

NINE

The Role of the Palestinian Peasantry in the Great Revolt (1936–1939)

Ted Swedenburg

Between 1936 and 1939, a major anti-colonial rebellion known among Arabs as the Great Revolt shook the mandate territory of Palestine. The struggle pitted a poorly armed peasant movement against the might of the world's preeminent colonial power, Great Britain. Despite the militancy and duration of the revolt, scholarly work on this period tends to emphasize the shortcomings of the insurgent movement and, in particular, to discount the role of the peasantry. Dominant accounts generally define the fellahin as "traditional, backward, and conservative," as "activated by tribal and religious loyalties,"¹ and as "too isolated, ignorant and poor" to play a significant role in the national movement.² Because they consider the peasants to be completely dominated by the local ruling class, these scholars view them as incapable of political initiative. Moreover, they attribute the disintegration of the revolt to the traditional clannish, factional, and regional divisions among fellahin that prevented them from maintaining a unified movement. The rebellion's demise is thus seen as due to the peasantry's accession to leadership in the vacuum left by the urban elites. A parallel argument, which imposes a model derived from industrial capitalism upon an agrarian society, attributes the uprising's defeat to its failure to develop a strong leadership. Since only a revolutionary party could have provided the command structure and social program necessary for victory, the peasantry as a class is considered incapable of providing guidance. Such analyses not only dismiss the crucial role of the peasants, who made up 75 percent of the population of Palestine,³ but also ignore their legitimate social and political demands.

I propose, as an alternative, to read existing historical accounts "against the grain" so as to bring the marginalized Palestinian peasantry to the center of my analysis.⁴ I will argue that the peasantry's relation to the ruling notables was

never simply one of complete subservience. As Gramsci notes, a dominant class's hegemony is never "total or exclusive"; it is, rather, a process, a relation of dominance that has, as Raymond Williams says, "continually to be renewed, recreated, defended and modified. It is also continually resisted, limited, altered, challenged by pressures not all its own."⁸ The Palestinian peasantry, therefore, while subordinated to the rule of the notables, nonetheless possessed a long tradition of opposition to their hegemony. It also possessed a history of challenging capitalist penetration and state formation. Such traditions of resistance were kept alive in popular memory and could be drawn upon as powerful tools of mobilization in moments of rupture. These "folk" traditions were not isolated, however, from other influences. They did not exist in a state of pristine purity, but were affected and transformed both by the dominant ideologies of the notables, who led the nationalist movement, and by alternative discourses emanating from more radical factions of the educated middle class. Also the fellahin's "common sense" notions⁹ and their forms of political mobilization were jolted by the rapidly changing material conditions of the British mandate period. The Palestinian peasantry, in short, was not simply an unchanging, backward social category.

During the course of the revolt, the rebels, who represented a broad alliance of peasants, workers, and radical elements of the middle class, developed an effective military force and began to implement social and political programs that challenged *a'yan* (notable) leadership of the nationalist movement and threatened the bases of mercantile-landlord dominance. The threat of a counter-hegemonic peasant leadership with a class-based program caused large numbers of wealthy urban Palestinians to flee the country. The movement also posed a serious threat to British strategy in the region and forced them to expend considerable military energies to crush the rebellion, which they succeeded in doing only after more than three years of struggle.

In order to recuperate and to assess the Palestinian peasants' historical achievements and traditions of resistance, I will trace the historical evolution of Palestinian society and its prevailing ideologies prior to the rebellion, going back to the period before capitalism was imposed as the dominant mode of production in Palestine. This will lay the foundation for a revised understanding of the pivotal role of the struggles of the Palestinian peasantry against the expansion of the Ottoman state, Zionist colonization, and British occupation that culminated in the Great Revolt.⁷

PALESTINE IN THE PRE-CAPITALIST ERA

In the period immediately prior to its occupation by Egypt's ruler Muhammad 'Ali in 1831, Palestine was only loosely controlled and integrated into the Ottoman empire.⁸ At best, Ottoman sway extended to Palestine's towns and their immediate environs. But even the towns, dominated by notables whose

authority was based on religious or genealogically claimed "noble" status, enjoyed substantial autonomy and frequently rebelled against Ottoman authority.⁹ Towns along the coast had suffered a decline in the late eighteenth century due to the demise of the cotton trade with France and the ravages inflicted by the successive invasions of coastal Palestine by Egypt's 'Ali Bey (1770-71) and France's Napoleon Bonaparte (1799).¹⁰ By the early nineteenth century the center of gravity had shifted to the towns of the interior highlands. While these urban centers in no way rivaled the great commercial emporia and textile-producing cities of northern Syria (Damascus, Homs, Hama), they were important centers of local and regional trade and artisanal production (particularly the olive oil of Nablus). In an era of weak imperial authority, these towns were generally dominated by the countryside. The population of the rural areas was concentrated in the central highlands of the Galilee, Jabal Nablus (Samaria), and Jabal al-Khalil (Judea). Here, clan-based coalitions organized along highly fluid "tribal" lines (Qays and Yemen) competed over local resources and political power. A rudimentary class structure separated the shaykhs of the leading patrilineages (*hamulas*) and the district tax collectors (*shuyukh al-nawahi*) from the mass of peasant producers.¹¹ The shaykhs' obligations to the Ottoman state were to maintain security and to collect taxes, a portion of which they retained. In practice they only sporadically remitted taxes to the state; more frequently they defended their autonomy by leading rural confederations to fend off tax-foraging expeditions sent out by the Ottoman governors of Damascus and Sidon.¹² Local class antagonisms were thus somewhat mitigated by the benefits that the peasantry gained in supporting their local chieftains against direct Ottoman rule.

The lowlands of Palestine—the plains of the coast and the Jordan and Esdraelon valleys—functioned as a hinterland for the highlands. But they were not merely an empty zone. The plains were cultivated but sparsely populated. Villagers who resided permanently in the more secure and salubrious hills and foothills went down to the lowlands to work the nearby plains on a seasonal basis. In contrast to the highlands, where individual ownership (*mulk*) by the head of the extended family predominated and where orchard and vine cultivation was typical, the peasants of the plains participated in *musha* or "communal" tenure and practiced extensive grain cultivation.

Unlike the highlands, in the lowlands agricultural practices interpenetrated with pastoralism, for both villagers and nomads used marginal and fallow lands to pasture their herds. The relation between peasants and nomads, usually represented as implacably hostile, was actually one of complexity and fluidity, characterized by moments both of cooperation and of struggle. Commentators who have described conditions on the plain as "anarchic" and have singled out the Bedouin as the chief cause of desolation merely reproduce the viewpoint of the Ottoman state. In fact the lowlands were simply a zone where peasants, nomads, bandits (both of peasant and of nomadic stock), and the forces of the

state vied for control, with no group able to take decisive command. Bedouin chiefs commonly ruled over certain areas and "protected" peasants against the forces of the state (and against thieves and other nomadic tribes), in return for protection fees paid as a form of rent.

PRE-CAPITALIST IDEOLOGIES

Although the peasants of Palestine recognized the Ottoman sultans as successors to the Prophet and thus as legitimate rulers, in practice they exercised a great deal of independence from the state; Ottoman authority may have been legitimate but it scarcely intervened in everyday life. The local shaykhs served as mediators between the peasants and the state, but, given the balance of forces, they enjoyed virtual autonomy. Their own authority rested upon their imputed "noble" descent. As is typical in pre-capitalist societies,¹³ relations between the "noble" shaykhs and their inferiors appeared highly personalized and intimate. This appearance in fact served to refract the underlying relations of exploitation, recasting them in terms consonant with the constitution of amicable interpersonal relations. Class antagonisms were also softened by the shared interests of shaykhs and peasants in defending highland villages from state intervention and in struggling against competing rural confederations. In addition, peasants were positioned in their productive relations through idioms of kinship,¹⁴ while other relations based on village, regional, and "tribal" ties also served to divide peasants internally.¹⁵ These vertical cleavages were not insuperable, for the various confederations (including Bedouin) were able to unite under the leadership of the shaykhs to resist foreign invaders, as in the broad-based 1834 rebellion against Egyptian occupation.¹⁶ The principles of these dynamics of division and unity are expressed in the famous proverb, "I and my brother [unite to fight] against my cousin, but I and my cousin [unite to fight] against the stranger."¹⁷

Lack of state control over rural areas was also reflected in the distinctly "folk" character of peasant Islam. Mosques were virtually unknown in the villages, for rural religious practice centered instead on the worship of saints (*walis*) whose shrines (*maqams*) dotted the countryside. Nearly every village possessed at least one *maqam* where peasants went to plead for the *wali's* intercession on their behalf.¹⁸ A proliferation of shrines underlined the localized, particularistic nature of Palestinian folk Islam. However, other aspects of popular religion point equally to its socially unifying effects. For one thing, it was not strictly Islamic, for Muslim peasants visited many Christian churches and respected them as holy shrines.¹⁹ Feasts (*mausim*) celebrated in honor of various prophets also enhanced popular unity. For example, the *mausim* of Nabi Rubin (Reuben), held south of Jaffa, attracted pilgrims from all the nearby towns and villages and lasted for a full lunar month.²⁰ The *mausim* of

Nabi Musa (Moses), celebrated near Jericho, was an even bigger event, attended by peasants, city-dwellers, and Bedouin from all over southern Palestine and Jabal Nablus.²¹ Such feasts, joining peasants from a wide area together with town-dwellers, were important rituals of popular solidarity.

Despite localized folk practices, the peasants of Palestine remained part of the wider Ottoman Islamic community which owed its loyalty to the sultan in Istanbul. In theory at least, their broader sense of belonging involved diffuse notions of duties and obligations to the Ottoman state, including the duty to pay taxes. Although the prevailing balance of forces in practice diminished the effects of such sentiments of loyalty to imperial authority, they held the potential to override localized interests. As the Ottoman authorities increased their hold over the provinces, they could draw on such sentiments to impose their hegemony.

PALESTINE'S INTEGRATION INTO THE WORLD MARKET

During the course of the nineteenth century, Palestine, like most of the non-Western world, was integrated into the capitalist world market, which dramatically transformed its social structure. These changes were not a "natural" evolutionary process, but required the sharp intervention of the Ottoman state under pressure from the European powers. Such developments began with the Egyptian invasion of Palestine and the rest of Syria, and Ibrahim Pasha's vigorous efforts to secure order there between 1831 and 1840. After the Egyptian exodus, the transformation proceeded more slowly as the Ottomans gradually subdued the towns and pacified the countryside, making the atmosphere safe for export agriculture and commerce.

