tea mixed with leaves of mint,
arrive in the evening.

By way of concluding our discussion of this theme, it
is worth mentioning that some Arab writers find the present
Arab emotions concerning the return to Palestine no less
intense than the sentiments expressed by the Psalmist:

If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right
hand forget her cunning.
If I do not remember thee, let my tongue
cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer
not Jerusalem above my chief joy.²

In fact, the above Psalm in particular finds an echo
in some poems written by Palestinian poets. Mu'īn Bisīṣū,
for instance, wrote a poem entitled اله أورشليم (The God
of Ūrushalīm),³ in which he copies the Psalmist, saying:

لتنسني يميني
لتنسني عيون
حببتي ،
لينسني أخني
لينسني صديقي الوحيد
... ..

¹ From a poem entitled تَشَرَّدُ by Hikmat al-‘Attīlī,
al-Ādāb, no.4 April 1964, p.47.

² Psalm 137, verses : 5,6.

³ Al-Āthār al-Kāmila, pp.143-146.

إذا نسيت
 أن بين ثديي أرضنا بيت ،
 اله أورشليم ،
 وأن من قطوف دمننا يعتصر
 الشهد واللبن
 لكي يعيش
 ويفرخ الوحوش .

Let my right hand forget me,
 let my beloved's eyes,
 my brother and my only friend
 all forget me
 if I remember not
 that the god of Ūrushalīm
 lies heavily on (the chest of)
 our land,
 squeezing honey and milk
 out of drops of our blood,
 to live
 and hatch out monsters.

In an article published in The Middle East Journal,¹
 an Arab writer, 'Abd al-Latīf Tībāwī, points out that there
 is a "striking similarity between present Arab aspirations
 and emotions concerning "the Return" and those from which
 Zionism was born". He also adds:

"There is thus a "new Zionism" in the
 making, an "Arab Zionism" with the aim
 of returning to the homeland. It is not
 likely that serious Arab intellectuals
 will take too long to recognize the sig-
 nificance of their own "Psalmists" who
 remember Jerusalem and long for
 Palestine". 2

¹ Vol. XVII, 1963.

² Ibid., p.509.

The Bitter Experience of two Defeats, 1948 and 1967.

When disastrous defeats befall a nation, it is not unusual to find each constituent part of that nation laying the blame for the defeat on the others, accusing them of being a major factor in the defeat.

The Arabs had suffered two humiliating defeats at the hands of the same enemy during a period of only two decades. It is no wonder, then, that we find a variety of views expressed by Arab writers and poets, putting the blame for those defeats on one group or another; but, at the same time, all reflect the common feeling that Arab pride, whether at individual or collective levels, had been seriously injured. This feeling should not be underestimated, since it sheds light on many essential characteristics of contemporary Arab literature in general, and poetry in particular, regarding tone, attitudes and mood.¹

In the pursuance of the theme under discussion we shall now examine three aspects of the painful experience of two defeats: the responsibility for those defeats, the resultant feelings of pain and shame, and, finally, the prevalence of optimism over despair and pessimism in regard to their ability to overcome the consequences of those defeats.

As for those poems that followed the defeat of 1948, we have noted that they concentrate on putting the whole responsibility for losing the war on the Arab leadership,

¹ This will be discussed in chapter VII.

to such an extent that other aspects of Arab society, such as social and cultural backwardness, freedom of thought and speech for the individual Arab, etc., remain untouched. In the case of the poetry which followed the 1967 defeat, on the other hand, not only the Arab leadership was criticized, but also Arab society itself. Taking as an example a poem entitled *بعد النكبة* (After the Catastrophe)(1948)¹ by 'Umar Abū Rīsha (1908-), we notice that even in this poem in which the Arab public is blamed, such blame is allocated merely because, as the poet believes, the Arab masses had trusted their leaders and left them free to do whatever they wished. Moreover, it was the Arab masses who had extolled to the heavens such unworthy leaders:

أمتي كم صنم مجّده لم يكن يحمل طهر الصنم

O my people! many an "idol" you praised
who was not endowed even with the purity
of an idol.

In the body of criticism directed towards the Arab rulers following the first defeat, Arab poets in the Mahjar (Particularly in South America) were more harsh and direct in attacking Arab rulers than were poets living in Arab countries. This can be attributed to the fact that the former, who did not live in Arab countries, enjoyed more freedom to say what they wanted, because they were not within the Arab rulers' reach. The many poems on this subject by Ilyās Farhāt (1891-1976), Rashīd Salīm al-Khūrī (1887-),

¹ Dīwān Abū Rīsha, vol.1, pp.7-11.

Nasr Sam'ān (1905-1967) and others, illustrate how severe and critical their attack was.¹

One of the most stinging poems on this theme that we have found is one written by Ilyās Farhāt, published in his collection of poems entitled al-Kharīf, in which he says:

وإذا لقيت ذوي الجلالة من	ساداتنا المتحكين بنا
وذوي السمو وكل ذي لقب	خاو كصاحبه قليل غنى
فاهزأ بالقاب لهم سميت	وكرامة هزلت أسي وضي
ديست بأقدام اليهود

If you meet Their Majesties these Kings of ours, or Their Highnesses, and every holder of an honorific title, (remember) both the title and the holder are worthless. Mock at them, then, as having big titles but little pride; and that trampled upon by the Jews.

Then the poet threatens the rulers saying that they will pay highly for this attitude:

فستأكلون أكفكم ندما	وستشربون دموعكم حزنا
وستدفعون لكل سائلة	عن عرضها أعراضكم ثمنا

Thus you will bite your fingers (lit. palms) in sorrow. And will drink your tears out of sadness. And it is your honour that will be paying when any (Arab) woman puts her honour up for sale.

While tracing our theme, i.e. criticism of the Arab leadership, in poems written after the June defeat in 1967,

¹ See 'Azīza Muraydin, al-Shi'r al-Qawmī fī al-Mahjar al-Janūbī, pp.306-335.

² Samīr Badwān Qaṭāmī, Ilyas Farhāt ... , p.148.

we find that the poets' vision of it has enlarged, and they begin attributing the defeat to other vital defects rooted in the political, social and cultural state of Arab society. As we mentioned before, such feelings were not voiced in the poetry which followed the "disaster" in 1948.

However, although there are a countless number of poems dealing with the factors that led to the June defeat, two poems only will be considered here, both by Syrian poets, but analysing the defeat differently. The first, entitled *من وحي الهزيمة* (Inspiration from Defeat)¹ by Muḥammad Sulaymān al-Aḥmad (known as Badawī al-Jabal) (1907-1981), is chosen because it is the only poem -as far as we know- that attacks socialism in the form adopted by certain Arab countries in the late fifties and sixties, Egypt and Syria in particular, while at the same time considering socialism a major causative factor in the defeat. The other *هوامش على دفتر النكسة* (Marginal Notes in the Book of the Setback)² by Nizār Qabbānī (1923-), acquired wide fame, and there arose an enormous storm in Arab literary circles on its first publication in al-Ādāb magazine.³

Although in this poem Badawī al-Jabal considers that it was the rulers who were defeated in the June War and not the Arab nation, (*هزم الحاكمون والشعب في الأصفاد فالحكم وحده المكسور*), he concentrates on socialism, seeing it as an evil system. According to him, socialism means the enrichment of the ruling class through acquisition, the depriving of the people of freedom or justice, and an increase of immorality

¹ Dīwān Badawī al-Jabal, pp.192-207.

² Nizār Qabbānī, al-A'māl al-Siyāsiyya, pp.5-15.

³ No.8, August 1967, p.2.

in society.

(اشتراكية تعاليمها الاثراء والظلم والخنا والفجور
اشتراكية فان مّر طاع صفّ جند له ودوى نغير
... ..
كلّ فرد من الرعية عبد ومن الحكم كلّ فرد أمير)

Socialism also, the poet says, does not respect religion or religious people. The cruelty of the Arab socialist regimes towards Muslims was an unforgettable experience, when mosques were stormed with fire, and many of those who were praying, were humiliated or tortured.

(هتكوا حرمة المساجد لا جنكيز باراهم ولا تيمور
قحموها على المصلين بالنار فشلو يعلو وشلو يطير
أمعنوا في مصاحف الله تمزيقا ويدو على الوجوه السرور
فقت أعين المصلين تعذيبا وديست مناكب وصدور)

It should be stated, however, that Badawī al-Jabal was not on good terms with the ruling socialist regimes in Syria and Egypt during the late fifties and sixties. The poet, therefore, lived in exile in several Arab and European countries from 1956 to 1967.¹ This may explain the poet's attitude; nevertheless, it is obvious that the defeat came as a golden opportunity for al-Jabal to quench his thirst for revenge on those regimes, and consider them the actual sources of the defeat.

The poem "Marginal Notes in the Book of the Setback" by Nizār Qabbānī, the subject of our discussion now, is

¹ Dīwān Badawī al-Jabal, pp.16-19.

considered one of the most important poems that Qabbānī ever wrote. Soon after its appearance, the poem gave rise to heated, lengthy argument in Arab literary circles in which many readers, writers and critics took part.

By some, the poem was received with enormous enthusiasm, as they saw in it an honest and truthful picture of the ills to be found in Arab society. Others, however, severely attacked the poem as well as the poet for many reasons.

However, the poet himself, in his book قصتي مع الشعر (My Poetical Experience) sums up the views of the latter group by listing the following points:

- 1) Nizār Qabbānī, being "a poet on erotic themes who has devoted all his poetry to women and love is unqualified to write about national themes".¹
- 2) Qabbānī, more than any other writer or poet, "should be blamed because of his sensuous poetry which has affected the new generation badly and spoilt their morals".²
- 3) Nizār, in the poem, is no more than a "sadist who finds pleasure in whipping the Arab nation while she is bleeding because of the defeat", and by "dancing over the wounds of his people".³
- 4) The poet, by writing thus, aims at "killing any remnant of determination or hope that may still exist among the Arabs". By this, he is "serving the enemy who wishes to

¹ Qiṣṣatī ma' al-Shi'r, p.216.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

see the Arabs in complete despair".¹

The wave of anger arising from Qabbānī's poem reached its peak in the writings of Egyptian writers, some of whom wrote asking the authorities to ban the poet and his works from entering Egypt. Seeing this "unjust campaign" against him, Qabbānī reveals in the aforementioned book that he wrote to President Nasser about this and included in his letter² a copy of the poem. The President, Nizār states, gave instructions to the appropriate authority that all restrictions on Qabbānī and his books were to be lifted.

However, for Qabbānī, as well as for other poets, the defeat in 1967 was most shameful. The events that led to it were a combination of various factors, some of them related to aspects of the society itself, including its thinkers and men of letters; while others were connected with the Arab rulers.

As for Arab society, the poet envisages it as "dressed in the husk of civilization, while its soul remained primitive".

(لقد لبسنا قشرة الحضارة
والروح جاهلية ..)

The Arabs, the poet adds, have been living underground for ages, existing in an endless lethargy and ignorance of

¹ These four points were also the backbone of Ghālī Shukrī's criticism of Nizār Qabbānī and his national poems in general, and this poem in particular.

See Ghālī Shukrī, Adab al-Muqāwama, pp.398-401.

² Of the text of the letter, see Qiṣṣatī ma' al-Shi'r, pp.237-241.

the age they live in. Their skins are numbed, unfeeling, while their "souls lament their bankruptcy". They pass their time in slumber or by playing chess or practising the Zār¹.

(خمسة آلاف سنة
ونحن في السرداب
...

جلودنا ميتة الاحساس
أرواحنا تشكو من الافلاس
أيامنا تدور بين الزار والشطرنج والنحاس)

Although the Arabs have become rich, as a result of the oil they have, this source of wealth, instead of becoming a "dagger of flame and fire" which could serve as a weapon in the struggle against the enemy, is "flowing away beneath the concubines' feet".

(كان بوسع نفطنا الدافق في الصحارى
أن يستحيل خنجرا من لهب ونار
لكنه ،
واخجلة الأشراف من قرش
وخلصة الأحرار من أوس ومن نزار
يراق تحت أرجل الجوارى)

Moreover, when the Arabs entered the war against Israel, they entered it with a strange strategy, the poet says. No wonder then if the result matched such means:

إذا خسرنا الحرب لا غرابة
لأننا ندخلها
بكل ما يملكه الشرقي من مواهب الخطابة

¹ A dance involving witchcraft practiced in some Arab countries, usually conducted by a woman, in order to expel an evil-spirit from a person thought to be possessed by it.

باعتريات التي ما قتلت ذبابة •
 لأننا ندخلها
 بمنطق الطلبة والرياسة •

It is not strange that we have lost the war,
 because we entered it armed with
 the rhetorical talents that an Oriental has,
 with false heroism that would not kill even
 a fly;
 because we entered it
 with the logic of the drum and the rabāba.

For their part Arab intellectuals, thinkers and
 writers, bear a great responsibility for the defeat, hence
 the books they read or write belong to a dead past rather
 than to the present age. Their speeches, the poet adds, are
 as "full of holes as an old shoe" and dominated by terms
 of "obscenity, slander and abuse".

(انعى لكم
 كلامنا المثقوب كالأحذية القديمة
 وفردات العهر والهجاء والشتيمة
 أنعى لكم ..
 أنعى لكم ..
 نهاية الفكر الذي قاد الى الهزيمة) •

Shifting to the responsibility of the Arab rulers,
 Qabbānī sums up the whole relationship between them and
 their peoples by saying that the rulers denied their
 people any chance of expressing their opinions freely
 and acting as a spontaneous body in a free society.

Addressing the "Sultan", by which term, as we believe
 are denoted Arab rulers in general and not the

particular,¹ Qabbānī says:

لو أحد يمنحني الأمان
لو كنت أستطيع أن أقابل السلطان
قلت له : يا سيدى السلطان
كلابك المفترسات مزقت ردائي ..
ومخبرك دائما ورائي
عيونهم ورائي
أنوفهم ورائي
أقدامهم ورائي
كالقدر المحتوم كالقضاء ..
يستجوبون زوجتي
ويكتبون عندهم أسماء أصدقائي ..
يا حضرة السلطان ،
لأنني اقترت من أسوارك الصماء
لأنني حاولت أن أكشف عن حزني وعن بلائي
ضربت بالحذاء
أرغمني جندك أن آكل من حذائي .

¹ Z. Gabay, in an article published in Middle Eastern Studies (vol.9, 1973, p.217) on Qabbānī and his poetry, puts the view that the poem is directed at Nasser, since - Gabay says - "Nāṣir is the "Sultan" who lost two wars: 1956 and 1967". But he also adds that "one could equally claim that it can denote all Arab heads of states in general". However, it seems to us that the "Sultan" does not refer in any case to Nasser in particular, because -according to the Arab point of view- the war of 1956 was not a defeat for him. This is clear in all the Arabic literature on the war. Moreover, Qabbānī's poem itself written on that war entitled "رسائل جندي مصري في جبهة" "رسائل جندي مصري في جبهة" does not imply such an idea. The two defeats implied by Nizār are obviously those of 1948 and 1967, and Nasser was not in power when the first of these took place.

يا سيدى
يا سيدى السلطان
لقد خسرت الحرب مرتين
لأن نصف شعبنا
ليس له لسان

If I were promised safety,
if I could meet the Sultan
I would say to him: O my lord the Sultan!
my cloak has been torn by your ravenous dogs,
your spies are following me all the time.
Their eyes,
their noses,
their feet are chasing me
like destiny, like fate.
They interrogate my wife
and write down all the names of my friends.
O Sultan!
Because I dared to approach your deaf walls,
because I tried to reveal my sadness and
tribulation
I was beaten with shoes.
Your soldiers forced me to eat my shoes.
O my lord the Sultan!
you have lost the war twice
because half our people
has no tongue.

Thus Qabbānī makes clear the bitter fact that the
Arabs were defeated by their own defects rather than by the
strength of their enemy:

ما دخل اليهود من حدودنا
وأنما ..
تسرّوا كالنمل من عيوننا

The Jews did not come across our borders, but
they crept in like ants through our defects.

The self-criticism and self-condemnation which followed
the June defeat can be seen in many poems, all reflecting
the bitterness and frustration eating at the heart of the
Arab poets. Among the best known of these poems is

بكائية الى شمس حزيران (Lament for the June Sun)¹,
by the Iraqi poet 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Bayātī (1926-), one
of the leading contemporary Arab poets. Al-Bayātī's ruth-
less criticism of Arab society is even harsher than that we
have seen in Qabbānī's poem, as the following lines il-
lustrate:

طحنتنا في مقاهي الشرق
حرب الكلمات
والسيوف الخشبية
والأكاذيب وفرسان الهواء
...
شغلتنا الترهات
فقتلنا بعضنا بعضا
وها نحن فقات
في مقاهي الشرق
نصطاد الذباب
نرتدى أقنعة الأحياء .
في مزلة التاريخ
أشباه رجال

In the cafés of the East we have been ground
by the war of words,
by wooden swords
and by lies and ~~horsemen of air~~ quixotic knights.

...
Engaged in vanities
we killed each other.
And here we are like crumbs.
In the cafés of the East
we (pass the time) in swatting flies,
wearing the masks of the living.
We are placed in the dunghill of history,
mere shadows of men.

A comparison of the poets' reactions to the two
defeats reveals a similarity in many aspects. In both, the

¹ Dīwān 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Bayātī, vol.2, pp.336-341.

initial response was one of shock and a loss of the sense of proportion; hopes were shattered, and sorrow and grief dominated. But each time, after the shock have had dissipated, the poets regained their composure and expressed faith, confidence and hope in the future.

Thus, our discussion in the following pages will look at the poets' reaction from both sides: the immediate response which is characterized by impotent fury, an overwhelming sense of injury, and despair in some poems; and the secondary development, the optimistic view which believes that the Arab nation -although defeated- is still able to stand up to the challenge facing her in the conflict.

Judging from the many poems written before 1948 or during the war in that year, we can fairly state that the defeat came as a surprise for the poets' as well as for the Arab public in general. The poets were sunk in feelings of disgrace, seeing the pride of their nation as having been deeply injured. According to 'Umar Abū Rīsha, the Arabs, as a nation, lost all respect in the world community. Therefore, he addresses his nation in a poem entitled *بعد النكبة* (After the Catastrophe)(1948)¹ by saying:

منبر للسيف أو للقلم	أمتي هل لك بين الأمم
خجلا من أمك المنصرم	ألتقاك وطرفي مطرق
خنقت نجوى علاك في في	أمتي كم غصة دامية
في حمى المهد وظل الحرم	الاسرائيل تعلو راية

¹ Diwān Abū Rīsha, p.7.

O my nation! Is there any place left among
the nations where you can wield your swords
or pen!
I think of you with my head bowed down,
feeling ashamed to face your past.
O my nation! many a time agonized shrieks
killed words in praise of you on my tongue.
How could the flag of Israel be raised in
the shelter of the Holy Sepulchre and the
shade of the Haram!1

For the Sudanese poet 'Abdullah al-Ṭayyib (1921-), who
was living in London in 1948, life lost all its meaning be-
cause of the defeat, and death is seen by the poet as the
only way out of the pain the defeat had brought:

(أني أرى العيش قد ضاقت مذاهبه فاسلك إلى الموت إن أبصرته بابا
أبيت في "لندن" أسوان محترنا حيران أندب عند النيل آرابا)

One of the most striking poems arising from the 1948
defeat came from the Iraqi poet 'Adnān al-Rāwī. The poem
is entitled استغفر الله (I ask Forgiveness of God)³. It
reflects an exceeding bitterness and utter despair similar
to that shown later in poems written after the June War.
The following verses illustrate how deeply the poet was
shattered.

سأكفر بالكون والعالمين وأنكر كل عقيد ودين
وأمسك قلبي عن أمّتي وأبعث شعر الهوى والمجون
سأنسى بأنني في موطن إلى الحرب ينسيه الأولون

I will not believe in this world any more.
I will disown all religions.
In praise of my nation I will keep my tongue
checked,

¹ The Aqṣā Mosque.

² From a poem entitled هموم فلسطين (Agonies of Palestine)
(1948), Dīwān Aṣḍā' al-Nīl, p.150.

³ Al-Majmū'a al-Shi'riyya al-Kāmila, p.165.

and instead I will turn to themes of love
and buffoonery.
I will forget that I am living in a home
that was once Arab.

The Arabic word for shame or disgrace is 'ār. since 1948, this word in particular became a standard term repeated in numerous poems speaking -plainly or subtly- about Palestine or the challenge facing the Arabs regarding it. To give only one example of the frequent use of the word, it is repeated seven times by an Egyptian poet, Fārūq Shūsha in one poem entitled كلمات للعار (words for the Shame)(1964)¹. By a Lebanese poet, Khalīl Hāwī, it is repeated five times in الأم الحزينة (The Grieved Mother)(1968)².

Some other words denoting feelings of humiliation and injured pride, such as dhull and Jurh, have also been used frequently since 1948. Muqbil al- 'Isā, from Saudi Arabia, feels that the "Palestine wound" is not healing as wounds usually do; instead, it has been deepening more and more in the heart of the Arabs.

(يا فلسطين انما أنت جرح وصاب على النفوس أليم
كل جرح له شفاء ولكن جرحك اليوم غائر وجسيم)³

Other poets from different Arab countries express the same idea in many poems, as can be seen in الجرح المتجاوب (The Sympathetic Wound)(1965)⁴ by Ṣāliḥ Kharfī from Algeria,

¹ Al-Ādāb, no.3, March 1964, p.33.

² Ibid., no.7, July 1968, p.8.

³ Ibid., no.3, March 1964, p.57.

⁴ Ibid., no.3, March 1965, p.29.

الجرح المتجدد : فلسطين (Palestine: the Rejuvenated Wound)(1964)¹ by 'Alī 'Ārif from Tunis, ثورة النفس (The Outburst of the Ego)(1948)² by 'Abdullah Zakariyyā al-Anṣārī from Kuwait, موعد في الأرض المحتلة (A Rendez-vous in the Occupied Lands)(1958)³ by al-Zayn 'Abbās 'Imāra from the Sudan, فلسطين أبدا (Palestine Forever)(1955)⁴ by Kāzīm Jawād from Iraq, عام جديد (New Year)(1958)⁵ by 'Umar Abū Rīsha, and many other poems.

Then came the Six-Day War (1967). The poets' initial response to the defeat was one of shock and loss of composure. They seemed stunned and dumbfounded, and expressed themselves in nightmareish visions.⁶ The mood of sadness in their works became deeper than it was before the defeat; in fact, some of them even expressed complete despair in a number of poems. 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Bayātī, for instance, declares in his aforementioned poem "Lament for the June Sun", that:

نحن موتى
نحن جيل الموت بالمجان
جيل الصدقات .

¹ Al-Fikr (Tunis), 10th year, no.1, October 1964, p.7.

² Dīwān al-Shi'r al-Kuwaytī, edited by Muḥammad Hasan 'Abdullah, p.228.

³ Ma' Riyāh al-'Awda. p.25.

⁴ Al-Ādāb, no.10, October 1955, p.10.

⁵ Dīwān Abū Rīsha, p.64.

⁶ M.M. Badawi, "Commitment in Contemporary Arabic Poetry" in: Cahiers d'histoire mondiale vol.XIV, 4, 1972, p.877.

⁷ Dīwān 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Bayātī, vol.2 , p.341.

We are dead.
We are the generation of free death,
recipient of alms.

Another poet from the Sudan, 'Abd al-Majīd Abū Ḥasabū (1920-), in a poem entitled حزينان (June)¹, sees himself in a desolate spot where he perceives no sign of hope. He is sunk completely in despair.

(بني وطني انّي أعيش بواحة
فقدت بها نفسي وكل جوارحي
وليس لها صوت البشير يواسي
فلا الأهل أهلي ، لا الأناس أناسي
وصرت أسير الحزن أشرب كأسه
وما عرفت ضوء الحيا أعراسي)

The Lebanese poet Yūsuf al-Khāl (1917-), who collaborated with Adunīs ('Alī Ahmad Sa'īd) to start the magazine Shi'r, which became the mouthpiece of the free verse movement and of poetic experimentation for several years,² also expressed an extremely pessimistic view of what the defeat had done to Arab poets. In his poem عشرين ايضاً فلنجلس (Another Twenty Years: let Us sit on the Banks of Life)³ he surrenders himself to overwhelming despair to such extent that he can see no glimpse of hope for the near future. Besides, the defeat has destroyed his vision and left him utterly blind:

ليتني أرى رؤيا
...
لكنني محارب جريح
أضعت لسان الصمت

¹ Dīwān al-Zilāl, p.31.

² Shi'r appeared in Beirut from 1957 to 1964. In 1967 it appeared again and continued until 1969.

³ Ibid., no.35, Summer 1967, pp.17-21.

على مرتفعاتك يا سوريا
في قدسك الشريف يا فلسطين

...

حالما بالأمر كيف كان
بالغد كيف يكون
حالما بلا رؤيا .

I wish I could see a vision

...

but I am a wounded fighter
who lost the tongue of silence
on your Heights, O Syria!
in your holy Jerusalem, O Palestine!

...

dreaming of yesterday: how it was,
dreaming of tomorrow: how it would be,
dreaming, but without vision.

Contrary to this pessimistic view, the majority of the Arab poets, and the Palestinians in particular, did not lose their sense of proportion or sink into despair.¹ Although their poems came to overflow with frustration, bitterness and sadness, they did not see in the defeat the final stage of the struggle for Palestine. Nizār Qabbānī, for instance, in "Marginal Notes in the Book of the Setback", mentioned before, expresses his firm confidence that the new generation would be able to achieve what the present generation had failed to do. After advising them not to "embrace their defeated fathers' thoughts" or "trace their deeds", the

¹ This was noticed also by many Arab critics. See for example: Iḥsan 'Abbās, "Aṣābi' Ḥazīrān wal-Adab al-Thawrī", al-Ādāb, no.5, May 1970, pp.33-40, 66-68.

Shukrī 'Ayyād, "al-Adab al-'Arabī ba'd al-Khāmis, min Ḥazīrān", Ibid., no.5, May 1969, pp.3-6.

And M. M. Badawī, "Commitment in Contemporary Arabic Poetry", op. cit., p.879.

poet says:

يا أيها الأطفال
يا مطر الربيع
يا سنابل الآمال
أنتم بذور الخصب في حياتنا العقيمة
وأنتم الجيل الذي سيهزم الهزيمة ¹

O (our) children,
rain of the Spring, buds of hopes!
you are fertile seeds in our barren life;
you are the generation that will vanquish
the defeat.

The reaction of another distinguished poet, Adūnīs , (1930-), shows that the June defeat did not lead him to despair, but, rather, deepened his previous vision which saw the rebirth of modern Arab society as conditional on real changes which could shake the roots rather than the surface of this society. It would seem that this view, reflected in his works prior to 1967, found strong support in the June defeat. The poet still believes that the Phoenix (one of his symbols for resurreuction), which lies dead at the moment, will rise to life when its ashes re-ignite, and that the seed of fertility is still buried alive in the earth, waiting for spring to come so that it may break through the ground and sprout. Taking his poem الرأس والنهر (The Head and the River)(1967)² as an example (a poem published shortly after the defeat³ and written in

¹ Al-A'māl al-Siyāsiyya, p.15.

² Al- A'māl al-Kāmila, vol.2, pp.363-403.

³ Parts of the poem was published first in al-Ādāb, no.9, September 1967, p.9.

a dramatic form), we find that it reflects the same earlier vision of the poet, which still dreams of the arrival of spring. In the scene describing a mother laying down her dead child, another woman takes off her black coat and covers him. Then enter two masked men and carry the dead child away. While they walk out slowly, sad music is heard, and an unseen chorus begins singing:

تفتّحي يا وردة الدماء
 في جثة العصفور
 في صبية محروقة
 في نهر الأشلاء
 تفتّحي كبذرة خفية
 لدورة الفصول
 تفتّحي
 هذا هو اللقاح
 هذى رعدة الحقول

O rose of blood! let your petals open
 in the body of the bird,
 in burnt children,
 in the river of corpses.
 Like a hidden seed,
 be open to the cycle of the seasons.
 Be open,
 this is the pollen
 this is the trembling of the fields.

