

# Las élites palestinas de Jerusalén

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## Introduction

The aim of this paper is to offer an approach to the world of the Palestinian elites in Jerusalem. In order to achieve this, I am focused on the Nashashibis and Husaynis, and on the relationship between these and the foreign powers that have governed their land.

As a preliminary step, I offer an analysis on the elites theory, first of all by referring to its main scholars, Mosca and Pareto, and eventually by introducing the analysis made by several scholars such as Bottomore, Schumpeter and Mills, just to mention a few specialist in the field.

In every society, throughout the history of humankind, there has been one class governing the remaining segments of society: a group of families or a clan would make decisions on behalf of the rest of the society to which they belong.

The Palestinian case has been no exception. The traditional families have ruled the people and each and every village throughout Palestine. Taking in consideration this background, in his book *Arbiei Eretz Israel*, Yacov Shimoni makes a distinction between three different groups of families: The urban families --governing at the national level--, the rural-urban families --endowed with regional power--, and the rural families --rulers of their villages.

This paper focuses on the first group and, above all, on the fate of the Nashashibis and Husaynis. Their lust for power and their mutual rivalry have made them take different paths after the 181 resolution of the United Nations. It is true that, a few years before 1947, their rivalry is made open and becomes materialized in the creation of their own political parties. Still, the events taking place after 1948 might have changed the history of the region. What influence might have had the international legitimation of a Palestinian government in Gaza? What role might have been allotted to these two families in the coalescence of the two factions? What kind of relationship might have evolved between each of these families and the Hashemite monarchy? This questions and several others are analyzed in depth and in relation to the social and political events that took place in the modern Middle East resulting from the creation of the State of Israel.

How have these elites striven to preserve their power and identity throughout those turbulent years? Do they really preserve it or do they have to metamorphose themselves into political parties or other forms of associations? Or is it that they have only tried to preserve their political and religious power above all?...

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### **Theoretical framework**

When seeking to understand a social theory of the elites, it becomes necessary to corroborate the following points:

- a) Behind the legitimate owners of the state power, there are or coexist a number of stable groups which are in possession of power that sets them apart from the other groups.
- b) These groups have decisive political influence
- c) They serve as a recruiting ground for members of the government.

These points are evaluated below in order to distinguish and analyze the Palestinian elite in Jerusalem. First of all, the basic concepts of any elite must be defined.

### **The elite, concept and ideology**

Life in the modern and industrial era call for a political system --regardless of its essence and the society in which it is applied-- in which important political decisions are taken by a few individuals.

Any theory on the elites relies on two main assumptions: First of all, the masses are intrinsically incompetent, and therefore these should not be given the possibility to decide. Secondly, they are inert matter, modelled at will, as well as ungovernable and unsatiated beings with a proclivity to undermine culture and liberty, indispensable pillars of the modern democracies.

Even though the main goals of the elites consist in preserving and promoting the interests of the community, these impose on the State a specific role and assign to it tasks that have been defined in accordance to their basic interests.

According to Aristotle, man is a political animal. Still, it is often stated that, as a man's strength and energies are absorbed fundamentally by his personal life, for the common man politics becomes a marginal issue, a state at which a few chosen arrive. In consequence, several experts on the subject state that the elite consists of a few men, governing first of all to secure

their own selfish interests and then to secure the welfare of the people, but always according to their own values.

It could be stated that there is a certain amount of truth in this claim. In the history of humankind, all the main political, economic and social decisions have been made, not only by the politicians, but also by a small number of powerful individuals.

Bottomore makes a distinction between the political class and the political elite. The former is composed by those groups which exercise political power or influence, and are directly engaged in struggles for political leadership. The latter is integrated by a smaller group of individuals who actually exercise political power in a society in any given time. There are two principal elites in the economic, political and military sphere, and these are in fact a cohesive group:

a) The governing elite: Those who occupy the position of command in a society.

b) The ruling class (the concept will be further developed in the following section): The class which owns the major instrument of economic production in a society and which is shown to be a cohesive group because its members have definite economic interests in common.

Since the power of a ruling class arises from its ownership of prosperity, and since this prosperity can easily be transmitted from generation to generation, the class has an enduring character. It is integrated by a group of families which remain as its component elements over long periods of time through the transmission of family property. Its composition is not entirely immutable, for new families may enter it and old families may decline, but the greater parts of its members continue from generation to generation.