The process involved a major shift in the local balance of forces. Ottoman authorities broke the power of the rural confederations and shifted control over local administration and tax collection from the independent-minded rural shaykhs to an emerging class of urban *a'yan* or notables, the Porte's local partners in its project of "reform." Their local power eroded, many rural shaykhs subsequently shifted their base of operations to the towns and merged with the urban notable class.

The *a'yan* took command over much of agricultural production, besides seizing political control over rural areas. Notable families and an emerging commercial bourgeoisie acquired vast properties in the wake of a series of new land laws beginning with the Ottoman Land Code of 1858. These new laws required individual registration of title to what was considered state or *miri* land and facilitated a massive land grab. The *a'yan*, who controlled the state apparatus administering the laws, were best positioned to profit from the situation. Many peasants failed to register their properties, some to avoid paying the registration fee, others to keep their names off government rolls and so escape

purchases as early as 1891, but their efforts were largely "sporadic and non-systematic" and limited to sending formal petitions of protest to Istanbul.³⁵ The advances made by urban Jews in commerce and industry were perceived as a greater threat to the interests of the Arab upper classes, particularly the commercial bourgeois sector, than were their purchases of agricultural properties.

In contrast, peasants whose livelihoods were directly threatened by Jewish colonies—especially those who cultivated and who pastured their herds in the northern and central plains—reacted in militant fashion. By 1883, displaced peasants and Bedouin were already attacking, raiding, robbing, and generally harassing the new Jewish settlements. Although spontaneous and fragmented, this violent opposition meant that the government was routinely forced to call out troops to drive fellahin off lands purchased by Jewish colonists. These activities eventually prompted the notables to protest the Zionist influx, albeit feebly.

The *a'yan's* ineffectiveness in confronting the external threat began to undermine their own legitimacy (and that of the Ottoman state in general) in the eyes of many Palestinians. The disastrous experiences that befell dispossessed peasant sharecroppers in particular prompted them to question the usefulness of the patron-client system. Arab nationalism, emerging at the same moment, was able to tap these sentiments. As a nascent movement that advocated in its different versions either complete Arab independence from the Ottoman empire or greater autonomy, it became a significant social force in the wake of the ferment aroused by the Young Turk revolution (1908). Although the nationalist movement was less important in Southern Syria (Palestine) than in Lebanon and Northern Syria, and though it was dominated by notables and the commercial bourgeoisie, nonetheless there arose within it a radical wing composed of elements of the educated middle class. Opposition to Zionism was one of the Palestinian radical nationalists' chief themes, which they advanced through a new means of communication that had sprung up in this era of enhanced political freedom, namely, newspapers. Although the early Arab nationalist movement is usually characterized as a strictly urban phenomenon, beginning in 1909 the political activities of its militant wing included helping to organize peasant attacks on Jewish settlements.³⁶ These raids increased in tempo in the years immediately preceding World War I, but this militant sector of the developing Arab national movement and its peasant connections assumed real prominence only during the years following the war.

THE BRITISH OCCUPATION OF PALESTINE AND THE MANDATE, 1918-29

Expectations for national independence rose sharply in Greater Syria as World War I and the privations it caused came to a close. These hopes intensified in

1918 with the establishment of an Arab government at Damascus under Prince Faysal. Many young Palestinian radicals from the educated middle class held prominent positions in the new Sharifian government. At the same time, their influence in Palestine began to outstrip that of the more moderate notables. Through organizations such as al-Nadi al-'Arabi (the Arab Club) and al-Muntada al-Adabi (the Literary Club), the radicals pushed for a program of complete independence of Palestine from Britain and for its political unity with the rest of Syria. By contrast, the Palestinian notables who had organized Muslim-Christian Associations in all the towns favored a separate political autonomy for Palestine under British protection. The euphoria that followed the end of the war was dampened by the Balfour Declaration, which announced the end of the war was dampened by the Balfour Declaration, which announced Britain's intention of establishing a "national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine. This tarnished Britain's local reputation and helped win broad popular support for the militant nationalist program. Popular radicalism in turn pressured the notable *zu'ama* or "chiefs" to adopt more combative positions themselves. The militants capitalized on the moment by pushing through a resolution advocating Palestine's political unity with Syria at the notable-dominated First Palestine Arab Congress.³⁷

In this period the radicals not only organized effectively in the public arena but also secretly purchased arms and prepared for armed revolt in favor of Faysal.³⁸ So effective was the radicals' work among the peasantry that in December 1919, British Naval Intelligence reported with concern that fellahin were listening with keen interest to both Damascus and local newspapers advocating pan-Arabism and discussed the possibility of anti-Zionist actions.³⁹ Despite widespread illiteracy, "advanced" pan-Arab and anti-Zionist ideas circulated among the peasantry and helped to mobilize them. At least one organized act of violence against the British occurred. In April 1920, Palestinian radicals (connected to the Arab government at Damascus) organized over 2,000 armed Bedouin from the Hawran (Syria) and the Baysan valley of Palestine in an attack on British military forces.⁴⁰ The countrywide anti-British upsurge that the radicals expected to ensue did not, however, come to fruition.

In the same month, soon after Faysal was crowned as king of Syria, radicals intervened in the Nabi Musa procession at Jerusalem. In 1919 the practice of delaying the procession for speeches had been introduced,⁴¹ this year Musa Kazim al-Husayni, Jerusalem's mayor and a leading notable, praised Faysal in his speech, while young activists made "inflammatory" declamations from the balcony of the Arab Club. The crowds, including peasants from the surrounding villages, responded by roaming the streets of the Old City, attacking Jewish residents.⁴² This event transformed the *mausim* of Nabi Musa from a folk festival into an annual nationalist demonstration.⁴³

In May 1921, clashes between Arabs and Jews at Jaffa led to generalized fighting and attacks on Jewish settlements throughout the country. The British

military quickly and violently restored order. Two months later King Faysal's troops at Damascus were defeated by the French, who dismantled the Arab government. The moment of crisis had ended. Great Britain, which now held a mandate to govern Palestine under the auspices of the League of Nations, strengthened its control. The threat of pan-Arab militants to *a'yan* hegemony and their ability to mobilize the peasantry subsided. The notables, who favored a policy of peaceful negotiations with the British authorities rather than mass mobilization as the means of achieving the nationalist goals, reemerged as the dominant force within the national movement.

During the 1920s, the notables reasserted their hegemony over the Arab population of Palestine through a consolidation of their role as "natural" leaders of the national movement. British authorities in turn absorbed members of notable families into important administrative positions in the mandate government.⁴⁴ As chief agents of state rule in the late Ottoman and mandate periods, they expected to emerge as the country's rulers once Great Britain granted Palestine its independence. Their principal means of organization, the Muslim-Christian Associations, were not mass-membership bodies but were composed of religious leaders, property owners, those who held positions in the Ottoman administration, and "noble" families of rural origin—in short, the *a'yan* class. These associations periodically met in Palestine Arab Congresses and in 1920 set up an Arab Executive, chaired by Musa Kazim al-Husayni, to tend to the daily affairs of the national movement. At the same time, mandate authorities co-opted a young militant from a prominent notable family, Hajj Amin al-Husayni, making him first Grand Mufti (1921) and then president of the Supreme Muslim Council (S.M.C.) in 1922. As "Head of Islam in Palestine," Hajj Amin gradually consolidated all Islamic affairs under his administration and began to compete with the more cautious Arab Executive for leadership of the nationalist movement.⁴⁵

The notables continued to lead the Arab population of Palestine in the mandate period under the ideology of patronage. *A'yan* served as mediators between the people and the British authorities. Politics was strictly reserved for organizations (the Muslim-Christian Associations, the S.M.C.) "qualified" to lead. Once the radical pan-Arab threat had passed and Palestine was established as a territorial unit, notables were able to co-opt the growing popular self-awareness of "Palestinian Arabness" that arose in response to the Zionist threat and to alien rule.⁴⁶ Furthermore, the British bolstered the *a'yan* position by ruling through their agency and by upholding their control over rural areas.⁴⁷

In spite of the fact that the legitimacy of notable leadership was constructed on "national-popular" sentiments, the notables themselves were caught in a fundamentally contradictory position, for while the *a'yan* posed as leaders of nationalist aspirations, they served as officials in the British mandate administration. Rifaat Abou-el-Haj sums up the predicament of Palestinian notables (characteristic of all Mashriq elites):

[As the nationalist elite] actually began to collaborate with the new ruling powers, the [elite] cadre managed to portray itself in the "vanguard" of resistance against outside domination—in some instances even taking a revolutionary posture. The other role it adopted for itself was that of realist-pragmatist mediator with which it defended its compatriots against the direct and therefore presumed odious rule of the foreigner.⁴⁸

The British in Palestine depended in particular on erstwhile "radical" Amin al-Husayni to act as such a mediator. The Mufti worked hard to prevent outbursts and to pacify the Muslim community, channeling nationalist energies (including those of his former comrades) into legal activities.⁴⁹

The contradictory position of the Palestinian notables—at once servants of the British mandate and leaders of "the nation"—was rendered even more unstable than that of Arab elites elsewhere, due to the competition of the Zionist movement. Since Zionists opposed the establishment of any legislative body in Palestine that would relegate the Jews to a minority position, they effectively blocked the development of national Palestinian institutions of self-rule. Had not the threat of Jewish immigration appeared somewhat limited due to more internal problems of the Zionist movement, conditions might have been more unstable in the 1920s. But meanwhile, the Zionists were quietly building an infrastructure that served as the basis for expansion of the Jewish community in the 1930s and made the Yishuv virtually self-governing.⁵⁰

The lack of progress in the creation of Palestinian institutions of self-rule began to undermine even the notables' own liberal self-image. Steeped in Western liberal ideas,⁵¹ the *a'yan* expected the British to behave toward them according to the standards of justice that Great Britain preached. As it gradually became clear that the British authorities did not adhere in practice to the standards that the two groups supposedly shared, Palestinian liberal notables became disillusioned. Both notables and liberal intellectuals developed an ambivalent attitude toward the West and, in particular, Britain.⁵² Although the notables never entirely abandoned their affection for Britain since service in the mandate administration was still profitable, disaffection for British policies slowly undermined their confidence in diplomatic discussions between "gentlemen" as the best means of resolving the national question.

