



State Formation from Below and the Great Revolt in Palestine

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The Great Revolt (1936–39) represented the most fervent and sustained Palestinian challenge to British and Zionist colonialisms during the thirty years of British rule in Palestine. Although its ultimate defeat has led to negative appraisals of its historical significance, the uprising was in its day the largest mass mobilization in Palestinian history and, at its apex, threatened to overturn the British regime. The rebellion was characterized by considerable organizational ingenuity as Palestinians created novel institutions that embodied their drive for popular sovereignty and an end to colonial domination. This article principally examines two such sets of institutions, the national and popular committees of 1936, and the rebel court system from 1937–39. In doing so, it argues that much like revolutionary peasant-based movements elsewhere in the colonial world, insurgent forces in Palestine embarked on a process of state formation from below. This process aimed to sap the colonial regime of its authority and weaken its capacities while augmenting those of the rebels by integrating broad segments of the population into insurgent frameworks. It further contends that it is the dynamic of state formation from below, and the popular character and leadership of the rebel movement, that lent the revolt its resilience and enabled it to push the colonial state to the wall.

IN THE FALL OF 1937, after the Peel Commission called for the partition of their country, Palestinian revolutionaries resumed their armed campaign for national self-determination and sovereignty. Over the course of the next year the anti-colonial uprising known as the Great Revolt (1936–1939) roared ferociously back to life after a long hiatus. Thousands of rural and urban insurgents took to the hills, plains, and cities of Palestine to resist British rule and the Zionist settler project that it protected. At the peak of its power in the summer and fall of 1938, the revolt threatened to completely eviscerate the British regime.

In the course of its ascent in 1937–38, the insurgent movement organized itself, as it had during the first phase of the revolt in 1936, through an array of popular revolutionary institutions. Rebels established courts and local administrations, collected taxes, conscripted fighters, levied all manner of assistance, built a formidable intelligence apparatus, managed systems of provisioning, sheltering, and moving their men and institutions, and organized paramilitary formations. This ensemble of

institutions, though protean and irregular in quality, was not merely incidental to the rise of the rebel movement. In a word, the rebels had embarked on a process of state formation from below, attempting to embody the popular sovereignty over the country which they sought, to defeat and expel the dual colonial challenge posed by the British and Zionism, and to reclaim longstanding traditions of community autonomy that had been eclipsed since the dying days of the Ottoman Empire.¹

The remarkable development of insurgent institutions during the revolt has garnered surprisingly little attention or investigation.² Instead, the ultimate suppression of the Great Revolt has spurred various accounts that, reading history backwards, seek principally to explain its downfall. Although the role of external repression is sometimes adduced, great emphasis has been placed on diagnosing a variety of failures internal to the rebel movement. The earliest versions of this narrative stem directly from Zionist intelligence and depict the revolt as a maelstrom of tribalism and fratricide.³ While arguably avoiding the worst pitfalls of this tradition, other early accounts, such as that of Israeli historian Yehoshua Porath, focus almost unrelentingly on the revolt's purported flaws to the virtual exclusion of anything else.⁴

More recently, a host of leading scholars have suggested that the Great Revolt was a direct cause of Palestinian defeat in 1948. James Gelvin, for one, has dubbed the outcome of the Great Revolt "the first nakba," which "paved the way for the one that followed [that is, in 1948]." His textbook on Palestine/Israel depicts the rebellion as a thuggish affair and compares the revolutionaries to plunder-prone "Afghan warlords."⁵ Rashid Khalidi deems the revolt "a massive failure" that inadvertently advantaged Zionism while decimating the Palestinian leadership in the lead-up to the Mandate's most critical hour.⁶ Mustafa Kabha, one of the Palestinian scholars who has done the most work on the revolt, along with his sometime collaborator, Nimr Sirhan, together offer an equally harsh assessment, wherein the revolt gave way to "civil war" and its downfall led to the Nakba.⁷

Most accounts do not adequately explain the rebel ascent in either 1936 or 1938, nor how a rebel movement powered by the lower classes, and especially by poor peasants and the landless, could, if only temporarily, put the British Empire on the run.⁸ In what follows I will endeavor to shed light on a number of rebel institutions, particularly the national and popular committees in 1936 and the courts network in 1937–39, and to illuminate their importance to the growth and vitality of the overall rebellion. Scholars of revolutionary peasant movements in the modern era have long noted that their success depends in part not only on building coalitions with urban social forces, but on developing an infrastructure capable of drawing the bulk of the population into supportive roles and postures. This entails, as Eric Wolf observes, the creation of "a network of institutions that parallel and replace those of the established government."⁹ The case of Palestine was no different: by providing the revolt with a sound organizational basis that integrated the broader population into rebel frameworks, the incipient institutional matrix fortified and propelled the insurgent movement, lending the uprising remarkable resilience in the face of grave defeats on the battlefield and great hardship that was visited on the Arab public.¹⁰ Indeed, it is the dynamic of state formation from below, and the popular character and leadership of the rebel enterprise, as much as the insurgents' actual guerrilla campaign, that enabled the rebel movement to push the colonial state to the wall and to liberate much of the country for a brief period.¹¹

The 1936 General Strike and the National and Popular Committees

The Great Revolt is arguably the seminal event of modern Palestinian history before 1948. Consisting of two primary phases, the first a half-year general strike and armed insurrection beginning in April 1936, and the second an insurgency from fall 1937 until the eve of World War II in 1939, the revolt was the most direct and sustained Palestinian challenge to both British and Zionist colonialisms during the fateful thirty-year period of British mandatory rule in Palestine. The uprising was, in its day, the largest mass mobilization in Palestinian history. Its origins lay not only in two decades of political frustration during which the British time and again turned back Palestinian demands for self-determination, democratic rule, and an end to the imperial policy of supporting Zionism. Equally important, the wellsprings of the revolt lay in new patterns of social mobilization, repertoires of collective action and contention, and horizontal social affinities that crystallized largely after the 1929 uprising (the Buraq Revolt or *thawrat al-Buraq*, in Arabic). The activism of youth, workers, and peasants reshaped and radicalized the political landscape of the first half of the 1930s, and it was largely their energies, determination, and leadership that propelled the Great Revolt.¹²