The message of the poem is clear. The poet is quite sure he sees the seed of fertility ready to break its way through the soil when spring comes, so that life may be brought to the land.¹

When we turn to a consideration of the reaction of the Palestinian poets, whether those who have been living in

¹ More discussion on this poem is made in chapter VI, pp.323-330.

Israel since 1948 (mostly referred to as the resistance Palestinian poets) or those living elsewhere, it is clear that the defeat did not shake their belief that the final victory would fall to the Arabs. . . Maḥmūd Darwīsh (1942-) a prominent poet who became well-known to Arab readers after 1967, and who was living in Israel when the War broke out,¹ admitted that "the June defeat did not break him down or change his thoughts" regarding the struggle between Arabs and Israelis over Palestine. The defeat, he added, represented a "painful open manifestation"² (مكاشفة جارحة) .

For another Palestinian poet living in Israel, Tawfīq Zayyād (1932-) the defeat in June is seen as:

كبة هذى وكم يحدث أن يكبو الهمام
أنها للخلف كانت خطوة
من أجل عشر للأمام .³

Merely a tumble
that could happen to any gallant knight.
It is one step backwards
for ten steps forwards.

The poet, speaking on behalf of the Arabs in Israel, makes it clear that although they are oppressed and deprived of everything: their freedom, their properties, etc., they still have other things, in spite of the defeat, which enable them to resist and challenge the arrogant enemy:

كبريائي وأنا في قيدهم

¹ Maḥmūd Darwīsh left Israel in 1971.

² Shay' 'an al-Waṭan, p.268.

³ Dīwān Tawfīq Zayyād, p.449.

أعنف من كلّ جنون العجرفة
 في دمي مليون شمس
 تتحدى الظلم المختلفة
 وأنا أقتحم السبع السماوات
 بحبي لك
 يا شعب المآسي المسرفة .¹

My pride, even though they have me chained,
 is tougher than all the madness of arrogance.
 In my blood there are a million suns
 challenging all sorts of oppression.
 And through my love for you
 O people of enormous tragedies!
 I can conquer the Seven Heavens.

Furthermore, the poet is confident that the struggle of his people will not end in failure, since it is a struggle for a just cause; the failure, he believes, will be on the enemy's side:

ثم ماذا بعد ؟ لا أدري ولكن
 كل ما أدريه أن الحق لا يفنى
 ولا يقوى عليه غاصبون
 وعلى أرضي هذى لم يعمر فاتحون²

What then? I do not know.
 All I know is that the land and the years
 are pregnant.
 What I know is that the right cannot perish,
 or be beaten by usurpers,
 and on my land conquerers could not stay.

For an examination of the reaction of some other Palestinian poets to the June defeat, those who, until 1967, were not living under Israeli occupation, a poem entitled

¹ Ibid., p.235.

² Ibid., p.446.

مدينة الحزينة (My Sad City)(1967)¹ by Fadwā Tūqān, living in Nablus on the West-Bank, is highly representative. To Fadwā the Arab nation is seen as a tree. Although the trunk of the tree had fallen down as a result of the defeat, its roots are still deep in the earth, safe and strong, and able to give life to another trunk:

ستقوم الشجرة
ستقوم الشجرة والأغصان
ستنمو في الشمس وتخضر
وستتورق ضحكات الشجرة
في وجه الشمس
سيأتي الطير
لا بد سيأتي الطير
سيأتي الطير.

The tree will grow
the tree and the branches,
under the sun it will grow and become green.
Its laughter,
while it faces the sun, will burst into leaf.
Then the birds will arrive.
Certainly they will!
They will!

The Fidā'ī.

In Arabic the word Fidā'ī, which comes from the root fadā (to ransom) applies to "one who offers his life for another; a name used of special devotees in several religious and political groups".² Among the Nizārī Ismā'īlis, who emerged in the late Eleventh century, the noun Fidāwī, [the و (wāw) being a substitute for هـ (hamza)], is used for those who undertake perilous adventures, more particularly

¹ Dīwān Fadwā Tūqān, pp.481-483.

² Encyclopaedia of Islam (art. Fidā'ī).

for the destruction of the enemies of their sect.

In modern Arabic, the word as defined in al-Mu'jam al-Wasī applies to the "one who sacrifices himself for the sake of Allāh or the homeland".

The usage of the word Fidā'ī in modern Arabic literature according to the meaning described in al-Mu'jam al-Wasī is, in all probability, due to the Palestine issue. The word was first used in this sense by the Palestinian poet Ibrāhīm Tūqān in a poem written in 1930, bearing the word Fidā'ī as its title.¹

The poem speaks about a young Palestinian Arab who assassinated a British public prosecutor in Palestine because of his unjust sentences on Palestinian Arabs, as the poet states in his introduction to the poem.

After the loss of Palestine in 1948, the word began to appear in many poems written on the Palestinian groups who used to infiltrate across the Israeli borders to carry out armed activities against the Israelis.² But it should be mentioned that such groups, though called Fidā'īyyīn in

¹ Dīwān Ibrāhīm Tūqān, p.94.

² See فدائي (1952) by 'Umar Abū Rīsha (Syrian), Dīwān Abū Rīsha, p.28.

الفدائي (1956) by Muhammad Jamāl Shalāsh (Iraqi), al-Ādāb, no.8, August 1956, p.24.

رسالة من فدائي الى صديقه (1958) by Fārūq Shūsha (Egyptian), Ibid., no.11, November 1958, p.20.

فدائي (1956) by Salmā Khadrā al-Jayyūsī (Palestinian), al-'Awda min al-Nab' al-Hālim, p.56.

some poems, in others were termed **متسللون** (Infiltrators)¹ or **عائدون** (Returning Men)². After 1967, the word **Fidā'ī** is the only word used to denote one who belongs to the Palestinian Resistance Movement.

However, the **Fidā'ī**, as a theme in poetry written on Palestine between 1948 and 1967, is a minor one compared with other subjects such as the Palestinian Arab refugees, or the longing for the Return.³ During 1967 and 1973, however, the theme became predominant.

The question which occurs immediately to the mind is : what did the **Fidā'ī** represent for the Arab poets, and why did his image affect them so deeply in such a particular way?

The answer to such questions is not difficult to find; it is obvious from the poems which treat of this subject. In those written before 1967, the **Fidā'ī** by infiltrating into Israel, is shown as attacking the enemy, destroying his military installations and keeping alive the cause of the Palestinian people. Moreover, he represents the birth of a new Palestinian Arab who will no longer tolerate his being helpless and crushed in refugee camps; or, as phrased by the Egyptian poet **Fārūq Shūsha**:

¹ See: **المتسللون** (1955) by **Samīr Ṣunbur** (Palestinian), *al-Ādāb*, no.8 August 1955, p.50.

² See: **العائدون** (1953) by **Ṣālīḥ awād al-Tu'ma** (Iraqi), *Ibid.*, no.12 December, 1953, p.37.

³ This can be gathered also from the statistics in chapter IV, which show that only 18 poems (from a total number of 268) dealing with the **Fidā'ī**.

مولد انسان
يتحدى ليلات الرعب

The birth of a man
who would challenge the nights of terror.

After the defeat in June 1967, the *Fidā'ī* is seen by the Arab poet as the only visible manifestation that the Arab nation is still alive, or has something to be proud of in her modern history, which has been dominated by shameful setbacks and defeats since the Balfour Declaration was issued (1917) right up to the present day, as the Iraqi poet Muhammad Mahdī al-Jawāhirī puts it in his poem *الفداء والدم* (Blood and Self-Sacrifice) (1968).² This idea, in particular, forms the basis of most of the images focussing on the *Fidā'ī*.

Nizār Qabbānī, for instance, concentrates greatly on this idea. In his poem *فتح* (1968)³, which is directed at the Palestinian Resistance Movement as represented in *Fath* (the main and biggest group in the Movement), he speaks at length about the effect of that movement on Arab psychology which sank in despair after the June Defeat. According to him the appearance of *Fath* had brought the lifeless body of the Arab nation back to life again. The following lines from the poem show this central idea expressed in a number of images:

¹ In the poem entitled *رسالة من فدائي الى صديقه* *al-Ādāb*, no.11, November 1958, p.20.

² *Dīwān al-Jawāhirī*, vol.5, p.303.

³ *Al-A'māl al-Siyāsiyya*, pp. 31-36.

وبعد ما قُتلنا
 وبعد ما صلّوا علينا .. بعد ما دفنّا
 وبعد أن تكّسست عظامنا
 وبعد ما اهترأنا
 وبعد أن جعنا .. وأن عطشنا

 جاءت إلينا " فتح "
 كوردة جميلة طالعة من جرح
 كنّيح ماء بارد يروي صحارى ملح
 وفجأة ثرنا على أكفاننا وقمنا .

After we died,
 after they prayed over our bodies
 and buried us,
 after our bones had calcified
 and we became worn out.
 after we suffered starvation and thirst
 the Fath came to us
 like a beautiful rose sprouting from a wound,
 like a spring irrigating salty deserts.
 And so we, all of a sudden, tore off our shrouds
 And rose from the dead.

Then he addresses Fath by saying:

يا " فتح " يا شاطئنا من بعد ما فقدنا
 يا شمس نصف الليل لاحت بعد ما ضجرنا
 يا رعدة الريح فينا بعد ما يبسنا
 حين قرأنا عنكم كل الذى قرأنا
 خمسين قرنا بكم كبرنا
 وارتفعت قاماتنا
 وأزهرت حياتنا .

O Fath! you are the shore for us
 after our being cast adrift.
 You are the midnight sun rising on us
 after we had become bored to death.
 You are the tremor of spring in our dead bodies.
 When we read all that was written about you
 we felt ourselves growing for centuries upon
 centuries.
 Our stature has straightened
 and our life has blossomed.

In another poem *افادة في محكمة الشعر* (Testimony in the Court of Poetry)(1969)¹ Qabbānī portrays the Fidā'iyyīn with a halo around their heads. His extreme enthusiasm induces him to state, in an exaggeration which may be unacceptable to some, that the Fidā'iyyīn represent the new prophets in the Arab lands, at a time when these lands were barren of great men. Not only that; he adds that the Arabs should date their history from the day the Fidā'iyyīn appeared:

(ويطل الفداء شمساً علينا
 قبلهم لم يكن هناك قبيل
 هبطوا فوق أرضنا أنبياء
 بعد أن مات عندنا الأنبياء)
 ما عسانا نكون لولا الفداء
 ابتداء التاريخ من يوم جاءوا

However, images of the Fidā'ī similar to those presented in the poems mentioned above, and explaining what the Resistance Movement means to the poets, can be traced in a countless number of poems.²

¹ Ibid., pp. 64-81.

² To give only examples, the following poems may be mentioned:

أغنية مصرية للمقاومة (An Egyptian Song to the Resistance Movement) by Kīlānī Ḥasan Sanad, *al-Ādāb*, no.10, October 1970, p.25.

الحب والموت (Love and Death) by Ḥasan Fath al-Bāb, Ibid., no.7, July 1968, p.33.

لا وقت للبكاء (There is no Time for Weeping) by Amal Dunqul, no.12, December 1970, p.4.

رسالة الرجل الصغير (The Letter of the Young Man) by Buland al-Haydarī, Ibid., no.7, July 1968, p.11.

الله واللهيب (God and the Flame)(1969) by al-Zayn 'Abbās 'Imāra, *Dīwān ma' Riyāh al-'Awda*, p.89.

صرخة الثأر (The Cry of Revenge) by Ḥasan 'Abdullah al-Qurashī, *Dīwān al-Qurashī*, vol.2, pp.599-609.

The Iraqi pioneer poetess Nāzik al-Malā'ika (1923-), however, approaches this point from a different angle in her poem الضيف (The Guest)(1971)¹. In this poem, Nāzik sees that the Fidā'ī has brought with him what the Arabs really need, or what they have thirsted for for a long time, i.e. "the voice of anger". This, the poetess says, is what made the Arab masses "open their hearts to the Fidā'ī when he knocked at their doors announcing his arrival".

Poems portraying the Fidā'ī differ in their representations of this character. Some picture his psychological characteristics: his feelings, emotions, etc., while other poems concentrate on picturing his physical features: his strength, bravery, angry appearance, etc.. In a third section both psychological and physical attributes are interwoven.

However, in most poems the portrayals become alive and beautiful, infusing the picture of the Fidā'ī with that of the captured land, which perseveres in calling upon him to free her from captivity.

From among the many poems picturing the Fidā'ī, a poem entitled مع بطل العالم في رمي القرص (With the World Champion Discus Thrower)(1969)² by Yusrī Khamīs, an Egyptian poet, may be considered, from an artistic point of view, a highly representative example.

The picture presented in this poem is produced from a combination of elements, some of which are derived from

¹ Al-Ādāb, no.3, March 1971, p.4.

² Al-Ādāb, no.9, September 1969, p.19.

actual life and surroundings of the Fidā'ī such as the refugee camps, and the miserable situation of the refugees there; the lost home, etc., while other elements seem to be derived from aspects of mythological gods and heroes.

What may be regarded as an additional merit in this poem is the fact that it -unlike many other poems- did not absolve the Fidā'ī from those characteristics of weakness which can be found in any human being. In the poem the Fidā'ī, both fears failure and undergoes pain; but, more importantly, he endures the pain and holds himself upright when storms try to bring him down. However, the poem, which is fully quoted here, speaks for itself:

يحمل في يديه قرص الشمس
يزرع في التراب
أقدامه ،
ويستقيم عاريا ، كنخلة تخترق السحاب .

* * *

يرجع للوراء
يهتز قرص الشمس في يديه
يشدّ كفه عليه
بكل ما يملكه من الغضب
يدفعه الى السماء
يعلو ، ويعلو ،
يلمس باب الرب ،

* * *

تنكشف الأشياء :
لامعة مخيمات اللاجئين في الصحراء
لامعة معلبات الجبن في يد الأطفال
لامعة دموعهم .
لامعة عظامنا على الرمال
لامعة بنادق الشوار في الحقول والجبال
لامعة عيونهم
تشعل وجه الأرض والسماء

* * *

يسقط خارج الزمان والمكان قرص الشمس
يعبر جرح الأمس ، يستقر مرة ثانية في يده
يعاود اللعب
بكل ما يملكه من الغضب
* * *

ما راغني
ليست عيون الشمس
ما راغني : أقدامه
أقدامه ، وذلك التوتر المحموم والتقلصات
والخوف من سقوطه ، والانفلات
قدرته على التماسك الأليم
قدرته على تحمل الألم .

He holds the discus of the sun in his hands,
plants his feet firmly on the ground and
straightens his naked body like a palm tree
breaking through the clouds.

He steps backwards,
the sun-discus shakes in his hand,
the hand grasps it,
then, with all his anger,
he throws it into the sky.
The discus goes higher and higher
and touches God's door.

All things become uncovered:
glittering are the refugee camps under the
open sky,
glittering are the tins of cheese in the hands
of children,
glittering are the children's tears,
glittering are our bones on the sand,
glittering are the guns of the rebels
on the mountains and in the fields,
glittering are the rebels' eyes
lighting up the face of earth and sky.

The sun-discus falls beyond the limits of
time and space,
crosses the wounds of yesterday
and comes again to rest in his hand.
He, with all his anger,
throws it again.

What astonished me was
not the eyes of the sun,
but his feet,
his nervous tension and the contraction
(of his muscles)

his fear of falling and losing control of
himself,
his power in holding together,
his power of bearing the pain.

A close study of the poems dealing with the theme under discussion reveals that the characteristics of the Fidā'ī represent an evolutionary phase in the development of Palestinian Arab personality since 1948, from a helpless downtrodden refugee, to a lost man whose nostalgia for his homeland flares up more and more through the years, then to a restless exile, and finally to a rebellious character.

A poem entitled رجال على الطريق (Men on the Road)¹ by an Egyptian poet, Badr Tawfīq, may be regarded as a good example of this. The poem consists of the portrayals of seven men. By doing this, the poet aims at portraying his model, the Fidā'ī, in several poses, which reflect those evolutionary phases in his life after 1948.

The first man, who represents the Palestinian Arab refugee following his expulsion from the country, is portrayed as helpless, overwhelmed by feelings of shame and regret:

كان على مشارف المدينة
يحمل لومه ويحمل الندم
مطاردا من خارجه
مطاردا من داخله

He was standing on the hills overlooking
the city
carrying with him his self-blame and regret.

¹ Ibid., no.10, October 1968, p.33 and no.1, January 1969, p.45.

He was on the run from both
himself and others.

In the second part, which portrays the second man, the Palestinian is still lost, sad and lonely in his exile. What is important in this portrayal is the fact that Arabs from other Arab countries began to see their own faces or features reflected in the picture of the Palestinian. In other words, the poet is unifying the two by giving them similar features. The message in this part is clear: both the Palestinian and the individual Arab share the feeling that their lives, as they are now, are forged:

سألت عن بطاقته
أجابني .. مزورة
ألست أنت ؟
أليست الصورة صورتك
ساعتها ألح أن أنظر في المرأة
رأيت وجهي ملصقا على بطاقته

I asked him about his identity.
- Forged like yours,
isn't my picture yours also? he answered.
Then he insisted I should look in the mirror,
and there I saw my picture on his identity card.

In the third portrayal the man is pictured veiled. But now he is "holding a gun, silent, disliking arguments" and "waiting in ambush for the enemy". He is involved in the Resistance Movement, but secretly. This refers to the few years preceding the June War of 1967, in which Fidā'iyyīn activities were somehow secret. This explains why the figure is portrayed as veiled in this part.

The fourth picture represents the man (i.e. the Fidā'ī)

in the period following the June defeat when Fidā'īyyīn activities came out into the open. The main features of the picture are these:

كان أليف الوجه والمشية والسلام
مغترب الباطن ، منك القوى
مقيد اليدين .. مطلق الزمام
يشدّ قامته ...
حتى يراه الناس ، معتد الخطى
مجردًا من اللثام .

His face, his way of walking and
his way of greeting show friendliness.
His inner being complains of alienation
and his body suffers from exhaustion.
He is defiant even with his hands tied.
He raises his body so as to be seen by
all others,
and walks in confidence, unveiled.

The fifth and sixth part of the poem present a more developed picture of the Fidā'ī. Nevertheless, he is beleaguered and chased by the Arab regimes, who see in him a serious threat to their existence. His voice comes through the air leading the masses in the right way:

وكنْتُ تائها .. ظللتُ تائها
حتى أتاني صوتك الخفيض في عرض السماء
" من هنا هنا الطريق
نحو جنوب الشرق "

I was lost ... remained lost,
until your subdued voice crossed the sky
and reached me:
"From here lies the way
to the South-East".

In the last portrayal, the Fidā'ī is killed, leaving an everlasting picture of himself in the consciousness of the

Arab masses, even in the farthest villages. The poet is one of these Arabs, and he reveals:

جاء يزورني
في منزلي الآمن .. في إحدى قرى مصر
كان حزينا مرهقا
وكان شابا يافعا .. لكنه
يبدو كشيوخ في الثمانين

He called on me
in my peaceful home in an Egyptian village.
He was sad and tired
and looked like an old man in his eighties
although he was still in the age of youthfulness.

Among Palestinian poets, the idea that the *Fidā'ī* represented a developed version of the Palestinian Arab personality after 1948, forms the main pattern in many poems. To give an example, we may quote a poem by *Samīḥ al-Qāsim* (1939-) published in his collection *الموت الكبير* (*The Great Death*)¹.

In the poem, *Samīḥ al-Qāsim* refers to the Palestinian Arab before his evolution into a rebel by the phrase "the mysterious man", who lives an unworthy life and finds all doors shut before him. The picture which the poet draws of him at that stage is expressed in the following lines:

في آخر الطريق كان واقفا
كشبح الفزاعة المنصوب في الكروم
في آخر الطريق
وفوق منكبيه معطف عتيق
" الرجل الغامض " كان اسمه ،

¹ Published in *Beirut* in 1972.

وكانت المنازل البيضاء
تغلق دون وجهه أبوابها
وشجرات الياسمين وحدها
كانت تحب وجهه المصقول بالحب والبغضاء
" الرجل الغامض " كان اسمه

At the end of the road
he used to stand
like a scarecrow put up in the vineyards,
at the end of the road,
with an old coat on his shoulders.
His name was "the mysterious man".
The lifeless / lit. white /
houses used to shut their doors in his face.
Only the jasmine trees
loved his face, polished with love and hate.
His name was "the mysterious man".

When the transformation moment came, his whole character changes:

وصار يا ما صار في يوم من الأيام
أن سار للأمام ،
وجلجلت صرخته في ساحة المنازل البيضاء
وازدحم الشيخ والأطفال والرجال والنساء
في ساحة المنازل البيضاء
وهالهم أن أبصروه يضم النيران
في المعطف العتيق 1 .

Then one day, it happened that
he started walking.
His cry reverberated in the yards of the
lifeless houses.
So all men and women, young and old,
crowded into the yards of the lifeless houses.
Seeing him setting fire to the old coat
they were all alarmed.

CHAPTER VI

New Poetic Tools

It is generally acknowledged by almost all contemporary Arab critics and writers that the use of myths and symbols in a dramatic sense in poetry is the chief influence from English literature on contemporary Arabic poetry. Nevertheless, it may seem strange that, while political differences between the Arabs and the West deepened with the end of World War II and the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, Arabic literature was subject to increasing influence from the West, and in particular from Anglo-Saxon writers.

Foremost among these was T.S. Eliot, whose influence was "eruptive and insistent".¹ Explaining why this poet more than anyone else had such enormous influence, Jabrā Ibrāhīm Jabrā, a Palestinian Arab poet, novelist, short story writer and literary critic, says:

This was so because it happened that the people who read him most and translated him and commented on his work were themselves the leading young writers and poets of the new generation, ... (such as) Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb, Yūsuf al-Khāl, 'Alī Aḥmad Sa'īd (Adūnīs), Tawfīq Ṣayigh, Buland al-Ḥaydarī, Luwīs 'Awad, Salāh 'Abd al-Ṣabūr and the writer himself [J.I. Jabrā].²

However, when discussing the influence of T.S. Eliot

¹ "Modern Arabic Literature and the West", Journal of Arabic Literature, vol.III, 1971, p.81.

² Ibid.

on prominent Arab poets of the "Free Verse Movement" which appeared in the late forties, critics usually refer especially to "The Waste Land". In an attempt to explain why Arab poets responded so passionately to this poem, another writer and poetess, Salmā Khadrā al-Jayyūsī, writes:

Arab poets found in Eliot's implicit use of the fertility myth [in The Waste Land] an expression of ultimate love and an emphasis on the potential of self-sacrifice. It was the idea of the cycle of sacrificial death that leads to rebirth which attracted them most.

... From the midfifties to the early sixties Arab poets repeatedly drew the analogy between the aridity of the Arab life after the 1948 disaster in Palestine and the aridity of the land in the fertility myth, 1 saved from complete waste only by death and the spilling of blood, analogous to the falling of rain over a parched land.²

Jayyūsī's opinion is repeated by many Arab writers, all of whom acknowledge a great deal of influence from English poetry in general, and from that of Eliot and certain other writers in particular, on the Arab poets of the new verse movement.³

In this chapter, however, only that poetry dealing with the subject of Palestine or influenced by the Arab-Israeli

¹ We do not share to the full Jayyūsī's judgement that the theme mentioned flourished only in poems written during the midfifties and early sixties. In fact this theme in particular continued to flourish and remain dominant throughout the sixties and seventies.

² Trends and Movements in Modern Arabic Poetry, vol.2, p.724.

³ See for example, M.M. Badawi, A Critical Introduction to Modern Arabic Poetry, p.224.

confrontation, which at the same time employs such new poetic tools (i.e. symbols, myths, etc.), will be discussed.

Symbols.

In literary usage the term "symbol", as explained in the Princeton Encyclopaedia of Poetry and Poetics, refers "most specifically to a manner of representation in which what is shown ... means by virtue of association, something more or something else".¹ In other words, a symbol is the deliberate use of a word or a phrase to signify something else, by implication or reference rather than by analogy.

By the use of symbolism an idea which would appear flat or "unmoving" when expressed by itself, may be made a vivid and emotionally effective one. Moreover, the symbol can play different roles in the poem. The above-mentioned encyclopaedia sums up such roles thus:

A symbol is a device of the poetic art when *it* refers to something in the poem as standing for something else in the poem; it is a power of poetic language when it refers to the way words and rhythms can evoke mystery; it is a function of the whole poem when it refers to the kinds of meaning a literary work can stand for; it is a form of therapeutic disguise when it refers to the way in which a poem stands for the working out of the author's inner disturbances; and it is an index of cultural values when it refers to the way in which man's products reveal his attitudes.²

The use of symbols in modern Arabic poetry is a vast

¹ P. 833.

² P. 835.

subject, since this poetry is full of symbolic terms , whether mythical or not. But it should be noted that modern Arab poets do not regard themselves as followers of the Symbolist school. They "employ symbols just as they employ several other forms of obliquity".¹

Tracing the symbols which have been used by Arab poets when writing about Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict is not always an easy task since symbolism is used subtly in some poems and in such a way that a student could be misled when there is no mention of Palestine or the conflicting parties, nor any other direct references to or indications of this subject.

A poem entitled هجم التار (The Tartars have struck) (1954)² by the Egyptian poet Ṣalāḥ 'Abd al-Ṣabūr represents a good example of such difficulty.

The Tartars in the poem, we believe, are used as symbols of the Israelis. This symbol, however, is ambiguous, since for many it stands for the Triangular attack on Egypt in 1956. But since the poem was written in 1954,³ such an interpretation is totally wrong.

Awareness of the following considerations strengthens the suggestion that the theme of the poem focusses on an Israeli attack on an Arab village on the West-Bank which took place late in 1953:

¹ Salma Khadra Jayyusi, Trends and Movements..., vol.2, p.712.

² Dīwān Ṣalāḥ 'Abd al-Ṣabūr, vol.I, pp.14-17.

³ The poem was published first in al-Ādāb, no.2, February 1954, p.27.

1- On 11-15 October of that year Israel launched an attack on Qibya in which 75 people were killed and the village was demolished.¹ The attack aroused enormous anger among the Arabs. In al-Ādāb itself, where 'Abd al-Ṣabūr's poem was published a few months later, several poems inspired by this attack appeared, such as قبية الشهيدة (Qibya the Martyred)² by 'Alī al-Hillī, على الحدود (On Borders)³ by Muḥammad Jamīl Shalash, both from Iraq; آه لو تنفع آه (O, if O could help!)⁴ by Muḥammad Majdhūb from Syria and نغم جديد (A New Tune)⁵ by a Palestinian poet, Samīr Ṣunbur.

2- There are several indications in the poem that the above-mentioned attack was fully present in the poet's mind serving as an incentive for 'Abd al-Ṣabūr in the creation of this poem.

"The Tartars have struck" starts by describing the havoc caused by the triumphant enemy, and the feelings of shame and humiliation among the defeated, to whom the poet belongs:

هجم التّار
ورموا مدينتنا العريقة بالدمار .
رجعت كتائبنا ممزّقة . . وقد حمى النهار
الراية السوداء والجرحى وقافلة موات
والطلبة الجوّاء والخطو الذليل بلا التفات

¹ Sami Hadawi, Palestine in Focus, p.91.

² Al-Ādāb, no.1, January 1954, p.24.

³ Ibid., no.3, March 1954, p.63.

⁴ Ibid., p.48.

⁵ Ibid., p.46.

The Tartars have struck
 bringing our ancient city into destruction.
 Our battalions returned in shreds .. in
 the heat of the day.
 The black flag, the wounded, the caravan
 of death, the hollow drum and the humiliated
 march with no backward glance.