### **The antecedent, Mosca and Pareto**

Both investigators have been the first scholars to give a thrust to the research into the elites in their first edition of *Elementi di Scienza Politica* (1896). Mosca states that in any given society there are two kinds of individuals, divided into two clearly distinct groups: The governing and the governed class. There is nothing remarkable in the above-mentioned statement; yet, Mosca endows this statement with an antidemocratic nuance by insisting that one class is dominated by the other. In other words, the first class, smaller in size than the second one, takes care of all the political functions, monopolizes the power and knows how to enjoy its benefits. Mosca defines and calls this class the "Ruling Class". The second class is

controlled by means that could range between legality and arbitrariness, depending on the circumstances.

Mosca calls the ruling group a “Ruling Class,” and he recognizes as Pareto that it is itself composed of distinct social groups. Pareto observes that the upper stratum of society nominally contains certain groups of people that are called aristocracies.

Moreover Mosca adds that, in modern times, not only is the elite prominent at the top of the social pyramid and is it totally unconnected from the rest of the pyramid, but it is also intimately linked to it by means of a sub-elite. This group is even greater than the first one and consists of the so-called middle class of civil servants, white collar workers, scientists, scholars and intellectuals. This group is a vital element of the governing class.

How does an elite hold power? In order to answer this question, Mosca introduces in his theory the notion of social force as the main element and source in the creation of an elite. In order to survive, it is crucial for the governing elites to reflect the changing forces of society and also to monopolize the talent of its members.

Mosca states “that the whole history of civilized mankind comes down to a conflict between the tendency of dominant elements to monopolize political power and transmit possession of it by inheritance, and the tendency towards a dislocation of old forces and an insurgence of new forces; this conflict produces an unending ferment of endosmosis and exosmosis between the upper classes and certain portions of the lower. Ruling classes decline inevitably when they cease to find scope for the capacities through which they rose to power, when they can no longer render the social services which they once rendered, or when their talents and the service they render lose in importance in the social environment in which they live...” (Mosca, Gaetano, *The Ruling Class*, p. 65-66). According to the text, the precursors confirm the existence of circulation between the elites and the other classes; moreover, they consider it as the feedback factor of the elite itself. The social balance relies on a sufficient quantity of talented and ambitious individuals who become members of the elites. In addition, a governing class may also be fed by the arrival of whole groups and families belonging to the inferior classes. In other words, if the governing elite is reluctant to incorporate new members from the inferior classes to its ranks, a revolution may be forthcoming.

### **The Elites in the Third-World Countries**

This paper is focused on an area belonging to the so-called “third world” or “developing countries”. Before 1948, the region is governed by Great Britain, on account of the territorial

divisions take place in the aftermath of the First World War. ...”Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations instituted the system of the mandate. It speaks of “people yet not able to stand by themselves... [and therefore] tutelage of such peoples should be entrusted to advanced nations... as mandatories on behalf of the League”... as Dr. Sela explains in his Political Dictionary of the Middle East.

Palestine is governed as a Class A mandate, according to the above-mentioned article. In practice, however, it is managed as an English colony. Under this regime, Great Britain is expected to provide administrative assistance both in Palestine and in the region so that this may overcome its lack of stability. The relationship between the Mandate and the Palestinian elite becomes a key factor affecting the fate of both the Palestinian aristocracy and the emerging Arab nationalism. Bottomore distinguishes four categories of developing or third-world countries, each of them with their important similarities of social structure and culture:

- a) The African States
- b) The Arab States of the Middle East and North Africa
- c) The Asian States
- d) The Latin American States

Among the countries belonging to group b, a number of them have been formed by independence struggles against direct colonial rules, but many others have enjoyed political independence for some time and have chiefly had to resist the indirect control of their economic resources by foreign powers. Their political problems are mainly those of breaking down feudal systems of government which are linked with highly inegalitarian and rigid class systems.

Industrialization in the developing countries, in contrast to the Western countries, takes place in a recurrent state of political instability: The popular masses demand better standards of living, and the traditional elements of society object to these changes.

These traditional elements sometimes keep the masses inactive. This attitude consequently fosters the birth of a new elite in charge of mobilizing the masses and of bringing about the economic development.

