Hillel Cohen, **Army of Shadows** Concluding Chapter Berkely, 2009, pp.259-267. Presented with permission of the author, June 2024).

Irrefutable evidence shows Palestinian Arab collaboration with Zionists before Israel was established greatly assisting Jewish nation building. (loyalty to family, loyalty to place; further Cohen asserts a general absence among Palestinians for a sense of national feelling, instead tied to villages, localities, and not willing to die for the nation, These are Cohen's conclusions repeated in the following paragraphs and again in the overall conclusions in his book

Cohen noted in this conclusion repeated below, "Palestinian society's national spirit was not sufficient to the task at hand. According to Benedict Anderson, **a national spirit is fraternity that makes it possible for so many millions of people not so much willing to kill as willingly to die for it. This was not the case among Palestinian Arabs, who by and large did not see the nation as the central focus of their loyalties,** to use Hans Kohn's definition.This limited willingness to sacrifice their lives (or personal comfort) for the nation can be seen, not only in the low level of mobilization for the decisive war that began in December 1947, but also in their economic activity and involvement in selling land to the Zionists.

Kohn's second component of nationalism is a shared tie to a homeland that constitutes a single territorial unit. This, too, was not strong among Palestinian Arabs. Socially and politically, family and factional ties were stronger than national ones, and the same was true when it came to territory. **The tie to the land focused on personal holdings or on the lands of a village or region, but not on Palestine as a whole. This, too, was evident during the war. Most of the Palestinian Arabs who took up arms were organized in units that defended their villages and homes, or sometimes a group of villages. Only in extremely rare cases did forces move to distant sectors—a sharp contrast with the high mobility of the Jewish forces.** Mobility enabled the Jews to achieve numerical superiority in almost every area where combat took place. Furthermore, in many locations Arabs' links to their villages and community had been disturbed when some villagers sold land or because of individuals' links with Jewish intelligence operatives. This had a negative impact on the villages' resilience and was displayed in internal conflicts during combat. The lack of a shared view of Palestine as a single entity was expressed in another way as well. An important group among the

opposition to Hajj Amin al-Husseini had close ties with Transjordan's ruler, Emir (later King) 'Abdallah. At various points in time these figures supported the annexation of Palestine (or its Arab parts) to 'Abdallah's state. Hajj Amin and his followers considered these people traitors because they rejected his authority. But it is important to stress that their concept of the nation was different not only with regard to the question of who should lead it (a central issue for their rivals, the Husseini party) but also with regard to the definition of the territory in question. They did not see Palestine as a discrete political unit. This is a point of great significance, for land constitutes the territorial and cultural basis of nationalismfor so many millions of people not so much willing to kill as willingly to die for it.1 This was not the case among Palestinian Arabs, who by and large did not see the nation as the central focus of their loyalties, to use Hans Kohn's definition.2 This limited willingness to sacrifice their lives (or personal comfort) for the nation can be seen, not only in the low level of mobilization for the decisive war that began in December 1947, but also in their economic activity and involvement in selling land to the Zionists.

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(Bolded passages are mine, original assertions are Cohen's).

Ken Stein, June 2024

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"The study of Palestinian history during the British Mandate generally focuses on the national movement led by the mufti of Jerusalem, Hajj Amin al-Husseini. Arabs who opposed al-Husseini or collaborated with the Zionists are treated as marginal. This is a prejudiced view. It ignores the fact that cooperation and collaboration were prevalent, in a variety of forms, throughout the period and among all classes and sectors. Collaboration was not only common but a central feature of Palestinian society and politics. The actions of many so-called collaborators were not inconsistent with Arab nationalism, yet collaboration was regarded by the mainstream as treason.

The history of the national movement cannot be studied without a thorough examination of collaboration. Zionist institutions shared interests with the Arab rural leadership, with part of the urban elite, and with some members of the public at large. These common concerns and the cooperation that resulted were factors in the defeat of the mainstream nationalists. At the period's two most important historical turning points, Arabs the mainstream labeled as traitors succeeded, with foreign help, in neutralizing the mufti's camp. The Husseinis and other nationalist forces initiated and guided the Arab rebellion of 1936–39. Peace units and local collaborators helped the British and Zionists put down the uprising. To oppose the UN partition plan of 1947, the mufti and the Higher Arab Committee formed the Holy Jihad army and brought the Arab states into war against Israel. "Traitors" refrained from fighting, made alliances with the Jews, in some cases coordinated

their moves with King ‘Abdallah of Transjordan, and helped frustrate the attempt to establish an independent Arab state in Palestine.