Rapidly changing agrarian conditions during the 1920s were potentially more unsettling to *a'yan* hegemony. Land purchases by the Zionists continued apace, resulting in the dispossession of increasing numbers of peasants. More-notables' appeals that the government halt the process were ineffectual. Moreover, by 1928, land sales to the Zionists by Palestinian landowners had eclipsed those by non-Palestinians.⁵³ A section of the notable class was thus enriching itself through land sales to Zionists and contributing directly to peasant landlessness, especially in the northern and central plains. This portion of the *a'yan*, clustered around the leadership of the Nashashibi clan, which opposed the Husayni dominance in the national movement, generally comprised its wealth-

ier and commercial elements, who used their profits for urban construction and expansion of citrus production.

Small but growing numbers of peasant holders also sold their lands to Zionist developers, usually not for profit but to pay off debts. Peasant indebtedness to usurers who charged high rates of interest was exacerbated by the mandate government's rationalization of rural property taxes, now set at a fixed percentage based on the net productivity of the soil (that is, minus the cost of production). This meant that the capital-intensive Jewish agricultural enterprises paid lower rates because of higher "labor costs." Regressive indirect taxes added to the peasants' financial burden. The weight of taxation therefore fell disproportionately on poor Palestinian fellahin, whose contributions helped to finance industrial and agricultural development in the Jewish sector and to pay Britain's expenses in defending the Jewish "national home."⁵⁴ The British administration also ensured that taxes were more efficiently collected by enlisting the services of the village *mukhtars* (headmen) to maintain rural security and to pass on taxes and information to the government.⁵⁵

As a consequence of such pressures, by 1930 some 30 percent of all Palestinian villagers were totally landless, while as many as 75 to 80 percent held insufficient land to meet their subsistence needs.⁵⁶ Some peasants made up this imbalance by renting additional farmlands, but most now depended on outside sources of income for survival. During peak periods of economic activity in the mandate, about one-half of the male fellahin workforce (over 100,000 persons) engaged in seasonal wage employment outside the village (on road or construction projects, in citrus harvesting and packing, and so forth). Often the entire male population of a village was recruited to work as a team on short-term construction projects.⁵⁷ Thus Palestinian rural villagers no longer filled a purely "peasant" position in the economic structure; increasingly they assumed a dual economic role as peasants and as casual laborers. So while notable landowners and moneylenders maintained economic dominance over the villages, particularly through client networks, the new experiences of peasants in the wider labor market altered their "traditional" fellahin subjectivities and provided alternate sources of income.

Indebtedness and expropriation at the hands of Zionist colonies forced a significant sector of the peasantry to emigrate permanently to the rapidly growing metropolises of Haifa, Jaffa, and Jerusalem. There they worked mainly as casual laborers and as a "scuffling petty bourgeoisie" in petty trading and services, a class situation typical of urban centers in underdeveloped colonial social formations.⁵⁸ Permanent wage work was difficult to come by in the face of competition from Jewish workers who monopolized positions in the more advanced Jewish economic sector. The work that Arab workers did obtain was extremely low-paying, due to an abundant labor supply and the difficulties inherent in organizing casual workers. As a consequence, the costs of Arab labor were never fully met by wages but were subsidized by the workers' access to subsistence agriculture and support networks at home in the village.⁵⁹

These rural-to-urban migrants did not remain passive in the face of such conditions. On the contrary, they set up various associations based on village of origin which ignored the *hamula* distinctions that were so divisive at home.⁶⁰ They also joined semi-political organizations headed by artisans, enlisted in trade unions whenever possible, and came in contact with militant religious reformers like Shaykh 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam. Their entry into the urban wage workforce helped to weaken clan, village, and regional divisions; these new experiences also had an impact on the home villages, with which migrants maintained close contact. Thus the old cleavages that buttressed patron-client networks were slowly breaking down under the impact of capitalist development. The nationalist leadership tried to reverse the process by making frequent appeals to the British on behalf of the impoverished peasantry, but this had little effect on British policies or on economic conditions.⁶¹ Furthermore, the fellahin were increasingly skeptical of the *a'yan's* sincerity. By 1927, according to a British official, the notables were apprehensive that the peasantry "show[ed] a growing tendency to distinguish between national and Effendi [notable] class interest."⁶²

The brewing crisis in agriculture, closely tied to steady Zionist progress in the 1920s (between 1919 and 1929 the Jewish population of Palestine had doubled, reaching 156,000 persons),⁶³ was a major factor in igniting the violence that erupted over expanded Zionist claims to the Wailing Wall at Jerusalem (known by Arabs as the *Buraq*, the western wall of the Haram al-Sharif, third holiest shrine in Islam). The Mufti as usual tried to settle the problem through the good offices of the British, at the same time attempting to allay the anger of the populace, who saw in Zionist "religious" expansionism a condensed form of the general danger Zionism posed to Palestinian Arab sovereignty.⁶⁴ A series of provocative demonstrations at the wall by Zionist extremists took place during 1929. Finally, on 23 August, peasant villagers influenced by the propaganda work of nationalist militants arrived in Jerusalem for Friday prayers armed with knives and clubs. Hajj Amin made every effort to calm the crowds, but violence radical religious shaykhs made speeches inciting them to action.⁶⁵ Violence broke out against Jews in Jerusalem and quickly spread throughout the country; British forces restored order in brutal fashion.

The widespread nature of the violence demonstrated that the mass of the population was ready to take direct action against the Zionist threat, independently of the cautious notable leadership. Unfortunately they could also be incited to ugly sectarian violence, which assumed the dimensions of a pogrom at Hebron and Safad. One of the most important forms of organization to emerge from this outbreak was the guerrilla band known as the *Green Hand Gang*, established by Ahmad Tafish in the Galilee hills in October 1929. Composed of men associated with radical circles who had taken part in the August uprising, the band launched several attacks on Zionist colonies and British forces in the north.⁶⁶ The band's organization probably resembled that of the gangs of peasant bandits that traditionally operated in the Palestine hills

and were a growing security problem in the 1920s.⁶⁷ But unlike them, Ahmad Tafish's band had an overt political purpose. Although quickly subdued, the Green Hand Gang aroused considerable sympathy among the peasantry who, the Shaw Commission concluded in 1930, were "probably more politically minded than many of the people of Europe."⁶⁸ This atmosphere of popular agitation provided new opportunities for alternative political forces within the national movement to challenge notable hegemony.

HARBINGERS OF REVOLT, 1930-35

The early 1930s were characterized by extremely unstable conditions, which the Palestinian *zu'ama* were incapable of controlling. Contradictions piled one on top of another, ushering in a series of crises that, by fits and starts, led to the explosion of 1936.

One major destabilizing factor was the global depression. Due chiefly to forces released by the worldwide economic downturn, Jewish immigration to Palestine jumped sharply in the early 1930s. Between 1931 and 1935 the Jewish community grew from 175,000 to 400,000 persons, or from 17 to 31 percent of the total population of Palestine. The advance of anti-Semitism in Poland, the tightening of the U.S. quota system in 1929, and the triumph of Nazism in Germany all contributed to the floodtide of immigration to Palestine.⁶⁹

The effects of Jewish immigration upon Palestinian Arab society were uneven. Between the late 1920s and 1932, the country suffered a recession and a steep rise in Arab unemployment. But with the refugee influx, the economy expanded in the 1933-36 period, while the rest of the world (except the Soviet Union) languished in deep depression. As a result of an agreement, known as the Ha'avara, between the World Zionist Organization and the Nazis, Jews leaving Germany were able to import large amounts of capital into Palestine. Nearly 60 percent of all capital invested in Palestine between August 1933 and September 1939 entered by means of the Ha'avara.⁷⁰ This capital inflow permitted wealthy Jews greatly to increase their investments in industry, building, and citriculture. In addition, rapid British development of Haifa as a strategic eastern Mediterranean port meant the construction of a new harbor, an oil pipeline (which began pumping oil from Iraq in 1935), refineries, and a railroad during the same period.⁷¹ As a consequence, job opportunities for Arab workers expanded. The greatest share of jobs, however, went to Jewish workers, as Zionist leaders and especially the Histadrut (the Zionist labor federation) made sure that the burgeoning Jewish economic sector provided for the new Jewish immigrants. This caused resentment among Arab workers and led to clashes with Jews over access to jobs.⁷² The economy suffered another recession from 1936 to 1939, which affected semi-proletarianized Arab workers much more deeply than largely unionized Jewish labor.

The capital influx accompanying Jewish immigration increased the pace of

land purchases as well. Zionist acquisitions from large Palestinian owners and small peasants now assumed greater importance than in the 1920s.⁷³ An increasingly desperate economic situation constrained peasants to sell their lands, for by 1936 the average debt of a peasant family—25 to 35 pounds per year—equaled or surpassed their average annual income of 27 pounds.⁷⁴ The money peasants earned from land sales usually did little more than release them from debt and propel them toward the urban slums. Due to inflated real-estate prices, large Palestinian landowners, on the other hand, could make huge profits by selling their estates to the Zionists. Some owners arbitrarily raised rents to force their tenants off the land prior to concluding such a sale, in order to avoid paying compensation to the peasants.⁷⁵ A law, decreed in 1933, extending greater rights to tenants contributed to a noticeable increase in disputes between landlords and peasants over tenancy rights. Militant nationalists were involved in encouraging such conflicts.⁷⁶ By the mid-1930s the government was routinely forced to call out large numbers of police in order to evict sharecroppers from sold properties as, more and more frequently, peasants resisted dispossession through violent means.⁷⁷

The bankruptcy of the notables' policies was therefore increasingly apparent: they had made no progress toward achieving national independence and were incapable of stemming the Zionist tide of increasing population, land settlement, and economic development. The *ayan's* inability to achieve successes threatened their hold over the national movement and made it difficult for them to claim the discourses of nationalism or even Islam as their exclusive property. Moreover, the notable front had splintered over disagreements on national strategy. Opposition to Husayni leadership crystallized around the Nashashibi clan, which represented the richest landowners in land sales to and entrepreneurs. More heavily involved than other notables in land sales to the Zionists, and the greatest beneficiaries of citrus exports to England, the Nashashibi-led groups of the notable-mercantile class opposed pan-Arab unity and was ready to accept less than total independence from Britain.⁷⁸ This group, which established the National Defense Party in 1934, had a certain base of support through its patron-client networks.⁷⁹

The radical nationalists took advantage of the openings provided by the series of crises and by the swelling of their ranks with a new contingent of young men educated in mandate institutions. As Göran Therborn notes, the training of an intellectual stratum in colonial situations often generates revolutionary ideologies, due to the disparity between the nature of the training they receive, suitable for an advanced capitalist society, and the colonial form of subjection.⁸⁰ The mandate educational system in Palestine produced young men whose qualifications were not commensurate with the holy roles assigned to them, and so their discontent generated new and critical forms of subjectivity.