The village was left in ruins, and the Tartar soldiers
 were intoxicated by their victory:

ومزاج مخمورين من جند التتار
 يتلّمظون الانتصار
 ونهاية السفر السعيد .

And the jokes of the drunken Tartar soldiers
 gloating over the victory
 and the end of a happy trip.

While the elderly people of the village took refuge in
 caves in the surrounding mountains suffering cold and star-
 vation, this image was often used when speaking about the
 Palestinian Arab refugees especially in the fifties, as we
 pointed out when we discussed the Refugee theme in the
 previous chapter. Such an image occurs in 'Abd al-Ṣabūr's
 poem:

أمي .. وأنت بسفح هذا التلّ بين الهارين
 والليل يعقد للصغار الرعب من تحت الجفون
 والجوع والشوب الشفيف
 والصمّ والسحالة والظلماء تقعي في الكهوف .
 أترى بكيت لأنّ قربتنا حطام ؟

Mother! When you were at the foot of that
 little mountain among those who had fled,
 when night summoned terror to the children
 from under their eyelids,
 and hunger and flimsy clothes,
 the deaf, the demons and darkness,

all squatted in the caves,
did you cry seeing our village reduced
to rubble?

The poem also ends as most of the poems treating the conflict end, i.e. with optimism and determination on revenge:

أمّاه .. إنّنا لن نبيد .
...
وأنا وكلّ رفاقنا يا أمّ حين ذوى النهار
بالحقّ أقسمنا سنهتف فى الضحى
بدم التتار .
أمّاه قولي للصغار :
أيا صغار
سنجوس بين بيوتنا الدكناء إنّ طلع النهار
ونشيد ما هدم التتار .

Mother! We shall not perish.

....
I and all our comrades swore in hatred,
that in the forenoon we would spill
the Tartars' blood.
Mother! Tell the children that
at the break-of day we shall peer round
our dark houses, and rebuild what the
Tartars* have destroyed.

Thus, in such poems as "The Tartars have struck", consideration for other subsidiary facts or elements concerning the poem, e.g. its dating, or its phraseology and imagery, may help determine whether the poem is dealing with the subject of Palestine or not, and clarify its symbolism if there is any.

* It may be worth mentioning that the same term, the "Tartars", is used by the Iraqi poet Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb in his poem مدينة السندباد (The City of Sindbad) in which the "Tartars" symbolize the Iraqi communists during the bloody events in Iraq in 1959.

The symbols in the poems inspired by the conflict over Palestine can be classified into three main groups:

- a- Those standing for Palestine as a usurped Arab country.
- b- Those representing the Palestinian Arabs as an expelled people.
- c- Those standing for the Israelis as usurpers and as a force of racist oppression.

In poems treating or referring to Palestine symbolically, it is easy to see that the dominant symbol is that of the beloved whom the lover cannot reach and is thus unable to slake his thirst for love. This, however, is not confined to poems written by Palestinians, but is found frequently in poems written by other Arab poets. In Palestinian poetry, however, the symbol is more developed and fused with the image of the mother,¹ as will be explained shortly.

The following three poems by three poets from different Arab countries have more than one characteristic in common, and can help clarify this point. The poems are:

حبيتي والصمت، نصف برتقالة (My Silent Beloved, Half of an Orange)² by a Syrian poet, Nabīh Sha‘‘ār, توقعات حول مستقبل المدن المهزومة (Speculations about the Future of the Defeated Cities)³, by Ḥamīd Sa‘īd from Iraq, أغنية لقريتي السليمة

¹ There are some poems by non-Palestinian Arab poets in which Palestine is symbolized as the mother, as in, e.g. وحدي مع المنفى by an Iraqi poet Ṣālih Jawād al-Tu‘ama [see al-Ādāb, no.2, February 1954, p.38. 7, but such poems remain few and exceptional.

² Al-Ādāb, no.8, August 1968, p.33.

³ Dīwān Qirā‘a Thāmina, pp.7-49.

(A Song for my Usurped Village)¹ by 'Abd al-Rahmān Ghunaym from Egypt.

Palestine in these poems is the "beloved", but she is taken captive (سبيّة) by the "Jewish king". The lover, therefore, is overflowing with love, and is determined to remain faithful to her.

In Sha'ār's poem the lover has not seen his beloved for twenty years (symbolizing the years since the disaster in 1948). Through all those years he has been looking for her everywhere. He is told finally that his beloved has been spotted roaming the deserts, dishevelled and bewildered, trying to conceal her shame for being forced to sleep with Jews coming from all over the world.

(قالوا رأوك عارسة
شعثاء تضرين في القفار
.. تلتف فوق ناهديك بردة الجريمة
وتتقين خنجر السموم بالهزيمة ،
وتسترين عريك العظيم بالسكوت ،
يا واجة المشرقين والمغربين يا حبييتي
يا أنت يا سبيّة الجبين)

Similarly, Hamīd Sa'īd sees his captured beloved in the following situation:

ملك يهودي يقضي ليلة معها
وقد لقحت
فأولدها دما مرّا
ومات صبيّها العربي مقتولا .

A Jewish king is spending his nights with her while she was pregnant.

¹ Al-Ādāb, no.3, March 1965, p.49.

And he killed the Arab baby in her
by causing her to miscarry.

'Abd al-Rahmān Ghunaym, for his part, assures his beloved that no woman, however beautiful she may be, can arouse the desire for sex in him, because all such desire, he says, is saved for the moment of his reunion with his beloved:

(كلّ الحسان ها هنا
لن يستطعن أن يشرن شهوتي
لأنني اختزنتها
ليومي الذي أعطيك فيه قوتي)

He also, like the other two poets mentioned above, suffers much pain on seeing his beloved sleeping forcibly with her captor:

(وأنت في البعيد
في أحضان معتد غريب
سباك ذات ليلة
قبلاته خناجر على شفاhek التي
تورمت . .)

In poetry written by Palestinians, the "beloved", symbolizing the lost Palestine, figures more frequently. This is natural, since it is the Palestinians who are deprived of the country they believe is their own.

We may take as an example of this Abū Salmā's poems written after 1948, in which this symbol is a major thematic element. For this poet the favourite word for the beloved is السَّـمْرَاءُ (The Brown-skinned Girl). This word is repeated in many poems; such as, لولاك يا سمرَاءُ (If it weren't

for You, Brown-skinned Girl),¹ هي والشاعر (She and the Poet)², هوى الاسم (Love of the Brown-skinned Girl),³ and others.

In "Love of the Brown-skinned Girl", we find another name used to denote the poet's beloved, namely ثريّا (Thurayyā)*, a common woman's name in Arabic. The poem appears to be a love song directed to a real woman, especially when we find the poet describing some of the physical distinguishing marks of his beloved, such as the dimple in her cheek.

Addressing his Thurayyā and expressing his adoration for her, he promises her that he will remain a faithful lover, saying:

ثريّا هل بقايا الشوق في عينيك أم أكثر
على شفّتك أشعاري فما أحلى وما أنضـر
على الغمّاة الحلو أسرار الهوى تنشـر
...

حشدت الحبّ في شعري وعينك لم تزل أشعر
سينس القلب كلّ هوى ولا ينسى هوى الأسمر

Thurayyā ! Is that the remnants of your yearning in your eyes, or is it something more?

My verses about you become fascinating when repeated by your lips.

The charming dimple (in you cheek) reveals all secrets of our love.

It is only your love that overflows in my poems, yet your eyes remain far more poetic.

In my heart no love would last but that of the brown-skinned girl.

¹ Dīwān Abī Salmā, p.176.

² Ibid., p.178.

³ Ibid., p.195.

* The Arabic name for the Pleiades.

In the poetry of the younger Palestinian generation, such as Maḥmūd Darwīsh, Samīḥ al-Qāsim, Hikmat al-‘Attīlī, Amīn Shunnār, ‘Izz al-Dīn al-Manāṣira and others, the symbol of the beloved (Palestine) has developed still more and become fused with that of the mother and that of the land in such a way that the three become one.

The poetry of Maḥmūd Darwīsh is the best example of this, since such unity is reflected in most of his poetry collections, without losing its originality or uniqueness, and "reflects his inmost feelings", as Iḥsān ‘Abbās points out.¹

Maḥmūd Darwīsh also, as in the case of Abū Salmā, sometimes uses real names for the woman whom he loves, but this practice should not mislead the reader. The beloved, whatever her name is, remains the same, i.e. the land or the mother, as he himself makes clear in مذكرات جرح فلسطيني (Memoirs of a Palestinian Wound)² by saying:

وطني ليس حقيبة
وأنا لست مسافر
إنني العاشق والأرض حبيبة *

My homeland is not a travelling bag,
nor am I a passing traveller.
It's I who am the lover and the land
is my beloved.

Darwīsh's love affair with his beloved-motherland

¹ Ittijāhāt al-Shi‘r al-‘Arabī al-Mu‘āṣir, p.194.

² Dīwān Maḥmūd Darwīsh, vol.1, pp.553-555.

sometimes "takes on a mystical quality",¹ expressed vividly in the seventeen "Psalms", published in his Dīwān أحبك ، أو لا أحبك (I love you, I love you not), and sometimes the affair seems a hopeless one, when he feels that his beloved, although before his eyes, is intangible and unattainable. This makes him desire to see the affair resolved, however painful it may be for him. In "Psalm 8"² he addresses her saying:

لماذا لا تعلنين براءتك مني
لأكفّ عن الموت
...
قبولي مرة واحدة
انتهى حبنا
لكي أصبح قادرا على الموت والرحيل
...
موتي لأرثيك
أو كوني زوجتي لأعرف الخيانة
مرة واحدة .

Why don't you wash your hands of me
so that I may stop dying again and again?

...
Tell me just the once
our love is over,
so I may be capable of dying and departure.

...
Die, so that I may mourn you,
or be my wife so that I may know
what betrayal looks like,
just the once.

Nevertheless, whatever Darwish suffers because of

¹ Denys Johnson-Davies, The Music of Human Flesh (Maḥmūd Darwish), p.XV.

² Dīwān Maḥmūd Darwish, vol.2, pp.43-44.

this love affair he accepts as his destiny, and so his love remains vigorous. Another noted element in Darwish's poetry about his beloved is that her picture never vanishes from his sight. She lives in his inmost feelings, and appears to him wherever he goes and in whatever he sees.

His poem عاشق من فلسطين (A Lover from Palestine)¹, although it is not the only poem which expresses the way in which this beloved (symbolizing Palestine) is treated by the poet, is nevertheless a good example. In order to give a clear idea of what we have pointed out it is necessary to quote in full the following lines:

عيونك شوكة في القلب
توجعني وأعبدها ،
وأحميها من الريح ،
وأغمدتها وراء الليل والأوجاع .. أغمدتها
فيشعل جرحها ضوء المصابيح
ويجعل حاضري غدها
أعز علي من روعي .

...
رأيتك أمس في الميناء
مسافرة بلا أهل .. بلا زاد
ركضت اليك كالأيتام ..
أسأل حكمة الأجداد :
" لماذا تسحب البيارة الخضراء
الى سجن ، الى منفى ، الى ميناء
وتبقى رغم رحلتها
ورغم روائح الأملاح والأشواق
تبقى دائما خضراء ؟ "

...
رأيتك في جبال الشوك
راعية بلا أغنام

¹ Ibid., vol.1, pp.131-142.

مطاردة ، وفي الأطلال
وكنت حديقتي ، وأنا غريب الدار
...

رأيتك في شعاع الدمع والجرح
وأنت الرئة الأخرى بصدري ..
أنت أنت الصسوت في شفتي
وأنت الماء ، أنت النار .
...

رأيتك عند باب الكهف .. عند الغار
معلقة على جبل الغسيل ثياب أيتامك .
رأيتك في أغاني اليتيم والبؤس
رأيتك ملء طح البحر والرمل
وكنت جميلة كالأرض ، كالأطفال .. كالفل
وأقسم :

من زموش العين سوف أخيط منديلا
وأنتش فوقه شعرا لعينيك .
واسما حين أسقيه فؤادا ذاب ترتيلا ..
يمد عرائش الأيك
سأكتب جملة أغلى من الشهداء والقبل :
" فلسطينية كانت .. ولم تنزل "

Your eyes are a thorn in my heart;
It stings me, yet I adore it
and protect it from the wind.
I thrust it deeper and deeper (into my flesh)
beyond darkness and pain,
so that its wound kindles the lights of lamps
and makes from my present days a future for her
(Such a future) is dearer to me than my soul.

...
Yesterday, I saw you at the harbour
travelling without relations or provisions.
I ran to you like an orphan,
asking the wisdom of our forefathers:
"How can the green fruit grove
after being dragged to a prison, to an
exile and to a harbour, remain green
in spite of its travels
and in spite of the scent of salt and
longing?"

....
I saw you on the mountains covered with
thorny plants
a shepherdess without sheep,
harried amidst the ruins.
You were a garden for me,

I, who have been turned into a stranger.

....

I saw you in rays of tears and wounds,
you, a lung in my chest,
you, the voice of my lips,
you, the water and the fire for me.

...

I saw you at the mouth of the cave,
hanging the rags of your orphans on a rope.
I saw you in the songs of orphanhood and
misery,

I saw you in every drop of the sea
and in every grain of sand,
beautiful as the earth,
beautiful as children
and as beautiful as jasmine.

Thus I swore (to you):

I will weave a veil from my eyelashes
and embroider it with verses for your eyes,
and with your name, which when it is watered
with a heart

would melt with chants (of praise),
and make trees green again.

I will write a few words

more precious than martyrs and kisses:

"Palestinian she was and still remains".

Symbols denoting the Palestinian Arab and his painful experience since 1948 vary from one poet to another. However, three of the most commonly occurring are; Sindbad, Ulysses and Christ.

In fact such symbols had become familiar to Arab poets from the fifties, not only when writing about the Palestine experience, but also when dealing with other themes.

When using these symbols in poems inspired by the new situation of the Palestinian Arabs resulting from their exodus in 1948, Arab poets have frequently drawn parallels between these Biblical and mythological characters and the Palestinian Arab. Taking Christ as an example, the common ground between Him and the Palestinian, according to the poets' vision, lies in the sufferings and pain both have

experienced. And as Christ was crucified, so is the Palestinian Arab, and thus Arab poets usually portray him.

Sindbad, a folk-tale hero in the "One Thousand and One Nights", is famous for his seven voyages, in which he encounters terrible dangers and misfortunes, but always succeeds in overcoming them by resourcefulness or by good luck. This character was seen by some poets as an appropriate symbol for the Palestinian Arab, who also encounters great misfortunes and who has been sailing in stormy seas. A poem entitled *قافلة في المأهنة* (A Caravan in the Labyrinth)¹ by a Palestinian living in Iraq, Khālīd 'Alī Mustafā, explores the common ground between the two, Sindbad and the Palestinian Arab; both lost their way in a stormy ocean:

(فنحن الآن في قعر المدى
 كالسندباد أضاعه البحر
 نرؤس في دروب الرحلة الجفأ أشواقا
 يهددها صدى مر)

In 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Bayātī's poem *العرب اللاجئون* (The Arab Refugees)(1961), mentioned before,² Sindbad (denoting the Palestinian refugee) is seen taking the form of a beggar knocking at Arab doors asking for alms:

(السندباد أنا
 كنوزي في قلوب صغاركم
 السندباد بزي شحاذ حزين)

¹ *Al-Ādāb*, no.12, December 1961, p.46.

² See above , p.224.

عار طعين ،
النمل يأكل لحمه ،
• وطيور جارحة السنين)

Ulysses or Odysseus, the husband of Penelope, one of the best known figures of Greek mythology, has been chosen by some Arab poets to symbolize the Palestinian Arab after 1948. Such poems adapt the myth of Penelope, who spent years waiting for her husband's return, putting off her acceptance of suitors until she had finished weaving a shroud for Odysseus' father, gaining time by unravelling at night what she had woven by day. The poets see Penelope as Palestine and sometimes as a Palestinian woman, who still awaits her husband's return.

In this regard, a poem entitled صخرة الانتظار (The Waiting Rock)(1953)¹ by Hārūn Hāshim Rashīd (Palestinian: 1930-) provides a good example.

Although the poem does not mention either Odysseus or Penelope directly, it adopts a pattern similar to Penelope's story concerning her long wait for her husband, while not giving up hope that he would return. The Palestinian refugee woman, whose husband went to fight for a cause he believes to be just, as Odysseus did, goes every day to a rock on the sea-shore to wait for his return. The days pass without sight of him. But, in spite of her daily frustration, she keeps going to the same place in the hope of seeing him coming back, while addressing the rock thus:

¹ Dīwān Hārūn Hāshim Rashīd, pp.24-26.

يا صخرة نحتتها معاول الأقدار
 قلبي سيرجع زوجي مكللا بالغار
 أبليه بدموعي ، ألفه بإزاري
 قلبي سيأتي ، سيأتي ،
 يا صخرة الانتظار .

O rock that was carved by divine foreordainment!
 Tell me my husband will return crowned
 with laurel.
 Then I shall soak him in tears and wrap him in
 my garment.
 Say it, O waiting rock!
 He will come back.
 He will come back.

In addition to the three prominent symbols mentioned above, (i.e. Sindbad, Ulysses and Christ), there are other terms used as symbols for the Palestinian Arab, whether on an individual or collective basis. It is impossible, however, to refer to all these terms, since to do them justice is not relevant to a general study. But it should be pointed out that in many cases terms used by non-Palestinian Arab poets to denote Arabs in general at the present time, may be used by Palestinian poets to denote only Palestinians.

Al-Ḥusayn, (The martyr of Karbalā')^{*}, for instance, a revered name among the Shi'ites, has become a frequent symbol for martyrdom and sacrifice in contemporary Arabic poetry. This symbol is used by Adūnīs, himself an 'Alawī, in الرأس والنهر (The Head and the River)¹, denoting Arabs in

¹ The poem is discussed at length in this chapter. See pp.323-329.

^{*} The second son of 'Alī b. Abī Tālib, killed by the Umayyads in 61 A.H. / 680 A.D. at the battle of Karbalā' .

general after the June defeat in 1967.¹ But, for Aḥmad Daḥbūr, who is a Palestinian, al-Ḥusayn stands only for the Palestinian Fidā'ī who was killed during the "Black September" events, the bloody clashes between the Jordanian army and the Palestinian Fidā'iyyīn in Amman in 1970, which led to the expulsion of the Fidā'iyyīn from Jordan. The latter poet says in a poem written during those events:

ودخلت في موتي وحيدا أستحيل
 وطننا فمذبحة فخرية
 وأتيت تسبقني يداي ،
 يا كربلاء تفور في النار
 أذكر كيف تنقلب الوجوه .

I went to my death lonely,
 transforming my body into a home,
 a massacre and exile,
 and I came to you, O Karbalā', flaring up
 (with rage) and in great haste. Yet I still
 remember how faces turned away from me.

Symbolic terms denoting the Israelis are many; for example, التينّين or الوحش (the Tartars)³, الذئب (the Monster)⁴, اللص (The Thief)⁶ and الذئب (the Wolf)⁵. All such terms, as is clear, indicate evil,

¹ Rītā 'Awad, Uṣṭūrat al-Mawt wal-Inbi'āth fil-Shi'r al-'Arabī al-Mu'āṣir, p.142.

² Dīwān Ṭā'ir al-Wiḥdāt, p.37.

³ See above, p. 286.

⁴ إيقاع الأجراس الصديقة by Badr Tawfīq, al-Ādāb, no.3, March 1965, pp.58-59.

⁵ ديرياسين by Nazīr al-'Aẓma, al-Ādāb, no.6, June 1955, p.16.

⁶ نشيد العودة by Sulaymān al-'Īsā, al-A'māl al-Shi'riyya al-Kāmila, vol.2, p.32.

danger, aggressiveness, and love of devastation and destruction.

Yet, Samīh al-Qāsim, a well-known Israeli-Arab poet, one of that group who became known as the "Palestinian Resistance Poets", has written a verse play entitled Qaraqāsh,¹ by which name he symbolizes the ruling body in the State of Israel.

In the following pages the play will be discussed at length, but, before doing so, some explanation should be offered of a historical character known as Qaraqūsh, on whom the play is based.

Historically Qaraqūsh was an extremely influential Amīr who served Saladin (1169-1193) and his son al-Malik al-ʿĀdil (1193-1198) very well. His full name, as given in Ibn Khallikān's Wafayāt al-Aʿyān, is Abū Saʿīd Qaraqūsh b. ʿAbdullāh al-Asadī, called Bahā' al-Dīn (d. 597 A.H./1200 A.D.)². He was also appointed regent to al-Malik al-Manṣūr when the latter succeeded to the sultanate in 1198.³

Qaraqūsh, Saladin's right-hand man,⁴ was once captured by the Crusaders when they had retaken Acre, but was released after paying a ransom of ten thousand dinars

¹ Published by Dār al-ʿAwda, Beirut, 1970.

² Vol.4, p.91.

³ Richard Stefan Cooper, Ibn Mammātī's Rules for the Ministries: Translation with Commentary of the Qawāwīn al-Dawāwīn, p.11.

⁴ Stanley Lane-Poole, Saladin and the Fall of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, p.108.

according to Ibn Khallikān.¹

What can be gathered from Qaraqūsh's biography is that he was a great warrior and a man whose ability was highly praised by contemporary historians.²

Curiously enough, his image, instead of being associated with acts of fidelity and hardihood, has become in Arab folk-tales that of a stupid unjust judge who looked and acted like a perfect fool.

This change in Qaraqūsh's image may be attributed to a book written by one of his rivals, al-As'ad b. Mammātī, entitled *الفاشوش في أحكام قراقوش* (The Nonsensical Judgements of Qaraqūsh).

Ibn Mammātī was himself an extremely influential figure during that period. During the reigns of Saladin and his son al-Malik al-'Azīz, Ibn Mammātī was entrusted with the *Dīwān al-Māl* in addition to the *Dīwān al-Jaysh*. His influence and power reached its peak when he was also appointed as the *Nāẓir al-Dawāwīn*, a sort of inspectōr-general entrusted with the final review of the actions of all ministers.³

When Qaraqūsh was appointed regent to al-Malik al-Manṣūr, as mentioned earlier, Ibn Mammātī was in a strong position to challenge his appointment.⁴

Besides, a great part of Ibn Mammātī's fame rests on his being a poet and a man of letters. His biography, as

¹ *Wafayāt al-A'yān*, vol.4, p.92.

² Richard Stefan Cooper, op. cit., p.11.

³ Ibid., p.10.

⁴ Ibid., p.11.

given in Mu'jam al-Buldān by Yāqūt al-Rūmī, includes 23 books on various subjects.¹

However, though Ibn Khallikān admits that people attributed strange regulations and orders to Qaraqūsh during his days of power, he holds it to be unlikely that such things were true, saying:

"والناس ينسبون اليه أحكاما عجيبة في ولايته . . . والظاهر أنها موضوعة " 2 .

Nevertheless, it is possible that Ibn Mammātī's book "The Nonsensical Judgements of Qaraqūsh" helped to transform the real historic image of Qaraqūsh into a completely different one.

Over the years, various folk-tales have enhanced the humorous qualities and characteristics of Qaraqūsh. Helen Mitchnik, for instance, includes in her book Egyptian and Sudanese Folk-tales³ one of those tales heard while staying in Egypt and the Sudan. This story provides a clear reflection of the image Qaraqūsh had acquired in Arab folklore.⁴

It is even believed by some scholars like J.M. Landau that the name Karagöz, by which the Turkish shadow plays are known, "is derived from the Egyptian Wazīr Qaraqūsh". Landau adds that "until this very day we have a Qaraqūsh-inspired type which, in its essence is a constant source of irony. This is the personification of stupidity, innate foolishness and lack of manners, though not devoid of

¹ Vol.2, p.251.

² Wafayāt al-A'yān, vol.4, p.92.

³ Oxford University Press, 1978.

⁴ The tale is quoted in full in appendix IV.

courage".¹

In most Arab countries, too, the popular proverb **حكم قراقوش** (usually used to protest against a cruel judgement or to condemn unjust laws) is still found.²

Returning to Samīh al-Qāsim's play, we find that the dramatic portrayal of Qaraqāsh has the same qualities and characteristics as his popular representation; both behave foolishly and both pass sentences that lack any sort of logic or justice. Thus it seems that al-Qāsim patterned his Qaraqāsh on the popular Qaraqūsh image, in spite of the slight difference in the pronunciation of the two words.*

Yet we should note that Qaraqāsh in the play, besides being pictured as a foolish ruler whose capability for foreseeing the future is very limited, is a cruel and wicked man who loves bloodshed, as much as any warmonger does. This is stressed strongly in the play, as the following

¹ J.M. Landau, Shadow Plays in the Near East, p.162.

² Hānī al-'Amad, al-Amthāl al-Sha'biyya al-Urdunīyya, p.207.

* There could be two possible reasons for the unusual usage of the name of Qaraqāsh by the poet instead of the universally accepted Qaraqūsh:

a) It is possible that he used Qaraqāsh as a way of avoiding censorship, because the name Qaraqūsh could be used to refer to the Israeli authorities straightforwardly; thus he wanted the name to sound different from the apparently obvious name of Qaraqūsh.

b) It is possible that Qaraqūsh is pronounced in certain Palestinian dialects as Qaraqāsh, although we have been unable to find any evidence to support this possibility.

analysis points up.

The play consists of four scenes. Its characters are: Qaraqāsh, peasants, nobles, soldiers (of Qaraqāsh's army), a rebellious peasant, a thief, a woman, a young girl, a young prince (Qaraqāsh's son), an officer, a doorman, a minister, a wife and her husband, a soldier with one hand cut off, a group of men dressed as ancient Greeks, another group dressed as ancient Egyptians, a third group dressed in modern European clothes carrying Hitler's picture, and a chorus.

By gathering together such an assembly of characters, it is obvious that the writer is trying to represent different categories and classes in society. His aim in presenting groups from ancient nations together with a group belonging to modern history, is explained by the chorus, who, when the curtain rises on the first scene, start singing:

في كلّ زمان
في كلّ مكان
يأتي في صورة انسان
يأتي فيجي الموت
ويظلّ يدوي الصوت
في كلّ زمان عاش
في كلّ مكان عاش
قرقاش ... 1

Any time,
anywhere,
he comes in human shape,
bringing death with him.
Again and again the sound sings out:
he has lived in all ages,
he has lived everywhere,
he, Qaraqāsh.

¹ p.9.

In this scene, a long dialogue between Qaraqāsh and the peasants reveals that the country is suffering from drought. The peasants express serious fears that the country is on the fringe of a disastrous famine. But Qaraqāsh reassures them that he, with all the power he possesses, is able to lift the country above such a danger. He has both the will and the means to succeed, he tells them.

At this point, the dialogue reflects differences of opinion between Qaraqāsh and some of the peasants on how the country can overcome its crucial economic difficulties:

قرقاش: أسألكم أنتم
والجمهور الجالس في هذي الصالة
ماذا نفعل ان جفت بئر أنهلكها الصيف؟
فلاح: نضرب في أعماق الأرض
بحثا عن بئر أخرى .
ويرد عليه قرقاش بغضب:
ولماذا لا نضرب في أبعاد الأرض
بحثا عن بئر أخرى ؟¹

Qaraqāsh: I ask you,
I ask also the audience in this hall.
What should we do if a water-well is
dried up in the heat of the summer?

A peasant: We should dig into the depths of the
land to find another well.

Qaraqāsh (angrily): Why don't we travel to distant
lands instead and find another well.

This illustrates the point that Qaraqāsh's policy is based, in essence, on expansion rather than on the utilization or exploitation of new resources in the land already

¹ Pp. 22-23.

possessed. It is likely that here the writer is attributing the June War in 1967 merely to economic factors on the Israeli side.