This is not to argue that collaboration with Zionists was the main cause of the Arab defeat. There were many other contributing factors: the Jewish forces’ superior military organization; the support the Zionists received from the British during the early Mandatory period and from the international community toward its end; and the mufti’s problematic conduct. Nevertheless, it is important to know that central figures in Palestinian society opposed Hajj Amin’s bellicosity and consequently joined the Zionists or ‘Abdallah. Both sides benefited from this cooperation, even when it was partial. ‘Abdallah annexed the West Bank, the Jews enlarged their state beyond the borders set by the partition plan, and “traitors” received posts in the united monarchy’s executive branch (e.g., Ragheb Nashashibi and Suliman Tuqan), legislative branch (Farid Irsheid, ‘Abd al-Fattah Darwish, Hafez Hamdallah), or religious-judicial branch (Hussam Jarallah). To be sure, some paid a heavy price and became refugees as a result of a war they had sought to avoid. In any case, until the war of 1967, and to a lesser extent until the Intifada of 1987, they and their successors held positions of power in Palestinian society.

When Chaim Weizmann visited Palestine in 1920, the Zionist Executive foresaw that its project would split Palestinian society and undermine its leadership and institutions. The rift among Palestinians in 1948 may be seen as the fulfillment of this prediction. But to understand Palestinians’ readiness to cooperate with Jews, one must first picture the Middle East at the beginning of the twentieth century, before nationalism became the focal point of identity and before the borders of the Arab states were drawn. In that period, including the years immediately after World War I, large numbers of Arabs identified themselves first and foremost by their religion, their family, their village, and the region they lived in. Even those who gave priority to their national identity as Arabs were divided on the question of what constituted the Arab nation and what its national territory was. The pan-Arab movement was sometimes stronger and sometimes weaker. Some of its adherents perceived Palestine to be part of an Arab kingdom centered in Damascus, others viewed it as a natural extension of the Transjordan emirate, while still others saw the boundaries of the British Palestine mandate as defining a specific Palestinian Arab identity distinct from other Arab identities. As time passed, the latter became the mainstream, though not the only, view among Palestinian Arabs.

Two opposing forces took form in Palestine's Arab community at the beginning of the Mandatory period. One was the Husseini party, which controlled the national institutions, and the other was the opposition, often identified with a rival Jerusalem family, the Nashashibis, but with many of its leaders from rural and peripheral areas. Both established social and political networks throughout Palestine. Under the new circumstances, old debates turned into ideological debates: how to respond to Zionism; how to relate to 'Abdallah of Transjordan. From the start, the Husseinis took a hostile stance toward both Zionism and the Hashemites. The opposition, in contrast, preferred to seek good relations with the emir and accommodation with the Zionists—not necessarily out of love of the Jews, but rather since they understood that the Zionists could not be defeated by the Arabs. Over the years, senior opposition leaders were in contact with the Zionist movement, and some also sold land to Jews. The Husseini leadership branded them traitors. Their conflict with the mufti led them to prefer the annexation of Arab Palestine to Transjordan, that is, to resist the very core of Palestinian mainstream nationalism as consolidated during the early 1920s.

The opposition did not win the support of a majority of Palestine's Arabs, but the Husseini camp also failed to garner mass support. Part of the reason was an internal contradiction: the Husseinis expected the public to identify itself first and foremost as Palestinian Arabs, just as nationality had become the central component of personal identity in Europe. Such a revolution in self-perception required that other political and family identities become subordinate to the nation. But the Husseini version of Palestinian national identity demanded total allegiance to a specific political camp and, even more so, to a particular leader. In other words, the Husseinis themselves gave priority not always to the interests of the nation, but rather to the interests of the mufti. The unintended result of this contradiction was the strengthening of family and political identities in the opposition. Thus, for many individuals on both sides, as for many who were not affiliated with either, personal and family interests remained paramount and overshadowed national considerations. In the new, post–World War I global order (the "age of nationalism"), this was a political deficiency of the first order. This was even more the case given that the Palestinian national movement's rival was Zionism, whose ideology and political and organizational structure were deeply rooted in the European nationalist tradition. An important consequence was that those who opposed the Husseinis at the beginning of the British Mandate period