The 1930s witnessed an upsurge in Palestine of independent political organizing by the educated middle class, just as in the rest of the Arab world, where

a new generation of radical nationalists were raising slogans of socioeconomic justice and Arab unity and developing novel forms of political organization.⁸¹ Palestinian radicals set up a variety of bodies such as the Young Men's Muslim Association, the Arab Youth Conferences, and the Arab Boy Scouts (independent of the international Baden-Powell movement). The most important organization was the Istiqlal (Independence) Party, established in 1932, whose roots lay in the old Istiqlal movement associated with the Sharifian government at Damascus.⁸² Led by elements of the educated middle class and the disaffected offspring of notable families, it appealed to educated professionals and salaried officials: lawyers, doctors, teachers, government employees.⁸³ Unlike other Palestinian parties founded in the 1930s, it was organized not on the basis of family or clan loyalties but around a political program, and thus it was the first (excluding the Communist) to appeal to and construct a new and modern form of subjectivity. It also distinguished itself by centering its political actions on opposition to the British mandate government rather than aiming them at the Jewish community alone.

The Istiqlal took a "populist" political stance representative of an aspiring national bourgeoisie.⁸⁴ Its adherents criticized the chronic unemployment besetting Arab workers, and the high taxes, rising prices, and unjust government treatment that the peasants suffered under. The Istiqlal advocated the establishment of a nationalist parliament and the abolition of "feudal" titles, such as *pasha*, *bey*, and *effendi*, that were common among the notables. In 1933, Istiqlalists began to attack the notable leadership, asserting that because it had remained abject in the face of Zionism and imperialism, Palestinian nationalism was not the cause of the *zu'ama* but, rather, that of the poor.⁸⁵ The Istiqlalists therefore attempted to mobilize the popular classes along the faultlines of class antagonisms by constructing a popular-democratic discourse that took advantage of fellahin disaffection from the notables and used it for "national" purposes.⁸⁶

In 1934, however, only a year and a half after its founding, the Istiqlal Party ceased to function effectively. Aided by the party's division into pro-Hashemite and pro-Saudi factions, Hajj Amin al-Husayni was able to sabotage it. Many Istiqlalists subsequently joined the Mufti's Palestine Arab Party, which, paradoxically, made it into something more than simply a clan-based grouping.⁸⁷ In addition, their entry pushed Hajj Amin to take a more militant stance. But even after their party's demise, Istiqlalists continued to be active as individuals, while other independent groupings stepped up their organizing efforts. The Arab Youth Congress attempted to prevent illegal Jewish immigration by organizing units to patrol the coasts.⁸⁸ Arab labor garrisons were set up at Jerusalem, Haifa, and Jaffa to defend Arab workers against attacks by Jewish workers trying to prevent Jewish capitalists from hiring Arabs.⁸⁹

Efforts to mobilize the peasantry were even more consequential. Educated young men from the villages, who returned home to serve as teachers, spread

radical nationalist notions among the fellahin, particularly in the northern foothills of Jabal Nablus (the region known as the Triangle, comprising the environs of Nablus, Janin, and Tulkarm) where villages had lost land to Zionist colonies on the coastal and Esdraclon plains.⁹⁰ Poetry was an especially significant vehicle for this dissemination of nationalist ideas and sentiments in the countryside. Written in simple language and style, nationalist poetry frequently criticized the notable leadership.⁹¹ According to Ghassan Kanafani, it often took the form of "almost direct political preaching."⁹² Poems and songs by artists like Ibrahim Tuqan, 'Abd al-Karim al-Karmi, and 'Abd al-Rahim Mahmud were well known in the countryside and recited at festive and public occasions. Peasants had access to newspapers (which began to appear daily after the 1929 riots) and magazines that printed nationalist poetry; the anthropologist Hilma Granqvist reports that fellahin from the village of Artas who went to Bethlehem for market heard newspapers read aloud in the coffee shops there.⁹³ Probably most villages had similar access to the printed word. Al-Baquri claims that the poetry of the nationalist bards "rang out on the lips of the fighters and popular masses" during the 1936-39 revolt.⁹⁴

The Palestine Communist Party should be mentioned in this context, even though its impact on events was minimal. Founded in 1922, the P.C.P. remained primarily a Jewish organization until 1929, when the Comintern ordered it to undergo "Arabization."⁹⁵ At its Seventh Congress in 1930, it began to orient itself programmatically toward the peasantry. Asserting that in an agricultural country like Palestine it was "the peasant revolution" that was "the most significant," it called for the confiscation of estates held by big Arab landowners, religious institutions, and Jewish colonies, and for their distribution to landless and land-poor peasants. The P.C.P. urged peasants to refuse to pay taxes and debts and advocated armed rebellion. It also proposed conducting propaganda at the mosques on Fridays and at popular festivals like Nabi Musa, for "it is during such mass celebrations that the fighting capacity of the fellahin is appreciably aroused."⁹⁶ In addition, the P.C.P. campaigned vigorously on behalf of Bedouin and peasants dispossessed by Zionist colonization.⁹⁷ But due to its paucity of Arab members, the fact that no cadre lived in villages, and widespread perceptions that it was chiefly a Jewish organization, the party's influence in the Palestinian Arab community remained circumscribed. In any case, after the onset of the Comintern's Popular Front strategy, the P.C.P. dropped its call for agrarian revolution (typical of the world Communist movement's ultra-left "Third Period") and began trying to build closer ties with middle-class nationalists. 'Abd al-Qadir Yasin asserts that the party's social demands were influential among workers and peasants by the mid-1930s,⁹⁸ but such claims are difficult to verify, since the P.C.P.'s ideas were not backed up by practices. At best, Communist notions may have influenced radical nationalist individuals with whom the party maintained contact.

A wave of renewed violence in 1933 further demonstrated the notables'

tenuous hold over the nationalist movement. Violence rapidly spread through the urban centers (and some villages) of the country after an anti-British demonstration at Jaffa in October led to clashes with police. Unlike the situation in 1929, this violence was aimed specifically at the British mandate administration, which represented a significant shift in the movement's strategy and political awareness. The British leaned harder than ever on the Mufti to keep these disturbances from getting out of hand. In return for preventing the fellahin from following the "extremists" and for restraining demonstrations, the British granted the Supreme Muslim Council complete control over *waqf* (religious endowment) finances.⁹⁹ But as tensions mounted, Hajj Amin's position as mediator became more precarious. He moved in two directions at once, trying both to maintain good relations with the British by reining in the national movement and to retain credibility with the populace by adopting a militant posture.

Hajj Amin's primary activities concerned land sales, a significant issue of public concern. The Palestinian Arab press frequently editorialized against land traffic with the Zionists, and in the early 1930s the Muslim-Christian Associations and the Arab Executive had sent agents out to the villages, urging peasants not to sell their land.¹⁰⁰ In the fall of 1934 the Mufti and the S.M.C. initiated a more vigorous campaign, mobilizing the ideology and institutions of Islam to fight land sales (and to maintain Hajj Amin's influence with the peasantry). The Mufti toured areas where transactions were occurring, to explain the dangers they posed to the nation and condemn them as acts of sin and high treason.¹⁰¹ In January 1935, he issued a *fatwa* (legal opinion) on the matter that forbade traffic in land with the Zionists and branded *simsars* (real estate brokers) as heretics (*marig*).¹⁰² But religious propaganda alone could not reverse the economic forces that led the peasants into indebtedness and forced them off the land. The dire agrarian situation was exacerbated by a series of crop failures between 1929 and 1936 and by competition from cheap agricultural imports, their prices depressed by the global economic downturn.¹⁰³ The Mufti recognized, in theory, the need for structural changes, and he called for (1) measures to protect peasants from big landowners; (2) the establishment of national industries; (3) aid to small farmers; and (4) a campaign of purchasing national products.¹⁰⁴ But the S.M.C.'s only concrete action was to put some tracts of land under *waqf* (mortmain) protection.

By the mid-1930s the political impasse in Palestine forced even the Mufti to realize that more drastic measures might be called for. Accordingly, in late 1933 a young associate of Hajj Amin's, 'Abd al-Qadir al-Husayni, organized a secret military group known as Munazzamat al-Jihad al-Muqaddas (Organization for Holy Struggle).¹⁰⁵ At the same time, various groupings of radicals were also preparing for military struggle. And in 1934, according to Palestine Communist Party propaganda, a popular bandit known as Abu Jilda was carrying out significant armed activity in the countryside. Abu Jilda's "partisan detach-

ments," claimed the Communists, were pulling the country toward disorder and toward armed revolt against the colonial authorities.¹⁰⁶

THE REVOLT OF AL-QASSAM

The spark that ignited the explosion came from an independent organization intimately connected to the peasantry and semi-proletariat created by the agrarian crisis. That organization was founded by radical Islamic reformer Shaykh 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam. A native of Jabla, Syria, and a key figure in the 1921 revolt against the French, al-Qassam took refuge in Haifa after fleeing Syria under sentence of death. A man of great religious learning who had studied at Cairo's al-Azhar, al-Qassam was associated with the Islamic reform (Salafiya) movement,¹⁰⁷ as well as with certain Sufi *turuq*.¹⁰⁸ He quickly achieved prominence in Haifa as a preacher and teacher. Unlike other political activists in Palestine, al-Qassam concentrated his efforts exclusively on the lower classes with whom he lived.¹⁰⁹ He set up a night school to combat illiteracy among the casual laborers (recent migrants from rural areas) of Haifa shantytowns and was a prominent member of the Young Men's Muslim Association. In 1929 al-Qassam was appointed marriage registrar of Haifa's Shari'a court. The duties of this office, which required that he tour northern villages, permitted him to extend his efforts to the peasantry, whom he encouraged to set up growing and distribution cooperatives.¹¹⁰

Using his religious position, al-Qassam began to recruit followers from among the fellahin and the laborers of Haifa, organizing them into clandestine cells of not more than five persons. By 1935 he had enlisted 200, perhaps even 800, men.¹¹¹ Many received military training, carried out after dark; all were imbued with al-Qassam's message of strict piety, of struggle and sacrifice, of patriotism, the necessity for unity, and the need to emulate early Islamic heroes.¹¹² In the 1920s, al-Qassam made a name for himself by attacking as un-Islamic certain folk religious practices still common in the Haifa area.¹¹³ Such Islamic certain folk religious practices still common in the Haifa area.¹¹³ Such Islamic certain folk religious practices still common in the Haifa area.¹¹³ Such Islamic certain folk religious practices still common in the Haifa area.¹¹³ Such Islamic certain folk religious practices still common in the Haifa area.¹¹³ Such Islamic certain folk religious practices still common in the Haifa area.¹¹³

Al-Qassam's appeal to religious values was not simply a return to tradition or a retreat into the past, but instead represented a real transformation of

traditional forms for revolutionary use in the present.¹¹⁶ He seized on popular memories of the Assassins and the wars against the Crusaders by invoking the tradition of the *fiḍa'iyyin*, the notion of struggle that involved sacrifice. His clandestine organization resembled that of a Sufi order: his followers grew their beards "wild" and called themselves shaykhs.¹¹⁷ This was not as incongruous as it might seem, for, as Thomas Hodgkin argues, the Islamic worldview contains elements that can be articulated together to constitute a revolutionary tradition.¹¹⁸ Al-Qassam's efforts represent just such an articulation and condensation of nationalist, religious "revivalist" and class-conscious components in a movement of anti-colonial struggle.