The differences between Qaraqāsh and the peasant, who is described as rebellious, develop to their climax further. The peasant foresees the fatal consequences of Qaraqāsh's policy, and therefore addresses the other peasants, warning them of Qaraqāsh and his dangerous ways of handling their affairs, saying:

أنا أخاف فافهموا
خوفي والّا تندموا
هذا الذي طمأنكم
خندقه قبركم
يزعم أن ينقذكم
والموت فيما يزعم
فالخصب في زنودكم
وليس في هرائه
وقرقاش أيها الإخوان ليس منكم
فحاذروه وافهموا
صوتي والّا تندموا¹

I do feel fear,
but you ought to understand why I feel so,
otherwise you will regret it.
This man who set your minds at rest
is making your graves his ditch.
He claims that he will rescue you
but only your death lies in what he asserts.
Your welfare rests in your forearms
and not in his idle talk.
Qaraqāsh, O brothers! is a stranger,
beware of him, and listen to my voice,
otherwise you will have regrets.

This rebellious personality, and the views expressed,

¹ Pp. 26-27.

seem to represent the outlook of the communists in Israel, to whom the poet himself belongs.

However, the peasant's words are not powerful enough to stand up to the more convincing promises of Qaraqāsh, who presents his view and incites the peasants against their rebellious companion thus:

يا اخوتي ماذا ترانا نفعل
والأرض قفر ممحل؟
ماذا وعبر حدنا
حقل ونهر مهمل
وجارنا عدونا
حملنا ما نحمل
فامثلوا لرغبتني
وامشقوا سيوفكم
واعصموا بقدرتي ،
وطهروا صفوفكم من الجبان الخائن¹.

Brothers! What should we do
when the land is barren,
and there, across our border
flows a river in a neglected land.
Besides, it is our neighbour, our enemy
who burdened us with what we are suffering now.
So do what I say:
Unsheathe your swords
and rely on my power,
and cleanse your ranks of this treacherous coward.

Qaraqāsh's words produce a magical effect on the peasants. They immediately attack the rebellious man and kill him.

In the second scene, victory is already gained. The young prince (Qaraqāsh's son) falls in love with a peasant

¹ Pp.30-31.

girl. Knowing that his father would not bless such a relationship, he asks the minister to sound his father out about this affair. The minister dares not tell Qaraqāsh directly that his son is in love with a peasant girl, so he asks him what should be done if it should happen that a prince loved a woman from the common class. Qaraqāsh replies that both lovers should be killed. By this answer, he passed the death sentence on his own son.

What the poet aims at in this scene is obvious. Qaraqāsh, who represents the ruling body in the state, fears any real and sincere love between anyone who belongs to the ruling class and a person from the subject class. Qaraqāsh's ideology teaches that this would kill the warrior spirit among rulers, and end their desire for the expansion of their territories.

Again, the writer, as a Marxist, implies that communism, as a social system and an ideology, contradicts completely Qaraqāsh's policy and theories, and threatens the existence of the State (i.e. Israel) in its present form.

This explains why Qaraqāsh hates it. The following lines from Qaraqāsh shed light on this point:

" فالدول الراقية المدنية
تتغنى بالسيف الباتر
لا بهوان المنجل والمطرقة المشثومة ¹ .

Civilized and superior states
sing the praises of the sharp sword
and not the lowliness of the ominous
hammer and sickle.

¹ P.42.

In the third scene, the popular pattern of Qaraqāsh becomes more obvious. For instance, Qaraqāsh orders the hanging of one of the nobles close to him for no reason other than that he is tall enough to reach the noose of the hangman's rope, instead of a criminal sentenced to be hanged, but released because he was too short for his head to reach the noose.¹

In the last scene, a revolt against Qaraqāsh led by the peasants ends with the killing of the tyrant and the establishment of a new rule based on equality. Thus the play ends with the peasants rejoicing at their riddance of Qaraqāsh and shouting:

عاش الملك العادل
نحن الملك العادل
نحن الملك العادل .²

Long live the just king.
We are the just king.
We are the just king.

To conclude our analysis of this verse play, we may isolate the following points which seem to have been the poet's focus of attention, and hence seem echoed clearly throughout the play:

1- Qaraqāsh, being a tyrant and a warmonger, as well as a man who acts rather stupidly, represents a serious threat not only to his enemies but also to the safety and welfare of his own people. This is echoed in many places in the play,

¹ Pp.72-74.

² P. 87.

some of which have been pointed out in the course of the previous discussion, such as his slaughter of the prince and the peasant girl because of their sincere and warm love, and his hanging of one of the nobles. Furthermore, his personal egoism leads him to believe that he is quite capable not only of fighting "death" itself but also of defeating it.¹

2- The play introduces Marxism as a substitute for the social and political structure of the State (i.e. Israel) in its present form. According to the poet, present-day Israel, symbolized by Qaraqāsh, is merely a link in a long chain of tyrannical states that have appeared in history: in ancient Greece, in ancient Egypt, and in modern Nazism.

3- The writer distinguishes clearly between rulers and ruled in Qaraqāsh's state. Furthermore, he pins his hopes on the subject class and sees the peasants and other labourers, who are members of it, as forming society, which will demolish the structure of the State of Israel, and establish a new one in which all, Palestinian Jews and Arabs alike, can participate.

This view is very significant in itself, since the play is, as far as we know, the first poetical work written by an Arab which makes the hoped-for destruction of Israel come from within Israeli society itself.

In the numerous poetical works written since 1948, Arab poets generally have been pinning their hopes in this regard on the Arabs themselves.

¹ Pp.84-85.

Myths.

This part is, in fact, an extension to the preceding one, since poets, when they employ mythical, Biblical or Qur'ānic figures in their works, use them as symbols through which to approach their themes.

Generally speaking, the dramatic usage of mythical elements in contemporary Arabic poetry is described by certain Arab critics as "the most daring and revolutionary changes that have happened in the modern Arabic poem since the late forties".¹

A close study of the use of myths by modern Arab poets of the "Free Verse Movement" reveals that poets have three main foci of consciousness:

- 1- The anxiety and restlessness of the Arab individual, living as he does in an unsettled and confused society. The poet, therefore, gives expression to great need for exploring new experiences. In this regard symbols denoting travel and the facing of the unknown, such as Odysseus and Sindbad, are found appropriate to this theme, and are therefore used frequently.
- 2- The idea of the rebirth and resurrection of a new healthy Arab personality, able to stand up to the challenges facing it. Here symbols such as Adonis, Phoenix, Osiris, Lazarus, Christ, al-Husayn and many others are repeatedly used.
- 3- The sufferings of man in general and that of the modern Arab in particular, resulting from a perception of the

¹ Ihsān 'Abbās, Ittijāhāt al-Shi'r al-ʿArabī al-Muʿāṣir, p.166.

wide gap between what is hoped for and what is achieved already. To elucidate this idea symbolic personalities famous for experiencing suffering and pain, such as Christ, al-Husayn, Prometheus and Sisyphus, are seen to dominate in poetry.

These examples show that Arab poets turned to varied mythical and religious sources, whether they be Greek, Babylonian, Phoenician and Egyptian, or Christian and Islamic.

In poems dealing with our subject, a vast number of such symbols are used also. The Palestinian Arab, for instance, is described sometimes as Odysseus or Sindbad, sometimes as Christ or Osiris. Thus all countries, according to him, are seen as a "new Babylon".

In the following pages, however, three well-known long poems are discussed at some length. They can help to give a detailed conception of the employment of myth in poems inspired by the problem of Palestine. But before doing so, it may be significant to point out that certain Arab poets, when employing Hebrew characters in their poems, have deprived those characters of their original identity and turned them into Arab figures. Samson, for example, is a distinguished figure in the Bible and in Jewish folk-tales.¹ His fame derives from his praeternatural strength and his adventures against the Philistines, as well as from his relationship with Delilah, the Philistine woman who coaxed out of him the secret of his power.

¹ The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, vol.4, p.198.

This character is treated by a Syrian poet, 'Alī Kan'ān, as a Palestinian rather than a Jewish hero. In a poem bearing the name "Samson" شمشون written in 1964,¹ Samson is merely a Palestinian Fidā'ī, who, after years of silence, regains his strength and drags down the temple on the Israelis, thus restoring to Palestine its Arab character. The identity of Delilah is also changed. Instead of being a Philistine woman, she becomes Jewish. She has succeeded, but only for a while, in keeping Samson in chains, the poet says.

Another example of this transposition of symbolic characters can be seen in a prose poem entitled غادة يافا (The Young Woman of Jaffa) (1953)², also by a Syrian poet, Muḥammad al-Māghūt. The poem is based on the biblical character called Tamar, which means "date palm" in Hebrew. In fact there are three biblical figures of this name,* and

¹ Al-Ādāb, no.3, March 1964, p.17.

² Ibid., no.10, October 1953, p.11.

* The three figures as mentioned in The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible (vol.4, pp.515-516) are:

1) Judah's daughter-in-law, the wife of his firstborn son, Er. After Er's early death Tamar became the wife of his brother, Onan. Onan also died young, and Judah, fearing now that marriage to Tamar was unlucky, told her to go and live in her father's house until his third son, Shelah, grew to manhood, but did not give her to Shelah even when he had grown up. Tamar, out of impatience, offered herself, disguised as a prostitute, to Judah and bore his twins, Perez and Zerah (Gen. 38:6; Rt.4:12; 1 Ch.2:4; Mt. 1:3).

2) A daughter of David and Maachah, and full sister of Absalom. Her half-brother Amnon conceived a passion for her, and by a ruse got her to come to his room and forced her to lie with him. Then his love turned to loathing and

it is a matter of doubt which of these the poem refers to.

What is more significant than deciding which Tamar the poet had in mind is the fact that this character is deprived of her Jewish nationality in the poem, appearing instead as an Arab. Al-Māghūṭ's Tamar symbolizes the Palestinian refugee woman, whose beauty captivates whoever sees her. The poem takes on the form of a soliloquy by Tamar herself. Although she finds herself expelled from her home, and everything around her drives her to despair, she is full of determination not to surrender to such a feeling, or let herself wilt like a dead leaf:

لا ، لن أموت وأذوي كورقة الخننج اليابسة من ثورة الزواجع .
 لن أموت كبعوضة في حلق تمساح ،
 أنا (تاما) غادة يافا ،
 ابنة الصراع ، وفراشة الوادي ، ورمح الانتقام
 سأرفع من أشلاء روعي المعنى ، نجمة حمراء تمضغ السواد
 وتهشم المستحيل ،
 لتكون ضوئي وهدايتي في الدرب البعيد ، والليل الطويل .

No, I will not let blowing storms put me
 to death, or make me wither like a dead
 leaf of the heather.
 I will not die like a gnat in the throat
 of a crocodile.
 I am Tamar, a beautiful young woman of Jaffa,
 the daughter of struggle, the butterfly of the
 valley and the spear of revenge.
 From amidst the fragments of my distressed
 spirit I will raise a red star that will chew
 up the darkness and crush the impossible to
 be my guide and my light on this long road and
 through the endless night.

he drove her from his house. She was later avenged by
 Absalom who had Amnon murdered. (II S. 13:I)
 3) The daughter of Absalom, famed for her beauty. In some
 versions she was given in marriage to Rehoboam, the son of
 Solomon. (II S. 14:I)

It was argued in chapter IV¹ that the discussion of the Arab-Israeli conflict as represented in modern Arabic poetry should not be confined to works treating the subject specifically only. To quote Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Badawī in this regard, "there have been since the early sixties a number of serious works, much more subtle and profound than those insufficiently thought out, direct propaganda-like writings which were the immediate response to the Palestine war (1948)"².

Jabrā Ibrāhīm Jabrā, for his part, emphasizes this point in his book al-Rihla al-Thāmina³ by saying: ..

The poem may not deal with the problem of the refugees, or their return, or with heroism, or martyrdom, or with any other aspects of the tragedy, but in its atmosphere, dimensions and roots, it is (nevertheless) a concrete outcome of the tragedy and its psychological impact.⁴

In fact the following three poems, primarily chosen as representative examples of the use of myth in poetry influenced by the conflict, present at the same time good examples of the subtle and indirect approach to the subject of Palestine.

The first poem is entitled لعازر عام ١٩٦٢ (Lazarus in

¹ P. 197.

² M. M. Badawi, "Commitment in Contemporary Arabic Literature", Cahiers d'histoire mondiale, vol. XIV, 1972, p.874.

³ Published in Beirut in 1967.

⁴ P.103.

1962)¹ by Khalīl Ḥawī, a key figure in contemporary Arabic poetry, and one of the group of Arab poets called "The Tammuzian Poets".*

In spite of the fact that the poem does not refer to Palestine or the Jews or the conflict directly, (neither indeed, do the other two poems), it "symbolizes the tragedy of the Arab nation as a whole resulting from a disfigured rebirth after the Palestine tragedy in 1948", as one Arab critic puts it.²

The poem is based on the character of Lazarus, who was raised by Jesus from the dead after four days in the tomb, but acquires new dimensions in the poem. He symbolizes the contemporary Arab man who fails to change the dreadful predetermined facts he and his nation live with. He therefore surrenders himself completely to despair, and feels an overwhelming desire to depart from the world of the living. The poet makes Lazarus's desire for an everlasting death stronger than any other wish; thus, when Jesus

¹ Dīwān Khalīl Ḥawī, pp.313-361.

² Rītā 'Awad, Uṣṭūrat al-Mawt wal-Inbi'āth fil-Shi'r al-'Arabī al-Ḥadīth, p.121.

* The name was introduced first by Jabrā Ibrāhīm Jabrā, including the names of Khalīl Ḥawī, 'Alī Aḥmad Sa'īd (Adūnīs), Badr Shākīr al-Sayyāb, Yūsuf al-Khāl and Jabrā I. Jabrā himself. See: Jabrā I. Jabrā, al-Nār wal-Jawhar, p.40.

Tammuz, the god of fertility from whom the group takes its name, is a major symbolic figure originating a considerable number of works by the above-mentioned poets.

For further information about the "Tammuzian Poets" see: Nazeer Fowzi al-Azma, Free Verse in Modern Arabic Literature, pp.123-145.

raised him from the dead, the miracle could not bring real life to him, because even a miracle would fail to revivify a person who himself has no real desire for life. This, we may dare claim, expresses the idea that Arab civilization, as seen by the poet, still desires to remain dead rather than come back to life.

In the opening verses of the poem, Lazarus addresses the gravedigger, saying:

عمّق الحفرة يا حفّار
عمّقها لقاع لا قرار
يرتمي خلف مدار الشمس
ليلاً من رماد¹.

Gravedigger! Dig the grave deeper and deeper,
until its bottom reaches the abyss.
Let it be a night of ashes
lying beyond the range of the sun.

This indicates that Lazarus, by demanding that his grave should lie beyond the range of the sun, where no life can exist, is willing to accept eternal death from which there would be no rebirth. Thus when Lazarus meets his wife, she notes that he still belongs to the dead, although raised from the grave by a miracle.

Lazarus's wife in the poem represents both the motherland and the bride. She looks at her husband, filled with desire, expecting him to satisfy her longing for sexual union, but he stands coldly facing her burning thirst for love with complete coldness. He even tries to destroy her.

¹ Dīwān Khalīl Ḥawī, p.313.

So, instead of rain falling on the land, the symbol of their sexual intercourse, the sky sends down fire and sulphur.

Lazarus's wife describes those painful moments saying:

كنت استرحم عينيه
وفي عيني عار امرأة
أنت، تعرت لغيرك
ولماذا عاد من حفرة
ميتاً كئيب¹

I was entreating his eyes
with my looks reflecting the shame of a woman
groaning with desire, undressing herself
for a stranger.
Why did he come back from his grave
dispirited and dead!

Disappointed at not finding any response from Lazarus, her love for him changes to hatred, and she is overwhelmed by the desire to sleep with the Mongol warriors, the symbol of destruction and devastation:

(جاءت الأرض الى شلال أدغال
من الفرسان، فرسان المغول)²

Yet this experience does not satiate her need for love, for an act that would make her fertile, but creates contradicting feelings in her, so that she becomes divided the desire for life and the desire for death.

In her distraction she sees herself as Mary Magdalene, standing face to face with Jesus. She tries to seduce him

¹ Ibid., p.323.

² Ibid., p.335.

but he ignores her. Thus the female remains thirsty for love; in other words, the land remains arid.

At this point, Lazarus's wife breaks down completely, and, like her husband, she demands eternal death:

غيبيني وامسحي ظلي
وأثار نعالني
يا ليالي الثلج، فيضي يا ليالي
امسحي ظلي أنا الأتني
تشهت في السرير
خلف بعل لا يجير¹

Overflow, O nights of ice,
and take me away.
Eradicate my shadow and all my tracks, ...
I am the female who longed in bed for a husband
who has turned out to be lifeless.

The poem ends with Lazarus being buried in the grave he wanted beyond the range of the sun, with his wife transformed into a serpent.

It is obvious, then, that the poet, by ending his poem thus, has lost hope of seeing the land fertile again. Accordingly, he sees a dead Arab body lying in a deep grave without sign of rebirth.

To end our analysis of this poem, it should be pointed out that the overwhelming pessimism which the poem reflects came as a result of the frustrating events and setbacks which the Arabs have undergone since 1948. The effect of the breakdown of unity between Egypt and Syria in 1961 is believed to have been a major factor also, as Rītā 'Awad

¹ Ibid., p.352.

rightly points out.¹

The poet himself reveals in his introduction to the poem that he tried hard to make it bright and optimistic but failed. His exact words in the introduction, in which he addresses his dead hero, Lazarus, are more bitter than any comment can be:

"يوم تم تكوينك كنت لعيني وجعا ورعبا • حاولت أن أهدك وأبنيك ،
وكانت مرارات عانيت بها طويلا قبل أن أنتهي من رغبتني في أن تكون
أبهى طلعة وأصلب أيمانا وأجل مصيرا • وماذا؟ لأن كنت وجه
المناضل الذي انهار في الأمس، فأنت الوجه الغالب على واقع جيل " 2.

Since the day in which I created you (Lazarus), you became a source of pain and alarm for my eyes. I underwent long and bitter sufferings while trying to destroy you and rebuild you in a different form; to make you more attractive, having a stronger faith and achieving a nobler end. Then what? If you were in the past the face of a fighter who failed, you are the face of a whole generation now.

The second poem now under discussion is الرأس والنهر (The Head and the River)(1967)³ by Adūnīs, a distinguished key figure among contemporary Arab poets. It was written shortly after the June War in 1967.⁴ The poem is based on an Islamic character, al-Husayn, the grandson of the Prophet.

¹ See her article "Khalīl Ḥawī yaktub Maḥamat al-Insān wal-Ḥaḍāra ", Shu'ūn Filastīniyya, no.52, December 1975, p.61.

² Dīwān Khalīl Ḥawī, p.309.

³ Adūnīs, al-Āthār al-Kāmila , vol.2, pp.363-403.

⁴ Some parts of the poem were published in al-Ādāb, no.9, September 1967, pp.9-12, 79.

The article included in the Encyclopaedia of Islam¹ refers to the many legendary stories woven around this personality, whether in relation to his birth and childhood or to his death. For instance, when he fell on the battle-field, the sky is said to have become red, raining blood, and on the night following his death the earth of Karbalā' is supposed to have turned into blood. Also, when his head was taken to Damascus, the Umayyad capital, we are told that the head emitted perfume, and that the angels wept that night, as did the wild beasts and the fishes. In addition, the head was heard to speak.

However, in contemporary Arabic poetry, al-Ḥusayn is treated as a legendary hero and as a fertility god. His tragic death is pictured as a sacrificial one, destined to bring fertility to the arid land.

By Adūnīs himself, the symbol of al-Ḥusayn is used frequently in his dīwān المسرح والمرايا (The Stage and the Mirrors).² There is no doubt that the poet's background as a 'Alawī Shi'ite has an obvious influence in this. The poet himself writes in his book فاتحة لنهايات القرن (An Opening to the Ends of this Century)³:

"أجئ من بيت شيعي، وكل بيت شيعي يرى الفاجعة، لكنه في نفس الوقت ينتظر فرحا يجي" 4 .

I came from a Shi'ite home, where tragedy is usually felt deeply; but at the same time, in such a home, joyous events are expected to materialize.

¹ New edition (1971), vol.III.

² Published in Beirut in 1968.

³ Published in Beirut in 1980.

⁴ P.37

This may explain also why Adūnīs, unlike Khalīl Ḥawī in the preceding poem, is not pessimistic, as the following analysis of the poem shows. The connection between the head in the poem and the head in the legend of al-Ḥusayn will be pointed out also.

The poem takes the form of a dialogue which occurs on a bridge over a muddy and slow-running river. On the bank of the river gather a group of people varied in age and sex, and some of them are disfigured. The river represents the River Jordan, which the Palestinians crossed after the June War in 1967, reaching its east bank disfigured and exhausted.

The dialogue in the opening lines expresses the idea that, in war time, death becomes the only reality. The earth, therefore, becomes arid and waste, with nothing green on it, as if it had been attacked by swarms of locusts.

Yet death, being triumphant, is not a final vision, because man in his unconsciousness dreams of rebirth. Thus death, accordingly, becomes defeated. This idea is expressed in the poem in the words of the chorus, who symbolize the collective unconsciousness of the nation, as Rītā 'Awad rightly points out.¹ The chorus is heard singing:

سيجي السيل
قبل حلول الليل²

The flood will come
before darkness falls.

Apart from the chorus, there is another symbolic person

¹ Rītā 'Awad, Uṣṭūrat al-Mawt wal-Inbi'āth ..., p.145.

² Adūnīs, "The Head and the River", al-Āthār al-Kāmila, vol.2, p.366.

in the poem, who also denotes the collective unconsciousness of the nation, Rītā 'Awad adds¹ namely the shepherd. But it is more likely that the shepherd in the poem refers to those shepherds who received the sign of Jesus' birth. Thus, as shepherds were the first to know of this event, so the shepherd in "The Head and the River" receives a sign that the head is on its way and about to arrive, carried by the water of the river:

(حطتْ أنْ رأسا
في النهر) 2

The head mentioned by the shepherd is the head of al-Husayn, who, as we pointed out earlier, became a symbol of fertility and resurrection similar to the vegetation gods and similar to Christ.

It does not take long, however, for the shepherd's dream to be realized. Seeing the flood and the head, the shepherd shouts to the group gathering on the bank of the river to get out of the way. Then the chorus starts singing:

رأسه الجريح والنزيف
رأسه حولكم يمامة
تحمل الأرض كالرغيف ،
رأسه حولكم علامة 3

His head is the wound and the blood.
His head is a dove (circling) around you
carrying the earth like a loaf of bread.
His head around you is a sign.

¹ Rītā 'Awad, op. cit., p.145.

² Adūnīs op. cit., p.366.

³ Ibid.

By then, the head is recognized:

وجه مہیار فی الماء یسطح كالجوهرة¹

Mihyār's face shines in the water like a pearl.

It is the head of Mihyār, one of Adūnīs's invented symbols, after which a collection of poems by this poet is named. The collection is entitled أغاني مہیار الدمشقي (Songs of Mihyār the Damascene).²

However, there is no contradiction between the claim that the head in the poem stands for al-Ḥusayn's head, while it is actually named the head of Mihyār. These two characters are treated as one in the poem, and this view is supported by the opinion of Kamal Abu Deeb, a critic and poet, who believes that "Mihyār's ancestors were the rejected and the rejectionists, the outcasts and outsiders in Arabic culture, the spiritual and intellectual heritage of Shi'ism".³

The chorus stresses the idea that al-Ḥusayn is bringing life again to the dead land through his sacrificial death by repeating the following lines more than once:

صوت من الماء • يقول الصوت
مات
لكي ينهي عهد الموت •⁴

A voice coming from the river saying:
he died
so as to bring an end to the era of death.

¹ Ibid., p.381.

² Published in Beirut in 1961.

³ "Adonis and the New Arab Poetry", Gazelle Review, no.3, 1977, p.44.

⁴ Adūnīs, al-Āthar al-Kāmila, vol.2, p.384.

The head itself speaks as it spoke in the legend. Accompanied by loud sexually suggestive music, a voice is heard coming from the head and addressing the mother-land, saying:

اقربي والمسيني
 اقربي واحضيني
 شورى يا بلادى
 شررى واشريني
 انني لحظة المعجزات
 1 لحظة الموت والحياة •

Come close and touch me,
 come close and embrace me,
 flare up, O my country!
 Let yourself burst into showers of sparks.
 Scatter my body. I am the moment of miracles,
 and the moment of death and life.

He also permits the masses to sacrifice his body in order to bring fertility to the land:

اشقبا جبهتي ، قيدوني
 وخذوا حرمة وانحروني
 مرقوني ، كلوني ،
 واقراءوا كيمياء المدينة
 بين أشلائي الأمانة 2

Pierce my forehead, chain me,
 thrust a lance into my body,
 tear me to pieces, eat my flesh,
 and read the alchemy of (the ideal) city
 in the faithful fragments of my flesh.

Because both sacrificial death and sex lead to reunion

¹ Ibid., p.386.

² Ibid., 393.

with mother-earth, and because rebirth and resurrection are to be achieved, al-Ḥusayn's image, as seen from the last two quotations, becomes that of a vegetation god and that of Christ.

A further even more dramatic stage is reached in the poem by the union of the head with the chorus. Through this every man becomes al-Ḥusayn, or Christ, or Tammuz.

Thus the poem ends optimistically. The song of the chorus joined by the head expresses this view clearly, and announces the coming rebirth:

”الرأس والجوقة معا ”
 نبئت زهرة على الضفة الأخرى
 بموتي ،
 صرت المدى والمدارا
 أبديا أمضي الى النبع أو أقبل منه
 أكون كالرعد
 صوتا حاضنا برقه ، وكالبرق نارا
 ...
 لى لغة
 لا تعرف التّخوم ، لا تحدّها الشّطان
 تحدّها علامتان : الشمس والانسان .
 وها أنا أطوف كي أزلزل الحدود
 كي أعلم الطوفان ¹.

(The head and the chorus together):
 Because of my death
 a flower sprouted on the other bank,
 I became the ultimate (range) and topic,
 I became eternal; either heading for the
 fount, or coming from it.
 I am like thunder.
 A voice embracing its lightning.
 I am fire like lightning.
 My language has no borders, it is limited
 by no shores

¹ Ibid., p.401.

but only by two signs: the sun and man.
And here am I, moving about so as to shake
all frontiers, and to give instruction on
the flood.

The third poem now under discussion is *نبوءة العرافة* (Prophecy of the Clairvoyant Woman) (1970)¹ by Fadwā Tūqān, a leading Palestinian poetess. The direct circumstance which influenced the poetess in this poem was the fierce fighting which broke out in Jordan between the Jordanian army and the Palestinian Liberation Organization forces in 1970. This event, needless to say, produced countless poems throughout the Arab countries, all expressing anxiety and fear for the Palestinian Resistance Movement and accusing the Jordanian regime of treachery and conspiracy against the Palestinian cause.

However, in the "Prophecy of the Clairvoyant Woman" the symbols are not interwoven so intricately as in the preceding two poems by Khalīl Ḥawī and Adūnīs.

The poem relies basically on three main figures: a young woman, who stands for the Palestinian Arabs; a knight, who symbolizes the *Fidā'ī*, and, finally, the woman fortune-teller.

Unlike T.S. Eliot's clairvoyant in "The Waste Land", Madam Sosostriis, whose powers "are hampered, may be because she has a bad cold",² the clairvoyant in Fadwā Tūqān's poem has a striking power of prophecy. She tells the woman about a number of happenings absolutely exactly, as the woman

¹ *Dīwān Fadwā Tūqān*, pp.590-602.

² George Williamson, *A Reader's Guide to T.S. Eliot*, p.132.

witnesses afterwards.

Besides, whereas Madame Sosostriis foretells the future by reading it in playing cards, the fortuneteller in Fadwā Tūqān's poem does it by interpreting the sound of winds.