The national committees, formed at the inception of the general strike in 1936, were the backbone of the nascent rebellion. After the call for a national strike was issued on 19 and 20 April almost simultaneously by the first such committees in Nablus and Jaffa, parallel committees quickly sprang up in other cities and towns, and in some villages, and the strike spread like wildfire. The port of Jaffa was closed, shops and factories shut their doors, and tradesmen halted their activities virtually everywhere, all within a matter of days.¹³ The strike took inspiration from recent regional unrest: in Egypt, the constitution had been reinstated the previous year following stormy youth protests, while in Syria a general strike earlier in 1936 had resulted in the opening of negotiations (with the French) for Syrian independence.¹⁴ In Palestine, the idea among the strike's progenitors was to finally force the British government to make major concessions, such as banning Jewish immigration, although once the uprising began some rural partisans quickly declared themselves for independence.¹⁵ The Palestinian elite, which was caught off guard by the national insurrection, struggled to keep abreast of the tide; it formed the Arab Higher Committee (AHC),¹⁶ a cross-factional body chaired by the Grand Mufti, Haj Amin al-Husseini, which also included his fervent opponents, known colloquially as the Opposition (*al-mu'arada*).¹⁷

One of the most distinctive aspects of the 1936 general strike was the new grassroots political infrastructure created by its partisans. Alongside the national committees, there were committees for strike supervision, medical relief, financial support, provisioning, legal services, and the boycott of Jewish and British goods, as well as arbitration and conflict resolution bodies and a host of women's and students' groups. As Bayan al-Hut points out, the proliferation of committees and support structures "spread the work and responsibility among numerous committees in [any] one area between the greatest possible number of countrymen," thus increasing the avenues for "organized participation in the struggle."¹⁸

The plethora of management and directive bodies built on youth, labor, and women's organizing and activism. The medical relief committee in Jaffa, for instance, was composed of an interfaith group of Boy Scouts—a mainstay of the youth mobilization of the first half of the decade—from

three local troops. Youth acted as disciplinary bodies, patrolling marketplaces and preventing illicit commerce. Women's committees appeared in "regions of the country that had seen little previous organized activity among women" and played important roles in fundraising for the rebellion, as well as in advancing and even leading numerous demonstrations.¹⁹

The upsurge of popular forces was also reflected in the composition of the national committees, which became the directive hubs of the new movement. Presenting a broad, cross-class front, middle class professionals and wealthy merchants sat beside youth activists and, on occasion, laborers. One Arab informant to the Jewish Agency (JA), who was himself a youth activist and member of Tulkarm's national committee, disclosed that the latter was dominated by youth.²⁰ The same was true for Nablus and Safad, while Jaffa's committee featured not only youth but a strong contingent from the lightermen who helped shut down the port.²¹ Even where youth did not directly control the committees, such as at Haifa, "the militancy of the younger generation and the lower strata" prevailed upon and disciplined their elders and class superiors.²² The initiative, as a number of accounts make clear, was with what Philip Mattar calls "young radicals" and their allies.²³ Indeed, the Peel Commission later observed: "Those few Arabs who kept their shops open or otherwise abstained from striking were soon won over or intimidated by representatives of the National Committees, which, staffed largely by younger Arabs, kept a highly efficient watch on the conduct of the strike."²⁴

From the outset the national committees extended their authority into myriad domains to accomplish their objectives. At base, they ensured compliance with the strike and managed affairs in their respective localities. To assure adequate food supplies and distribution, they monitored the limited sale of essential goods and foodstuffs that was permitted according to the strike, fought price gouging, worked with provisioning committees, and coordinated and oversaw the work of relief committees serving the poor and the needy.²⁵ As the example of food security suggests, the national committees intervened directly and dramatically in basic dimensions of everyday life and empowered themselves almost as mini-legislatures in their areas of operation. In this vein, their powers included important self-arrogated capacities to levy funds and material support from the Arab public. Funds were sought from wealthy elites and businessmen, merchants of all standings, and middle-class professionals as well as from nonstriking Arab government workers. Regarding the latter, the national committees claimed a portion of their salaries, which, according to one source, amounted by mid-summer to half of their pay.²⁶ Collections of what were treated as "taxes" (i.e. operating funds for the national struggle) appear to have been mostly voluntary early in the uprising, but as the strike wore on and the wealthy in particular were asked repeatedly for substantial sums, threats and coercion were also employed by armed insurgents and strike enforcement bodies.²⁷

The existence of strikebreaking and opposition to the uprising from certain quarters, particularly merchants resentful of the rebels' financial impositions and of youth policing their businesses, led to the development of the first rebel judicial and dispute-resolution bodies. We know little about these organs, but from one instructive description they served not only to enforce adherence to the strike, but also to dissuade vigilante violence and, through admonition, to offer those deviating from what was deemed their national duty the opportunity of returning to the fold.²⁸

Bolder experiments yet were undertaken by some national committees. In Nablus, the local committee ordered religious functionaries in the city to focus their preaching on national issues

and to limit their religious instruction to prescribing jihad (understood as armed struggle, not religious war).²⁹ As bankruptcy threatened to wipe out small and middling merchants and traders, the committee in Haifa called for the temporary suspension of rent payment and encouraged landlords and lending parties not to take legal action or foreclose on debtors. Although the initiative does not appear to have succeeded, it nonetheless reveals the national committees' audacity and their creative and adaptive approach to problem solving.³⁰

The great authority accorded to the national committees by the Arab public was not unrelated to the former's support for the armed struggle that accompanied the strike. The committees built links to the armed rebel bands that formed in the countryside, providing them with supplies, arms, and intelligence, some of which was procured from Arab police that acted as double agents for the rebel movement.³¹ Several members of the Tulkarm committee were connected to both urban and rural rebel groups, including the Abu 'Ubayda Boy Scouts and the band operating around the town itself, while the committee also organized or helped organize bands in adjacent villages.³² In Jaffa, the lightermen worked with the national committee to smuggle arms to the rebels while several of its members, including former mayor 'Umar al-Bitar, wrote them notes of encouragement. The local relief committee reportedly procured ammunition, paid fighters a monthly wage of P£10, and afforded the families of fighters a stipend.³³ The Nablus national committee also funneled monies to the insurgents and was reported by Haganah intelligence in mid-July to be in daily contact with them.³⁴ In Gaza, the national committee maintained a subcommittee whose tasks, similar to those elsewhere, consisted of weapons acquisition, purchasing supplies for fighters, and supporting their families.³⁵ Wary of the dangers they courted in aiding armed insurrection, national committees took a range of precautionary measures including keeping dual financial registers, one accurate, and the other for display to the authorities showing receipts being spent on aid to the poor and the impacted.³⁶