Although his followers may have begun carrying out small armed attacks on Zionist settlements as early as 1931,¹¹⁹ it was not until November 1935 that al-Qassam decided the moment was ripe for launching a full-scale revolt. Accompanied by a small detachment of followers, he set out from Haifa with the aim of raising the peasantry in rebellion. An accidental encounter with the police led to a premature battle with the British military, however, and al-Qassam died before his rebellion could get off the ground.

Nonetheless, his example electrified the country. Independent radical organizations eulogized al-Qassam and gained new inspiration from his revolutionary project. Al-Qassam rapidly achieved the status of a popular hero, and his gravesite became a place of pilgrimage.¹²⁰ His legacy also included the many Qassamites still at large and prepared for action, as well as militant nationalists who set up fresh political groupings in the towns and organized armed bands on the Qassam model. Urban radicals also redoubled their organizing in the villages in preparation for a new anti-British outbreak.¹²¹ In such a highly charged atmosphere, only a small event was needed to trigger an explosion.

THE GREAT REVOLT (AL-THAWRA AL-KUBRA)

That incident occurred on 13 April 1936, when two Jews were murdered in the Nablus Mountains, perhaps by Qassamites. Following a wave of brutal reprisals and counter-reprisals, the government declared a state of emergency. In response, "national committees" led by various militant organizations sprang up in the towns and declared a general strike. The notables followed along, trying to retake control of the unruly movement. On 25 April all the Palestinian parties (including the Nashashibi's National Defense Party) met with the national committees and set up a coordinating body known as the Higher Arab Committee (H.A.C.), with Amin al-Husayni as its president. Although the H.A.C. grew out of the notables' move to regain their dominant position, nonetheless, as a merging of the independent radical groupings with the traditional leadership it was more representative than the old Arab Executive had been.¹²² The H.A.C. quickly declared that the general strike would continue until the British government put an end to Jewish immigration to Palestine, and

it restated the other basic national demands—the banning of land sales and the establishment of an independent national government.

Though it initially sprang up in the towns, the revolt's focus rapidly shifted to the countryside. A conference of rural national committees convened in May and elaborated a specific peasant agenda, including a call for nonpayment of taxes and the denunciation of the establishment of police stations in villages at fellahin expense.¹²³ In addition, Istiqlalists (still active as individuals) toured the countryside of the Triangle to mobilize support for the general strike, while both Qassamites and S.M.C. preachers spread propaganda and attempted to organize among peasants.¹²⁴

In mid-May, armed peasant bands in which Qassamites featured prominently appeared in the highlands. They were assisted by armed commandos in the towns and by peasant auxiliaries who fought part-time. Though connected to the urban national committees, in general these bands operated independently of the Mufti and the H.A.C.¹²⁵ From mountain hideouts they harassed British communications, attacked Zionist settlements, and even sabotaged the Iraq Petroleum Company oil pipelines to Haifa. This last activity posed a particular threat to British global hegemony, for in the 1930s Great Britain still controlled the bulk of Middle East oil, and the Haifa pipeline was crucial to imperial naval strategy in the Mediterranean.

The towns, in a state of semi-insurrection, were finally brought under control by the British in July, which left the countryside as the undisputed center of revolt.¹²⁶ In the following month Fawzi al-Qawuqji, hero of the Syrian Druze rebellion of 1925, resigned his commission in the Iraqi army and entered Palestine with an armed detachment of pan-Arab volunteers, declaring himself commander-in-chief of the revolt.¹²⁷ Although the military effectiveness of the rebel movement was improved and al-Qawuqji was hailed as a popular hero throughout the country, he never managed to unite all the diverse bands under his command.

While popular forces fought the British in the countryside, the notables of the H.A.C.—only one of whom had been arrested—were negotiating with the enemy for a compromise to end the conflict. British authorities increased pressure in late September by launching tough countermeasures—boosting their military force to 20,000, declaring martial law, and going on a new defensive. The H.A.C. was also constrained by the onset of the agricultural season: peasants wanted to resume work, but, more important, harvest season started in September on the plantations of wealthy citrus-growers.¹²⁸ The H.A.C., preferring negotiations to mass mobilization, which threatened table leadership, called off the six-month-old general strike on 10 October, with the understanding that the Arab kings (of Iraq, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia) would intercede with the British government on the Palestinians' behalf and that the government would act in good faith to work out new solutions. A long interim period ensued. While notables pinned their hopes on a Royal Commis-

sion of Inquiry, activists and rebel band leaders toured the villages and purchased weapons in preparation for a new round of fighting.

In July 1937, the British Peel Commission published its recommendations for the partition of Palestine into Arab and Jewish states. Arab reaction was universally hostile; even the Nashashibi faction which had defected from the H.A.C. condemned the partition proposal. Feelings ran especially high in the Galilee, a highland region with few Jewish residents, which the plan of partition included in the proposed Jewish state.¹²⁹ In September, following the assassination of the British district commissioner for Galilee (possibly by Qassamites), the second phase of the revolt erupted. British authorities responded by banning the H.A.C. and deporting or arresting hundreds of activists. The Mufti managed to evade arrest by escaping to Lebanon in October. Shortly thereafter, fierce fighting broke out. With the notable leadership in exile or imprisoned, command now shifted decisively to the partisans in the countryside.

Rebel bands were most active in the Nablus and Galilee highlands, the areas of greatest popular resistance. The Jerusalem-Hebron region, where the *Munazzamat al-Jihad al-Muqaddas* operated, was also an important center. In these districts the various bands set up their own court system, administrative offices, and intelligence networks. While peasants and ex-peasant migrants to the towns composed the vast majority of band leaders and fighters, young urban militants played important roles as commanders, advisers, arms transporters, instructors, and judges.¹³⁰ Qassamites were particularly well represented at the leadership level. By taxing the peasantry, levying volunteers, and acquiring arms through the agency of experienced smugglers,¹³¹ the bands were able to operate autonomously from the rebel headquarters-in-exile set up by the notable leadership at Damascus. A network of militants in the towns, particularly from among the semi-proletariat, collected contributions, gathered intelligence, and carried out acts of terror against the British, the Zionists, and Arab *simsars* and collaborators.¹³²

In the summer and fall of 1938 the rebellion reached its peak. Some 10,000 persons had joined the insurgent bands, now sufficiently well organized for a handbook of instructions to be issued for their members.¹³³ Commanders of the largest bands established a Higher Council of Command to enhance military coordination. Most of the Palestinian highlands were in rebel hands, and by September government control over the urban areas had virtually ceased.

Once rebels gained the upper hand in the towns, the peasant character of the revolt expressed itself even more clearly. Rebel commanders ordered all townsmen to take off the urban headgear, the *fez*, and to don the peasant headcloth, the *kafiyah*; urban women were commanded to veil. This action was both practical, in that it protected rebels from arrest by the British when they entered the towns, and symbolic, in that it signified the countryside's hegemony over the city. Insurgents also instructed urban residents not to use electric power, which was produced by an Anglo-Jewish company. Few dared disobey these

orders. Large sums of money were extracted from wealthy city-dwellers as contributions to the revolt, and particularly large "contributions" were demanded from the big orange-growers and merchants at Jaffa who supported the Nashashibi opposition.¹³⁴

On 1 September, the joint rebel command issued a declaration that directly challenged the leading classes' dominance over the countryside. Although limited in scope, the declaration represented a social program which went beyond the merely "national" goals of the *a'yan*. In it the commanders declared a moratorium on all debts (which had so impoverished the peasantry and by means of which notables controlled agricultural production) and warned both debt collectors and land agents not to visit the villages. Arab contractors, who hired work teams for the construction of police posts in the villages and roads to facilitate access to rebel strongholds, were also ordered to cease operations. In addition, the statement declared the cancellation of rents on urban apartments, which had risen to scandalously high levels. This item was particularly significant in that, by linking the needs of peasants and urban workers, it revealed the new class alliance underpinning the revolt.¹³⁵

The rebels' interference with landlord-usurer control over the countryside and their demands for contributions from the wealthy constituted a "revenge of the countryside," which prompted thousands of wealthy Palestinians to abandon their homes for other Arab countries. Well-off Palestinians tended to view the rebels as little better than bandits. In part this charge was justified, for there were serious discipline problems within the rebel camp, despite the considerable advances the bands achieved in coordination and unity of purpose. For instance, clan or family loyalties occasionally interfered with the class or national interests of certain rebel commanders, who carried out petty blood-feuds under cover of nationalist activity.¹³⁶ Some peasants were alienated by the coercive manner employed by particular leaders to collect taxes and by their favoritism toward certain clans. Moreover, although class divisions among the peasants were not well developed, villagers were by no means homogeneous in their class interests. The assassination of a *mukhtar* who collaborated with the British, for example, was likely to alienate those members of his *hamula* who benefited from the *mukhtar's* ties to outside forces.