largely continued to oppose them thereafter. Then they were joined during those three decades by others who were victims of the rebels during the uprising of 1936–39, or of the aggression and nepotism that characterized the national political leadership of the Husseinis. In other words, the official Palestinian national institutions could not exert their influence on the opposition camp and so block its ties with the Zionists. Regional leaders who in the 1920s joined pro-Zionist organizations or the farmers' parties—such as Muhammad Zeinati of the Beit She'an Valley, members of the AbuGhosh family, the Darwish family who led the villages of the southwest Jerusalem mountains, the 'Azzis who headed the villages in the Beit Jibrin area, the Abu-Hantashes of Qaqun, and the Zu'bis of the Lower Galilee—continued throughout these years to act outside, and often against, the Palestinian national organizations. Some of them fought against the rebels in the 1930s, worked with the Jews and British to prepare for a German invasion in the early 1940s, and maintained contact with and often provided intelligence to the Jewish forces in the 1948 war. The fissure in Palestinian Arab society reflected, in the main, a traditional social and political structure based largely on kinship, with old tensions between landowners and the landless, between religious communities, and between the rural and urban populations. From the beginning, the Zionists were well aware of the strategic and tactical benefits they could reap from these tensions. At first they thought they could use opposition figures to reach a compact with Palestine's Arabs. When that turned out not to be possible, the Zionists took advantage of the divisions to weaken the Palestinian national movement and impede the Palestinian nation-building process. In so doing, they were able to broaden the gaps between the rural and urban leaderships. They slowly strengthened those Druze who opposed the national movement, to the point that Druze forces actually allied with the Jews in 1948. A similar result was achieved with some Bedouin tribes. The Zionists (alongside the British) used the services of collaborators to help suppress the rebellion and obtain vital information. Even more important, this created a cycle of hostility that prevented the Palestinians from uniting. Opposition figures and other collaborators who aided Zionists were hounded by the national movement, but that merely intensified their willingness to work with the Zionists. They extended their collaboration into new areas; political collaborators began to work as land agents, and land agents helped fight nationalist violence. Both provided information to the Haganah's intelligence division, the Shai.

The same process took place on the local level. Shai field operatives identified social fissures or feuds and sought to enlist one of the contending sides into its service. The founder of the Shai's Arab division, Ezra Danin, instructed his agents to use personal and family rivalries in Arab villages to locate and enlist potential collaborators. During the rebellion, additional collaborators came from among Arabs who sought revenge for injuries incurred at the rebels' hands. To get it, they were prepared to aid their enemy's enemy—the Zionists. Other collaborators were motivated by their distaste for the national movement's violent tactics, or because they found it morally repugnant to hurt their Jewish neighbors. Such Arabs provided information on attacks planned against the Jews or continued to do business with them in violation of the boycott declared by the national leadership. At times, of course, their motives were utilitarian, on both the national and the local level.

So, while the Zionists established and reinforced networks of informers, broadened fissures in Arab society, built up their military strength, and expanded their holdings by purchasing land and establishing settlements, Palestinian society was preoccupied with internal battles and was unable to mobilize and unify behind a leadership that all were prepared to accept.

The conduct of Palestinian society might lead to the conclusion that, during the period under discussion and even at its end, Palestinian society's national spirit was not sufficient to the task at hand. According to Benedict Anderson, a national spirit is fraternity that makes it possible for so many millions of people not so much willing to kill as willingly to die for it.1 This was not the case among Palestinian Arabs, who by and large did not see the nation as the central focus of their loyalties, to use Hans Kohn's definition.2 This limited willingness to sacrifice their lives (or personal comfort) for the nation can be seen, not only in the low level of mobilization for the decisive war that began in December 1947, but also in their economic activity and involvement in selling land to the Zionists.

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homes, or sometimes a group of villages. Only in extremely rare cases did forces move to distant sectors—a sharp contrast with the high mobility of the Jewish forces. Mobility enabled the Jews to achieve numerical superiority in almost every area where combat took place. Furthermore, in many locations Arabs' links to their villages and community had been disturbed when some villagers sold land or because of individuals' links with Jewish intelligence operatives. This had a negative impact on the villages' resilience and was displayed in internal conflicts during combat. The lack of a shared view of Palestine as a single entity was expressed in another way as well. An important group among the opposition to Hajj Amin al-Husseini had close ties with Transjordan's ruler, Emir (later King) 'Abdallah. At various points in time these figures supported the annexation of Palestine (or its Arab parts) to 'Abdallah's state. Hajj Amin and his followers considered these people traitors because they rejected his authority. But it is important to stress that their concept of the nation was different not only with regard to the question of who should lead it (a central issue for their rivals, the Husseini party) but also with regard to the definition of the territory in question. They did not see Palestine as a discrete political unit. This is a point of great significance, for land constitutes the territorial and cultural basis of nationalism.