Although the largely decentralized and acephalous leadership of the Great Revolt has been criticized as one of the rebellion's most fatal flaws, decentralization proved to be more of an asset than a liability. The modular and networked form of the strike movement had the advantages of being highly replicable and of encouraging local initiative, hence the quick emergence of the strike movement and its infrastructure throughout Palestine. Additionally, the movement absorbed periodic arrest waves by inducting new national and popular committee members as necessary; thus, the lack of a singular, centralized leadership made the strike impossible to decapitate.³⁷

With their focus not only on protest, but on reclaiming forms of community autonomy, the national committee network constituted the first step in the process of rebel state formation. The network aimed to delegitimize the colonial state while proffering an alternative vision of an incipient popular sovereignty, materialized through everyday practices and struggle. The organs of the strike accorded themselves powers of communal mobilization and resource management that are usually reserved for the state and even displayed a degree of functional specialization (as in a bureaucracy). While the state-making capacities of the rebels remained constrained and limited, the *dynamic* of popular state formation—that is, the drive for institutionally embodied self-organization, combined with the active rejection of external sovereignty and governance—cannot be gainsaid.

The weakening of the national committees after months of struggle helped end the strike. Ironically, this came about as the insurgency found its footing. As their strength grew, the

guerrilla bands usurped some of the national committees' fundraising functions, eating away at their authority, while tensions appeared between urbanites and the mostly rural rebel bands, since the latter felt that in taking up arms they bore the greatest burden of the revolt.³⁸ The divisions within the rebel movement sapped it of some of its earlier synergy. So too did the coarsening of strike discipline over time, which led to the assassination of two national committee chairs that were deemed insufficiently stalwart, Haj Khalil Taha of Haifa and acting mayor of Hebron Nasr al-Din Nasr al-Din.³⁹ With militancy turning inward and the imposition of martial law looming, the AHC seized the moment to take the initiative back from national committees and negotiate an exit to the strike. In a coordinated set of maneuvers, the AHC leveraged the prestige of foreign Arab leaders, who called on the Palestinians to lay down their arms and trust in British justice, to bring the weary population to accept a halt to the rebellion. The general strike was called off, rebel units demobilized, and the national committees saw their profile downgraded to overseeing the boycott of Jewish goods and services.⁴⁰ Although the revolutionary upsurge and its novel organs were temporarily unwound, the halt of hostilities was widely regarded by Palestinians as a truce (*hudna*) and the second phase of the revolt subsequently yielded an even greater push for state formation from below.⁴¹

The Second Phase of the Revolt (1937–39): Rise and Fall of the Rebel Regime

Rebel powers during the second phase of the Great Revolt were more expansive and more ambitious than during the 1936 strike. As the geographic and organizational bases of the rebellion consolidated and the insurgency grew in scale, the rebels moved not only to expel the colonial sovereign but to establish themselves as a ruling regime. The key commanders of the revolt, distributing themselves in part by region, set up governing apparatuses in their respective locales. They issued their own regulations and public directives, collected taxes, conscripted labor power, fielded military units and intelligence networks, and erected a rebel justice system.

Conditions for revolt were not as propitious in late 1937 when the struggle was renewed as they had been in 1936. The strike was tremendously costly to the Palestinians in material and financial terms and was followed by economic depression and the threat of starvation for many.⁴² The national movement was also in disarray. The popular forces that had driven the general strike had lost their avenues of influence in its wake and the revolutionary upsurge had exacerbated tensions and fractures within Palestinian society. Among the elite, the resurgence of factionalism had turned bloody; some in the Opposition were subjected to assassination attempts after they were seen to have backed both partition (before its terms were unveiled) and the Peel Commission's recommendation of a union between Arab Palestine and Transjordan.⁴³ By contrast, the Mandate government was more prepared for the recurrence of rebellion. When Acting District Commissioner–Galilee Lewis Andrews was killed in September 1937, signaling the Palestinian return to arms, the colonial authorities preempted a renewal of the strike's urban infrastructure by banning the national committees and the AHC and quickly arresting hundreds of known activists and notables.⁴⁴ Some elite and middle-class nationalists who evaded capture relocated to Syria and Lebanon, where, with the Mufti as figurehead of the

movement, they attempted without great success to establish control over the rebellion.⁴⁵ Additionally, police billets had already been emplaced in dozens of villages in order to snuff out lingering armed activity following the strike⁴⁶ and the government authorized punitive raids and collective punishments (including fines and curfews) against village and urban centers that the Acting High Commissioner described in late 1937 as “drastic in the extreme,” but “essential” for the sake of order.⁴⁷

The first task of the rebellion was to counteract the government’s intimidation of supportive villages and restore the movement’s access to safe harbor, recruits, and supplies in the countryside. This they accomplished by assembling a reliable and extensive intelligence gathering network. According to Subhi Yasin, who fought in the revolt in the Shafa ‘Amr region, intelligence capacities were developed at the platoon level (the smallest rebel fighting unit), indicating that they were an essential function of rebel organization. Possibly with some embellishment, Yasin refers to this capacity as an “intelligence service” (*mukhabarat*), although District Commissioner Edward Keith-Roach later lauded its effectiveness and described it as “well organized, properly directed and backed up by public opinion.”⁴⁸ After several failed organizing drives in late 1937 in former rebel heartlands in the north and the triangle region (Jenin-Nablus-Tulkarm),⁴⁹ Zionist intelligence reported in mid-November 1937 that the rebels had built up a wide network of informants, reputedly three or more persons per village. These tracked which villagers were working with the British, especially those who were helping arrest and detain rebels and rebel sympathizers. Arab collaboration with colonial authorities subsequently dropped off sharply,⁵⁰ no doubt due to rebel intimidation of loyalist elements. The consolidation of a widespread rebel intelligence network proved crucial to delinking the villages from government control and reopening them to rebels.