The opening verses reveal the first prophecy, in which the fortuneteller tells the woman that, according to the winds, the evil amulet (*تعويذة الشر*) which was knotted* twenty years ago (i.e. in 1948), and by which the woman's home (i.e. Palestine) has been afflicted since then, will be foiled only by a knight who is to appear in the near future.

It may be worth mentioning here that a belief in "evil amulets" is still alive among Palestinian Arabs, especially in rural communities. We may recall the many stories heard in the village of our youth, attributing the failure of a bridegroom to deflower his bride to an evil amulet, prepared by someone who either hated the bridegroom, or was endeavouring to marry the girl.

When the woman asks the clairvoyant when the knight will arrive, and who he will be, the latter replies:

* In an interesting article, "Knots and Curses", published in Arabian Studies (III, 1976), Professor T.M. Johnstone points out that the tying and untying of knots in order to influence the material environment, to cure and to curse, have played an important part in the culture of many peoples in Europe and the Middle East.

The article, however, sheds light on this custom which is prevalent among the Mahrah in Dhofar in the Arabian Peninsula.

حين يصير الرفض
 محرقة وجلجلة
 تلفظه أحشاء هذى الأرض
 من جسمها يَضَعُهُ 1.

When rejection becomes
 a holocaust and a Golgotha.
 The bowels of this land will bear him,
 and from her body will come his fleshly parts.

Yet the clairvoyant warns the woman of the danger that
 will threaten the life of the knight from her own brothers,
 which is an indication of the prejudice of Arab regimes
 against the Palestinian Resistance Movement:

لكنما الرياح في هبومها
 تقول حاذري
 اخوتك السبعة ،
 تقول حاذري
 اخوتك السبعة 2 .

But the winds say:
 Beware of your seven brothers!
 Beware of your seven brothers!

By then, the woman feels a burning anxiety to see the knight's arrival. This is marked by a change in the cycle of seasons, according to which spring is about to reappear. The image used to express this idea is not, however, a new one. It is seen frequently in poems written from the mid-fifties onwards, and it uses the fertility myth to express a belief in the future rebirth of the nation, as was pointed out earlier in this chapter.

¹ Dīwān Fadwā Tūqān, p.592.

² Ibid.

By Fadwā Tūqān, the idea is presented as follows:

وقفتُ عند الشرفة المخلّعة
أحلم بالتكوين
أنتظر الآتي
أصغي لنبض البذرة الدفين
يخضّ رحم الأرض
يرضع قلب السنبلة 10

I stood by the cracked balcony
dreaming of creation,
waiting for the one who is coming,
and listening to the buried pulse of the seed
shaking the womb of the earth
and suckling the core of ears of wheat.

The prophecy materializes, and the knight arrives, welcomed by the woman, his beloved. The knight himself is aware of the fact that his vulnerable spot is his unprotected back, as the heel of Achilles was that hero's weak spot, where he received a mortal arrow. This idea indicates the fear, which will indeed become true, that the danger threatening the life of the knight will come from those who are supposed to protect him while he is on his way to remove the harm of the evil amulet. He, therefore, makes his beloved ride behind him, so that his back may be protected:

(اردفني وراءه وقال يا حبيبتي
حبك يحمي ظهري العريان) 2

Yet the words of the clairvoyant, "Beware of your

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid., p.593.

seven brothers", still echo in the woman's ears.

The prophecy comes true, and "the brothers" fall on the knight, stabbing him with all the power they have. The description of his death is one of the best images in Fadwā's poem:

قابيل الأحمر منتصب في كل مكان
قابيل يدق على الأبواب
على الشرفات
على الجدران
يتسلق ، يقفز ، يزحف شعبانا ويفح
بألف لسان
قابيل يعرِد في الساحات
...

قابيل إله مجنون يحرق روما .¹

The bloody Cain is everywhere erect,
knocking at doors,
jumping on balconies,
climbing walls,
crawling like a snake, and hissing with
a thousand tongues.
Cain riots in the courtyards.

...
Cain is a mad god burning Rome.

Although the woman pleads with her brothers for her beloved's life, they do not listen to her, and he is slain like Osiris, the Egyptian deity slain by his brother Seth, who cut Osiris's body into pieces and scattered them throughout the land of Egypt.²

The woman, seeing herself as Isis, gathers together the scattered limbs of her beloved, in order to hand them to the winds to be sown in different parts of the homeland.

¹ Ibid., p.598.

² Samuel Henry Hooke, Middle Eastern Mythology, p.68.

The poem ends with the following prophecy:

ولم تنزل عرافة الرياح
تطرق بابي الحزين كلما تنفس الصّباح
تقول لي :
"حين تتم دورة الفصول
ترجعه مواسم الأمطار
يطلعه آذار
في عربات الزهر والنّوار" 1

Yet still the clairvoyant of the winds
calls at my sad door every morning,
and says to me:
"When the cycle of seasons is completed
the seasonal rains will bring him back,
and March will set him
in carriages of flowers and blossoms.

This image relies heavily on the myth of Adonis and his resurrection in spring.

Folk-elements.

Contemporary Arab poets, in general, show great awareness of the vitality and importance of folklore. They, therefore, embody in much of their poetry folk elements, such as popular tales, customs, traditions, etc.

Folk elements figure prominently in poetry on Palestine, especially in poems written by Palestinians. The continuous socio-geographic dislocation of the Palestinian Arabs since 1948 has led to the re-organization of the political and social structure of the Palestinians. Because of this, their folk heritage is threatened with extinction. This may

¹ Fadwā Tūqān, op. cit., p.601.

explain why Palestinian poets draw heavily on folk tradition, since, by keeping it alive, they may preserve their identity.¹

Iḥsān 'Abbās emphasises this point when he tries to explain the extensive use of folk material by Israeli-Arab poets or poets of the "Occupied Homeland", as it is commonly called in Arab writings:

It is not surprising that we find poets from the occupied territories particularly Tawfīq Zayyād and Samīḥ al-Qāsim who include in their poetry many folk elements. There is a feeling that the dependence on this heritage is not only an indication of the broad response of poets to this kind of tradition, but also constitutes an expression of pride in a common heritage, as well as the fear of losing it as a consequence of the minority representing it being swept away by a great tide .2

In the following pages, however, special mention will be made of three aspects of those folklore elements embodied in Palestinian poetry: customs and folk traditions, popular songs and folk tales.

Customs and folk traditions.

Many poems contain folk references to social customs which were and still are current among Palestinians. Many of these customs, it must be borne in mind, are not confined to the Palestinians, but are common to most other Arab countries; one of these, for instance, is the recitation of

¹ See Muḥammad Dakrūb's introduction to Tawfīq Zayyād's book 'An al-Adab wal-Adab al-Sha' bī al-Filastīnī, pp.5-17.

² Ittijāhāt al-Shi'r al-'Arabī al-Mu'āṣir, p.151.

verses from the Qur'ān over a boy or a young man as a means of protecting him from evil. Fadwā Tūqān, for example, refers to this practice in one of her poems about the Fidā'ī. In this poem she portrays a mother who recites two Qur'ānic sūras while seeing her son off, by way of protecting him from evil:

اذهب
وحوّطته أمه بسورتى قرآن
اذهب
وعوّذته باسم الله والفرقان . 1

"Go",
and his mother enveloped him with two sūras.
"Go" and she invoked Allāh's name and the
Qur'ān to protect him.

In other poems the folk elements become an integral part of the poem if not the central theme. The purpose of this is not to make use of a social custom for its own sake, but to exploit its associative potential as far as possible.

A poem entitled عرسان للمرأة الصعبة (The Two Weddings of the Difficult Woman)² by Aḥmad Daḥbūr, a Palestinian poet of the late sixties, is a good example of this.

The poem is based on the social practice current among Palestinians* which requires the bridegroom to deflower the bride, dip a white handkerchief in the hymeneal blood and then display it to the families of both the bride and

¹Diwān Fadwā Tūqān, p.507.

²Diwān Tā'ir al-Wiḥdāt, pp.70-76.

*Such a custom is also current in many other Arab countries, indeed in many other places too.

the bridegroom, to prove both the bride's virginity and the bridegroom's virility.

In the poem, Aḥmad Daḥbūr exploits this social custom effectively. The bride in this case symbolizes Palestine, the first bridegroom the Arab establishment, and the second bridegroom the Fidā'ī. In the case of the first wedding the families of both bride and bridegroom wait anxiously for the husband to come out with the handkerchief soaked in hymeneal blood. But after waiting most of the night the families are disappointed because the bridegroom has failed to deflower his bride. Then an old woman suggests to him that he should kill a pigeon and dip the handkerchief in its blood:

(خذ حمامة جاهزة لهذه المسائل
اذبحها على المنديل)

The poet goes on to say that this trick does not fool anyone. Thus the bride remains a virgin until she marries another man (i.e. the Fidā'ī) who succeeds in deflowering her and displaying the handkerchief, truly soaked in the hymeneal blood. As a result the impotent bridegroom, together with his family, stab the successful bridegroom with knives:

تجمعوا عليه
كل شفرة مندورة لذبح كبشنا الكبير
أغمدت في لحمه
وقيل مت ، فلم يمت ،
واختلطت دماؤه بوردة البكارة
قالتحت ثانية ،

They gathered around him
plunging in his body

every blade that was vowed
 to the slaying of our big ram.
 "Die!" they said to him,
 but he did not die.
 Yet his blood
 became mixed with the hymeneal blood,
 and so the bride
 returned again to her virgin state.

Thus the poem ends with the virginity of the bride restored through the contact of her blood with that of her stabbed bridegroom. The first bridegroom tries again to deflower her but, as in his previous attempts, fails to achieve his end.

The poem, however, effectively expresses the common belief which followed the 1967 Arab-Israeli war and became widespread among the Arab masses, especially the Palestinians, namely, that the Arab regimes were completely unable to deal properly with the problem. Furthermore, the regimes, as the poem plainly reflects, were accused of desiring the destruction of the Fidā'ī movement, as happened in Amman in 1970; it was such events which inspired Daḥbūr in this poem.

The folk songs.

Many Palestinian poets have shown great interest in folk songs, and this is clear from the poetry of Samīḥ al-Qāsim, Tawfīq Zayyād and Aḥmad Daḥbūr. These poets, in particular, not only use sections from Palestinian folk songs, but also base some of their poems on folk songs in such a way that the song becomes the fulcrum of the poem.

In مغني الربابة على سطح من الطين (The Rebab Singer on a

Mud Roof)¹ by Samīḥ al-Qāsim, the poet portrays the sorry state of the Palestinian Arabs living under Israeli rule since 1948, as they wait for the return of their relatives and friends who fled from Palestine following the 1948 war. In addition, the poet presents through the song incorporated in this poem a moving picture of the abandoned houses and orchards. The poem can be divided into three sections, as seen below:

A. على سطح من الطين
تثنّ ربابة المأساة في كفين من حجر
فتسقط أدمع القمر
ويصعد... صوت محزون
ينادى الإخوة الغيَّاب
في دنيا بلا خبر ،
يناديهم مع اللحن الفلسطيني

B. " طلع العشب عَطُوحَكَ وَيَبِسَ العِشْبُ
يَلِي عَ حَدَّ الأرضِ مَرْمِيْنُ
يا رَيْتُ تَيْجُوا تَطْلُطِلُوا عَالَتَيْنِ
يا رَيْتُ تُرْشِقُوا الْبَيْوتُ
وَتَصْلَحُوا الْبُيُوتَ وَالسِّدَّةَ
وَتَنْشِلُوا حَفْنَةَ مَيِّ لِلْوَرْدَةِ "

C. غناؤك يا غريب الأهل طال وطالت الأيام
وأورقت الرّبابة في يدك وشاخت الأنعام
فهل ستظل طول العمر محروما تناديني
مع اللحن الفلسطيني ؟

A. On a mud roof
the rebab of the tragedy moans in stone hands
making the moon burst into tears.
And from there a grieved voice comes
calling far-away brothers
of whom there is no news,
saying to them, in a Palestinian melody:

¹ Dīwān Samīḥ al-Qāsim, pp.224-226.

- B. "Oh you who have been cast out beyond the borders!
The grass grows and dies on the roofs of your
homes.
If only you could come and visit the fig trees,
if only you could come and whitewash the houses,
refix the doors and stores,
and water the rose".
- C. Your singing, O stranger, has been long-drawn out,
even the days have become long.
The rebab in your hands has come into leaf, and the
tunes you play have grown old.
Will you remain for ever deprived,
calling me with this Palestinian tune
for the rest of your life?

As seen in the text, section A can be regarded as the introduction to section B, which is certainly the fulcrum of the poem, while the last section can be taken as a commentary on the song.

This technique is used by Tawfīq Zayyād in many poems, such as *يا جمال* (O Camel Rider).¹ Zayyād states in his introduction to this poem that it is, together with some other poems,² based on popular songs of the Galilee area. However, the poet succeeds in exploiting certain parts of the song to suit his subject matter, while at the same time retaining the spirit, metre and expression of the song. The poem / song goes as follows:

عندما اختار الرحيل	غذّب الجمال قلبي
قال: كل الصبر عيّل	قلت: يا جمال صبرا
قال: صحراء الجنوب	قلت: يا جمال قصدك
قال: علكا وطيبوب	قلت: ماذا ضمّ حملك
قال: شوق للحبيب	قلت: ما داؤك قل لي

¹ *Dīwān Tawfīq Zayyād*, pp.363-366.

² Such as *أغنية زفاف*, *حرام*, and *تهليلة*; see *Ibid.*, pp.367-369, 375-377, 378-380 respectively.

قلت : هل زرت طبيبا	قال : تسعين طبيب
قلت : يا جمال خذني	قال : لا ، حملي ثقيلا
قلت : يا جمال أمشي	قال : لا ، دري طويلا
قلت : أمشي ألف عام	خلف عينيك أسافر
قال : يا طير الحمام	حنظل عيش المسافر

عذب الجمال قلبي	عندما اختار الرحيل
كل ما خلف دمعاً	فوق خدي يسيل

When the camel rider decided to leave
he grieved my heart.
To him I said: have patience, O camel rider!
My patience is at an end, he said.

Where are you heading for? I said.
To the desert of the south, he said.
What are you carrying in your load? I said.
Chewing-gum and perfume, he said.
What is ailing you? I said.
Longing for the beloved, he said.
Have you seen a physician? I said.
Ninety physicians, he said.
Take me with you, I said.
I can't, my load is heavy, he said.
I can walk, I said.
My way is too long, he said.
I beseech you!
I can walk for a thousand years, I said.
Gentle dove! The life of the traveller is
bitter, he said.

As the camel rider decided to leave
he grieved my heart.
And all that is left after him
are tears flowing down my cheeks.

The folk tale:

Palestinian poets also make full use of many popular tales, such as Sindbad, 'Antara, the Hilāliyya, the magic lantern of Aladdin ('Alā' al-Dīn), the genies, etc., in their poetry. In most poems, these folk tales acquire new dimensions whereby the implications of such stories are used to illustrate the main theme, which is Palestine.

Kulayb, one of the main characters of the Hilāliyya tales, becomes a symbol of the Fidā'ī in Aḥmad Daḥbūr's poem العين في الجرح (The Eye in the Wound).¹ The murder of Kulayb by Jassās is compared to the murder of the Fidā'iyyīn in Amman during the events of 1970. In Daḥbūr's poem, the still-living Fidā'ī who escaped death in Amman in September 1970 sees the dead Fidā'ī imploring him to avenge his death in the same way as Kulayb implores al-Muhalhal to avenge his death:

(وقرب رمحي الديني
رأيت رأس كليب
يضئ وجه المخيم
يقول لي : لا تصالح
يقول لي أنت ملزم
ان الدماء لا تسامح ،
فهل تسدد ديني ؟)

Another poem by Aḥmad Daḥbūr called شهادة بالكلمات (Martyrdom by Words)² provides a good example of the employment of folk tales in poems dealing with the Palestine theme.

The tale the poem is based on tells of a Sultan who used to go about town naked, while claiming to be fully dressed, saying that only the mad could not appreciate the fact that he was fully-clothed. According to the law of that ruthless Sultan, mad people were to be hanged. Therefore, every time the Sultan went about naked, the people in the town used to say to each other that the Sultan was wearing the finest clothes in the land. One day a little boy

¹ Dīwān Hikāyat al-Walad al-Filastīnī, pp.19-22.

² Ibid.

watched the Sultan's apparent nakedness, and shouted: "The Sultan is naked, the Sultan is naked".*

In Daḥbūr's poem, the Sultan refers to the Arab establishment, and the little boy represents the Palestinian Resistance Movement which was bold enough to expose the Sultan's nakedness; in other words, the impotence of the Arab establishment regarding the Palestine problem. The following lines show how the poet exploits the tale to improve on his theme:

طفل شقيّ جسور
في شفتيه الكلمة اللاهبة
وملأ كفيه تراب العصور
...

ويوم سار صاحب الجلالة
أمامكم عريان
مهددا بالسوط والدينار والسجان
من لا يرى ثيابه المختالة
كنتم بلا لسان
وانفلتت نبوءة شقية تختال
"مولانا السلطان
مجنون عريان

من يستر، من يكسو مولانا السلطان ؟ "

A daring naughty child
speaks angrily,
and fills his hands with earth
accumulated throughout the ages.

....

* Cf. the tale by Hans Christian Anderson "The Emperor's New Clothes", which has a similar but not identical plot.

The tale is also summed up in Motif-Index of Folk-Literature by Stith Thompson as follows: "An impostor feigns to make clothes for the emperor and says that they are visible only to those of legitimate birth. The Emperor and courtiers are all afraid to admit that they cannot see the clothes. Finally a child seeing the naked emperor reveals the imposture." [vol.4, K445, p.295]

And when his Majesty walked naked
 in procession in front of you,
 threatening with whip, money, and jailer
 anyone who did not praise his fine clothes,
 you were all dumb.
 That day a mischievous exclamation slipped out:
 "Our sovereign lord the Sultan
 is crazy; he is naked.
 Who can cover him?
 who can dress our sovereign the Sultan?"

References to fairy tales, such as the magic lamp of Aladdin, or the magic ring and the genie who comes to offer aid, also occur frequently in the poetry written by Palestinians.

Another poet, 'Izz al-Dīn al-Manāṣira, for example, exploits the tale of the magic ring and gives it a new twist. When the Fidā'iyyīn were besieged in Jordan during the 1970 events, they thought that the sanctity of the Palestine cause, which is likened by the poet to the magic ring in the fairy tale, would rouse the Arabs who then would rush to help them. When they rubbed the magic ring, it was as if they appealed to the Arab governments, but nothing happened and help was not forthcoming, just as if the ring had lost its magic; in other words, the cause of Palestine was no longer sacred to the Arab regimes:

(وتسرق خاتمي في الليل جنية
 وأصرخ يا علاء الدين .. ضاع السر
 كيف أفك هذا الطلسم الأسود
 ولا شبيك .. ولا لبيك ،
 وأسمع صرخة المرتد)

¹ From a poem entitled رسالة الى الوالي , Dīwān al-Khurūj min al-Bahr al-Mayyit, p.26.

This brief discussion shows how poetry on Palestine has been immensely enriched through the use of various folk elements. Although contemporary Arab poets in general used the same folk material, it was mainly the Palestinian poets who related it to Palestine, and therefore the examples given above are exclusively confined to Palestinian poets.

Diction.

It has been often mentioned in the course of this discussion that there are many words or terms of specific meaning used frequently in those poems inspired by events concerning Palestine.

In poems written before 1948, terms denoting the religious significance of Palestine, or calling on Arabs and Muslims to defend the country against the Zionist threat, were repeatedly used by Arab poets, as was pointed out in chapter III. Yet more important is the fact that the problem gave rise to a number of words being used for the very first time in modern poetic diction, such as ¹فدائي (Zionism), انتداب (imperialism), (mandate), and هدنة (armistice).

After 1948, a vocabulary of frustration, bitterness, sufferings and self-condemnation, such as عار (shame), جرح (wound), لاجئ or نازح (refugee) and other such words, found its way into a substantial number of poems. Such words, because of their frequent use in poems on

¹ See chapter V, p. 269.

Palestinian themes, gained a new meaning; in other words, the conception developed from generality to precise definition, in such a way that whenever such words occur in these poems, they arouse the remembrance of the "Palestine tragedy".

Let us take the word al-Jurh as an example. Arab poets using this word in reference to Palestine, find it unnecessary to give it any further definition than the definite article or definition by position, as can be seen in the following lines:

1 ومن الجرح تولد الكبرياء

And from the wound pride is born.

2 وهبناك يا جرح عمر القبيلة

O wound! to you we present the life of
the whole tribe as a gift.

This illustration applies to many other words. The following list includes the most representative examples:

المأساة : the tragedy.

النكبة : the catastrophe.

النكسة : the setback.

المغتصب or الوطن السليب , the usurped home.

الوطن المحتل : the occupied home.

اللاجئ or النازح , the refugee.

الشريد : the expelled.

¹ Nizār Qabbānī, "Ifāda fī Maḥkamat al-Shi'r", al-A'māl al-Siyāsiyya, p.79.

² Aḥmad Daḥbūr, Tā'ir al-Wiḥdāt, p.58.

- العائد : the returning man.
 العودة : the return.
 الخيمة : the tent.
 المخيم : refugee camp.
 المنفى : the exile.
 الذل : humiliation.
 الخزي and العار , shame.
 العدو : the enemy.
 الغاصب : the usurper.
 الثأر : revenge.
 مقاومة : resistance
 البرتقال : orange.
 الزيتون : olive.

With regard to one of the words mentioned above, namely al-Khayma (the tent), it is significant that the traditional image evoked by the word changed completely after its frequent use in poems dealing with Palestine in general and the Palestinian refugees in particular.

Throughout the centuries, the image of al-Khayma denoted the simplicity and delight of the Arab in his native desert. Such an image made Maysūn, wife of Mu'āwiya, the first Umayyad caliph (661-680 A.H.) feel contempt for all the pomp and splendour of her luxurious life in Damascus, and languish for her previous life in a tent in the desert. Expressing such feelings, Maysūn is reported to have

¹ Al-Baghdādī, Khizānat al-Adab, vol.3, p.593.

uttered some verses, among which is the following line:

لبيت تخفق الأرواح فيه أحبّ اليّ من قصر منيف

A tent with rustling breezes in it delights
me more than a lofty palace.

This pleasant image has changed to a one implying misery, misfortune and suffering. The "tent" became a symbol standing for the tragedy of the Palestinians. This new concept of the word originates, as we have mentioned above, from the vast number of poems describing the miserable conditions of the refugees in their flimsy tents; but further discussion of this theme is unnecessary since it has been thoroughly dealt with earlier.

Apart from the way the Palestine problem has affected the implications of many words and terms, we may isolate other spheres of its influence on poetic diction. These can be summed up as follows:

(1) Arab names of several Palestinian cities, villages, mountains, etc., such as Jerusalem, Jaffa, Haifa, Acre, Nazareth, Dayr Yāsīn, Kafr Qāsim, Galilee, Mount Carmel and suchlike places, are used frequently by Arab poets whether they are Palestinians or not. In some poems, the name of the place alone serves as a symbol denoting the whole country, as in *يافا يسوعك في القيود* (Jaffa, Your Jesus is in Chains).¹

In addition, names of trees, such as orange and olive,

¹ 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Bayātī, Dīwān 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Bayātī, vol.1, p.289.

vine, oak, etc., are used frequently. As with some place-names, tree-names are sometimes used as symbols standing for Palestine. Of these the most obvious are those of the orange and the olive.

(2) Words and phrases expressing frustrated hopes, anxiety, sadness, despair, loss of identity, alienation, anger and self-condemnation dominate this poetry.

(3) Colloquial terms and expressions derived from the Palestinian dialect have steadily increased in poetry written by Palestinian poets. The following list includes the most representative examples according to their frequency in Palestinian poetry:

دبكة [dabka] : name of a folk dance by group dancers.

قمباز [qumbāz] : traditional dress for men.

صمدة [ṣamda] : the act of sitting the bridegroom and the bride together on the wedding night in a hall or similar place, where songs and dances are performed in front of them.

سحجة [saḥja] : clapping hands rhythmically in group dances at wedding celebrations.

حواكير [ḥawākīr] : plural of hākūra, a small piece of *cultivated* land usually near family residences.

شبابية [shibbāba] : (in classical Arabic: shabbāba) reed flute.

خوابي [khawābī] : plural of khābiya, large vessel made of clay and straw for storing wheat, dried figs, etc.

بيارة [bayyāra] : citrus grove.

Of phrases that have been used, the following are popular among certain Palestinian poets:

نَشَافَ الرَّيِّقِ : [nashāf al-rīq] lit. : drying of the saliva, indicating the utmost hardships.

فِي عِزِّ الْحَصِيدَةِ : [fī 'izz al-ḥaṣīda] the middle of the harvest season.

أَخْبَارُهُمْ حَكَيَا بِكَيَا : [akhbāruhum ḥakāyā bakāyā] the sad news about them moves (others) to tears.

عَلَّمُونَا عَالِزْنَ : ['allamūnā 'al-ḥuzn]: they brought us up on sadness.

يَا أَغْلَى مِنْ رُوحِي : [yā aghlā min rūḥī] you, who are dearer than my soul.

بِرَمْشِ الْعَيْنِ أَفْرِشْ دَرْبَ عَوْدَتِكُمْ : [bi-rimsh al-'ayn afrish darb 'awdatikum] with (my) eyelashes I would cover the road for you to return.

أَبُوسِ الْأَرْضِ تَحْتَ نَعَالِكُمْ [abūs al-ard taḥt ni'ālikum] I would kiss the ground you walked on.

أَهْدِيْكُمْ ضِيَا عَيْنِي [ahdīkum ḍiyā 'aynī] I would give you my sight as a present.

يَا هَلَا بِالْمَوْتِ [yā halā bil-mawt] welcome to death.

The preceding discussion shows that the problem of Palestine has left noticeable marks on the poetic diction of modern Arabic poetry, sometimes by introducing new words to poetic usage, sometimes by giving words definitive meanings linked with the subject of Palestine, and sometimes by changing the image invoked by a particular, as in the case of the word al-khayma. Furthermore, the frequent use of

popular words derived from the Palestinian dialect, as well as the dominance of words denoting anxiety, alienation, anger, etc., may also be assessed as still more spheres of influence on poetic diction.

CHAPTER VII

The Impact of the Problem

(1) On the Development of the Palestine
Literary Personality.

Until the beginning of the twentieth century, and before Palestine, then an Ottoman province, went under the British Mandate after the First World War, cultural and educational life there was still inadequately ordered, in comparison with some other Arab countries, such as Lebanon or Egypt. This was mainly due to the maladministration and negligence of the central government in Istanbul towards the region, and the lack of government educational institutions, especially secondary and high schools. It was not until 1889 that the first government intermediate-secondary school was founded in Jerusalem. In 1895 a similar school was opened in Acre, and a third one in Nablus in 1897.¹

In spite of this, there were some other elements that helped, to some extent, to meet the educational needs of the inhabitants, thus gradually assisting in the development of both cultural and educational life in that small country.

A large number of missionary and sectarian schools were founded there as a result of the growing interest shown by several Western countries in the "Holy Land" during the nineteenth century. For example, the number of schools

¹ Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Asad, al-Shi'r al-'Arabī al-Ḥadīth fī Filastīn wal-Urdunn, p.10.

founded by Germany in the district of Jerusalem alone reached fifteen;¹ moreover, several printing presses were brought to Palestine. The first was established in Jerusalem in 1846 by French missionaries, and was known as Maṭba'at al-Ābā' al-Faransiyyīn.² Another press was founded in Jerusalem three years later known as Maṭba'at al-Qabr al-Muqaddas lil-Rūm al-Arthuduks. Statistics regarding one of the presses founded in 1892 in Jerusalem, called Maṭba'at Jūrj Habib Ḥanāniyya, show that the number of books published by this printing house between 1892 and 1909 reached 281, in different languages, among which were 83 books in Arabic.³

Moreover, some literary societies began to emerge by the end of the nineteenth century; these seem to have played a noteworthy role in developing the cultural life of the country. Among these was the society called Jam'īyyat al-Ādāb, formed in 1898, some of the members of which became active politically as well as culturally, such as 'Īsā al-'Īsā and Khalīl al-Sakākīnī.⁴

However, by the outbreak of the First World War, considerable signs of progress at different levels, social, political and cultural, became evident in Palestine, which

¹ Ibid., p.36.