It is possible to define five ideal kinds of leadership in the process of industrialization: (1) a dynastic elite, (2) the middle class, (3) the revolutionary intellectuals, (4) the colonial administrators, and (5) the nationalist leaders.

The colonial administrators have created, in many countries of Asia and Africa, some of the prerequisites for industrial development, by establishing an effective administration and

judiciary, introducing modern education and promoting modern systems of banking and commerce, as well as some modern industries. In spite of all this assistance, the countries under foreign domination are unable to achieve a fast industrialization, mainly because of the economic interests of the colonial power.

The dynastic elite has a limited role since it is concerned with preserving their social status. Such a status makes this kind of elite legitimate and provides it with social force; yet, at the same time, it makes it inoperant.

The roots of the new colonial elites in the countries under foreign domination may be found in two subgroups: On the one hand, the national leaders who seek to achieve political independence, and on the other hand, the revolutionary intellectuals.

These ideal kinds of elites act in similar ways in the third-world countries; the cultural gap between the elite and the masses in these countries is remarkably wider than in the developed countries. One of the main sources for this cultural and social polarization lied in the existing relationship between the third-world elites and the West. The constant exchange of input, the Western influence and the exportation of ideology to the East are some of the pillars of these relationship based on mutual necessity and even almost dependence.

This relationship, which in this case has been extremely direct, provides the Palestinian elite of Jerusalem with a kind of self-legitimacy that transforms it in the rulers of the destiny of a stateless people.

### **The Palestinian Elite before 1948**

#### **Jerusalem, the Holy Land**

*"Glory be to him who made His servant go by night from the sacred mosque whose surroundings We have blessed, that We might show him some of our signs"...* (The Koran, 17.1)

This quotation from the Koran makes clear the importance of Jerusalem as a holy city for the Muslim world.

At the beginning of the Muslim era, prophet Muhammad chooses Jerusalem as the site to which all the Muslims have to address their prayers. Still, when he realizes that the Jews from Hejaz will not adopt the new religion as their own, Muhammad established that Mecca is the new place to which prayers must be oriented.

Despite this change, Jerusalem preserves its sacred character: First of all, it is the third sacred city for the Muslim world; secondly, the al-Aqsa mosque is erected in this city in the exact place from which, according to the Muslim religion, the prophet has ascended to heaven.

Thanks to its sacred status, Jerusalem provides its inhabitants with power and a status that, had they lived in other Palestinian cities, they would not have enjoyed. To this, we should also add the growing international importance of the city in the middle of the nineteenth century. During the Ottoman period, Jerusalem is a mere district subordinated to Istanbul, and the Mufti of Jerusalem is, by the same token, subordinated to the Sheik ul-Islam at the Ottoman capital. Because of this, the desintegration of the Ottoman empire and the centralization of Jerusalem during the Mandate endows Jerusalem with an unprecedented importance. Is it on account of the new status of Jerusalem as capital of the Mandate that it has become so powerful? Or maybe, is it the traditional families that, in time and through several public policies, have further fostered the belief in a sacred Jerusalem.

As for Palestine, it acquires its status as the Holy Land for the Muslims after Salah al-Din reconquers the city in 1187, which has previously been in the hands of the Crusaders. Therefore, the city of Jerusalem manages to create a magic, a mysticism and a power that encourages us to focus our analysis on the Nashashibi and Husayni families.

### **The Important Families**

Within the Palestinian social structure, the dominant families set the social, political, religious and economic pace. They are in contact with the governing power and with the West, and its members hold important offices at social and political levels owing to their western education. These families are the custodians of the Holy Places, legitimate the governing power and, in consequence, are able to take advantage of their position as middlemen.

In this subworld, there are some families whose power decline, while some others become more influential. Some of them are guided by a head of family in charge of guiding the clan, whereas in other cases, there is a specific individual who monopolizes all the power. All of these changes are affected by the internal social pace. In our case, the most influential factors are the penetration of the capitalist system and the Europeanization that has taken place since the beginning of this century.

In every city and village there is a group of important families which varies according to the population size of the settlement. If the population is greater in size, there are more dominant families, and viceversa. It is important to remark that this equation fails to apply to all the cases but is nevertheless the case of an outstanding number of settlements. Still, with the advent of modernity, an important number of influential families migrate from the rural areas to the cities.

Before 1948, there are in Palestine three different kinds of families in the Arab society: The great urban families --influential at a national level--, the semi-urban families --only influential at a regional level--, and the families inhabiting the villages, who have little influence on their milieu.