While its intelligence capacities enabled the insurgency’s survival, the rebel court system was in many ways the crown jewel of rebel self-organization and institutional development. As Akram Zu‘aytir put it, “In every area [under the sway] of the revolution, the people are reviewing [*yuraji‘u*] all of their affairs and they’re making the courts the reference to any litigation [*wa-yaj‘aluna mahakimaha marja‘ taqadhihim*].”⁵¹ While their role in punishing or executing “deviants” (*khawarij*) and “traitors” has garnered the most attention,⁵² the courts served a host of purposes. At their most basic level, they were instruments for protecting and preserving public order within Arab society: they fought and punished criminal and predatory behavior, upheld recognized principles of justice, and mediated disputes. Besides enforcing nationalist dictums and red lines, they handled the full gamut of cases that any normal state court system would see, from civil offenses to property disputes, and they acted as peacemakers and conciliators as well as punishers. Notably, their jurisdiction also extended to fighters and band leaders, whose conduct and authority were subject to court review. Though the courts did not always operate smoothly or successfully, the effort at instituting a separation of powers, which enabled the rebel judiciary to check and balance those under arms, undoubtedly boosted their credibility and that of the insurgent regime. The courts’ authority over persons and issues within their jurisdiction was comparable, in the view of one British judge, to that of the regular state courts.⁵³

The impetus for the creation of the courts appears to have come in significant measure from the Arab public itself, elements of which began to shun the state’s courts and bring matters before the band leaders when the uprising recommenced in the fall of 1937. The mounting load of cases led

to the advent of a court system in order to allow the commanders to return their attentions to the battlefield. According to Ezra Danin, a pioneer of Zionist intelligence, the rebel courts extended throughout the country.⁵⁴

There were four tiers of courts in all, each with a different purview. At the base were village conciliation committees (*lijan al-sulh*) that strove to keep the peace and resolve local disputes. Above them were district courts which handled land disputes and other nonlethal crimes and offenses within specific geographic zones. Band captains ran their own courts that treated weightier issues like blood feuds, accusations of treason, and deviance from nationalist norms (such as land dealings with Jews).⁵⁵ They also took appeals arising from the district courts. At the apex were the so-called High Court and High Court of Appeals that convened only irregularly. The High Court heard cases in which discord existed between district courts and local rebel leaders along with other contentious cases.⁵⁶

The basis for court judgments was unsystematic. As well as invoking revolutionary necessity, the courts drew on Islamic legal principles, customary law (*urf*), and other social conventions.⁵⁷ Although they were inevitably personalized and the quality of their judgments was highly variable, the courts were deliberative bodies. They generally followed a set of evidentiary protocols that required witnesses or confessions in order to convict in criminal cases, barring which arrestees were freed. In one remarkable example of such proceduralism, rebels captured a spy working for the Royal Air Force (RAF). When the witness against him absconded before his trial, he was savagely beaten on repeated occasions in hopes of squeezing a confession from him. After being trundled around from village to village with no confession forthcoming, he was eventually released on orders from 'Arif 'Abd al-Raziq, one of the revolt's top commanders, and soon went on to recount his tale to both the British and the JA.⁵⁸ His case was not unique. In Jaffa in September 1938, for instance, after the rebels had all but captured the city, it was reported that witnesses were required for any conviction (presumably where the accused refrained from confessing), and that this standard was maintained even after the public security situation there began to deteriorate.⁵⁹ Contrary to their image as hanging courts, in many cases the rebel judiciary showed a marked tendency to offer redemption as well as mete out punishments, so long as offending parties had not been convicted of informing on the rebels, which more than any other issue was liable to result in capital punishment.⁶⁰ In civil property cases concerning land disputes, documentary evidence weighed strongly in the determination of judgments, such that where complainants (or sometimes defendants) lacked *tapu* records (a formal deed) or proof of ownership, their claims were likely to be quashed and rejected.⁶¹

The courts accumulated considerable regard from the Arab public, much to the astonishment of the colonial state. High Commissioner Harold MacMichael found it "most disturbing" that the accused submitted freely to trials and "abductions," explaining to London that "the sufferers make no attempt to resist, or to disclose their identity and the circumstances in which they find themselves even when passing through control points at which cars conveying them have been searched by the police, or to dispute the authority of their abductors in any way." This "particularly noteworthy" development was "sufficiently indicative of the prestige enjoyed by the gangs."⁶² Trials and hearings were sometimes held before public audiences, in business places or school buildings where available,⁶³ which lent the courts an air of transparency and public accountability. Similarly,

the willingness of rebel captains to put fellow insurgents on trial for criminal offenses, such as pilfering, was well received by public opinion and helped underscore that the rebellion strove to serve the public interest above all.⁶⁴

Importantly, the courts provided a forum for the weak to stand up to the wealthy and powerful.⁶⁵ From Arab memoirs we know that the extension of peasant-cum-rebel authority over judicial affairs, particularly non-revolt matters, caused trepidation amongst middle-class and elite nationalists, who worried that the movement was distracting itself.⁶⁶ But as Zionist intelligence at its most perceptive recognized, it was precisely the courts' assertion of prerogative over civil affairs that won the rebels support as a *governing* force. As one JA analyst put it, the courts allowed the bands to "merge with the village way of life," or in other words, to display their concern for the lives of the common people and to show their solidarity with the downtrodden rural majority.⁶⁷ Similarly, the rejuvenation of local practices of conflict resolution and the ideals of mutualism upon which they were based also spoke to the sympathies of the rural constituencies at the heart of the insurgency.⁶⁸