² Ibid., p.42.

However, 'Abd al-Raḥmān Yāghī dates the foundation of this print in Jerusalem 1848. See Ḥayāt al-Adab al-Filastīnī al-Ḥadīth ..., p.77.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

was still, at that time, part of Syria. Such progress was reflected in the increasing number of papers and magazines published there, such as al-Aṣmaʿī (1908), al-Nafāʿis al-ʿAṣriyya (1908), al-Manhal (1913) and the previously mentioned al-Karmil and Filastīn.¹

The number of students graduating from high schools and universities had increased also, and some of them paid special attention to translation into Arabic from various languages in many different fields, such as Khalīl Baydas (1875-1949), Muḥammad ʿĀdil Zuʿaytir and Aḥmad Sāmīḥ al-Khālīdī (1895-1951).

As for poetry written during the second half of the nineteenth century, only a few names seem to have achieved some fame, such as Yūsuf al-Nabhānī (1849-1932), Saʿīd al-Karmī (1851-1935) and ʿAlī al-Rīmāwī (1860-1919). Palestinian poets of that period were merely imitators, showing little creative talent. Their poetry is thematically restricted, dealing with religious matters concerning Islam and Prophet Muḥammad, the congratulation of friends and acquaintances, or variations on the elegiac and eulogistic modes.

Soon after the political events of 1908-1909 in Turkey, Arab poets in general, including Palestinians, became preoccupied with those happenings rather than with the

¹ More information on the papers and magazines published in Palestine during the first two decades of the twentieth century can be seen in ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Yāghī's book Ḥayāt al-Adab al-Filastīnī al-Ḥadīth..., pp.83-88.

Zionist threat to Palestine, which was, however, gathering on the horizon. This development, was discussed at length in chapter I.

During the period in which authority in Palestine rested with the British (1917-1948), the Palestine conflict with the Jews and the Mandate Power became a prominent theme in poetry, but other, non-political, subjects dominated a great deal of poetry at that time, too.

Besides, Palestinian poets of the thirties and forties such as Ibrāhīm Tūqān, 'Abd al-Raḥīm Maḥmūd and Abū Salmā, unlike the poets of the older generation, helped by creative talents, proved themselves to have had their own literary personality and talent by which they were able to create rather than imitate. On the other hand, their poetry reflects several aspects of the Palestine subject which the poetry written by other Arab poets does not reflect, as was pointed out in chapter II.

Tragedy struck the Palestinians after the 1948 War and the creation of the State of Israel. The majority of them became refugees scattered throughout neighbouring Arab countries, while only a minority remained in Israel.

Since then, this "tragedy" has been the fulcrum of Palestinian poetry, whether written by poets living in "exile" or those still living in Israel.

Nevertheless it is important to note that the poetry of "poets of the Occupied Homeland" or "Palestinian resistance poetry" (both terms are widely used in Arabic writings to refer to poetry written by Palestinian poets living in Israel since 1948) has a distinctive character

by which it may be distinguished from that written by Palestinians living in other Arab countries, or in "exile", as the poets themselves term their situation. This distinctiveness is the result of the different experiences undergone by the two groups after 1948. The poets living in Israel have been subjected to an experience uniquely different from that felt by their colleagues living in "exile". This divergence of experience, accordingly, has imposed distinguishing characteristics on the poetry of both groups, regarding subject-matter, vision, attitudes, etc.

When Maḥmūd Darwīsh met Fadwā Tūqān shortly after the Israeli occupation of the West-Bank following the June War in 1967, he reminded her of how deeply the Israeli occupation had changed her poetical vision and approach to the tragic situation of her people, even though her experience of the Israeli occupation was minimal at that time.¹

It is not difficult to discover how the experience of "exile" affected Palestinian poetry written far from home; this is clear from the many poems quoted in the course of discussion in previous chapters. In most cases, the poets' mood is extremely sad, overflowing with longing for the return, while also expressing bitterness and anger on seeing the tragedy being prolonged. Nevertheless, as we have shown, the poets' sadness has not exposed them to despair. On the contrary, hopeful visions run throughout their works.

Poetry written by Palestinians living in Israel is usually termed by Arab writers as "Palestinian Resistance

¹ Maḥmūd Darwīsh, Shay' ʿan al-Waṭan, p.269.

Poetry". Yet, the Egyptian critic Ghālī Shukrī argues that this poetry should be termed as antagonistic (معارضة) rather than resistance (مقاومة)¹. He defends his view by arguing that this poetry reflects the poets' recognition of Israel as a state, and does not call for the liberation of Palestine from the Jews but from Zionism:

(أردت أن أقول أن جوهر الشعر الفلسطيني المعارض هو تحرير
الأرض لا من اليهود وإنما من الصهيونية)²

According to his view, "Palestinian resistance poetry" applies only to poetry written by Palestinians living outside Israel, such as Mu'īn Bisisū , Fadwā Tūqān and Muḥammad al-Qaysī.

What is more surprising about his view is that while he calls the poetry of Palestinians living in Israel "antagonistic", he considers similar nationalist poetry written by French and Russian poets resisting Nazism as the "poetry of resistance". Even Egyptian poetry written during the 1956 Suez War is "poetry of resistance", according to him.³

Nevertheless, such a view seems extremely odd for more than one reason:

Firstly, it is not true that poetry written by poets living in Israel opposes the Jewish State politically, although Ghālī Shukrī tries to restrict it to this. Even a hasty glimpse falsifies such a claim. What the critic has to do

¹ Ghālī Shukrī, Adab al-Muqāwama, p.391.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

is read between the lines, noting the unique indirect approach of those poets to their subject. To give only one example, we may quote a two-line poem by Samīḥ al-Qāsim which runs as follows:

تبدّل الأوراق من آن لآن
لكن جذع السنديان ...¹

Leaves fall from time to time
but the trunk of the tree ...

The reader of such verses and of many similar poems does not need to make much effort to comprehend what the poet means.

Secondly, even the poetry written by Fadwā Tūqān, who until 1967 was not under Israeli rule, or the poetry of Mu'īn Bisisū or any other Palestinian poet, does not call for the liberation of Palestine from the Jews, but from Zionism.

Thirdly, when Ghālī Shukrī considers the Russian, French or Egyptian resistance to the Nazis and the powers who attacked Egypt in 1956, he does not take into consideration whether those poets recognize the enemy as an existing regime or not, while, when dealing with Palestinian poetry, he makes this political point the decisive criterion.

However, it is generally acknowledged by contemporary Arab critics that the most distinguished and significant literary outcome of the Arab-Israeli conflict is the emergence of "the Palestinian resistance poetry". some even

¹ Dīwān Samīḥ al-Qāsim, p.651.

state : "perhaps the most interesting and valuable single recent development in modern Arabic literature is the emergence of the work of the "committed" Palestinian poets as a literary force of no little significance".¹

A prominent Arab poet, Nizār Qabbānī, expresses in a poem called شعراء الأرض المحتلة (Poets of the Occupied Land) (1968)² deep affection and admiration, seeing the verses of these poets as having given modern Arabic poetry "the kiss of life", brightening it with vivid new colours.

Yet it is worth mentioning that "Palestinian resistance poetry" has become known to the Arab reader outside Israel only since 1966, when Ghassān Kanafānī (1936-1972), a well-known Palestinian novelist and short-story writer, published his book Adab al-Muqāwama fī Filastīn al-Muḥtalla, which includes a critical study and a number of poems by prominent poets there.

Two years later, a second book entitled Dīwān al-Waṭan al-Muḥtall by another Palestinian poet, Yūsuf al-Khaṭīb, appeared. The book also includes a critical introduction to Palestinian poetry written in Israel from 1948 up to the June War in 1967. But unlike the first book, it includes all the poetical works of Maḥmūd Dārwiṣh, Samīḥ al-Qāsim and Tawfīq Zayyād written up to that year, in addition to a number of poems by poets not mentioned in Kanafānī's book, such as Rāshid Ḥusayn, 'Iṣām

¹ M.M. Badawi, "Commitment in Contemporary Arabic Poetry", Cahiers d'histoire mondiale, vol. XIV, 1972, p.879.

² Al-A'māl al-Siyāsiyya, pp.37-41.

'Abbāsī, Nāyif Ṣāliḥ and Ḥabīb Zaydān.

The Arabs' setback in the June War in 1967 played an important role in focussing close attention on Palestinian resistance poetry. Other Arab poets, to whom the defeat was unbearable, were astonished by the optimism overflowing from the verses reaching them from the poets of the "Occupied Homeland". The voice of Samīḥ al-Qāsim declaims:

نحن في الخامس من حزيران
ولدتنا من جديد 1

On the fifth of June
we were born anew.

Then came the voice of Tawfīq Zayyād:

What then? I do not know.
All I know is that the land and the years
are pregnant.
What I know is that the right cannot perish
or be beaten by usurpers,
and on my land conquerers cannot stay.²

While Maḥmūd Darwīsh sang:

فإذا كنت أغني للفرح
خلف أجفان العيون الخائفة
فلأن العاصفة
وعدتني بنبيذ .. وأنخاب جديدة
وأقواس قزح 3

If I am singing for the joy
lying deep in the frightened eyes,

¹ Dīwān Samīḥ al-Qāsim, p.669.

² Dīwān Tawfīq Zayyād, p.446. (See the Arabic text of the verses in chapter V, p.268.

³ Dīwān Maḥmūd Darwīsh, vol.I, p.290.

that is because the whirlwind*
promised me wine ... and proposed new
toasts to me,
and promised me rainbows.

By the late sixties, Palestinian resistance poetry had become the subject of many studies and articles. In most, writers were over-enthusiastic, showing little objectivity, to such an extent that some of the resistance poets themselves criticize what is written about them and their works. In his article *أنقذونا من هذا الحب القاسي* (Save us from this Unendurable Love)¹ Maḥmūd Darwīsh writes angrily, asking Arab writers and critics to show more objectivity when writing about this type of poetry, and not to allow affection to be the decisive criterion when assessing it. He also points out that "Palestinian resistance poetry" should not be looked at as if it came suddenly from nothing. "It is only a stream originating from and pouring into the big river, Arabic literature", he states.

Another poet, Tawfīq Zayyād, warns that the poetry he and his colleagues write should not be separated from the poetry written by Palestinian poets before 1948. The poetry of Ibrāhīm Tūqān, 'Abd al-Rahīm Maḥmūd, Abū Salmā and others, he writes, formed the bricks with which he and his colleagues inside Israel built. To quote his own words:

"وليس صحيحاً القول : أننا نحن الشعراء الذين خلقتنا الأمة
في بلادنا قد بدأنا من جديد . أننا نردّ هذا القول

¹ Shay' 'an al-Waṭan, pp.25-36.

* Al-'Āṣifa (the whirlwind) is the military branch of Fath organization.

الى أصحابه • نحن واصلنا الطريق •• نفس الطريق الذى
 واصلته فى حينه ابراهيم طوقان وأبو سليمى وعبد الرحيم محمود
 ومطلق عبد الخالق وآخرون •••• لقد زدونا قبل النكبة
 الزاد الذى استطعنا أن نسند به بطوننا بعدها • ان شعرنا
 الثورى هو امتداد لشعرهم الثورى " 1 •

In fact what Maḥmūd Darwīsh and Tawfīq Zayyād point out is unquestionably true. Yet even more important is it to isolate the distinguishing features of this poetry, which can be attributed to the sort of experience the Palestinian poets in Israel underwent from 1948.

Undoubtedly, those poets, belonging as they do to a minority long subjected to many laws and harassments .. all aiming to deprive that minority of its national identity, culture and remaining land,* have been living through experiences quite different from those of other Arab poets, even from their Palestinian colleagues living in "exile".

This experience has left its own marks on their works. The following can be isolated as the most prominent emergent characteristics:

(1) Attachment to the land.

In spite of the fact that both the Palestinian poets living in "exile" and those living in Israel express deep attachment to the land, the experience of the two is obviously different. In the case of those living in "exile",

¹ 'An al-Adab wal-Adab al-Sha'bi al-Filastīnī, p.77.

* A book written by Sabri Jiryis: The Arabs in Israel, gives a full account of these subjects. The book was published originally in Hebrew in Israel in 1966, then translated into Arabic in 1967. The book was also translated into English in 1976.

attachment to the land takes the form of longing for the return to that greatly missed country, as we have seen in Fadwā Tūqān's poem, "The Call of the Land"¹. Poets living in Israel, however, still dwell in the land they love. Such a poet "smells its soil day and night", but sees it possessed by someone else who, he believes, has no right to possess it. Such every day experience, Tawfīq Zayyād reveals, "causes comfort and misery at the same time, and gives that poetry a distinctive aroma".²

This idea in particular permeates a major portion of that poetry. The beloved, who is close to her lover, yet inaccessible to him, causes contradictory feelings within him. In *أنا آت إلى ظلّ عينيك* (I am coming to the Shadow of your Eyes)³ Maḥmūd Darwīsh expresses such feelings by addressing his beloved thus:

... أنت حزني وأنت الفرح
 أنت جرحي وقوس قزح
 أنت قيدي وحررتي
 أنت طيني وأسطورتي
 أنت لي . أنت لي . . . بجراحك
 كل جرح حديقة .
 ...
 أنت شمسي التي تنطفئ
 أنت ليلي الذي يشتعل
 أنت موتي وأنت حياتي .

You are my grief and joy,
 my wound and my rainbow,
 my prison and freedom.
 You are my myth
 and the clay from which I was created.

¹ See above, pp.241-243.

² 'An al-Adab wal-Adab al-Sha'bi, p.85.

³ Dīwān Maḥmūd Darwīsh, vol.I, pp.511-522.

You are mine, with all your wounds,
each wound a garden.

...
You are my sun at its setting,
and my lightened night.
You are the death of me and the kiss of life.

Comparing the attachment of the Palestinians and the Israelis to the land, the same poet, Maḥmūd Darwīsh, describes that of the Palestinians as genuine, and that of the Israelis as artificial. The Zionists who came to Palestine came to a land that existed for them merely as an intellectual idea, or as a solution to their predicament in Europe, or as fulfilment of what they believe to be a promise from God:

" نحن لم نبحث عن هذا الوطن في حلم أسطوري ، ولا في صفحة جميلة
من كتاب قديم . نحن لم نصنع هذا الوطن كما تُصنع المؤسسات والمنشآت .
هو الذي صنعنا . هو أبونا وأما . نحن لم نشتر هذا الوطن في
حانوت أو وكالة ، كما لم يقنعنا أحد بحبه . لقد وجدنا أنفسنا
نبضا في لحمه ودمه ، ونخاعا في عظمه ، وهو لهذا لنا ، ونحن له " .

We excavated this home neither in mythical
dreams nor in the illustrated page of an old
book, nor did we create it in the way
companies and institutions are established.
It is our father and mother. We did not,
either, buy it through an agency or shop,
and we have been under no pressure to love it.
We identify ourselves as its pulse and the
marrow of its bones. It is therefore ours,
and we belong to it.

It may be worth mentioning here that the Arab national
organization which was formed in Israel in 1958, led by

¹ Shay' 'an al-Waṭan, p.9.

Manṣūr Kardūsh and Ḥabīb Qahwajī, and including many Palestinian intellectuals and poets there, had chosen the name أسرة الأرض (Family of the Land), signifying their attachment to the land.¹

What was expressed by Darwīsh in prose in the above lines forms the central idea of many poems. In جندى يحلم (A Soldier dreams of the White Lilies),² an Israeli soldier admits that his feelings for the land were artificially induced. In وطن (Homeland)³, also, he reasserts this idea, saying:

(وطني ليس حزمة من حكايا
ليس ذكرى
هذه الأرض جلد عظمي
وقلبي
فوق أعشابها يطير كمنحلة) .

Similarly, in الأرض من بعدى (The Land after my Death)⁴, Samīḥ al-Qāsim argues how the Palestinian Arab throughout the centuries grew into the adorer or worshipper of his land:

مَنْ رَكَّز الصخرات في السفح ؟
من عَلم النسمة
نسمايتها السمحات للدوح
مَنْ . . غير جدّي الطيب السمع ؟

¹ For a full account of the al-Ard group, see Ḥabīb Qahwajī, al-ʿArab fī Zill al-Ihtilāl al-Isrāʾīlī ..., pp.446-475, also Sabri Jiryis, The Arabs in Israel, pp.187-197.

² Dīwān Maḥmūd Darwīsh, vol.I, pp.311-322.

³ Ibid., pp.371-373.

⁴ Dīwān Samīḥ al-Qāsim, pp.483-486.

من عود السهلة
 أن تكثر الغلّة
 من غير عمي الكهل والوالد ؟
 من حزر أسماء الأقارب واحدا . . واحد
 في كل جذع من جذوع كرومنا
 من غير هذا العاشق العابد ؟

Who built the stone-barriers* at the (mountain)
 foot?
 Who taught the breeze
 to be kind to the trees?
 Who, but my good-natured grandfather?
 Who taught the plain
 to be a generous giver of crops?
 Who but my father and his old brother?
 Who carved the names, of relatives, one by one
 on every tree trunk in our groves,
 Who, but this adorer and worshipper?

(2) Adherence to national identity.

Another distinguishing feature of that Palestinian poetry which emerged as a direct reaction to the socio-political situation of the Arab population of Israel, is the poets' death-defying assertion of the national identity of their people as Palestinian Arabs.

This task is seen by the poets as a national duty, especially when they become aware of Israeli efforts to rob that minority of its Arab personality, culture and identity. In his book 'an al-Adab wal-Adab al-Sha'bi al-Filastīnī, Tawfīq Zayyād sheds light on this by writing:

"لم ينتهجوا سياسة التهود الجغرافي فحسب (بأخذ الأرض من أصحابها العرب) بل والتهويد الروحي أيضا
 وعد أن فشلوا

¹ Barriers of stones built mainly to prevent the soil from being swept away by rain or to mark the border between two pieces of land.

في "تنظيف" البلاد من العرب، لجأوا الى "تنظيف" العرب من مشاعرهم القومية . لقد انتهجوا هذه السياسة في كل مكان وكل مجال . كل المسؤولين عن المجالات العربية ، وعن كل ماله علاقة بالعرب ليسو عربا : المسؤولون عن الصحف الحكومية باللغة العربية ، المسؤولون عن القسم العربي في دارالاذاعة ، المسؤولون عن التعليم بين العرب في وزارة المعارف . . . الخ . وعرقلوا كل محاولة شريفة لاقامة مسرح عربي . وفي كل المدن والقرى العربية لا توجد مكتبة عامة عربية واحدة سواء كانت بلدية أو حكومية . أما برامج التعليم فقد فرغوها من كل مضمون وطني . وأكثر من ذلك لقد حولوها الى برامج تجهيل . وحرّموا الأناشيد الوطنية . . . ولهذا كان على شعرائنا وكتابنا ومثقفينا تزويد طلابنا وشبابنا بالغذاء الروحي الوطني . وقد عمل شعراؤنا بنجاح على تحقيق هذه المهمة " .¹

Similarly, some Israeli writers shed light on other sides of the policy of the government towards the Arab minority in Israel. One summed up such policy by writing:

Ever since Independence, the Arabs of Israel have been subjected to a special regime. Military governors for Arab areas were superimposed on the regular district administration under the Ministry of the Interior. These areas were mostly in the north and in the extreme south. Arabs in these areas were required to obtain passes from the military governor if they wanted to visit other parts of Israel. . . . The whole system was, however, heartily disliked, not only by the Arabs, but a great many liberal-minded Jews. They still remember with bitterness the restrictions placed on the movement of Jews in Russia.²

It is their environment, therefore, that forced those poets to concentrate on stirring up national consciousness among their people, and to re-state constantly their immutable adherence to their national identity. Thus Samīḥ al-Qāsim felt it important to make his statement:

¹ Pp. 86-87.

² Edwin Samuel, The Structure of Society in Israel, pp.102-103.

مثلما تُغرس في الصحراء نخلة
مثلما تطبع أُمِّي في جبينِي الجهم قبلة
...

مثلما تبسم للعاشق نجمة
مثلما تمسح وجه العامل المجهد نسمة
...

مثلما يبسم في ودّ غريب لغريب
مثلما يرجع عصفور إلى العش الحبيب
هكذا تنبض في قلبي العروسة¹

Like a palm tree planted in the desert,
like my mother placing a kiss on my frowning
forehead,

Like a star smiling for a lover
like the breeze cooling the worker's face. . .

Like two strangers smiling at each other,
like a bird returning to its dear nest,
thus my heart is beating with Arab consciousness.

One of the most celebrated poems, consequently quoted by many when discussing this point, is that entitled بطاقة هوية (Identity Card)² by Maḥmūd Darwīsh. When the poem appeared in the early sixties, the political identity of the Palestinian Arabs was, in the eyes of the world largely a matter of numbers rather than nationhood; they were considered to have no aspirations, no cause and no identity. Darwīsh took the concept of Palestinian political identity, amplified it, and gave it a voice.

In the poem, the imperative word sajjil! (write down!) is repeated at intervals. The word is directed to a supposed Israeli clerk who -in the poet's experience- is annoyed

¹ Dīwān Samīh al-Qāsim, p.500.

² Dīwān Maḥmūd Darwīsh, vol.I. pp.121-127.

when he hears the word Arab and is likely to flare up with anger when he hears that the man whom he has thought of merely as a number since 1948. still feels proud of his national geneology. The irony is crucial to the poem, and reminds us of the irony in Ibrāhīm Tūqān's poems, some of which were quoted in chapter II.¹

Darwish's poem opens as follows:

سَجِّلْ !
أنا عربي
ورقم بطاقتي خمسون ألف
وأطفالي ثمانية
وتاسعهم . . . سيأتي بعد صيف
فهل تغضب ؟

Write down!
I am an Arab
and the number of my card is fifty thousands.
I have eight children
and the ninth is coming after the summer.
Does this anger you?

The poet, or, supposedly, the Arab addressing the Israeli clerk, gives an assurance that although everyday life has become extremely difficult for him as an Arab, he will in no way lower himself or lose his dignity:

سَجِّلْ !
أنا عربي
وأعمل مع رفاق الكدح في مجبر
وأطفالي ثمانية
أسلّ لهم رغيف الخبز
والأشواب والدفتر
من الصخر . .

¹ See pp. 52-53, 78-79.

ولا أتوسل الصدقات من بابك
ولا أصغر
أمام بلاط أعتابك ،
فهل تغضب ؟

Write down !
I am an Arab.
I work with comrades of toil in a quarry,
and I have eight children,
for them I wrest a loaf of bread,
clothes and school books
from the rocks,
and do not ask for alms at your door
or lower myself at your doorstep.
Does this anger you?

In the middle stanzas, Darwish concentrates on pointing out the deep roots of his ancestors in the country, and the characteristics of the people he belongs to, from whom he inherited his great pride.

Yet the main message of the poem is seen in the last stanza, which goes as follows:

سجّل !
أنا عربي
سلبت كسروم أجدادي
وأرضا كنت أفلحها
أنا وجميع أولادي
ولم تترك لنا .. ولكل أحفادي
سوى هذي الصخور
فهل ستأخذها حكومتكم .. كما قيل ؟
اذن
سجّل .. برأس الصفحة الأولى :
أنا لا أكره الناس
ولا أسطو على أحد
ولكنني .. إذا ما جعت
أكل لحم مختصبي .
حذار .. حذار .. من جوعي
ومن غضبي .

Write down!
 I am an Arab.
 You stole my forefathers' groves*
 and the land I used to till,
 I and all my children;
 and you left nothing but these rocks
 for us and all my grandchildren.
 Yet, will your government take them too
 as is being said?
 Then write down! .. at the top of page one:
 I neither hate others
 Nor do I steal their properties,
 but if I become hungry
 the flesh of my usurper shall I eat.
 So beware ... beware of my hunger
 and of my anger.

(3) Simplicity of expression and clarity of imagery.

All the above quotations give evidence of this characteristic in Palestinian resistance poetry, and this is mainly because this poetry is directed in the first place to the general Arab public in Israel.

The many festivals of poetry which the Arab community in Israel arranged since the mid-fifties in several cities and villages, at which poets were invited to read their poems, attracted large audience whenever they were held.¹ At one of those festivals held in a village called Kafr Yāsīn in the summer of 1957, twelve Palestinian poets read their poems to an audience numbering thousands of the Arab population, as one participant in that festival, Ḥabīb Qahwajī, writes. He also points out that all the poems read

¹ Maḥmūd Darwīsh, Shay' 'an al-Waṭan, p.278.

* In classical Arabic كرم means vineyards, but in Palestinian dialect the word, apart from its classical meaning, can mean groves of other trees too, especially olive and fig.

at that gathering focussed on three connected topics: the land, the village and the peasant.¹

Describing how those festivals became important for the Arab minority in Israel, and how they influenced those poets, who afterwards became known as poets of the resistance, Qahwajī writes:

" وبقينا فلقد أصبحت المهرجانات الشعرية من تقاليد الأقلية العربية في الأرض المحتلة عام ١٩٤٨ . . . ولقد أصبح العرب في إسرائيل ينتظرون مثل هذه المهرجانات انتظارهم للاعياد القومية أو الدينية ويترقبونها بفرغ الصبر . . . لقد نفخت فيهم المهرجانات كثيرا من الحزة القومية وأثارت في صدورهم أعذب العواطف وأغلاها . حتى أن كثيرين منهم كانوا يحفظون شعر المهرجانات غيبا ويرددونه في مجالس أنسهم أو سهراتهم . وكان لهذا التقليد الأثر الكبير في غرس حب الشعر في صدور الجيل الجديد وفي دفعهم للاطلاع على التراث الشعري العربي . . . فسدوا بذلك قسما من العجز الذي كان يعاني منه تدريس الأدب العربي في مدارس المعارف الاسرائيلية . كما أنها مهّدت الطريق لظهور شعراء أصبحوا أعلاما لا في إسرائيل فحسب بل على مستوى العالم العربي كمحمود درويش وسميح القاسم وغيرهم . . " 2

However, in such circumstances, poets were expected to express themselves clearly and simply, and to make their images comprehensible to all their readers and listeners. Furthermore, their frequent use of popular words, expressions and proverbs, as was pointed out in the previous chapter, increases clarity and helps to achieve popularity and effectiveness.

(4) Political Commitment.

Palestinian resistance poetry is to be characterized

¹ Ḥabīb Qahwajī, al-‘Arab fī Zill al-Iḥtilāl al-Isrā’īlī..., p. 284.

² Ibid., p.285.

as leftist, and this tendency, again, is the outcome of the circumstances dominating Palestinian Arab life in Israel, that unique experience that Palestinian poets there have undergone.

According to Ghassān Kanafānī, the first writer to introduce this poetry to the Arab reader outside Israel, as we mentioned earlier, these circumstances can be summed up as follows:

- a) The majority of the Arab population remaining in Israel after 1948 is rural. This population was deeply involved in the revolutionary activities and uprisings which took place during the British Mandate. They, too, received the hardest blow in 1948.
- b) The very bad living conditions they endure, and the discrimination they suffer under Israeli rule, as well as the hard struggle they have to fight for their daily bread, all leave their effect.
- c) The firm belief that the existence of Israel as a state is the outcome of imperialistic schemes and that, moreover, the continuation of this state is mainly sustained by capitalism.¹

Even more important than the above factors, we believe, is the nature of the Israeli political parties and their attitude and stance vis à vis the Arab population of the country.

The book written by Sabri Jiryis,² himself an Arab

¹ Ghassān Kanafānī, Adab al-Muqāwama fī Filastīn al-Muḥtalla, pp.46-47.