It is important to explain the differences existing between the cities and the villages of those times, as well as to analyze the social and political role of the villages within the Palestinian society.

Before the creation of the state of Israel, 65% of the Arabs in Palestine have lived in the villages, and agriculture has constituted their main occupation. The majority of the *falakhim*, tenant farmers who are settled in the villages, are Muslim Arabs. The Christian Arabs represent a small percentage of the villagers. For the most part, they live in the cities. The Arab villages are characterized by the following two aspects: Firstly, their lack of space --there is no room for streets and the houses are extremely cramped--, and secondly their physical location at the mountainsides. Still, the political and economic features of the villages are determined their distance with respect to the cities. The villages located near the cities are under the economic influence of the cities, and their produce is more easily sold and at better prices. The city is also a source of employment for the *falakhim*. In other words, they have all the benefits of living next to the modern world. The land, as a means of production, is the principal basis in the lives of the *falakhim*. There are five different kinds of land, each having its own value, and on many occasions these are manipulated as symbols of power by the inhabitants of the cities. In the cities where the Arab population reaches 35%, the proportion between Moslem and Christian Arabs is inverted. The Christians account for 80% of the urban Arab population. The percentage of the Christian Arab population living in the cities is so prominent that, out of the seventeen Arab cities in Palestine, four are completely Christian, namely: Nazareth, Ramallah, Bethlehem and Beit Ja'la. In Yaffo and Tzfat, Arabs are the majority of the population, whereas Jerusalem, Haifa and Tiberiades have a Jewish majority.

A constant wave of migration to the cities takes place, resulting from the introduction of capitalism and the process of urbanization that has begun since the second half of the last century. The Christian Arabs have the greater benefits arising from these changes. This resettlement in the cities brings about a difficult adaptation of the traditional elite to the new patterns of modern education of the Ottoman Empire. It is important to emphasize that the important families living in the cities have preserved their ties with the villages, since the former are still the owners of farming land, which are for them a source of income.



It is impossible to observe any kinds of elites in the rural Arab society. There is no difference between the owners of the means of production and the owners of the factories. The same applies to the owners of the financial capital and the owners of commercial capital. All of these are monopolized by a single individual, a single family: This is a patriarchal system.

The situation is altogether different in the cities. The families are not as powerful as in the villages. It is only the social power that remains almost intact, and this is because of the conservative character of this society. The prominent families continue to hold important public offices, while economic power is more widely spread. The competition within the political and economic power is mirrored by the creation of political parties in the Arab society. There are few ideological differences between them and, in consequence, it is logical to think that these parties are employed as indicators of power.

This applies to the Nashashibis and Husaynis, who form their own political parties as markers of competition and rivalry. (In those days, there are about sixty one thousand Arabs living in Jerusalem, and the city has one of the greater Arab populations of British Palestine.)

The Husaynis have become powerful during the last generations. According to some sources, they are mentioned in the Jerusalem chronicles as early as the thirteenth century; in contrast, other sources suggest that they have become known since the sixteenth century. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, Abd al-Qadir Ibn Karim al-Din al-Wafa'i al-Husayni had held the office of Mufti of Jerusalem; by keeping this office, the national status of the family is granted. Although this family fails to hold this office for a century and a half, they manage to recover it at the beginning of the last century in order to monopolize it. The members of this family hold high positions in the Jerusalem district and in the central government administration in Istanbul. Al-Wafa al-Husayni's sister marries the Iman of the al-Aqsa mosque, and their descendants preserve their Sharif lineage and their family name, Husayni.

The ties of this family with the governing power begin to be woven at the different social spheres. When the British inaugurate their mandate, they learn that one of the members of this family is the mayor of Jerusalem, while the other is the Mufti of that city.

The Nashashibis have lived in Jerusalem since the fifteenth century. It is believed that this family is of Kurdish descent. Still, they become powerful only at the beginning of the present century. After Uthman al-Nashashibi is appointed member of the Ottoman Parliament in 1912, this family begins to be influential. With Uthman al-Nashashibi's death, the family base their

power on Raghīb al-Nashashībī's status at the Ottoman Parliament (1914) and on the subsequent offices that the latter holds during his career. Since 1914, Raghīb al-Nashashībī represents Jerusalem at the Ottoman Parliament.