The role of the revolutionary courts in sheltering the Arab public was all the more vital given the retreat of the colonial state. The economic depression wracking the country spurred "free lance gangs of brigands" that preyed upon the public, often by posing as rebel tax collectors.⁶⁹ The government was happy to watch as this created confusion and dissension within Arab society while impairing the revolt's "cohesion." More generally the colonial state expressed contempt for the Arab public by ignoring conventional crime (that is, criminal acts unrelated to the rebellion) altogether, by obviating the legal rights of Arabs through the use of collective punishments, and in some cases, by encouraging armed predators to impersonate rebels regardless of the cost to the general population.⁷⁰ The rebels struggled mightily to bring imposters to book and repel the wave of criminality. They arrested gangs committing extortion and in some cases conducted public executions and left offenders' bodies on display, which the District Commissioner-Southern described as provoking "terror and admiration" in Arab society.⁷¹

The extension of the rebel regime, or proto-state, to encompass broad swathes of Palestine's territory and population undoubtedly bolstered the rebellion. By September 1938, Zionist authorities bemoaned the near disappearance of government from the country and Zionist officials as well as the War Office in London agreed that rebel force strength was in the neighborhood of five thousand men, up tenfold from the previous year.⁷² In the liberated zones of the country, where the insurgents beat back the colonial state, the revolutionary courts symbolized the drive for popular sovereignty. Indeed, as the High Commissioner observed, the rebels adduced the courts first and foremost when broadcasting their establishment of a revolutionary government during the summer of 1938.⁷³

Rebel fortunes changed dramatically after the Munich Pact, which allowed Britain to send a second division of troops to Palestine and thereby greatly intensify the counterinsurgency campaign. The additional manpower enabled the British to generalize new techniques of collective punishment that included the temporary incarceration of entire villages and urban neighborhoods in open-air cages and the imposition of movement controls on the Arab population. The former, in conjunction with Zionist intelligence and counterrevolutionary Palestinian informants, yielded valuable actionable intelligence. The latter stripped the Arab public of control of its daily affairs, threatened its businesses with bankruptcy, and menaced its access to adequate food and nutrition.⁷⁴

Facing this new tactical onslaught, the rebels were quickly thrown back on their heels: by the end of 1938 all of the rebellion's top commanders had suffered major defeats in combat, several were injured, some barely evaded capture, and all save two had fled or exited the country.⁷⁵

In the high-pressure post-Munich environment, rebel institutions became increasingly erratic and anemic. The parallel government that the insurgents had worked to erect largely collapsed, and the rebel infrastructure's integrative functions and capacities gave way to disarray. Rebel desperation and disorder were visible in the utterly fantastic levies that were foisted on several cities in late 1938; Jaffa was ordered to pay P£60,000, for example. These wild demands deviated from the standard rebel tax protocol (aimed at the rich and the middle classes) and invited public dissonance and alienation from the insurgents.⁷⁶ The British military's permit-based movement control regime, imposed in November 1938, elicited what was probably the rebel governing apparatus's final show of force. Because the permits were tied to the issue of new identity cards for males that were intended to facilitate the identification and tracking of insurgents, the rebels called for the system's boycott. A testament to the rebel regime's power, the public complied with the boycott for a month and a half, but the military was thereafter able to use the onset of citrus season to force the rebels to call off the boycott, on pain of losing the entire Arab portion of the valuable crop.⁷⁷

The rebel judiciary fared no better amidst the escalating repression. Kabha, who has done more work on the courts than any other scholar, argues that their operation and legitimacy tracked the general course of the rebellion. As the rebellion went to pieces, convening courts became more difficult, less experienced and less prudent hands became judges, and sentencing became more severe and disproportionate, with death sentences handed out with increasing frequency.⁷⁸ Emblematic of the courts' decline was action taken under the direction of Yusuf Abu Durra, one of the revolt's chief commanders. As part of a purge of collaborators and land dealers in late 1938, Abu Durra and his underlings tried thirty-eight northern notables in absentia, convicted them of capital crimes, and executed or injured ten of them. According to the son of a judge under Abu Durra, this affair did much to sour the local public on the rebel justice system.⁷⁹

The rebel regime was no more able to withstand or deflect the dramatic pressures that followed the Munich Pact than were the insurgent formations or Palestinian society as a whole. The ensuing rebel devolution stripped the counter-state of the synergy it had generated with the Arab public, leaving the rebellion reduced to a shadow of its former self by 1939.

State Formation and the Downfall of the Revolt

There is little question that the demise and suppression of the Great Revolt has affected evaluations of its significance and character. The tendency to view the revolt through a glass darkly has obscured our understanding of the popular movement at the heart of the uprising and its potent organizational ingenuity. Consequently, it has only seldom been recognized that the rebels were engaging in a process of popular state formation, despite the fact that such developments were common among rural-majority anti-colonial movements.

The process of state formation was uneven, but developed and deepened over time. In both phases of the Great Revolt, popular state formation and rebel institutional development generated

momentum for the insurgent movement and helped to accrete growing masses of the population to the revolutionary cause. During the strike, popular mobilization was synonymous with self-organization. The national committees asserted broad revolutionary authority over Arab society and, aided by the militancy of the popular committees and the armed bands in the countryside, exercised control over the movement's strategic orientation. This balance shifted in the strike's later months after the insurgency blossomed and fears of capitulation at the hands of the urban elite spread. The underlying social divisions within Palestinian society reemerged and manifested not only in terms of friction over the forms of popular participation (armed versus unarmed action), but also over the aims of the rebel movement. As they soon made plain to the Peel Commission, elite and middle-class partisans tended to think of the strike as a means to bring about a negotiated settlement to the Palestine problem.⁸⁰ On the other hand, armed partisans implicitly, and sometimes explicitly, viewed the uprising as a war of liberation and an opportunity for raising the banner of social reform.

During the second phase of the revolt the fracture within the revolutionary coalition deepened, as did the process of state formation. To survive and to turn the tables on the colonial power, the rebels quickly found it necessary to develop their institutional capacities. The two outlined here were crucial: the intelligence apparatus was vital to rebel self-preservation but also served to penetrate the British state, delink segments of the population from it, and undermine the colonial forces' ability to project power; and the rebel judiciary served to vouchsafe the rebels' intent to protect the basic interests of the Arab community, restore long-effaced customary principles of justice, and to govern in the name of the common people who had been subjected to decades of relentless neglect and marginalization. With foundations rooted in concern for the oppressed and the preservation of village lifeways that had fallen into sharp crisis under the British, the rebel regime was able to integrate broad segments of the public into the domain of the insurgency, thereby strengthening and propelling it to unforeseen heights.