² The Arabs in Israel.

intellectual who has lived in Israel since 1948, discusses at length the social and political situation of the Palestinians in Israel since the creation of the Jewish State.

In the book, Sabri Jiryis sheds ample light on the outlook of the main Israeli political parties on the Arab population in Israel. Speaking of Mapai, the writer concludes that "there was nothing in its history or ideology to attract the Arabs or win their support".¹ As for Mapam, the party "having neither the means of Mapai nor the zeal of the Communist Party in defending the Arabs, locally and abroad, Mapam was bound to fail in making substantial progress among the Arabs".²

On the contrary, the Communist Party has succeeded to a large extent in what Mapam and Mapai failed to do. It also, encouraged the Israeli-Arabs to join the party. As a result, many intellectuals among them became members in that party.

The reasons for this success, as discussed by the writer, can be summed up as follows.

a) The Israeli government's own policy towards the Arab minority. As the military government became more oppressive, and the expropriation of Arab land more extensive "the Communist Party was soon leading the Arab opposition to such domestic policy".³

b) The government's foreign policy, which tied the country to United States policy at the expense of the Communist

¹ Ibid., p.164.

² Ibid., p.175.

³ Ibid., p.181.

bloc. This put "the Communist Party and the Arabs in Israel on the same side". Thus "the Communists focus on both fronts", by "trying to protect Arab rights" at the local level and by encouraging, to some extent, the national aspirations of the Arab minority. At their twelfth party congress in 1958 the Communists even championed "the right of the Arabs of Israel to self-determination, even to the extent of seceding".¹

c) The active role of the Communist press, which "has kept an almost complete record of the experiences of the Arabs in Israel, and is widely read by the Arab population".²

Besides, the several Arabic literary and cultural magazines founded by the Communists such as al-Ittihad (the union), al-Jadid (the new), al-Ghad (the morrow) and al-Darb (the road) allowed Arab writers and poets in Israel to express themselves freely. In fact many poets such as Maḥmūd Darwīsh, Samīḥ al-Qāsim, Tawfīq Zayyād, Sālīm Jubrān, Rāshid Ḥusayn and others, first appeared in print in these journals.

All the above facts support the view that the leftist tendency of Palestinian poets in Israel is due for the most part to the fact that their support for that ideology, and their contribution to it, were the only options open to them in order to ensure as far as possible their survival and that of their national aspirations, and to make use of whatever freedom of speech was available to them. This fact is even

¹ Ibid., p.182.

² Ibid., p.183.

acknowledged by several Israeli writers. To quote again Edwin Samuel, "Arabs vote Communist, especially in Nazareth, not because they are particularly Marxist in outlook, but because the Communists make the strongest protest against "Establishment's" restrictions on Israel's Arab citizens".¹ Nevertheless, it should be borne in mind that their adoption of the Communist ideology was neither constant nor done at the expense of national feeling. For example, support for the Communists among Israeli Arabs grew "as Soviet ties with some Arab countries, such as Egypt and Syria, were strengthened in the midfifties", but when Communists and nationalists in Arab countries "were airing their differences in the late fifties, only three Communists were elected to the Knesset, in contrast to six in 1955". Yet when that conflict was settled, "the Israeli Communists regained their popularity and won five seats in 1961".²

In conclusion, then, we may summarise as follows this discussion on the poetical representation of the Arab-Israeli struggle over Palestine, and its impact on Palestinian poetry:

- (1) At the first stage of the conflict, which covers the period preceding the issue of the Balfour Declaration in 1917, the subject was mooted in only a few poems, focussing mainly on the Zionist possession of land in Palestine.
- (2) During the second stage, in which Palestine was mandated by Great Britain, the conflict became a major topic, though

¹ The Structure of Society in Israel, p.108.

² Ibid., p.183.

not the only one. In addition to introducing new poetical themes, the conflict also introduced new terms and expressions to poetical usage, as has been pointed out previously. Even so, at that stage the Palestinian literary personality was not so distinctive. Although some distinguished poets appeared then, such as Ibrāhīm Ṭūqān and 'Abd al-Raḥīm Maḥmūd, both of whom instilled into Palestinian poetry a new spirit originating mainly from the struggle, that poetry remained influenced by Egyptian, Syrian and Lebanese exemplars, the writers in those countries leading the Arab literary movement at that time. In other words, Palestinian poetry during that period was taking more from the Arab literary movement than it was giving it.

(3) After 1948, the "tragedy", with its different consequences, became the sole concern of the Palestinian poet. In no way can this poetry be understood or valued now without examining it in the context of the Palestinian tragedy.

Besides, Palestinian poetry at this phase of the conflict developed into a literary movement with several distinguishing features. This applies to poetry written in "exile" as well as that written under the Israeli flag.

Moreover, it is at this stage, and for the first time in the history of Arabic literature, that Palestinian poetry began to give the Arab literary movement as much as it took from it, if not more.

(2) The Impact of the Problem on Modern Arabic Poetry.

It was mentioned earlier in this thesis that non-Palestinian Arab poets, up to the date of the Balfour Declaration in 1917, paid little attention to the Zionist threat to Palestine, although the subject was widely discussed in Arab papers and reviews. The main concern of the poets then was Arab-Turkish relations, as the discussion in chapter I illustrates.

During the period between 1917 and 1929, there were a number of poems voicing fear and deep concern about Palestine because of the Zionist threat to it.¹ But still it cannot

¹ After a lengthy search in poetry collections, papers and periodical reviews, we have been able to find the following poems. However, it should be pointed out that the many poems written by Wadī' al-Bustānī in that period are not included here, since we have classified the poet as Palestinian, for reasons explained previously in chapter II, p.46.

المسافر (1917) by Rashīd Salīm al-Khūrī (al-Shā'ir al-Qarawī), Dīwān al-Shā'ir al-Qarawī, p.306.

انهض نهوض الليث (1927) and دمة على العرب (1920) by Maḥbūb al-Khūrī al-Shartūnī, Dīwān al-Shartūnī, p.82-88. pp.126-128 respectively.

الى هربت صموئيل (1920) by Ma'rūf al-Raṣāfī, Dīwān al-Raṣāfī, pp.327-331.

فلسطين إن القصد لا يتحول (1921) by 'Abd al-Muḥsin al-Kāzīmī, Dīwān al-Kāzīmī, p.233.

أنين الديار (1924) and سياسة الالهواء (1924) by Muṣṭafā al-Ghalāyīnī, Dīwān al-Ghalāyīnī, p.104, 110-111 respectively. على حرمين (1925) by Najīb Zughayb, al-'Irfān, vol.11, 1925, p.285.

الحركة الفلسطينية الأولى (1925) by Mārūn 'Abbūd, Dīwān Zawābi', p.55.

be claim^d that the subject was treated widely in the poetry of that period.

The Palestinian-Jewish clashes of 1929 over al-Burāq Wall (the Wailing Wall) marked the turning point in the poets' attention to the happenings there. Since then the political situation in Palestine has become a major theme, especially in the poetry written by Syrians, Lebanese, Iraqis, Egyptians, Kuwaitis, Algerians and Arab poets in the Mahjar (S. N. America).

After the loss of Palestine and the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, the conflict became a major concern of the Arab poet, irrespective of his political or ideological commitment.

Then came the June defeat in 1967, adding a far-reaching impact, not only on poetry but on other literary forms as well, as was pointed out in chapter IV.

The response of most of the poets to that disastrous defeat was one of unbalanced shock; they often expressed themselves through nightmarish visions. Yet the message of the poetry inspired by the June defeat, to quote the words of one writer, "is never one of despair, but of sober realization of the grim facts and heroically continuing the

الى الحزب الوطني في فلسطين (1925) by Ḥasan Ḥumānī, al-Irfān, vol.11, 1925, p.966.

نسمة من فلسطين (1928) by Muḥammad 'Abd al-Ghanī Ḥasan, Dīwān Nab' al-Hayā, p.96.

فلسطين (1928) by Sālīḥ al-Ja'farī, Filastīn fī al-Shi'r al-Najafī al-Mu'āṣir, p.225.

تحية الوفد الفلسطيني (1928) by 'Abd al-'Azīz 'Atīq, Dīwān 'Atīq, p.143.

struggle".¹

For some poets, like Nizār Qabbānī, the June setback circumscribes a shift from love themes to political ones dealing mainly with the Arab-Israeli conflict.*

However, in many of their writings, Arab poets, even before 1948, directed much of their wrath and criticism not only at the Israelis or the powers backing them, but also at Arab leadership and society itself. Particularly in poetry written after 1967, even the Arab man as an individual became exposed to dissection and conviction.

Besides, there has been a notable development in the poets' understanding of the dimensions of the problem. The tragedy of the Palestinians has not been dealt with as a calamity concerning only Palestinians, but as a painful hardship affecting the entire Arab world. While thus broadening its terms of reference, they have been careful neither to reduce the problem to a mere conflict between Jews and Arabs or Muslims, nor to conceive of it in purely political terms.¹

¹ M.M. Badawi, "Commitment in Modern Arabic Poetry", op. cit., p. 879.

² Najm A. Bezirgan, "Arab-Jewish Cultural Symbolism: Prospects and Retrospects", Al-'Arabiyya (Journal of American Association of Teacher of Arabic), vol. 13, Nos. 1-2, 1980, p. 7.

* Qabbānī's first national poem on the subject of Palestine is entitled قصة راشيل شوارزنبرغ (The Story of Rachel Schwartzberg). The poem was published in al-Ādāb magazine (February 1956, pp. 1-2). Since the beginning of his career and up to the 1967 War, only few poems with socio-political themes were written by the poet, such as: جميلة بو حيرد (1961), الحب والبتول (1955), خبز وحشيش وقمر (1956), رسالة جندي في جبهة السويس (1958) and

Looking to the poets' technique in approaching this subject, we find two forms of presentation: direct and indirect. Works treating it directly or plainly are easily traced, and often concentrate on themes related directly to the conflict, such as those of the refugees and their longing for the return, the call for liberating the country, the *Fidā'ī* etc. This, however, was discussed at length previously.

On the contrary, works approaching the subject indirectly or obliquely are traced only after strenuous effort, and even then they may elude the student. This sort of presentation is found amply in avant-garde poetry, in which the works rely heavily on myths and symbols, with no direct mention of the parties involved in the conflict. The examples by Ṣalāḥ 'Abd al-Ṣabūr, Khalīl Hāwī, Adūnīs and Fadwā Ṭūqān which we discussed in chapter VI are representative of this approach.

It should be noticed, however, that this oblique approach became evident only after the emergence of the "Free Verse Movement" which coincided with the tragedy of Palestine in the late forties. This judgement is based on the fact that only three poems -all we have found- from among the mass of poetry written before 1948, treat the subject of Palestine symbolically. These poems are:

الحشي الذبيح (The Slain Turkey)(1931)¹ by Ibrāhīm Ṭūqān
الروض المستباح (The Confiscated Garden)(1947)² by Fadwā

¹ *Dīwān Ṭūqān* p.104.

² *Dīwān Fadwā Ṭūqān*, pp.129-133.

(The poem appeared first in the Egyptian monthly review *al-Kitāb*, vol.3, no.4, January 1947, pp.592-594.).

Tūqān, and وردة في كف ظالم (A Rose in the Hand of an Oppressor)(1947) by an anonymous Iraqi poet.* But the symbol in these poems, especially the last two, is very clear and can be recognized immediately. The Iraqi poet even ends his poem by verses referring to Palestine by name:

(أفهل تدري الوري ما هذه هذه الوردة قطر مستكين
انه قطر فلسطين الذي عبث فيه أكف الجائرين)

Unfortunately, the few books written in Arabic about the representation of the Palestine problem in modern Arab poetry deal only with works treating the subject directly and blatantly.** This misleads the student, giving him only a short-sighted view of the subject.

Nevertheless, many Arab critics and writers have voiced their awareness of this, and have pointed out that when

* The poem was published in al-'Irfān, vol.33, no.6, April 1947, p.611. The poet did not give his real name, but identified himself as شاعر الوطن - الكاظمية. Our efforts, however, have failed to discover who the poet was.

** The following list consists of five books written on the subject. The last two were written after 1967.

- Al-Shi'r al-'Arabī al-Ḥadīth fī Ma'sāt Filastīn, by Kāmil al-Sawāfirī, published in Cairo in 1963.
- Fī Shi'r al-Nakba, by Ṣāliḥ al-Ashtar, published in Damascus in 1960.
- Ma'sāt Filastīn wa-Āthāruhā fil-Shi'r al-Mu'āṣir, by Jamīl Sa'īd, published in Baghdad in 1965.
- Al-Shi'r al-'Arabī wal-Qaḍiyya al-Filastīniyya min al-Nakba ilā al-Naksa, by Aḥmad Sulaymān al-Aḥmad, published in Damascus, n.d.
- Filastīn fī al-Shi'r al-Najafī al-Mu'āṣir, by Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Ṣaghīr, published in Beirut in 1968.

dealing with this subject attention must be paid to works treating it subtly and indirectly. Besides, they have constantly called attention to the far reaching impact of the problem on modern Arabic poetry, especially in respect of attitude, tone, mood, imagery, symbolism, etc.

In 1964, al-Ādāb¹ asked six writers and critics to answer the following question: "To what extent has the Palestine problem influenced modern Arabic literature?"

The writers who were asked are: Suhayl Idrīs, Munīr al-Baalbakī, Muṭā' Ṣafadī, Iḥsān 'Abbās, Ghassān Kanafānī, and Muḥammad Yūsuf Najm. Their answers can be summed up as follows:

(1) The representation of the problem is not limited to works treating the subject directly. More serious works approach it subtly and symbolically, and students of literature must be kept well-aware of this fact.

(2) The "Palestine tragedy" has channelled contemporary Arabic poetry into new paths, and given it a new taste, colour, and identity. Had not this problem existed its characteristics would be completely different from what they are at present.

(3) The impact of the problem on Arabic literature will increase both horizontally and vertically (i.e. in quality and quantity), hence the literary response towards tragic events like those that have happened in Palestine, needs time to produce deeper changes in literary production.

¹ No.3, March 1964, pp.1-5.

However, discussion about the representation and the impact of the problem on literature in general and poetry in particular has been increasing, especially in the years following the June War in 1967. In their discussion, Arab writers have been paying more attention to the qualitative rather than the quantitative works inspired by the conflict whether directly or indirectly.

The following few pages, therefore, aim to shed light on some basic issues seen as obvious spheres of influence of the conflict on modern Arabic poetry. These are, namely, the idea of commitment, the idea of death and resurrection, elements of anxiety and sadness and the reaction determined by these moods.

The equivalent Arabic word for "commitment" is Iltizām, and this word has been an essential part of the vocabulary of any modern Arab literary critic for many years. Although its meaning has become diluted, as one writer notices,¹ it denotes that literature should have a message, should serve the causes and aspirations of the nation, rather than just delight the reader. In other words, "commitment" contradicts the idea of "art for art's sake" which represents *it* as self-sufficient, with no need to serve any ulterior purpose; if this be so, it should therefore not be judged by any non-aesthetic standards, whether moral or political.²

The idea of commitment in modern Arabic thought and

¹ M.M. Badawi, A Critical Introduction to Modern Arabic Poetry, p.207.

² Princeton Encyclopaedia of Poetry and Poetics, p.6.

literary criticism is not, however, altogether new. Much earlier than the fifties, this issue had been discussed by several Arab writers. In Egypt, for instance, the radical thinker and writer Salāma Mūsā (1889-1958) tried to promote this idea by calling for a literature for the people and of the people.¹ And in Lebanon, the socialist Lebanese 'Umar Fākhūrī attacked "ivory tower" literature and called for politically and socially committed literature in his book Adīb fil-Sūq (1944).²

Nevertheless, it was from the early fifties, that the debate about commitment became a central idea in Arab literary writings. In 1953 a new literary magazine, al-Ādāb, was founded in Beirut, with commitment as its main message, as was pointed out in chapter IV.

Since then, "commitment became the keyword in literary criticism",³ or, as put by another writer, "the rule rather than the exception".⁴

The impact of the Palestine problem on promoting this idea in literature in general and poetry in particular is unquestionable, according to almost all Arab critics and writers. To quote M. M. Badawi in this regard:

The two events which in the meantime had contributed significantly to the wide spread of this attitude of commitment were

¹ Salma Khadra Jayyusi, Trends and Movements , vol.2, p.574.

² Ibid., p.575.

³ Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, "Modern Arabic Literature and the West", op. cit., p.88.

⁴ M. M. Badawi, A Critical Study , p.207.

the Palestine tragedy of 1948 ... and the Egyptian Revolution, itself an indirect consequence of the Palestine war in 1948 with its advocacy of the cause of the masses and the proletariat, and its far-reaching repercussions throughout the Arab world.¹

According to another critic, Muḥammad Mandūr, the call for commitment in modern Arabic literature can be considered as a revolt against the call for "sentimental poetry" (الشعر الوجداني) which was raised by the "Diwan Group" in Egypt and the "Mahjar School" during the twenties and thirties of this century.² This view, however, does not contradict the former, since Arab men of letters, when demanding that literature should be committed to the causes of the Arab masses, were motivated deeply by the Palestine tragedy, as one writer rightly points out.³

The period since the late nineteenth century following the opening up of the Arab countries to the outside world, especially the West, is usually referred to in Arabic writings as a "renaissance period". This term, speaking in general, became unquestioningly accepted as a fact by many writers of different specializations.

Even so, many Arab poets did not accept the term blindly. From the early years of this century, poets have asked several questions concerning this perception of the facts: was it really a period of awakening for the Arabs?

¹ Ibid., p.208.

² Muḥammad Mandūr, Qaḍāyā Jadīda fī Adabīnā al-Ḥadīth, p.77.

³ Ṣāliḥ al-Ashtar, Fī Shi'r al-Nakba, p.88.

Have the Arabs really arisen out of the stagnation in which they have lain for many centuries? And, if so, how can the continuous setbacks, retrogressions and fragmentations on the Arab side be explained or justified?

In posing such questions, Arab poets often cast doubt on what historians or politicians took as an accepted fact. For many among them, the Arab nation is still dead, and so its resurrection remains a hope rather than an existing fact.

One of the most outstanding poems, we believe, in this regard is an experimental* poem called *النهاية* (The End)¹ by the Mahjari poet Nasīb 'Arīḍa, written in 1917, in which he rebukes the Arabs for tolerating the Turks. In the poem, 'Arīḍa sees the Arab nation as a lifeless body which deserves to be buried unmourned. The poet's tone is charged with overwhelming grief and anger for such a situation:

كَفَّنُوهُ
وَادْفِنُوهُ
أَسْكِنُوهُ
هَوَّةَ اللَّحْدِ الْعَمِيقِ
وَإِذْهَبُوا • لَا تَتَذَبَّبُوهُ ، فَهُوَ شَعْبٌ
مَيِّتٌ لَيْسَ يَفِيْقُ •
هَتَكَ عَرْضَ ،
نَهَبَ أَرْضَ ،

¹ *Dīwān al-Arwāh al-Hā'ira*, pp.65-67.

* For a critical analysis of the poem regarding its experimental form, see, 'Izz al-Dīn Ismā'īl, *al-Shi'r al-'Arabī al-Mu'āṣir*, p.70, also S. Moreh, *Modern Arabic Poetry* (1800-1970), pp.117-118.

شنىق بعض ،
 لم تحرك غضبه ،
 فلماذا تذرف الدمع جرافا
 ليس تحيا الخطبة •

Dress him for the grave
 and bury him.
 Let the abyss of the grave
 be his dwelling.
 Leave him there
 and don't bother your head about
 mourning him,
 since he is a dead nation,
 and the hope of seeing him awaken
 is a hopeless one.

...
 His honour being disgraced,
 his land being plundered,
 his men being hanged
 all this could not ignite his anger,
 so why should we waste tears upon him!
 A dry piece of wood will never come to life.

The comparison between this poem and Khalīl Ḥawī's poem "Lazarus in 1962", for example, reveals a close similarity between the vision of the two poets regarding the point under discussion. Both lament the death of the nation they belong to, and express pessimism about its resurrection. The kinship between these poems is clear, even when we take into consideration the time at which 'Arīḍa's poem was written, and the poets' technique in approaching their subjects directly and blatantly at that time.

In contemporary Arabic poetry, however, the idea of the death and rebirth of the Arab nation or Arab civilization became the main concern of many serious political works by the leading poets of the "Free Verse Movement". Those prominent figures, such as Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb, Adūnīs, Khalīl Ḥawī and others, gave this idea new dimensions

and enriched it with fresh vision by treating it subtly, and by using a technique which relies heavily on mythical images and symbols.

The link between the domination of this idea in contemporary Arabic poetry and the problem of Palestine is unquestionable, as Rītā 'Awad believes.¹ As an example of this we may quote Adūnīs, in Fātiḥa li-Nihāyāt al-Qarn (An Opening to the Ends of the Century) (1980):

We are not living. Our daily life has become
a form of muted death, and our historical
misery is unparalleled. 2

In another passage he makes himself clearer:

For about nine centuries, the West has been
trying earnestly to keep the Arab lands in
endless darkness. If in the past the conflict
with the West took a spiritual shape, now it
has taken a materialistic form represented in
the creation of the State of Israel. Yet the
conflict has not ended with the taking-over
of the land; the West is demanding the Arabs'
acceptance of the loss of that land and dic-
tating conditions affirming the de facto
situation. 3

Nevertheless, Adūnīs' vision with regard to the death and rebirth of the Arab man, is not one of despair, but often of firm belief: "From the dying Arab body the flower of the future will be born. And this dying body is our sea and sun",⁴ he writes.

¹ Uṣṭūrat al-Mawt wal-Inbi'āth ..., p.87.

² P. 21.

³ Ibid., p.136.

⁴ Ibid., p.134.

What makes him optimistic is clarified in another passage, in which he addresses the Arab rulers, saying:

You have made Arab man lose his chance in this age by freezing him in the swamps of the Middle ages, and by building a barrier between him and civilization. And if he is still miraculously throbbing with life in his ashes, this is because he is made of a unique substance. ¹

Accordingly, the several mythical and legendary symbols introduced by the poet, such as the Phoenix, Mihyār and al-Husayn, provide variety in the visions of resurrection in his poetry.

Tracing this idea in the works of another poet, Khalīl Ḥawī, we see that it is the main concern of the poet. In some of his collections, i.e. Nahr al-Ramād (River of Ashes) (1957), Bayādir al-Jū' (The Threshing-floors of Hunger) (1965), and the poems al-Umm al-Ḥazīna (The Grieved Mother) (1967) and Dabāb wa-Burūq (Fog and Lightning flashes) → Ḥawī expresses a deep pessimism about the resurrection of the Arab nation. The poem "Lazarus in 1962" which came in the second collection (i.e. Bayādir al-Jū') represents a good example of this. Nevertheless, in the collection called al-Nāy wal-Rīḥ (The Flute and the Wind) (1961) and some other poems he is highly optimistic.*

¹ Ibid., p.17.

* The life of Khalīl Ḥawī ended tragically. The poet who was a Lebanese Christian committed suicide by shooting himself a few days after the Israeli invaded Lebanon in June 1982. The poet is said to have left a note in which he expresses his despair and anguish at seeing Israeli

Poetic mood, tone and attitude were also influenced by the problem of Palestine after 1948. "Sadness, alienation, loneliness, deprivation, repression and the tragic death" became the banners of contemporary Arabic poetry, one critic states.¹

The circumstances that made such characteristics the main features of the poetry of the new generation are amply expressed by Arab writers, critics and poets themselves, 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Bayātī, a leading figure in the contemporary poetical movement, reveals that when he began to realize, as a poet, the essence of things around him in the early fifties, tragedy and sadness were the only visible facts within his sight.² Such scenes are reflected clearly in his early collections ملائكة وشياطين (Angels and Devils) (1950), أباريق مهشمة (Broken Pitchers) (1954) and المجد للأطفال والزيتون (Glory be to Children and Olives) (1956).

Yet at a later stage, his poetry began expressing rejection of this situation and then rebellion against it.³

This development, from the portrayal of sadness to its rejection and then to rebellion against it and its causative factors, as pointed out by al-Bayātī, represents the way

troops at the doors of Beirut, while Arab governments watched silent and indifferent. Such a tragic end illuminates the deep sufferings and intolerable pain eating at the heart of the Arab poet as he witnesses the continuous setbacks, frustrations and humiliation of his nation.

¹ Khālida Sa'īd, "Bawādir al-Rafḍ fil-Shi'r al-'Arabī", Shi'r, no.19, summer 1961, p.88.

² 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Bayātī, Tajribatī al-Shi'riyya, p.20.

³ Ibid., p.21.

in which contemporary Arabic poetry as a whole has developed since 1948, as 'Izz al-Dīn Ismā'īl explains.¹

Thus, we can conclude now that the impact of the Palestine issue on modern Arabic poetry has developed over the years from the introduction of new themes related to the conflict to deeper aspects which touch the very essence of this poetry. Had not this problem existed, there is no doubt that the characteristics of modern Arabic poetry would be different to what they are at present.² According to Kamal Abu Deeb the loss of Palestine formed the tragic reality which determined the climate within which Arabic poetry has developed since the late forties.³ The poetry of the last three decades has embodied the bitterness, frustration and despair eating at the heart of the Arab poets in these years. The Palestine experience has radiated with a new poetic tone, a new symbolism, a new Angst which forms a subterranean level of modern poetry,⁴ he also adds.

¹ Al-Shi'r al-'Arabī al-Mu'āṣir, p.401.

² Iḥsan 'Abbās, Ittijāhāt al-Shi'r al-'Arabī al-Mu'āṣir, p.58.

³ "Adunis and the New Arab Poetry", Gazelle Review, no.3, 1977, p. 35.

⁴ Ibid.

Conclusion:

The foregoing survey of the representation and influence of the political situation in Palestine on modern Arabic poetry will help to enlighten students of literature on many basic issues concerning this genre. These can be summed up as follows:

(1) Unlike any other problems the Arabs have experienced in their recent history, the Palestine issue has influenced almost all Arab poets, irrespective of their political, ideological and religious affiliations. Their poetry reflects a unified outlook and attitude to this problem.

(2) The poets' response to the Arab-Israeli conflict precedes that of the novelists, short story writers and dramatists. It precedes also Arab official attention to the political events in Palestine. It was only after 1948 that the problem became extensively reflected in novels, short stories and plays; indeed, the turning point occurred after 1967, when this issue became a dominant theme in non-poetical literary works.

(4) Before 1948, events in Palestine provided Arab poets with several related themes. The new situation which followed the foundation of the State of Israel and the subsequent expulsion of the majority of the Palestinians from their homeland, as well as Arab defeats in wars with Israel, provided the poets with new and vivid themes and ideas.

(4) In the poetry written before 1948, the religious factor

is much more evident. On the other hand, nationalist and humanitarian factors acquired far greater significance in poetry written after 1948.

(5) While the poetry written on Palestine before 1948 reflects much attention to the Jews, and to Great Britain as their ally, the poetry written after the creation of the State of Israel shows less interest in the Jews, whether Zionists or not. This can be attributed to the general feeling that the "Palestine tragedy" was caused not so much by the Zionist presence as by the Arab absence. During the last three decades the Arab poet has become more preoccupied with a keen desire to understand himself and society in the light of repeated defeats in the struggle against Israel.

(6) The poets' approach to the subject has developed from an earlier plain, direct treatment to a subtle and indirect one relying heavily on mythical references and images. In so doing, the poets, rather than merely picturing events or commenting on them, plunged into the depth of the individual and collective Arab psyche and explored the moral and psychological changes in the Arab character which had been affected by the loss of Palestine and by the Arab defeats.

(7) The impact of the Palestine issue on modern Arabic poetry, therefore, goes beyond the realm of themes; it touches the very essence of this poetry, in regard to mood, tone, attitudes, imagery and diction. Had not this problem

existed, there is no doubt that many definite characteristics of modern Arabic poetry would have been different from what they are at present.