The rivalry and competition between the two families lie in their respective attempts to gain political power over Jerusalem. This enmity is further increased when in 1920 Husaynī is discharged from office by the British authorities.

The Nashashībīs are ardent opposers to the Supreme Moslem Council, and try by all means to resist the policies of this institution, which is managed by the Husaynīs and their followers.

### **The Elites as a Guaranty of Security in the Face of the British Mandate**

When the British formally begin their Mandate over Palestine, they become acquainted with an urban elite which has already politicized the public life of the place. During the last years of the Ottoman Empire, a number of events take place, and these conclude with the politization of the public life. One of these is the institution of parliamentary elections in 1876, 1908, 1912 and 1914. As a result, the urban elites have a new instrument of power and influence that could be employed not only vis-a-vis the Ottoman Empire, but also vis-a-vis their pairs in the villages. In order to ensure the power of the elites, the elections take place in two stages, and only the owners of a substantial amount of capital are entitled to cast a vote. Thus, only a select class of people are given the right to vote and, by the way, it is this social group that benefits from the results. As Yoshua Porat states in *The Emergence of the Palestinian-Arab National Movement*, "a close corporation of Arab families, not recognized by the law, but influential by position, usurped all the municipal offices among them" (p. 14).

The creation of new associations such as the Arab Club (*al-Nadi al-Arabi*), and the Literary Club (*al-Mantada al-Adabi*) are the clearest expressions of the elites' monopolization of the public life, by laying emphasis on nationalism. There are no great political differences between these associations. They are only divided by the rivalry between the Husaynīs and the Nashashībīs. Moreover, these two clubs consider Palestine as the southern part of Syria, and seek to accomplish the dream of a Great Syria. *al-Nadi al-Arabi* is managed by the younger generation of the Husaynīs, and has al-Hajj Amin al-Husaynī as its president. *al-Mantada al-Adabi* is managed by the younger Nashashībīs.

In turn, these two families are supported by Great Britain and France, which have emerged victorious from the war and have gained control of the Middle East. The British Empire has contacts with the Husaynīs, whereas the French, who seek to emasculate the British power in

the region, trust the Nashashibis. In time, this new confrontation ceases to be a conflict between families, and acquires a political character.

Thanks to their relationship with the British, the old elite has access to higher education abroad. The majority of the youth educated during the thirties are related to Husayni's clan, and accept Hajj Amin al-Husayni's leadership as the Mufti of Jerusalem. In this way, the Husaynis reach a very high level of organization and set for themselves a set of goals at a national level. In contrast, the Nashashibis are still in a stage dominated by the familial perspective and have little reception among the intellectuals. On the one hand, these intellectuals become the speakers of the governing regime, and on the other hand, they learn how to defend themselves against the British and Zionist politics such as the Balfour Declaration.

In response to this declaration, the Arab community in Palestine tries to form a political front so as not to comply with the British orders such as the creation of a legislative council. Nevertheless, the Palestinians themselves are divided, and this leads to a new confrontation between the families. The Nashashibis head a reaction against the political and religious monopoly of the Husaynis, which becomes materialized in the creation of the Executive Committee and the Supreme Muslim Council. The Nashashibis attempt to prevent the Husaynis from becoming visible and from becoming the *de facto* Palestinian representatives by trying to secure a place at the Supreme Muslim Council (an Arab organization representing the community at the Mandate) for themselves. This is achieved in 1926, when the Husaynis are defeated.

In addition, the strife between these families is further aroused in 1920, with the collapse of the Southern Syria project. On account of this frustration, Palestinian nationalism undergoes a period of crisis that is mirrored by the outbreak of internal conflicts, both at a familial and a political level. One of these takes place within the *al-Muntada al-Adabi*, among members of the Nashashibi family and other individuals close to the Husaynis.

### **How Has a New Elite Come into Existence?**

With the conclusion of the First World War, all the area that has previously belonged to the Ottoman Empire comes into possession of the victorious powers, Great Britain and France, which divide the region between the two of them.