The state-building project foundered in late 1938. Elite factionalism interjected murderous violence into the revolt and muddied the national waters as the Mufti acted to eliminate his rivals within Palestine and the Opposition fielded counterrevolutionary troops that aided the British. The revolutionaries' turn, at the apex of their power, towards social as well as political revolution (embodied by famous moratoriums on debt collecting and urban rent) rendered key components of the elite increasingly interested in counterrevolution. Yet in the final analysis, the crux of the revolt's downfall in 1938–39 lay not in Palestinian disunity, as damaging as this proved to be, but in the vastly superior forces—military, police, and Zionist auxiliaries totaling over twenty-five thousand men, plus armored units, artillery batteries, and the RAF—arrayed against the insurgents.⁸¹ As Khalidi has pointed out, this too was epiphenomenal since “nowhere around the globe during the interwar years was an armed revolt of the colonized successful, nor did an anti-colonial movement secure full independence.”⁸² The rebels in Palestine weren't just outgunned—after all, they had been throughout the Great Revolt—they were deficient in that most essential quality of state-making: obtaining a monopoly on the means of coercion. In the end, the crushing mismatch in military capabilities and the recourse to collective punishment allowed the colonial state to penetrate and disable the rebel regime, to distance part of the Arab population from the rebels, and to make continued support of the uprising costly in the extreme. From late 1938 forward this new calculus

diminished the rebel star, and with it the revolutionaries' dreams of Palestinian sovereignty, social renewal, and freedom from colonial domination.

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ENDNOTES

- 1 It might be supposed that seeking to resuscitate traditions of communal autonomy was revanchist or antithetical to the new nationalist identities that surged to life in the Middle East after World War I. Yet as John Chalcraft has recently argued, the nationalist movements that emerged in the Arab lands of the former Ottoman Empire (and in Morocco) "did not simply confront and displace existing defensive and autonomist forms of protest, but made use of them, joined hands with them, and derived their great capacities for mobilization from these new articulations." The nationalist struggles of the interwar Middle East were, in other words, the products of older models of community, justice, and contentious politics combined with both radically changed circumstances and new forms, vehicles, and ideologies of social mobilization. What resulted was "a new version of mass politics" that "proposed a systematic connection between the people and the political, and thus promoted new notions of popular sovereignty . . . [and] political community." See John Chalcraft, *Popular Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), pt. 2 (quotes from pp. 199–200).
- 2 Undoubtedly this owes in some degree to both the fragmentary sources available for such inquiry and, perhaps equally as much, to limitations on their accessibility to researchers. The fact that captured Palestinian documents (and translations of the same) reside in both the Israel State Archives and the Central Zionist Archives, where many students of Palestinian history cannot utilize them, is a case in point. Still, while equal access remains a stumbling block, most researchers have some access to relevant sources (written or oral), so sources alone cannot fully explain the lacuna.
- 3 For examples of this literature, see Ezra Danin, introduction to *Te'udot u-demuyot mi-ginize ha-kanufiyot ha-Araviyot ba-me'ore'ot, 1936–39*, 1st ed., ed. Danin and Ya'acov Shimoni (Jerusalem: Harry Truman Institute for the Advancement of Peace / Magnes Press of Hebrew University, 1981 [1944]); Tom Bowden, "The Politics of the Arab Rebellion in Palestine, 1936–39," *Middle Eastern Studies* 11, no. 2 (1975): pp. 147–74; Yuval Arnon-Ohanah, *Herev mi-bayit: Ha-ma'avak ha-panimi ba-tnu'a ha-Palastinit ha-le'umit, 1929–39* (Tel Aviv: Yariv Heder / Shiloah Institute, 1981). For critiques, see Haim Gerber, "Zionism, Orientalism, and the Palestinians," *JPS* 33, no. 1 (2003): pp. 23–41; Charles W. Anderson, "From Petition to Confrontation: The Palestinian National Movement and the Rise of Mass Politics, 1929–1939" (PhD diss., New York University, 2013), especially pp. 19–26.
- 4 Yehoshua Porath, *The Palestinian Arab National Movement: From Riots to Rebellion, 1929–1939* (London: Frank Cass, 1977). Porath devotes a mere two pages (237 and 238) of his book to the rise of the revolt in 1938.
- 5 James L. Gelvin, *The Israel-Palestine Conflict: One Hundred Years of War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 111–15; quotes from pp. 113, 114. This view contrasts sharply with Gelvin's earlier analysis of popular revolts in Syria and Palestine: see James L. Gelvin, "The Other Arab Nationalism: Syrian/Arab Populism in Its Historical and International Contexts," in *Rethinking Nationalism in the Arab Middle East*, ed. Israel Gershoni and James Jankowski (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), pp. 231–48.
- 6 Rashid Khalidi, "The Palestinians and 1948: The Underlying Causes of Failure," in *The War for Palestine: Rewriting the History of 1948*, ed. Eugene L. Rogan and Avi Shlaim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 12–36, quote from p. 26. Khalidi makes much the same