(8) The tragedy of the Palestinians helped Palestinian poetry develop its own distinguishing features. Yet, apart from the fact that Palestinian poetry after 1948 presents a developing image of the Palestinian from a downtrodden helpless wretch to a rebellious determined one who can change the situation in which he finds himself; this poetry, especially after the emergence of the "Poetry of the Resistance", became one of the main factors contributing to the formation of the current features of modern Arabic poetry. This, however, has happened for the first time in the history of Arabic poetry, for at no time in the past has poetry written by Palestinians played such a role as it does now.

Appendix I

Arabic Novels Reflecting the Palestine Issue : 1947-1973.

- * مذكرات دجاجة (The Diaries of a Hen), by Ishāq Mūsa al-Husaynī, Cairo, 1943.
- * فلسطين المجاهدة (Palestine, the Freedom-Fighter), by Ibn al-Sharāh, Baghdad, 1948.
- * فتاة من فلسطين (A Girl from Palestine), by 'Abd al-Ḥalīm 'Abbās, Cairo, 1949.
- * لاجئة (Refugee Girl), by Jūrj Ḥannā, Beirut, 1952.
- * صراخ في ليل طويل (Screams in a Long Night), by Jabrā Ibrāhīm Jabrā, Baghdad, 1955.
- * فرنكا : جاسوسة من بني صهيون (Firankā , A Zionist Spy), by 'Abd al-Hādī Muḥammad Mas'ūd, Cairo, 1956 (157 pages).
- * حسناء صهيونية (The Beautiful Zionist Woman), by Muḥammad al-Jazzār, Cairo, 1956 (168 pages).
- * أنا من فلسطين (I an from Palestine), by 'Azmi Rashād al-Muhtasib, Kuwait, 1956.
- * ثمن النصر (The Cost of Victory) by Jamāl Rabī', Cairo, 1958.
- * طريق العودة (The Road to Return), by Yūsuf al-Sibā'ī, Cairo, 1958.
- * أرملة من فلسطين (A Widow from Palestine), by 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Jūda al-Saḥḥār, Cairo, 1959, (152 pages).
- * طريق فلسطين (The Road to Palestine), by 'Alī Abū Ḥaydar, Beirut, 1959.
- * بيت وراء الحدود (A House beyond the Border), by 'Isā al-Nā'ūrī, Beirut, 1959.

* Palestine is a main theme in the novel.

- * "Hunters in a Narrow Street", by Jabra Ibrahim Jabra,
London, Heinmann, 1960.¹
- ** جيل القدر (The Generation of Destiny), by Muṭā' Safadī,
Beirut, 1960.
- * ستة أيام (Six Days), by Ḥalīm Barakāt, Beirut, 1961.
- * دقت الساعة يا فلسطين (Oh Palestine, the Hour has Struck!),
by Yūsuf Sālim, Cairo, 1962.
- * الفردوس السليب (Paradise Usurped), by Samīr 'Abd al-Rāziq
al-Quṭub, Beirut, 1963.
- * رجال في الشمس (Men in the Sun), by Ghassān Kanafānī,
Beirut, 1963.
- * أرض الأنبياء (The Land of Prophets), by Najīb al-Kilānī,
Cairo, 1963.
- ** الدكتور خالد (Dr. Khālīd), by Aḥmad Ḥusayn, Cairo, 1964.
- ** أي شيء (Any Thing), by 'Āṭif Naṣṣār, Cairo, 1964.
- * فداء فلسطين (Sacrifice for Palestine), by Rajab Tawfīq
al-Thalāthīnī, Cairo, 1964.
- * عناصر هدامة (Destructive Elements), by Yūsuf al-Khaṭīb,
Beirut, 1964.
- ** غروب وشرق (The Setting and Rising), by Jamāl Ḥammād,
Cairo, 1965.
- * حفنة رمال (A Handful of Sand), by Nāṣir al-Dīn al-
Nashāshībī, Beirut, 1965.
- * المشوهون (The Disfigured), by Tawfīq Fayyād, Haifa,
1965.
- * بنفسجة للعائد (A Violet for the Returning [Refugee]),
by Ilyāna Ṣunbur, Beirut, 1965.

¹ The novel was translated into Arabic by Muḥammad 'Uṣfūr and published by Dār al-Ādāb (Beirut) in 1974, under the title "صيادون في شارع ضيق".

** Palestine is a minor theme in the novel.

- * أقوى من الجلادين (Stronger than the Executioners), by Rajab al-Thalāthīnī, Cairo, 1966.
- * الطَّـرِيد (The Expelled Man), by Nawwāf Abū al-Hayjā, Damascus, 1966.
- * جراح جديدة (New Wounds), by 'Isā al-Nā'ūrī, Beirut, 1967.
- * مائة ساعة في القمة (One Hundred Hours on the Peak), by Muṣṭafā, Fūda Muṣṭafā, Cairo, 1967.
- * واحترقت القاهرة (And So Cairo Burnt), by Aḥmad Ḥusayn, Cairo, 1968.
- * الكابوس (The Nightmare), by Amīn Shunnār, Beirut, 1968.
- * عودة الأسير (The Return of the Prisoner-of-War), by Ḥusayn Kāmil al-Muḥāmī, Cairo, 1968.
- * التضحية (The Sacrifice), by Ghāzī Sam'ān, Beirut, 1968.
- * عصفير الفجر (The Birds of Dawn), by Laylā 'Usayrān, Beirut, 1968.
- * كفاح ومصير (Struggle and Fate), by Samīr 'Abd al-Rāziq al-Quṭub, Beirut, 1968.
- * أنت منذ اليوم (You, from Today), by Taysīr Sabbūl, Beirut, 1969.
- * الهدية الأخيرة (The Last Gift), by Ḥusnī Sulaymān al-Bīṭār, Beirut, 1969.
- * عودة الطائر الى البحر (The Bird's Return to the Sea), by Ḥalīm Barakat, Beirut, 1969.
- * ناسف الجسور (The Destroyer of Bridges), by 'Āṭif Aḥmad Ḥulwa, Beirut, 1969.
- * أحزان حزيران (The Sorrows of June), by Sulaymān Fayyāḍ, Beirut, 1969.
- * آلام نازحة (The Pains of a Refugee Woman), by Aḥmad al-'Uwaydī al-'Abbādī, Beirut, 1969.
- * الباحثون عن الحقيقة (The Seekers After Reality), by 'Awnī Muṣṭafā, Beirut, 1969.

- * من جانبي الطريق (From Both Sides of the Road), by Kāmil 'Āshūr, Beirut, 1969.
- * حارة النصارى (The Christian Quarter), by Nabīl Khūrī, Beirut, 1969.
- * سداسية الأيام الستة (The Six-Day Sextet), by Imīl Ḥabībī, Beirut, 1969.
- * أم سعد (Sa'd's Mother), by Ghassān Kanafānī, Beirut, 1969.
- * الرحيل (The Exodus), by Nabīl Khūrī, Kuwait, 1969.
- * عرس فلسطيني (A Wedding in Palestinian Style), by Adīb Naḥawī, Beirut, 1970.
- * رسالة من جندي (A Letter from a Soldier), by Buthayna 'Alī, Cairo, 1970.
- * السفينة (The Ship), by Jabrā Ibrāhīm Jabrā, Beirut, 1970.
- * اللعبة والحقيقة (Game and Reality), by Jīlān Ḥamza, Cairo, 1970.
- * النار والاختيار (The Fire and the Choice), by Khunātha Bannūna, Rabat, 1970.
- * قارب الزمن الثقيل (The Vessel of Heavy Days), by 'Abd al-Nabī Ḥijazī, Damascus, 1970.
- * عائد الى حيفا (Returning to Haifa), by Ghassān Kanafānī, Beirut, 1970.
- * كنت أسيرا (I was a Prisoner of War), by 'Abd al-Raḥmān 'Anān, Cairo, 1970.
- * الأبتـر (The Mutilated Man), by Mamdūh 'Udwān, Damascus, 1970.
- * سنوات العذاب (The Years of Suffering), by Hārūn Hāshim Rashīd, Cairo, 1970.
- * شـخ في تاريخ طويل (A Crack in a Long History), by Hānī al-Rāhib, Damascus, 1970.
- * الى اللقاء في يافا (Farewell in Jaffa), by Hiyām Ramzī al-Dardanjī, Tripoli, 1970.

- * متى تورق الأشجار (When will the Trees come into Leaf?), by 'Aṭiyya 'Abdullah 'Aṭiyya, Amman, 1970.
- ** ولنظل الى الأبد أصدقاء (Let us be Friends forever), by Iqbāl Barakāt , Cairo, 1970.
- * أطول يوم في تاريخ مصر (The Longest Day in Egypt's History), by al-Sayyid Shurābī, Cairo, 1971.
- * ابتسامة على شفثيه (A Smile on his Lips), by Yūsuf al-Sibā'ī, Cairo, 1971.
- * الدم والتراب (The Blood and the Soil), by 'Aṭiyya 'Abdullah 'Aṭiyya, Amman, 1971.
- * فارس مدينة القنطرة (The Knight of al-Qanṭara City), by 'Abd al-Salām al-'Ujaylī, Beirut, 1971.
- * دم لفطير صهيون (Blood for Zion's Unleavened Bread), by Najīb al-Kīlānī, Beirut, 1971.
- * ليس ثمة أمل لجلجامش (There is no Hope for Gilgamesh), by Khudāyr. 'Abd al-Amīr, Baghdad, 1972.
- * طواحين بيروت (The Mills of Beirut), by Tawfīq Yūsuf 'Awwād, Beirut, 1972.
- * ويموت الحزن أيضا (Grief dies also), by Yūsuf Shurūrū, Beirut, 1972.
- * حكاية فدائي (The Story of a Fidā'ī), by Mu'īn Aḥmad Maḥmūd , Beirut, 1972.
- * أيام الحب والموت (The Days of Love and Death), by Rashād Abū Shāwir, Beirut, 1973.
- * وجوه لا تراها الشمس (Faces which the Sun does not see), by 'Aṭiyya 'Abdullah 'Aṭiyya, Amman , 1973.
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- * وعلى الدنيا السلام (It's all over with this World), by Dhun-nūn Ayyūb, Beirut, 1973.
- * جرح على أرض المعركة (A Wound on the Battlefield), by Ḥusnī Abū Rabāḥ al-Dajānī, Alexandria, n.d.
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Appendix II.

Arabic Plays Reflecting the Palestine Issue: 1933-1973.

- وطن في سبيلك يا وطن (Oh Homeland, it's all for your Sake !), by Wadī 'Tarazī, Ramallah,* 1933.
- شيلوك الجديد (The New Shaylock), by 'Alī Aḥmad Bā Kathīr, Cairo, 1945.¹
- في فلسطين : مأساة عائلات الشهداء والمجاهدين (In Palestine: the Tragedy of the Fighters and Martyrs' Families), by Sa'īd Shuqayr, Ramallah, 1946.
- على هامش الجامعة العربية (On the Margin of the Arab League) (one-act verse play), by 'Azīz Abāza, 1946.²
- لبيك يا فلسطين (I am at your Service, Palestine!), by Zuhayr al-Shawwā, Damascus, 1947.
- وطن الشهيد (The Martyr's Homeland)(verse play), by Burhān al-Dīn al-'Abbūshī, Jerusalem, 1947.
- فلسطين على المسرح (Palestine on Stage) by Ḥannā Abū Rāshid, Cairo, 1948, (128 pages).
- الصهيوني (The Zionist), by Yūsuf Wahbī, Cairo, 1948.. (the play was performed on "al-Ubirā" stage, Cairo, 1948-49 theatre season).
- فلسطين (Palestine), by Maḥmūd Muḥammad Bakr Hilāl Cairo, 1948.
- العائد من فلسطين (The Man Returning from Palestine), by Fayrūz 'Abd al-Malik; (the play was performed during the 48-49 theatre season,

¹ See an analysis of this play by Umberto Rizzitano, "Reactions to Western Political Influences in 'Alī Aḥmad Bā Kathīr Drama", Historians of the Middle East, pp.442-448.

² See summary of the play, chapter III, pp.145-148.

* Town north of Jerusalem.

Cairo, Aḥmad 'Allām played the protagonist role, and the director was Fattūḥ Nashātī).

مأساة أوديب (The Tragedy of Oedupus), by 'Alī Aḥmad Bā Kathīr, Cairo, 1949.

اللاجئ الصغير وأمه (The Refugee Child and his Mother), by 'Alī 'Abbās Khalīl, (one-act play), al-'Irfān, vol.36, 1949, p.1087.

شبح الأندلس (The Phantom of the al-Andalus)(verse play), by Burhān al-Dīn al-'Abbūshī, Beirut, 1949, (75 pages).

مولد بطول (The Birth of a Hero), a play in two acts published in Masrah al-Mujtama' by Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm, Cairo, 1950.

الخطر الأكبر (The Greatest Danger), by Kāmil Ibrāhīm al-Jabbūrī, Baghdad, 1950.

مسرح السياسة (Theatre of Politics), by 'Alī Aḥmad Bā Kathīr, Cairo, 1952.¹

صلاح الدين الايوبي منقذ فلسطين (Saladin, the Saviour of Palestine), by Abd al-Raḥmān al-Bannā, Cairo, 1952.

مأساة فلسطين (Palestine Tragedy), by Ḥasan Aḥmad al-Asadī, Baghdad, 1952.

تسع بنادق فقط (Only Nine Rifles)(one-act play), by Khalīl Hindāwī, al-Ādāb, January, 1954, p.8.

لبيك يا فلسطين (Oh Palestine! We are at your Service), by 'Abdullah Zakī, Baghdad, 1955.

شعب الله المختار (The Chosen People), by 'Alī Aḥmad Bā Kathīr, Cairo, 1956, (132 pages).

¹ Twelve one-act plays written between 1945 and 1948.

محاكمة اسرائيل أمام المجلس الأعلى للآلهة (The Trial of Israel before the Supreme Council of the Gods) (one-act play), by Muḥammad Rif'at, al-Hilāl, April, 1956.¹

الأسوار (The Walls)(verse play), by Khālīd al-Shawwāf, Beirut, 1956, (The play was performed on the Qā'at al-Sha'b stage in Baghdad in 1958).

الفدائي الصغير حسن (Hasan, the young Fidā'ī)(one-act play), by Khalīl Hindāwī, al-Ādāb, January, 1957, p.19.

الشوق واللقاء (The Longing and the Meeting)(one-act play), by Fādīl al-Sibā'ī, (published in the author's short story collection having the same title), Beirut, 1958.

الجسر (The Bridge)(one-act play), by Fādīl al-Sibā'ī, Ibid.

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طريق العودة (The Road to Return)(one-act play), by Khalīl Hindāwī, Ibid.

¹ See a summary of the play in the Arab-Israeli Conflict as Represented in Arabic Fictional Literature, by Howard Douglas Rowland, pp.164-165.

² For a summary of the play, Ibid., p.165.

- الله اسرائيل (The God of Israel), by 'Alī Aḥmad Bā Kathīr, Cairo, 1962.
- الأب والابن (The Father and the Son)(one-act play), by Samīḥ Yānīs, al-Ādāb, March, 1964, p.98.
- لا تدفنوا الموتى (Don't bury the Dead)(one-act play), by Nadīm Khashafa, al-Ādāb, March 1964, p.77.
- الى فلسطين (To Palestine), by 'Abdullāh Zakī, Baghdad, 1964.
- الهدف الكبير (The Great Goal)(one-act play), by Jamīl al-Jabbūrī, al-Aqlām, August 1965, p.131.
- بيت الجنون (The House of Madness), by Tawfīq Fayyād, Haifa, 1965.
- أرض كنعان (The Land of Canaan)(verse play), by Muḥammad 'Afīfī Matar, Cairo, 1967. (148 pages).
- فلسطين الغد (Palestine of Tomorrow)(verse play), by Fu'ād 'Abd al-'Azīm al-Hamīdī, cairo, 1967.
- غدا تلتهب الرمال (Tomorrow the Sand will burn)(verse play), Yūsuf al-Muṭṭalibī, Baghdad, 1967.
- الفداء (The Self-Sacrifice), by Burhān al-Dīn Qashqūsh, Baghdad, 1968.
- الساقية (The Water-Wheel)(one-act play), by Yūsuf al-'Ānī, al-Ādāb, August 1968, p.23.
- زهرة من دم (Flower of Blood), by Suhayl Idrīs, Beirut, 1969.
- سرحان بشارة سرحان (Sirḥān Bishāra Sirḥān)*, by 'Amānu'īl Rassām, Baghdad, 1969.

* S.B. Sirḥān, the American (of Palestinian origin) who assassinated Senator Robert F. Kennedy in 1964.

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- قرقاش (Qaraqāsh)(verse play), by Samīḥ al-Qāsim, Beirut, 1970.¹
- حفلة سمر من أجل خمسة حزيران (An Evening Party for June the 5th), by Sa'dullah Wannūs, Beirut, 1970.
- النار والزيتون (The Fire and the Olive Trees), by Alfrid Faraj, Cairo, 1970. (performed in Cairo, 1970).
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- الموت والقضية (Death and the Cause), by 'Ādil Kāzīm, Baghdad, 1971.
- الطريق (The Road), by Muḥammad 'Alī al-Khaṭīb, Beirut, 1971.
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- حائط المبكى (The Wailing Wall), by Tāhā Salīm, Baghdad, n.d.
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Appendix III

Selected Poems on the Theme of the Refugees*

- اللاجئ (The Refugee)(1949), by 'Abd al-Mun'im al-Rifā'ī (Palestinian), Dīwān al-Musāfir, pp.79-85.
- خواطر لاجئة (Thoughts of a Refugee Woman)(1951), by Ilhām Yūsuf (Egyptian), al-Risāla, 19th year, no.916, 22 January 1951, p.115.
- خيمة البهتان (The Tent of Injustice)(1952), by Maḥmūd Ḥasan Ismā'īl (Egyptian), Dīwān al-Tā'ihūn, pp.45-47.
- موت شريد (Death of a Fugitive)(1953), by Ibrāhīm Sharāra (Lebanese), al-Ādāb, no.9, September 1953, p.36.
- عودة اللاجئين (The Return of the Refugee)(1954), by 'Isā al-Nā'ūrī (Jordanian), al-Ādāb, no.8, August 1954, p.41.
- مشردون (A Displaced People)(1954), by Muḥammad al-'Arabī Ṣamādiḥ (Tunisian), al-Ādāb, no.4, April 1954, p.56.
- حكاية لاجئ (Story of a Refugee)(1957), by Yūsuf al-Khaṭīb (Palestinian), al-Ādāb, no.9, September 1957, p.26.
- خواطر مشرد (Thoughts of a Refugee)(1957) by Nadhīr 'Azma (Syrian), al-Laḥm wal-Sanābil, pp.29-35.
- خرافة السلام (The Myth of Peace)(1960), by Zakī Qunṣul (Mahjarī), al-'Arabī, no.24, November 1960, pp.132-133.
- رسالة من لاجئ فلسطيني (A Letter from a Palestinian Refugee) (1962), by Hilāl Nājī (Iraqi), al-Fajr Ātin yā 'Irāq, pp.48-51.
- وكثبان الرمل (The Refugee and the Sand Dunes)(1963), by 'Alī 'Uqla Khursān (Syrian), al-Ādāb, no.9, September 1963, p.35.

* All the poems listed here are not mentioned in the discussion of the theme of the refugees in chapter V.

- المشرد الشريد (The Fugitive Refugee)(1964), by 'Abd al-Raḥmān Ghunaym (Egyptian), al-Ādāb, no.3, March 1964, p.69.
- ذكريات لاجئ (Memories of a Refugee)(1965), by Muḥammad Aḥmad al-'Azab (Egyptian), al-'Arabī, no.78, May 1965, pp.51-53.
- من لاجئ إلى إيرهارد (From a Refugee to Erhard)* (1965), by Muḥammad Jamīl Shalash (iraqi), al-Ādāb, no.6, June 1965, p.42.
- هدية العائد (The Present of the Returning Man)(1966), by Ḥasan al-Najmī (Palestinian), al-Ādāb, no.1, January 1966, p.17.
- دعوة إلى لاجئ من فلسطين (An Invitation to a Refugee from Palestine)(1968), by Aḥmad al-Qadīdī (Tunisian), al-Fikr, 13th year, no.4, 1968, p.64.
- الخيمة (The Tent), by Kulthūm Mālik 'Urābī (Palestinian), Musharrada, p.63.
- نداء الخيام (The Call of the Tents), by Kamāl Nāsir (Palestinian), al-A'māl al-Kāmila, pp.81-82.
- نحن واللاجئون (The Refugees and Us), by 'Adnān al-Rāwī (Iraqi), al-Majmū'a al-Shi'riyya al-Kāmila, pp.153-156.
- اللاجئ العربي (The Arab Refugee), by Mīshāl Abū Shahlā (Lebanese), Anfās al-'Ashiyyāt, p.127.
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* Erhard, Ludwig: the chancellor of the German Federal Republic from 1963-1966.

Appendix IV

The Story of Qaraqūsh

One day as Qaraqūsh was walking through the streets of the city, he saw a man carrying an oven-ready turkey in a tray, and followed him to a bakery.

He then heard the man instruct the baker to roast the turkey and have it ready for him by a certain hour when he would return to collect it.

The baker promised to do so. But no sooner did the man leave the bakery, than Qaraqūsh went up to the baker and said to him:

'I am Qaraqūsh. And I fancy this turkey for my dinner. So, when it is ready, be sure to have it sent to the Palace for me.'

'Very well, my Lord,' said the baker. 'But what am I to tell the rightful owner of the turkey when he returns to claim it?'

'Tell him,' said Qaraqūsh, 'that you were on the point of popping the turkey into the oven, when it suddenly sprouted wings and flew out of the bakery.'

'I hear and obey, my Lord,' said the baker, 'but such talk would still not exonerate me from punishment.'

'Have no fear,' said Qaraqūsh. 'I am the Supreme Judge, and when your case comes before me, I shall clear you of all charges.'

Having thus had Qaraqūsh's assurance that he would suffer no punishment, the baker proceeded to roast the turkey, and when it was ready he had it sent to the Judge's Palace.

In due course, the owner of the turkey returned to collect it. And the baker said to him:

'I regret to tell you, mate, that I was on the point of popping your turkey into the oven, when it suddenly sprouted wings and flew out of the bakery.'

'Sprouted wings and flew out of the bakery! A dead turkey! What kind of talk is this? You take me for a fool? You thief! You swindler!' shouted the man angrily, and he punched and kicked the baker all over.

The baker defended himself as best he could. Then he picked up a stone and aimed it at the man. But the man dodged, and the stone went whizzing past him to land with a hard thud on the ear of a fellow who was sleeping peacefully on the ground opposite the bakery, and killed him.

Immediately, the dead fellow's brother sprang upon the baker raining more kicks and punches upon him, and again the baker put up a valiant fight in self-defence. Then, thinking he had caught his assailant with all defences down, he drew back his arm and swung it out in what he intended to be a crippling punch on the jaw. But he missed his aim and the punch landed fair and square on the belly of a pregnant woman, who was standing watching the fight, causing her to miscarry on the spot.

Thereat, the woman's husband leaped upon the baker clawing, punching and kicking him, and the baker who now felt he could take no more corporal punishment, decided to end his life.

So, he made a desperate dash for the nearest mosque, and threw himself from the top of the minaret. But instead of falling on the ground, he fell on a man who was walking peacefully along the street, and instantly killed him.

In a trice, the crowd who had witnessed the accident, closed in on the baker, and the dead man's brother fell upon him, waving his arms aloft, and shouting high for vengeance.

The baker saw he was now trapped. And his one thought was to flee. But where to flee.. ? And how to flee.. ? Wildly his eyes raked the crowd for the smallest possible outlet, and then hovered for a fleeting second on the hind-parts of a donkey. Allah! Thou art indeed Great .. !

With a prodigious lunge forward, the baker reached the donkey and then grabbed its tail with both hands. And the donkey, thus rudely jolted out of its asinine wits, bolted off with him in a loud bray of protest. Scattering the crowd right and left in its headlong flight.

'Allah ! Thou art indeed Great!' again breathed the baker, as he hung grimly on to the donkey's tail and watched

with great relief the distance between him and his pursuers grow wider and wider.

Suddenly the tail came clear off in his hands, and whilst the donkey now all at once rid of the drag on his hindparts, halted abruptly in its tracks to work this phenomenon out, the crowd which was hot in pursuit behind, caught up with the baker and again fell mercilessly upon him, pounding, punching and kicking on all sides.

Finally, assailants and assaulted found their way to the Court of Law, and stood before Judge Qaraqūsh who opened the session by cross-examining the owner of the turkey: "And why did you assault the baker, my man? "

'Because, my Lord, I gave him a turkey to roast for me, and when I went to claim it, he had the nerve to tell me that the turkey had suddenly sprouted wings and flown out of the bakery.'

'And is it not in the power of Almighty Allah to return a dead turkey to life?' challenged Qaraqūsh.

The owner of the turkey looked at him tongue-tied. 'But you seem to be in doubt as to the power of Almighty Allah to revive the dead,' proceeded Qaraqūsh coolly; 'for that, I sentence you to sixty strokes of the birch and a sixty-dinar fine.'

Next came the brother of the man who was killed by a stone. 'And you, said Qaraqūsh to him, 'Why did you assault the baker?'

'Because, my Lord, he killed my brother who was sleeping peacefully on the ground opposite the bakery, by aiming at him a large stone which landed on his ear.'

'Did your brother bleed?' queried Qaraqūsh.

'No, my Lord.'

'Did you feel his pulse?'

'No, my Lord.'

'Then how can you prove that it was the baker who killed him, since he neither bled, nor did you feel his pulse? He may well have been dead long before the stone hit him. I therefore find you guilty of assault and sentence you to sixty strokes of the birch, and a sixty-dinar fine.'

It was now the turn of the man whose wife had miscarried, and Qaraqūsh said to him: 'And why did you assault the baker, my man?'

'Because, my Lord, he punched my pregnant wife on the belly, causing her to miscarry on the spot.'

'In that case,' said Qaraqūsh, 'I rule that the baker take your wife now, and return her to you pregnant as she was before he caused her to miscarry.'

'Never!' shouted the man outraged. 'Absolutely never, my Lord! Such a condition is utterly unacceptable!'

'In that case,' said Qaraqūsh, 'since you will not accept this equitable reparation, I find you guilty of assault, and sentence you to sixty strokes of the birch, and a sixty-dinar fine.'

Finally, he turned to the brother of the second man who was killed and said to him: 'And why did you assault the baker, my man?'

'Because, my Lord, he threw himself from the top of the minaret, and fell like a thunderbolt on my brother who was walking peacefully along the street, and killed him.'

'In that case,' said Qaraqūsh, 'I rule that the baker be made to walk along the street, and that you go up the minaret and throw yourself down upon him, and so kill him as he has killed your brother.'

'But, my Lord,' protested the baker, 'what guarantee have I that instead of falling on the baker, I do not fall on the ground and so kill myself in my attempt to kill him?'

'That is a chance you have to take,' said Qaraqūsh. 'But since you do not seem to be willing to take it, I find you guilty of assault, and sentence you to sixty strokes of the birch, and a sixty-dinar fine.'

There now remained the owner of the donkey who had led his mount to Court in the hope that Judge Qaraqūsh would uphold his claim for compensation to the loss of its tail. But having heard the judgement passed on his predecessors, his hopes were now dashed, and he was hurriedly sneaking out of Court when Qaraqūsh caught sight to him and called out peremptorily: 'You there! Come back here. Why did you

assault the baker?'

'I haven't assaulted the baker in any way, my Lord!' said the man, meekly retracing his steps.

'Then why are you here? And (as his eye fell on the animal's shorn behind) 'what happened to your donkey's tail?'

'Nothing ... nothing at all, my Lord. This donkey never had a tail ... it was born tail-less'.

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