Most accounts of the revolt stress the internal problems faced by the rebels. Although such criticisms are exaggerated and detract from the rebel's positive accomplishments, they cannot simply be dismissed. The British and the Nashashibis were able to exploit the contradictions within the rebel movement through such means as the formation of "peace bands" in late 1938 to do battle with the rebels. Although representative primarily of the interests of landlords and rural notables, the "peace bands" were manned by disaffected peasants.¹³⁷

More important for British strategy than the "peace bands" was the signing of the Munich Agreement on 30 September 1938. This allowed Britain to free one more army division for service in Palestine and to launch a military

counteroffensive. Is it possible that British Prime Minister Chamberlain signed the Munich Agreement not merely to appease Hitler momentarily but also to protect Britain's oil supply in the Mediterranean from "backward" but dangerous bands of peasants? It would be difficult to chart a clear cause-effect relation, but it is evident at least that for the British chiefs of staff, Palestine was a crucial strategic buffer between the Suez Canal and potential enemies to the north (Germany, Soviet Union) and was an indispensable link in land communications. With war looming on the horizon in Europe, Britain was seeking desperately to end the disturbances in Palestine.¹³⁸

In any event, the Munich Agreement had disastrous consequences not just for Czechoslovakia but for the rebellion in Palestine as well. By 1939 the rebels were fighting a British military force of 20,000 men as well as the R.A.F. In addition, Orde Wingate, a British officer, organized a counterinsurgency force of Jewish fighters known as the Special Night Squads to terrorize villagers and to guard the oil pipeline.¹³⁹ The British counteroffensive increased pressure on the rebels and prompted further internal problems, such as abuses in collecting taxes and contributions and an upsurge in political assassinations.

However, the intensified military offensive was still not enough to finish off the rebellion, so the British launched a diplomatic one as well. In March 1939 the government issued a White Paper declaring that it was opposed to Palestine becoming a Jewish state, that Jewish immigration would be limited to 75,000 over the next five years, that land sales would be strictly regulated, and that an independent Palestinian state would be set up in ten years with self-governing institutions to be established in the interim. Although both the notables and the rebels rejected the White Paper, the Palestinian populace responded to it more favorably.¹⁴⁰ Clearly, while it did not satisfy the maximum national demands, the White Paper represented a concession wrung from the British by armed resistance. Zionist reaction against the White Paper, by contrast, was much more virulent.

The revolt was gradually crushed by extreme external pressures and the resultant internal fracturing of the movement. After over three years of fighting, the intervention of substantial British military forces aided by the Zionists, and nearly 20,000 Arab casualties (5,932 dead, 14,760 wounded),¹⁴¹ the rebellion was finally subdued. In July the last major rebel commander was captured; once the war with Germany began in September 1939, fighting ended altogether. An entirely new set of circumstances on the international scene were to determine subsequent events in Palestine.

CONCLUSION

I have tried to propose an alternative to the prevailing analyses of the Great Revolt in Palestine, which represent Palestinian society as so fractured by vertical cleavages that neither the class or national unity necessary for success

in the anti-colonial, anti-Zionist struggle could emerge. Given the prevailing social structure, so the argument goes, once the Palestinian peasantry took leadership of the revolt it could only act true to its inherently "backward" character. Arnon-Ohanna's assessment is typical: "The absence of cooperation and mutual responsibility, the deep-seated divisiveness of a society based on patriarchal lines and *hamulas*, the ancient inter-village and inter-*hamula* wrangles over stretches of land and water sources, over blood feuds, family honor and marital problems—these were simply transferred to the [guerrilla] bands movement."¹⁴² According to many of those who make such an argument, only one force could have ensured victory: a modern, revolutionary party.¹⁴³

I have argued that the model of vertical cleavages was essentially ideological, in that it was the form through which the Palestinian ruling class maintained its political and economic hegemony. As an ideology of rule, it worked by refracting the underlying class structure of the society, making relations of exploitation appear as amicable "exchanges" between persons of unequal status. In an effort to show that class antagonisms overdetermined this relation, I argue that peasants manipulated the dominant ideology in their struggle for a better life. Although peasants lived in a state of subordination, landlord-tenant domination was never total but was resisted on the basis of the very *terms* of the dominant ideology, that is, the struggle for a "just" exchange.

What is more, peasants possessed traditions of resistance, which they could call on in moments of crisis to forge a movement of opposition. I have charted a genealogy of these traditions of resistance prior to 1936. Despite its weak and often broken lines of descent, its vague and hidden traces, there are strong indications of such a tradition: a semi-autonomous existence prior to 1831, banditry and unorthodox religious practices, resistance to the expansion of the Ottoman state and to land registration in the late nineteenth century, and spontaneous struggles against new colonies of European Jews. Buried deeper within popular consciousness, moreover, were memories of earlier struggles, such as that of Salah al-Din's (Saladin) against those earlier European invaders, the Crusaders. Such traditions do not necessarily imply practices of a conservative or retrograde nature, for, as Raymond Williams has argued, the "residual" can be an important source for progressive political practices even in advanced industrial societies.¹⁴⁴

I have stressed too that the fellahin's folk heritage was not a pure, unblemished one. Their "common sense" was penetrated and altered over time by the dominant ideologies of the state during the resurgence of Ottoman power in the second half of the nineteenth century, and by the nationalist idioms of the notables in the mandate period. Peasant consciousness was influenced as well by radical ideas emanating from militants of the middle class. Older traditional notions came to be articulated with the newer discourses of the nation, democracy and reformist Islam. In some cases, as with al-Qassam's attack on folk Islamic practices, popular traditions were modified in order to enhance the

unity of the popular movement. In other instances, traditional practices such as banditry were transformed into powerful modern vehicles of struggle.

My aim has also been to demonstrate that the Palestinian peasantry was not an unchanging "backward" component of Palestinian society, but that it underwent constant change in the period under study. During the nineteenth century it was transformed from a class of relatively independent producers to one dominated by landowners and usurers, producing to a growing extent for the capitalist world market. A substantial number of peasants were displaced by Zionist colonization and indebtedness, forced out of agriculture altogether, and made into casual laborers. The fellahin were transformed further in the twentieth century, assuming a dual character as peasants and as casual workers. The partial integration of peasants into the wage circuit of "free" labor socialized peasant-workers in new ways and contributed to the dissolution of the pre-capitalist institutions in the village. Although the notables and the British tried mightily to uphold the hierarchies of patron-client networks, the grounds on which they were established were destabilized by the advances of Zionism and the notables' own failure to achieve "national" goals. Peasants totally abandoned by the system—dispossessed of their lands by Zionist colonies and driven into the towns as a subproletariat—eagerly embraced new ideas and practices that challenged notable dominance.

All these forces came into play during the Great Revolt. The peasant-led movement represented a congealing of nationalism, religious revivalism, and class consciousness, no element of which can be neatly disentangled from the others. Here I have underscored the emergence within the rebel movement of specific demands and practices of the peasantry as a class, in part because in other accounts this aspect is so underplayed. The refusal to pay taxes, the moratorium on debts, the heavy contributions levied against the wealthy: all these rebel practices aimed at addressing the needs of the peasants. In addition, the declared moratorium on rental payments for apartments indicates the movement's close linkage with the urban semi-proletariat. The campaign of terror launched against collaborators, land agents, *mukhtars*, and Arab police officers represented a serious attempt to deal with traitors whose activities had hurt peasants, even though by all accounts it was carried to unnecessary extremes. While such demands and actions on the part of the rebels did not, strictly speaking, constitute "revolutionary" practice, they nonetheless posed a considerable threat to the political and economic hegemony of the notables. They also show that to claim that the rebels had no discernible, coherent social or political program is to oversimplify the issue considerably.¹⁴⁵

We have seen how the rebels were able partially to overcome "traditional" social divisions based on region and clan. The establishment of a council of command by the leading commanders was an important political step in this direction, as were the efforts of Qassamites who organized on the basis of an Islamic discourse colored by the interests of the popular classes. Such factors

made crucial contributions to the remarkable degree of coherence that the rebellion was able to achieve.

Much has been made, in accounts of the rebellion, of the internal problems besetting the rebel forces. Indeed, misguided practice—such as regional, familial, and lineage loyalties which overrode fidelity to the movement, and the resort to assassination, brutality, and heavy-handed methods in extracting "contributions" from peasants—posed real problems for the movement and undermined its ability to sustain broad popular support. It is difficult here to achieve a "correct" analytical balance. But we should remember that through upheaval. We should not therefore focus on them exclusively in order to discount an entire movement. Such problems would not necessarily have magically been transcended under the guidance of a "revolutionary" party and leadership, for a party is no guarantee of a successful outcome for social struggle. To focus attention on the absence of a party, as many have done, is to belittle the militant, honest leadership and forms of organization that the peasantry and semi-proletariat were able to muster. While some commanders were given to self-aggrandizement and petty feuding, many others (most of whom remain anonymous) deserve to be remembered. Qassamites, who played a key leadership role, were particularly noted for their devoutness and honesty, and 'Abd al-Rahim al-Hajj Muhammad, the most respected commander, was renowned for his nationalist convictions, for his opposition to political assassination, and for his tirelessness as a fighter.¹⁴⁶

If anything, it was the formidable strength of the enemy that was more crucial to the peasant rebels' defeat than their purported "backwardness." The British, determined to maintain control over this area of major strategic importance (particularly the harbor at Haifa, the oil pipeline, and communication routes to India) mustered a substantial military force to fight the rebels. In addition, the powerful Jewish community was enlisted to assist the British efforts. Jews were enrolled in the police and the constabulary; Jewish fighters were organized into special counterinsurgency squads by Orde Wingate. Zionist revisionists, without British approval, launched terrorist attacks against the Arab community. Moreover, the rebellion gave the Zionists the opportunity to build up their military capabilities. While by the end of the revolt the Arab community was substantially disarmed, the Zionists in the meantime had put 14,500 men, with advanced training and weaponry, under arms.¹⁴⁷ This military imbalance between the two communities, enhanced during World War II, was an extremely important factor in the disaster that befell the Palestinian Arabs in 1948.

I have tried, then, to develop a counterargument to the dominant analysis of the Great Revolt. The "master narrative" of the rebellion tends to proceed by defining (and thereby diminishing) the peasants and casual laborers as "traditional," "backward," "fanatical," or even "terrorists." By presenting the peas-

antry as essentially unchanging, this approach also permits scholars to ignore the very real history of peasant resistance which preceded the rebellion. Other writers sympathetic to the revolt often disparage it for lacking a revolutionary party at its helm. Such arguments allow analysis to trivialize or ignore the accomplishments of the revolt and to concentrate on other questions, such as the role of the middle class, the treachery of the notables, or the Palestine Communist Party (which in fact was largely irrelevant to this affair).¹⁴⁸ What is at stake in such a dismissal is that the legitimate social and political desires of subaltern popular social movements have gone unheeded by the "progressive" as well as the dominant commentaries. Scholarly work that would constitute a social history of the revolt, including an investigation of the cultural life of the peasantry, the economic organization of the countryside, traditions of resistance, and ideologies of domination and opposition, has therefore scarcely begun.¹⁴⁹

For this reason, I have stressed in polemical fashion the positive accomplishments of the peasantry in the course of the Great Revolt—achievements which have so often been minimized. This should be seen, then, only as a tentative step toward the development of a complete analysis, which requires the investigation of both structures of dominance and movements of opposition in their complex historical relation.