- argument in his book on Palestinian statelessness, *The Iron Cage: The Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006).
- 7 Nimr Sirhan and Mustafa Kabha, *'Abd al-Rahim al-Hajj Muhammad: Al-qa'id al-'amm li-thawrat, 1936-1939* (Ramallah, 2000), pp. 26-27, 99-103.
 - 8 For examples, see Ann M. Lesch, *Arab Politics in Palestine, 1917-1939: The Frustration of a Nationalist Movement* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1979); Bayan Nuwayhid al-Hut, *Al-qiyyadat wa-l-mu'assasat al-siyasiyya fi Filastin, 1917-1948* (Acre: Dar al-aswar, 1981); Khalidi, *The Iron Cage*.
 - 9 Eric R. Wolf, "Peasant Rebellion and Revolution," in *National Liberation: Revolution in the Third World*, ed. Norman Miller and Roderick Aya (New York: Free Press, 1971), p. 64. See also pp. 59-60, 62-63 and Wolf, *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1969). In the Middle East, ventures of popular state formation similar to that detailed here for Palestine can be seen during the revolts in Iraq and Syria in the 1920s. See, respectively, Foulath Hadid, *Iraq's Democratic Moment* (London: Hurst, 2012), p. 18, and Daniel Neep, *Occupying Syria under the French Mandate: Insurgency, Space and State Formation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), chap. 4 (especially pp. 81-82).
 - 10 At first blush, the claim that rebel institutions in Palestine had anything to do with state formation might appear unfounded, if not absurd. The institutions were episodically suppressed and no state ever issued from them. The basis for the proposition is not, however, the success of the process, but rather the dynamics inherent to it. In his landmark study of European state formation, Charles Tilly identified four essential dimensions of states-in-the-making: claiming sovereignty and defeating competitors within a given territory ("statemaking"); attacking external, foreign rivals ("warmaking"); protecting key allies of the state-building project; and extracting resources from the state's population. By these lights, the Palestinians during the revolt were well on their way, engaging in all of these activities, save for warmaking against neighboring states. See Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990-1992* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1990), pp. 96-97.
 - 11 This argument is made at length in Anderson, "From Petition to Confrontation," chaps. 7-10. It is worth underscoring that the view herein, like that of scholarship such as Tilly's *Coercion, Capital, and European States*, assumes that state formation by definition involves the deployment of coercion, including against elements of the body politic that seek to resist the authority or will of the new statemakers. The project of statemaking is thus not an inherently romantic one, nor does it presume, as do many accounts of the period in Arabic, that the Palestinian people constituted an internally harmonious organic unity. For critiques of this last conception, see Ylana N. Miller, *Government and Society in Rural Palestine, 1920-1948* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985), p. 21; Ted Swedenburg, *Memories of Revolt: The 1936-1939 Rebellion and the Palestinian National Past* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2003 [1995]), especially chaps. 3-4; and Anderson, "From Petition to Confrontation," pp. 16-18.
 - 12 See Lesch, *Arab Politics in Palestine*, chap. 5; Zachary Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies: Arab and Jewish Workers in Palestine, 1906-1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), chaps. 3-5; Khalidi, *The Iron Cage*, chap. 3; Weldon C. Matthews, *Confronting an Empire, Constructing a Nation: Arab Nationalists and Popular Politics in Mandate Palestine* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2006); and Anderson, "From Petition to Confrontation," chaps. 1-3 and 6.
 - 13 *Report to the League of Nations, 1936*, p. 22.
 - 14 Haggai Erlich, "British Internal Security and Egyptian Youth," in *Britain and the Middle East in the 1930s: Security Problems, 1935-39*, ed. Michael J. Cohen and Martin Kolinsky (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), pp. 107-8; Porath, *The Palestinian Arab National Movement*, p. 160.
 - 15 Anderson, "From Petition to Confrontation," chap. 7, especially pp. 617-18, 693, 754-55. See also Shahada Musa, *Thawrat 'am 1936 fi Filastin: Dirasa susiyulujjiyya* (Beirut: Bahith al-dirasat, 2004), p. 192.
 - 16 Although the AHC has often been viewed as the strike's leadership, compared with the wide powers and jurisdiction established by the national committees, the AHC's writ was limited. It acted as the

- official mouthpiece of the uprising, but did so for most of 1936 on a consultative and not a command basis. See Anderson, "From Petition to Confrontation," chap. 7.
- 17 The Opposition was closely associated with the Nashashibi family and its patriarch, Raghib al-Nashashibi. The schism within the Palestinian elite and the impacts of factionalism on the national struggle have long been mainstays of the historical literature (e.g. Porath, *The Palestinian Arab National Movement*), some of which has, more recently, suggested that such divisions were in part the fruit of colonial manipulation (Khalidi, *The Iron Cage*; Matthews, *Confronting an Empire*). The AHC's joining together of the Mufti and his backers with their Opposition rivals is commonly represented as the high-water mark of elite unity during the Mandate era.
 - 18 Al-Hut, *Al-qiyadat wa-l-mu'assasat*, p. 340. Unless noted otherwise, all translations from the Arabic are the author's. I am grateful to Maia Tabet of *JPS* for some helpful suggestions in this regard.
 - 19 Ellen L. Fleischmann, *The Nation and Its "New" Women: The Palestinian Women's Movement, 1920-1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), p. 129; 'Isa al-Sifri, *Filastin al-'arabiyya bayna al-intidab wa-l-Sahyuniyya*, bk. 2 (Jaffa: Maktabat Filastin al-jadida, 1937), p. 14; Porath, *The Palestinian Arab National Movement*, pp. 122, 177; Lesch, *Arab Politics in Palestine*, p. 116; al-Hut, *Al-qiyadat wa-l-mu'assasat*, p. 342.
 - 20 Najib, 14.5.36, Central Zionist Archives [CZA] S/25 - 3875.
 - 21 Al-Hut, *Al-qiyadat wa-l-mu'assasat*, p. 334; Mustafa 'Abbasi, *Safad fi 'ahd al-intidab al-Baritani, 1917-1948: Dirasa ijtimaiyya wa-siyasiyya* (Ramallah: Muwatin, al-mu'assasa al-Filastiniyya li-dirasat al-dimuqratiyya, 2005), pp. 209, 218; Report, 12.7.36, Haganah Archives [HA] 8/39.
 - 22 May Seikaly, *Haifa: Transformation of an Arab Society, 1918-1939* (London: I.B.Tauris, 1995), p. 257.
 - 23 Philip Mattar, *The Mufti of Jerusalem: Al-Hajj Amin al-Husayni and the Palestinian National Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), p. 71.
 - 24 *Report of the Palestine Royal Commission*, Cmd 5479 (London: HMSO, 1937) [the Peel Commission report], p. 98.
 - 25 Akram Zu'aytir, *Yawmiyat Akram Zu'aytir: Al-haraka al-wataniyya al-Filastiniyya, 1935-1939* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-dirasat al-Filastiniyya, 1980), p. 71.
 - 26 Arab Bureau information, "On the situation these days," 30.6.36, CZA S/25 - 22231.
 - 27 Anderson, "From Petition to Confrontation," chap. 7, especially pp. 634-35, 693-94, 696-98.
 - 28 Zu'aytir, *Yawmiyat*, pp. 77, 79-80. On action against strikebreakers see Anderson, "From Petition to Confrontation," pp. 637-51; Porath, *The Palestinian Arab National Movement*, p. 177; and Hillel Cohen, *Army of Shadows: Palestinian Collaboration with Zionism, 1917-1948*, trans. Haim Watzman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), pp. 99-100.
 - 29 Zu'aytir, *Yawmiyat*, p. 71. Prior references to jihad in the diaries of Zu'aytir, an architect of the strike movement and local committee member, suggest national rather than religious connotations: pp. 1-2, 42.
 - 30 Seikaly, *Haifa*, pp. 112, 120n55.
 - 31 Anderson, "From Petition to Confrontation," pp. 652, 670, 692.
 - 32 Najib, reports from 18.5.36, 25.5.36, and 27.5.36, CZA S/25 - 3875; Arab Bureau information, 30.5.36 and 31.5.36, CZA S/25 - 22231.
 - 33 Report (S.G.), 12.7.36, HA 8/39.
 - 34 Events in Nablus (S.G.), 14.7.36 and Report (S.G.), 15.7.36, HA 8/39.
 - 35 Subhi Yasin, *Al-thawra al-'arabiyya al-kubra* (Cairo: Dar al-huna li-l-taba'a, 1959), p. 212. Illustrating the use of police as double agents, one of the subcommittee's members was Ja'far Filfil, chief clerk at the Gaza police station.
 - 36 Arab Bureau information, 16.6.36, CZA S/25 - 22231.
 - 37 Anderson, "From Petition to Confrontation," chap. 7.
 - 38 Musa, *Thawrat 'am 1936*, p. 172; Anderson, "From Petition to Confrontation," pp. 693, 739-40.