In accordance with the Treaty of San Remo (April 25, 1920), Palestine and Jordan are assigned to Great Britain, to be governed according to the Mandatorial regime. As the British

have been assisted by the Husaynis against the Ottomans, they transfer land to one of Hussein ibn Ali's son and appoint him as Emir. In this way, the Hashemite family comes into possession of another enclave in the Middle East. This essay does not provide a detailed analysis of the quarrels and military and political interests that lead to the creation of Transjordan since these fall beyond the scope of this paper. Still, it is important to highlight that the existence and survival of Transjordan is conditioned by British interests and needs: ...”a line [is] drawn from a point two miles west of the town of Aqaba in the gulf of Aqaba up the center of Wadi Araba. The Dead Sea and the river Jordan to the junction of the latter with the river Yarmuk, thence up the center of the river Yarmuk to the Syrian frontier”... (Jerusalem, *Palestine Official Gazette*, September 1, 1922). These are the frontiers of the new Emirate of Transjordan during 1921 and 1948, which has a surface of 35,000 sq. mi. The new emir is Abdullah bin-Hussein of the Hashemite dynasty and the thirty eighth generation from the Prophet.

Until the annexation of the West Bank, the economy of the country has been based on a fairly primitive agriculture and on stock-breeding. In addition, the country has strongly depended on the British economy. One of the king's important goals is to increase the internal resources of the country and diversify its external sources of support in order to avoid domination. Still, the slow economic development of the country is for the most part due to poor regional communication.

During 1921 and 1948, Abdullah seeks to strengthen his position in Transjordan. In order to achieve this, the king enacts a constitution and establishes a parliament, an administrative machinery and an efficient army. Nevertheless, after 1948, king Abdullah remains financially, militarily and politically dependent on

Great Britain.

### **Jordan and the West Bank: A Complementary Need**

After the British withdrawal from Palestine, Abdullah is given free rein to expand his dominions. Thanks to the annexation of the West Bank, Transjordan now has a new *raison d'être* and a new regional balance that allows the country to face the coming years.

King Abdullah's tutelage of the Husaynis and the Nashashibis is a fact that benefits both groups and the king himself. On the one hand, the Palestinians need a formal framework that protects them; on the other hand, the Transjordans look upon the Palestinian population as a source for their development and growth as a state. The king considers the annexation as the

fulfilment of his own territorial ambitions. Still, Abdullah finds some obstacles on his way to a total internal recognition, such as the refusal of Hajj Amin al-Husayni (the Mufti of Jerusalem), and the communit parties between 1949-1951, to acknowledge the king's legitimacy.

Below is a brief explanation is provided on the main axes of this annexation: The first measure is taken in December 1948, when a conference is held in Jericho in which the Palestinian dignitaries ask Abdullah to be king of the Palestinians. The former believe in the possibility of a Palestinian union and, for the first time, the issue of the Palestinian refugees is addressed. The second step, and almost final, is the Amistice Agreement on April 1949 between Israel and the Kingdom of Jordan; after a ceasefire in the region, this agreement takes for granted annexation of the West Bank by the Transjordanians.

Once the annexation becomes an accomplished fact, the principle of equal rights begins to be applied: In May 1949, for the first time Palestinians are appointed as ministers of the Transjordan government. The new three ministers are Ruhi Abdul (foreign affairs), Musa Nasir (communications) and Khulusi al-Khairi (agriculture and customs).

As one of the last and most important measures, the name of the country is changed, so that it may include all of its inhabitants. In June 1949, the country adopts "The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan" as its name; in this way, no emphasis is laid on neither of the two bands.

In April 1950, the Palestinians participate in the Jordanian elections for the first time, and eventually the Jordan parliament enacts the formal annexation of the West Bank. In this way, the last details of the annexation are formalized.

A new royal decree on December 2, 1950, creates a new office: Custodian of the Holy Places. Thus, Raghib al-Nashashibi, the appointed official, is responsible for preserving the harmony among the different religious communities. In this way, the Nashashibis begin to occupy offices in the new kingdom.

The new annexion brings about a great deal of changes at the social, political and economic level. The most important of them is the population increase resulting from the annexation. Before 1948, the Transjordan population has reached 400,000 inhabitants. With the annexation of the West Bank, the population increases in 900,000 inhabitants of Palestinian origin. The population of the kingdom doubles in a matter of months. The majority of these Palestinians live in the West Bank. 38% of the refugees live in the cities, whereas 30% of them live in refugee camps.