NOTES

1. Musa Budeiri, *The Palestine Communist Party, 1919-1948: Arab and Jew in the Struggle for Internationalism* (London: Ithaca Press, 1979), pp. 46-47.
2. Ann Mosely Lesch, *Arab Politics in Palestine, 1917-1939: The Frustration of a Nationalist Movement* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979), p. 17.
3. Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, "The Pitfalls of Palestineology: A Review Essay," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 3 (1981): 403-11.
4. Methodologically this requires a strategy of reading from the margins of existing works on the history of Palestine. This chapter does not pretend to be an exhaustive survey but is meant to suggest further avenues of research. A major problem is that the role of peasant women cannot be recovered through such a reading strategy; other means are required to develop an analysis of this important question.
5. Gramsci's notion of hegemony is summarized by Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 112-13.
6. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, ed. and trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), pp. 323-26, 419-25.
7. The conclusions of the following four sections are based in part on my M.A. thesis: Theodore Swedenburg, "The Development of Capitalism in Greater Syria, 1830-1914: An Historical-Geographical Approach," University of Texas at Austin, 1980.
8. Palestine was only united as an administrative entity under the British mandate. In the Ottoman period, it was ruled from various cities such as Damascus, Sidon, Beirut, and Jerusalem. I am treating it here as a geographical unit.
9. Aref-el-Aref, "The Closing Phase of Ottoman Rule in Jerusalem," Moshe Ma'oz, ed., *Studies on Palestine during the Ottoman Period* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1975).

10. Constantin F. Volney, *Travels throughout Syria and Egypt in the Years 1783, 1784, and 1785*, vol. 2 (England: Gregg International Publishers, 1973).
11. This class structure is comparable to what Rey terms a "hierarchical society": Pierre-Philippe Rey, "Les formes de la décomposition des sociétés précapitalistes au Nord-Togo et le mécanisme des migrations vers les zones de capitalisme agraire," in Emile le Bris et al., eds., *Capitalisme négrier* (Paris: Maspero, 1976), pp. 195-209.
12. Volney, *Travels*, pp. 252-53. A similar relationship among peasants, their overlords, and the state characterized conditions in Southeast Asia during the same period: Michael Adas, "From Avoidance to Confrontation: Peasant Protest in Precolonial and Colonial Southeast Asia," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 23 (1981): 217-47.
13. Karl Marx, *Grundrisse*, trans. Martin Nicolaus (New York: Vintage Books, 1973).
14. Maurice Godelier, "Infrastructures, Societies and History," *Current Anthropology* 19 (1978): 63-68. Empires based on a tributary mode of production typically left economic systems based on kinship intact, only modifying them to ensure that tribute was rendered. See also Samir Amin, *The Arab Nation* (London: Zed Press, 1978), pp. 87-102.
15. The situation in Palestine resembled that of the Kabyle Mountains of Algeria, where during the same era "league feuds channeled or drained off the energies of the peasants and diverted them from the social struggle.... Even though the leagues and alliances... veiled social tensions and disjunctions, these were nonetheless manifest": René Gallissot, "Pre-Colonial Algeria," *Economy and Society* 4 (1975): 424-25.
16. Mordechai Abir, "Local Leadership and Early Reforms in Palestine, 1800-1834," in Ma'oz, ed., *Studies on Palestine*, pp. 284-310.
17. Taufik Canaan, *Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries in Palestine* (London: Luzac, 1927), p. 251. Such proverbs are typical of mountain peasants of the Arab world and of "segmentary" Bedouin societies. (For Morocco, see David M. Hart, *The Aith Waryaghar of the Moroccan Rif* [Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1976].) My own reading of this proverb diverges from the usual interpretation given by anthropologists, who see it exclusively in terms of kinship and alliance. I suggest a broader political interpretation.
18. Canaan, *Mohammedan Saints*.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 98.
20. *Ibid.*, pp. 215-16.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 193.
22. Alexander Scholch, "The Economic Development of Palestine, 1856-1882," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 39 (1981): 35-58.
23. Alexander Scholch, "European Penetration and the Economic Development of Palestine, 1956-82," in Roger Owen, ed., *Studies in the Economic and Social History of Palestine in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Press, 1982), pp. 10-87.
24. Ya'akov Firestone, "Crop-sharing Economics in Mandatory Palestine," *Middle Eastern Studies* 11 (1975): 10.
25. Lesch, *Arab Politics*, p. 89.
26. For criticisms by anthropologists of the patron-client model as applied to Mediterranean societies, see Michael Gilseman, "Against Patron-Client Relations," in Ernest Gellner and John Waterbury, eds., *Patrons and Clients* (London: Duckworth, 1977), pp. 167-83; Luciano Li Causi, "Anthropology and Ideology: The Case of 'Patronage,'" *Critique of Anthropology* 4/5 (1975): 90-109; and Paul Littlewood, "Patronage, Ideology and Reproduction," *Critique of Anthropology* 15 (1980): 29-45.
27. Littlewood, "Patronage," pp. 37-38.
28. See David Seddon, *Moroccan Peasants* (Folkestone, Ky.: Dawson, 1981), p. 92, and Göran Therborn, *The Ideology of Power and the Power of Ideology* (London: New Left Books, 1980), pp. 56-57, 61-62, for discussions which support this line of argument.
29. Gramsci, *Selections*, p. 54.

30. J. C. Hurewitz, *The Struggle for Palestine* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1950), p. 54.
31. Canaan, *Mohammedan Saints*, pp. 197, 204-5.
32. Gilsean, "Against Patron-Client Relations," pp. 53, 151-52; see also Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798-1939* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 150.
33. Claude Regnier Conder, *Tent Work in Palestine* (New York: D. Appleton, 1878), p. 267.
34. James Scott, "Hegemony and the Peasantry," *Politics and Society* 7 (1977): 284.
35. Yehoshuah Porath, *The Emergence of the Palestinian-Arab National Movement, 1918-1929* (London: Frank Cass, 1974); Neville Mandel, *The Arabs and Zionism before World War I* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975), pp. 70, 214-22.
36. Mandel, *Arabs and Zionism*, pp. 70, 214-22.
37. Porath, *Emergence*, pp. 7-8.
38. Abdul-Wahhab Kayyali, *Palestine: A Modern History* (London: Croom Helm, 1978), pp. 71-72; Porath, *Emergence*, pp. 129-30.
39. Kayyali, *Palestine*, p. 73.
40. Nathan Weinstock, *Le Sionisme contre Israel* (Paris: Maspéro, 1969), p. 169.
41. Kayyali, *Palestine*, p. 75.
42. Lesch, *Arab Politics*, p. 89.
43. Hurewitz, *Struggle*, p. 54.
44. Ylana M. Miller, *Government and Society in Rural Palestine 1920-1948* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985), pp. 16-18.
45. Hurewitz, *Struggle*, pp. 52-53.
46. Miller, *Government*, pp. 27, 54-62.
47. *Ibid.*
48. Rifaat Abou-el-Haj, "The Social Uses of the Past: Recent Arab Historiography of Ottoman Rule," *IJMES* 14 (1982): 187.
49. Porath, *Emergence*, pp. 200-202.
50. Miller, *Government*, pp. 24-25, 47.
51. Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, *passim*. For an example of a liberal Palestinian mode of argument, see George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1938).
52. Walid Khalidi, ed., *From Haven to Conquest* (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1961), p. 72.
53. Yehoshuah Porath, *The Palestinian Arab National Movement: From Riots to Rebellion, 1929-1939* (London: Frank Cass, 1977), pp. 83-84.
54. Talal Asad, "Anthropological Texts and Ideological Problems: An Analysis of Cohen on Arab Villages in Israel," *Review of Middle East Studies* 1 (1975): 1-40.
55. Gabriel Baer, "The Office and Functions of the Village Mukhtar," in J. S. Migdal, ed., *Palestinian Society and Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), pp. 103-23.
56. Shulamit Carmi and Henry Rosenfeld, "The Origins of the Process of Proletarianization and Urbanization of Arab Peasants in Palestine," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 220 (1974): 470.
57. *Ibid.*, pp. 481-82.
58. Ken Post, *Arise Ye Starvelings: The Jamaican Labour Rebellion of 1938 and Its Aftermath* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1978), pp. 133-36.
59. Sarah Graham-Brown, *Palestinians and Their Society, 1880-1946: A Photographic Essay* (London: Quartet Books, 1980), p. 150. For a theoretical analysis of this phenomenon in South Africa see Harold Wolpe, "The Theory of Internal Colonialism: The South African Case," in Ivar Oxall et al., eds., *Beyond the Sociology of Development* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), pp. 229-52.
60. Rachel Taqqu, "Peasants into Workmen: Internal Labor Migration and the Arab Village Community under the Mandate," in Migdal, *Palestinian Society*, p. 271.
61. Miller, *Government*, pp. 79-89.