The lack of agreement over such a fundamental issue made it difficult to create a common ethos, and difficult for the social unit to function as a nation.* The lack of such central components of national identity led Zionist spokesmen to claim that no Palestinian Arab nationality existed. Ironically, this same claim was echoed by Palestinian Arab national activists when they sought to unite the public behind them. At times they too sensed that they were not succeeding in turning the national movement into a focal point of identity. To arouse the public, they posted placards warning that the failure to respond to the nation's call would confirm the Zionist claim that the Jews had come to a land without a people.

(The Palestinian dispute over the national territory differs from the current Israeli public debate over the status of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In the latter case there is disagreement about the need for Israel to exercise sovereignty over these lands on its periphery, no matter what their historical, religious, or military importance. At the same time, there is a consensus about the country's sovereignty over the territories within the boundaries demarcated by the cease-fire lines of

1949. In other words, there is a central territory about which there is general agreement. In the Palestinian case, the fact that many preferred the Jordanian option is evidence that they attached no importance to the existence of an independent Palestinian Arab state, and the entire territory of Palestine could, in their view, be a part of the Jordanian kingdom or some other Arab entity. This view negates Palestinian (though not Arab) nationalism.)

But things were more complicated than that and cannot be presented as a dichotomy—the presence or absence of a national identity. To better

understand the Palestinian case, it is necessary to deconstruct and dissect the concept of nationalism, to see which components were present and which not, and among whom. It can be stated that national consciousness—that is, the consciousness of belonging to the Arab nation, and specifically to the Palestinian Arab nation, took root among the Arab population of Palestine during the British Mandate. It is almost certain that a large majority of the country's Arab inhabitants, including those who tended to support the Hashemite option, defined themselves as Palestinian Arabs. This identity was produced by several factors, including the establishment of the borders of Mandatory Palestine, the activity of the national movement, and the struggle against Zionism. National sentiment, which as Ernest Gellner has noted is based on resistance to foreign rule, also characterized the Arab population of Palestine.3 Such sensibility existed at the time of the first waves of Zionist immigration, which created fears that Jews would take control of the country. It grew stronger after the Balfour Declaration and the imposition of the Mandate.

The spread of national consciousness and sentiment is testified to by the terminology used even by those people and groups whom the mainstream termed traitors. Such was the case in the early 1920s with Ibrahim 'Abdin of Ramla, who stressed that he was not a traitor; in his letters to the Zionists, he sought to dissuade them from harming the country's Arabs. Similarly, the propagandist Muhammad Tawil, active around 1930, wrote that he opposed the mufti for the sake of the nation. The same was true of peace unit commanders such as Fakhri Nashashibi of Jerusalem, Fakhri 'Abd al-Hadi of 'Arrabet-Jenin, and Rabbah 'Awad of the Western Galilee, who considered the uprising of 1936–39 a "counterfeit rebellion."

They called their war against the rebels a rebellion for the nation; local leaders like ‘Abd al-Fattah Darwish used the same terminology in 1948.

The Palestinian public thus did not reach identical and unambiguous political inferences from its national sentiments. The national institutions rejected contact with the Zionists. The other, “treasonous” stream maintained that talking and working with the Zionists for the sake of the country’s future was patriotic, or at least unavoidable. They added that the Husseinis’ militancy was liable to bring catastrophe on Arab society in Palestine. Critics of this latter group said that the claim of patriotism was no more than a fig leaf to cover up their mendacity, whereas at least some of the “traitors” seem to have been sincerely concerned with the public good, and subsequent events in some ways proved their case. Moreover, on the socioeconomic, as opposed to political and military,

CONCLUSION / 265 level, the public at large did not oppose cooperation on day-to-day matters. Emotional support for Hajj Amin and national sentiment, strong as it was, did not prevent Palestinians from working with and for Jews. The Arabs of Palestine usually distinguished between the private and the political, between daily needs and national sentiments. With the exception of a few specific and isolated points in time, they maintained social ties with Jews and ignored the economic boycott. Some even sold land to Jews. Certainly they did not seek to halt the construction of their nation; rather, their actions sometimes grew out of a conviction, based on a realistic appraisal of their situation, that the Jews had become an integral part of the country’s population who could not be uprooted. The political leadership ignored this insight, and that is one of its most colossal failures. Its opponents claimed that personal and party interests blinded the Husseini party. Its proponents said that they could not consent to the expropriation of any part of Palestine.