The second change is marked by the difference existing between the two groups at a cultural level. The high percentages greatly favour, at an educational level, the new

inhabitants. There are also remarkable differences at a political level. The Transjordanians' little experience at the political arena fails to resemble the Palestinians'. The latter's fights against the Zionists and the interests of the British mandate have provided them with an outstanding political training. By accepting these differences, the Jordan government is forced to restructure the administrative and political organization of the West Bank in order to impose his own authority. The creation of integrative institutions is a means of imposing the king's authority or of integrating the two groups. Nonetheless, in spite of all this equality, the Hashemite regime prevents the Palestinians from growing too powerful by becoming a majority in key places such as the Senate, the House of Representatives and the Cabinet. The king is also extremely selective in his political and military appointments. Amman tries to choose people who are close and loyal to the royal court, and who share the same goals. The majority of these appointments involve the Nashashibis and their disciples. The Nashashibi wing figures prominently in appointments to the Senate in the first year after the annexation. Out of eight senatorial appointments, five of them belong to the Nashashibis. A civil administration is established in all the districts, and by royal decree, on March 6 1949, three governors are appointed. It is important to remark that Raghib al-Nashashibi is appointed as the new governor of Jerusalem.

On the other hand, the Husaynis consider king Abdullah as a traitor to the Arab cause, and they accuse him of reaching agreements with the Zionists and the Western powers. Distrustful of king Abdullah's intentions toward the Palestinians, the Husaynis try to create a new separate entity, which they call the All-Palestine government.

The need to assist the refugees is one of the problems of the kingdom. To that aim, the Ministry for Refugee Affairs and Rehabilitation is created by royal decree in August 1949. Its aim is to increase the assistance given to the refugees and its new minister is the governor of Jerusalem, Raghib al-Nashashibi.

As Shaul Mishal states in *West Bank and East Bank*, after 1948 there are two states in with three different societies. These societies have opposite interests that will eventually erupt from the deepest foundations of society. There are imminent divisions at every level.

### **Political Parties as a New Elite?**

The outcome of the annexation leaves the Palestinians unsatisfied. They disagree with the country's foreign and domestic affairs, in which they find traits of ethnical bias. In addition, they strongly question parliamentary ethics. In this way, they begin to protest against the

government, and one of the best ways to do so, according to them, is through the creation of political parties.

The political parties emerge in Jordan at the beginning of the 1950's. The ruling foreign power, Great Britain, is totally against their existence, even when the Arab world negatively perceives this reaction. Several of these parties have an anti-Hashemite stance, for they consider the regime as an ally of the western powers, especially Great Britain. In consequence, all the Jordanian political parties belong to the opposition. The ideals of the parties have constantly swung between international Marxism and Arab nationalism. Eventually, this force both parties to review and change their policies and stance towards the regime. Since the middle of 1951, the communist parties have to resign themselves to the yoke of power. The clearest proof of this is that the party decides to substitute its name: League of National Liberation instead of Jordan Communist Party.

There are two reasons that have triggered the formation of political parties:

- a) The enactment of the Jordanian constitution
- b) The new situation of the country after the annexation of the West Bank in 1950

Nonetheless, in spite of all this freedom, the government has the prerogative, by law, to dissolve any political party that is against governmental regulations, that presents false details of their true goals or that is subsidized by external sources. In other words, it is possible to dissolve any party that opposes governmental policies.

Amnon Cohen defines the political parties as “the articulate organization of society's active political agents, those who are concerned with the control of governmental power and who compete for popular support with another group or group holding divergent views”. (p. 20)

The Jordanian parliamentary structure fails to be highly representative, since a large number of the population has low educational levels. The number of Jordanians who become members of political parties has never been high.

The socially more radical parties have copied the model of the communist parties in the world, such as The Communist, the *Qawmiyun* and the *Baath*. The most conservative right-wing parties have a totally different structure.

The political platforms of all the Jordanian political parties lay emphasis on social change. Their main preoccupation is to find a solution for all the political pressures from which Jordan suffers. The majority of the political parties have a branch in the Hashemite kingdom, but their seat is abroad.

After the annexation, all the Jordanian political parties consider the Palestinians as a source of strength to fight against the system. They are willing to please the new population in order to obtain their support, some times at the expense of their own ideals. The time will prove that to invest on the Palestinian population from the West Bank has been the wisest decision of the Jordanian parties: In that piece of land, the majority of the work and political movement is concentrated.