62. Nels Johnson, *Islam and the Politics of Meaning in Palestinian Nationalism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982), p. 37.
63. David Hirst, *The Gun and the Olive Branch* (New York: D. Appleton, 1977), vol. 2, p. 63.
64. Philip Mattar, "The Role of the Mufti of Jerusalem in the Political Struggle over the Western Wall, 1928-29," *Middle Eastern Studies* 19 (1983): 104-18.
65. *Ibid.*, p. 114; Lesch, *Arab Politics*, pp. 210-11.
66. Kayyali, *Palestine*, p. 156; Shai Lachman, "Arab Rebellion and Terrorism in Palestine 1929-1939: The Case of Sheikh Izz al-Din al-Qassam and His Movement," in Elie Kedourie and Sylvia G. Haim, eds., *Zionism and Arabism in Palestine and Israel* (London: Frank Cass, 1982), p. 56.
67. Ivar Spector, *The Soviet Union and the Muslim World, 1917-1956* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1956), p. 100.
68. *Ibid.*, p. 156. The Shaw Commission's statement reflects an ethnocentric and classist bias that assumes that the non-Western peasantry was inherently apolitical. In fact, movements of peasants have posed the greatest threat to imperialist rule in the underdeveloped world.
69. Porath, *Palestinian Arab*, p. 40.
70. Leni Brenner, *Zionism in the Age of Dictators* (Highland Park, N.J.: Lawrence Hill, 1983), p. 65; Weinstock, *Sionisme*, pp. 135-36.
71. Carmi and Rosenfeld, "Origins," p. 476.
72. Porath, *Palestinian Arab*, pp. 129-30.
73. *Ibid.*, pp. 182-84.
74. Weinstock, *Sionisme*, p. 64.
75. Porath, *Palestinian Arab*, pp. 103, 105.
76. Kenneth Stein, "Legal Protection and Circumvention of Rights for Cultivators in Mandatory Palestine," in Migdal, ed., *Palestinian Society*, pp. 250-54.
77. Kayyali, *Palestine*, p. 179.
78. Porath, *Palestinian Arab*, p. 67.
79. Lesch, *Arab Politics*, pp. 110-11.
80. Therborn, *Ideology*, pp. 17, 46.
81. Philip S. Khoury, "Islamic Revivalism and the Crisis of the Secular State in the Arab World: An Historical Reappraisal," in I. Ibrahim, ed., *Arab Resources: The Transformation of a Society* (London: Croom Helm, 1983), pp. 219-20. Women's organizations emerged in Palestine as a new form of mobilization in this period, but those discussed in the literature were led by the wives of the notable leaders (Mrs. Matiel E. T. Mogannam, *The Arab Woman and the Palestine Problem* [London: Herbert Joseph, 1937]) and were similar in form to the Muslim-Christian Associations. It is possible that their example inspired mobilization by women of the educated middle classes, but for now we can only conjecture.
82. Kayyali, *Palestine*, pp. 167-68.
83. 'Abd al-Qadir Yasin, *Kifah al-Sha'b al-Fisastini gabl al'am 1948* (Beirut: PLO Research Center, 1975), pp. 125-26; Hurewitz, *Struggle*, p. 63.
84. Yasin, *Kifah al-Sha'b*, pp. 125-26. This national bourgeoisie existed, however, in embryo only.
85. *Ibid.*, pp. 125-26; Kayyali, *Palestine*, pp. 167-68, 172.
86. For a discussion of populism see Ernesto Laclau, *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory* (London: New Left Books, 1977), especially p. 109.
87. Kayyali, *Palestine*, p. 187; Porath, *Palestinian Arab*, pp. 16-17.
88. Zvi Elpeleg, "The 1936-39 Disturbances: Riot or Rebellion?" *Wiener Library Bulletin* 29 (1976): 41.
89. Kayyali, *Palestine*, p. 177.
90. Porath, *Palestinian Arab*, p. 181.
91. Adnan Abu-Ghazaleh, "Arab Cultural Nationalism in Palestine during the British Mandate," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 3 (1972): 48-49.

92. Ghassan Kanafani, *The 1936-39 Revolt in Palestine* (Committee for a Democratic Palestine, n.d.), p. 17.
93. Abu-Ghazaleh, "Arab Cultural Nationalism," p. 87; Hilma Granqvist, *Marriage Conditions in a Palestinian Village* (Helsingfors: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1931), p. 99.
94. Abd al-'Al, al-Baquri, "Al-thawra bayn barakat al-jamahir wa tadahun al-giyadat," *Tah'ah* 7, no. 4, p. 95.
95. Joel Beinin, "The Palestine Communist Party, 1919-1948," *MERIP Reports* 55 (1977): 8-9.
96. The resolutions of the Seventh Congress are reproduced in Spector, *Soviet Union*, pp. 91-104.
97. Beinin, "Palestine Communist Party," p. 12; Budeiri, *Palestine Communist Party*.
98. Yasin, *Kifah al-Shab*, p. 143.
99. Kayyali, *Palestine*, p. 175.
100. Porath, *Palestinian Arab*, pp. 92-93.
101. *Ibid.*, pp. 96-97.
102. Yasin, *Kifah al-Shab*, pp. 147-48.
103. Firestone, "Crop-sharing," pp. 17-18.
104. Yasin, *Kifah al-Shab*, pp. 146-48.
105. Kayyali, *Palestine*, pp. 179-80.
106. Budeiri, *Palestine Communist Party*, p. 77.
107. It has been claimed that al-Qassam was a student of Muhammad 'Abduh', but S. 'Abdullah Schleifer, in "The Life and Thought of 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam," *Islamic Quarterly* 23 (1979): 61-81, asserts that 'Abduh's influence on al-Qassam was very limited.
108. Al-Qassam's grandfather and granduncle were prominent shaykhs of the Qadari order in his hometown of Jabla, and al-Qassam taught for a time in a school maintained by that *tariqa*. Al-Qassam is said to have belonged to the Tijaniyya and Naqshbandi *taruq*, the latter of which was involved in anti-colonial struggles in Syria during the nineteenth century: Schleifer, "Life and Thought," pp. 62-63, 69.
109. Lachman, "Arab Rebellion," p. 77.
110. Porath, *Palestinian Arab*, pp. 133-34; Kayyali, *Palestine*, p. 180; Schleifer, "Life and Thought," p. 47.
111. Kayyali, *Palestine*, p. 180; Porath, *Palestinian Arab*, p. 137.
112. Hirst, *Gun and Olive Branch*, p. 76.
113. Schleifer, "Life and Thought," p. 68; Lachman, "Arab Rebellion," p. 62.
114. Hart, *Aith Waryaghar*, pp. 170ff., 377ff.
115. Gilenan, "Against Patron-Client Relations," pp. 217-28.
116. Laclau, *Politics and Ideology*, p. 157. Al-Qassam's practices recall Walter Benjamin's notion of the "dialectical image," a constellation of materials from the past in the revolutionary present: Susan Buck-Morss, "Walter Benjamin—Revolutionary Writer (1)," *New Left Review* 128 (1981): 50-75. See also Williams's category of the "residual": *Marxism*, pp. 121-27.
117. Lachman, "Arab Rebellion," p. 64.
118. Thomas Hodgkin, "The Revolutionary Tradition in Islam," *History Workshop* 10 (1980): 148-49.
119. Lachman, "Arab Rebellion," p. 65; Yasin, *Kifah al-Shab*, p. 154, maintains that armed action began only in 1933.
120. Lachman, "Arab Rebellion," p. 72.
121. *Ibid.*, p. 74; Kayyali, *Palestine*, pp. 182-83.
122. James J. Zogby, "The Palestinian Revolt of the 1930's," in I. Abu-Lughod and B. Abu-Laban, eds., *Settler Regimes in Africa and the Arab World* (Wilmette, Ill.: Medina U.P.I., 1974), pp. 182-83.
123. Kayyali, *Palestine*, p. 192.
124. Lachman, "Arab Rebellion," p. 78; Porath, *Palestinian Arab*, pp. 179-82.

125. Porath, *Palestinian Arab*, pp. 192-93.
126. *Ibid.*, pp. 179-82.
127. The Palestinians had shown solidarity with the rebellion of 1925, when the Mufti had headed an emergency committee to aid the Druze: Michael Assaf, *The Arab Movement in Palestine* (New York: Masada Youth Organization of America, 1937), p. 39.
128. Porath, *Palestinian Arab*, pp. 211-21; Kayyali, *Palestine*, p. 201.
129. Lesch, *Arab Politics*, p. 122.
130. Porath, *Palestinian Arab*, p. 261.
131. Tom Bowden, *The Breakdown of Public Security: The Case of Ireland 1916-1921 and Palestine 1936-1939* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1977). Among the usual items the smugglers trafficked in was hashish.
132. Kayyali, *Palestine*, p. 212; Porath, *Palestinian Arab*, pp. 249-50; Lachman, "Arab Rebellion," p. 80.
133. Porath, *Palestinian Arab*, p. 247; Yuval Arnon-Ohanna, "The Bands in the Palestinian Arab Revolt, 1936-39: Structure and Organization," *Asian and African Studies* (Jerusalem) 15 (1981): 232. According to Arnon-Ohanna (p. 233), band membership was between 6,000 and 15,000.
134. Porath, *Palestinian Arab*, pp. 267-69.
135. *Ibid.*, pp. 267-68; Kayyali, *Palestine*, p. 214.
136. Porath, *Palestinian Arab*, p. 269.
137. *Ibid.*, pp. 251, 262, 269.
138. Gabriel Sheffer, "Appeasement and the Problem of Palestine," *IJMES* (1980): 377-99.
139. Christopher Sykes, *Cross Roads to Israel* (London: New English Library, 1967), p. 193.
140. Porath, *Palestinian Arab*, p. 293.
141. Walid Khalidi, ed., *From Haven to Conquest* (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1971), pp. 848-49.
142. Arnon-Ohanna, "Bands," p. 247.
143. Those who advance the "solution" of the revolutionary party are of various political persuasions and include Porath, *Palestinian Arab*, p. 269; Yasin, *Kifah al-Shab*, pp. 195-96; Budeiri, *Palestine Communist Party*, p. 107; Weinstein, *Sionisme*, p. 178; Tom Bowden, "The Politics of Arab Rebellion in Palestine, 1936-39," *Middle Eastern Studies* 11 (1975): 147-74; Kayyali, *Palestine*, p. 231.
144. Williams, *Marxism*, pp. 121-27.
145. This claim is made by, for instance, Graham-Brown, *Palestinians*, p. 171.
146. Porath, *Palestinian Arab*, p. 183; Elpeleg, "1936-39, Disturbances," pp. 48-49; Lesch, *Arab Politics*, p. 223.
147. Hirst, *Gun and Olive Branch*, p. 104.
148. For instance, Samih Samara Samih, *Al-'amal al-shuyu 'i fi filastin: al-tabqa wa-al-sha' b fi mauajaha al-kuluniyaliya* (Beirut: Dar al-Farabi, 1979). Budeiri, *Palestine Communist Party*; Alain Greilsammer, *Les communistes israeliens* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1978). For a review of this growing body of literature, see Alexander Flores, "The Palestinian Communist Party during the Mandatory Period: An Account of Sources and Recent Research," *Peuples méditerranéens* 11 (1987): 3-23, 175-94. Such studies touch only lightly on the 1936-39 rebellion and contain little socioeconomic analysis of the Palestinian social formation.
149. The work of Sarah Graham-Brown is a noteworthy exception. On this point, see Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, "The Pitfalls of Palestinianology: A Review Essay," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 3 (1981): 403-11.