Palestinian Arabs thus shared a national consciousness and nationalist sentiments but were divided about the practical implications of that nationalism. In the field, this took the form of the very limited willingness to engage in self-sacrifice (the behavior of the leadership was also a factor), the lack of a consensus over what territory constituted the national territory, and the preservation of prenationalist social structures. Opposition to the national leadership in the first decades of the development of nationalist ideas is a phenomenon well known from other countries. Eugen Weber’s comprehensive study of the French peasantry in the decades before World War I depicts much the same picture, perhaps one even more

distant from the common image of nationalism. His work shows that, almost one hundred years after the mandatory conscription law of 1789, the rural French still perceived the national army as a hostile force. In many places most young men sought to evade conscription, and the local population made life miserable for army units deployed in their vicinity.4 The situation Weber described is surprisingly similar to that faced by Arab military units (both Palestinian and those of the Arab countries) deployed in and around Palestinian villages and cities in the rebellion of 1936–39 and war of 1948.

Weber writes that he does not claim that the French were not patriotic. Rather, he shows that at that time patriotism was viewed differently by different French men and women. He concludes that patriotic sentiments on the national, as opposed to local, level are not instinctive. They have to be learned.5 The same is true of the young countries of the Middle East. Firsthand testimony of this comes from Faysal I, king of Iraq, speaking of his country in 1933: "In Iraq there is not yet . . . an Iraqi nation, but rather uncounted masses of people, lacking any patriotic ideal."6 In Palestine there were, in fact, many with patriotic ideals, because of the fear that Jews would take over their country. But they did not necessarily identify with the national leadership, which excommunicated people and factions from the nation. In the end, this prevented the national movement from becoming a significant framework of identity for all Palestine's Arabs. In the war of 1948 the leadership could no longer mobilize the masses, its armed units were crushed, and many Palestinians, from the opposition and others, asked 'Abdallah to "save" Palestine. Ironically, the results of the war led within a few years to the reemergence of the Palestinian national movement and the consolidation of the people around it.

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The Zionist movement's Arabists enjoyed both strategic and tactical successes. It is hardly surprising, then, that the use of political and intelligence collaborators continued to be a fundamental component of Israel's security conception in later years. During the nineteen years in which Jordan ruled the West Bank and Egypt the Gaza Strip, some of the collaborators who had worked with the Zionists during the Mandate period continued to serve Israeli intelligence both within Israel and outside it. When Israel occupied these territories in 1967, it established a well-developed network of collaborators. They were used to help frustrate terrorism, but as in the Mandate period one of the goals was also to frustrate Palestinian nation building. This was the logic behind the establishment of the village leagues at the

beginning of the 1980s, and it was also the logic behind planting informers within unarmed political organizations such as trade unions and student organizations. As during the Mandate, armed Palestinian activists tried and executed many collaborators. Purges took place in the early 1970s in the Gaza Strip and during the first and second Intifadas. But there are two important differences in the way the new Palestinian national movement conducted itself. For one, with the exception of some marginal elements and limited periods, it did not seek to impose an economic boycott on the Jewish economy or to forbid Arabs to work for or with Jews in Israel. In this way it avoided its alienation from the general public. In addition, the central stream of the national movement—Fateh—generally refrained from assassinating its political rivals. The Palestinians learned these two lessons from the fight against "traitors" during the Mandate.

This does not mean that the Palestinian public or its leadership ceased to be concerned about treason and collaboration or to fight them. On the contrary, the issues are very much alive today, and the fields of (and discourse about) collaboration did not change: In the political field the discussion is which compromise with Israel would be legitimate and which should be considered treacherous (a current example is the debate in Israel and Palestine on the Geneva initiative); in the security arena people are preoccupied by Israeli successes in recruiting collaborators even for targeted killing; and the land issue is also of great interest (as was manifested in the discussion of the Greek Orthodox patriarch land deal with a Jewish company in 2005). The hot debates in regard to these issues remind us that the question "What is treason?" is a mirror image of the question "What is patriotism?" and the question "What is unacceptable collaboration?" is another way of asking "What relations should we have with Israel?" and "What does it mean to be 'a good Palestinian'?"