### **Conclusion**

In every society, as Pareto states, there are individuals who govern and individuals who are governed. The elite in Jerusalem has been able to preserve its power as such, in spite of the different events that they have experienced.

It is true that the creation of the State of Israel modifies the political map of the Middle East, and indirectly affects the relationship between the elites and the government. Nevertheless, before and after 1948, the political situation in the region has been highly unpredictable, and the different kinds of nationalisms have tried to achieve their own aims of creating a state. The rivalry between the Husaynis and the Nashashibis during the years of the mandate takes place at different public spheres. The relationship between the elites and the foreign powers, the centralization of Jerusalem as the heart of the British mandate and the divergent internal policies set the pace for these families. The Husaynis have a great experience in matters of power, since they have had it for decades. In contrast, the Nashashibis are new in the political arena. Nevertheless, both families have the same goal in common: power for its own sake.

But are these families accepted by the people? It may be stated that they are: The people at that time have not had any influence at all, so it is very difficult for the latter to make these families legitimate. Still, are these families accepted by the government or do they seek to be accepted by it? The British have to apply the Mandate and benefit from it. For this reason, they need to be in constant communication with the Palestinian elite. This closeness is achieved by sealing pacts with the elites and by trying to penetrate this subworld in order to learn its values. It is important for the mandatorial authorities to become more fully acquainted with a Middle East that is still pervaded with legends that even Napoleon Bonaparte has been unable to eradicate.

The creation of political parties during the thirties constitute a form of political confrontation. On the one hand, the Husaynis create the Arab Palestinian Party (*al-Hizb al-*



*Arabi al-Filistini*); on the other hand, the Nashashibis form the National Defence Party (*al-Hizb al-Difa al-Watani*).

After the annexation, these two families take completely different paths: On the one hand, the Nashashibis find an ally in the future king of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, whose main confidant is Raghib al-Nashashibi. King Abdullah himself tries to obtain the support of some of the most prominent Palestinian families. The monarch is in contact with these families and offers them several offices in the country. As it has been stated, Raghib al-Nashashibi is the head of this family for two periods. During the Jordan period, he has held strategic offices: After the annexation, he is appointed as the governor of Jerusalem, Custodian of the Holy Places and Minister for Refugee Affairs and Rehabilitation. All the offices held by Raghib al-Nashashibi make him powerful and influential. This family is loyal to the kingdom, and most of its members are assigned offices in it. In all of the fifteen cabinets formed between 1950 and 1956 there have always been Palestinians. The majority of them support the government and the Nashashibis. Somehow, they mark

the Palestinian hegemony in Jordanian politics for the first years, above all in ministries such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and several Jordanian embassies abroad. This hegemony is closely monitored by the king, who would not have allowed a complete Palestinian hegemony.

In contrast, the Husaynis have a different stance. After the partition and eventual annexation of the West Bank, this family tries to form their own state. Do they consider themselves powerful enough to accomplish that aim? Perhaps they think that that is the only way of preserving their power.

With the creation of the All Palestinian Government in 1948, the Husaynis are once again at the center of the conflict. Supported by the Arab League and under the supervision of the Arab High Committee, Al Hajj al-Husayni proclaims himself as president of the state. The new state is supported by the majority of the Arab countries, but king Abdullah and the western powers are opposed to it.

The Husaynis consider king Abdullah a traitor to the Arab cause, and therefore, all of his supporters are similarly perceived. Once again, the Nashashibis are confronted with the Husaynis. In response to this declaration, Abdullah calls his supporters and holds a congress in Amman in 1948 (two months before the congress held in Jericho) in which the new government in Gaza is repudiated and Abdullah is asked to guide and protect the Palestinians.

In December 1948, by appointing Shaykh Hasamuddin Jarallah as the new Mufti of Jerusalem, king Abdullah openly challenges the Husaynis. As the Husaynis are opposed to the king, their power and influence decline. Even though some of the members of this family base their claims on lineage or money, a new elite emerges, consisting of professionals, intellectuals and the military. This new elite owes nothing to nobody.

In conclusion, the Palestinian elites have had a fundamental role in the development of the Palestinian society. It is true that before 1948 the fight between the families strengthen their power within the Palestinian society. The urban life, the modernization and the high standards of living legitimate of the elites. The events taking place after 1948 involve the Hussaynis' loss of power and the Nashashibis become allies of the Jordan government, thus strengthening their status.

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