- 39 Cohen, *Army of Shadows*, pp. 107–8; Anderson, “From Petition to Confrontation,” pp. 738–39, 752.
- 40 On the dynamics at the end of the strike, see Anderson, “From Petition to Confrontation,” pp. 721–55; on the national committees’ transformation thereafter, see pp. 761–62.
- 41 Muhammad ‘Izzat Darwaza, *Hawla al-haraka al-haditha: Tarikh wa-mudhakkirat wa-ta’liqat*, vol. 3 (Beirut: Al-maktaba al-‘asriyya, 1950), p. 192; RAF headquarters (Jeru.), 23.10.36, weekly summary of intelligence, British National Archive [BNA] – FO 371/20031; CID, 7.11.36, periodical appreciation summary 18/36, BNA – FO 371/20018. Bahjat Abu Gharbiyya, a youth activist at the time, reproduces a fragment of an AHC communiqué which declares the end of the strike a temporary measure and promises the return of the revolt should the Royal Commission not satisfy the Palestinians’ national demands. See Bahjat Abu Gharbiyya, *Fi khidam al-nidal al-‘arabi al-filastini: Mudhakkirat, 1916–1949* (Beirut: Mu’assasat al-dirasat al-Filastiniyya, 1993), p. 91.
- 42 Darwaza, *Hawla al-haraka*, p. 131; High Commissioner [HC] to Colonial Secretary [CSS], 27.4.37, enclosure to CP 127 (37), BNA – CO 733/332/11; Anderson, “From Petition to Confrontation,” pp. 785–88.
- 43 Cohen, *Army of Shadows*, pp. 122–24; Anderson, “From Petition to Confrontation,” pp. 797–98, 800–804, 825–31.
- 44 Anderson, “From Petition to Confrontation,” pp. 852–53, 858–62; Zu‘aytir, *Yawmiyat*, p. 336.
- 45 On the interrelations between rebel field commanders and exiles see Swedenburg, *Memories of Revolt*, especially chaps. 3–4; Basheer M. Nafi, *Arabism, Islamism and the Palestine Question, 1908–1941: A Political History* (Reading, UK: Ithaca Press, 1998), chap. 6; Porath, *The Palestinian Arab National Movement*, chap. 9; and Anderson, “From Petition to Confrontation,” chaps. 9–10.
- 46 *Report to the League of Nations, 1937*, pp. 11–12, 14; Anderson, “From Petition to Confrontation,” pp. 804–20.
- 47 Anderson, “From Petition to Confrontation,” pp. 876–77; Officer Administering the Government to Shuckburgh (CO), 21.11.37, CP 286 (37), BNA – CO 733/332/12. On collective punishment during the revolt, see Anderson, “From Petition to Confrontation,” chaps. 7–10; Jacob Norris, “Repression and Rebellion: Britain’s Response to the Arab Revolt in Palestine of 1936–39,” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 36, no. 1 (2008): pp. 25–45; and Matthew Hughes, “The Banality of Brutality: British Armed Forces and the Repression of the Arab Revolt in Palestine, 1936–39,” *English Historical Review* 74, no. 507 (2009): pp. 313–54.
- 48 Yasin, *Al-thawra al-‘arabiyya*, p. 67, and on Yasin’s own exploits, pp. 64–70; Edward Keith-Roach, *Pasha of Jerusalem: Memoirs of a District Commissioner under the British Mandate* (New York: Radcliffe Press, 1994), p. 196. See also Narrative dispatch #8, HC to CSS, 14.7.38, p. 38, BNA – CO 935/21.
- 49 Anderson, “From Petition to Confrontation,” p. 878.
- 50 Survey, 19.11.37–25.11.37, CZA S/25 – 22227; Survey, 30.12.37–21.1.38, CZA S/25 – 22437. The weakening of colonial intelligence was visible in the failure to capture rebels under arms after November 1937. See RAF headquarters (Jerusalem), 15.1.38, resumé of operations (December 1937), BNA – Air 5/1247 and subsequent reports at BNA – Air 5/1248.
- 51 Zu‘aytir, *Yawmiyat*, p. 507. See also Abu Gharbiyya, *Fi khidam al-nidal*, p. 119; Ahmad al-Shuqayri, *Arba’un ‘aman fi-l-hayat al-‘Arabiyya wa-l-dawliyya* (Beirut: Dar al-nahar li-l-nashr, 1969), p. 185.
- 52 Porath, *The Palestinian Arab National Movement*, pp. 190, 248, 250; al-Hut, *Al-qiyadat wa-l-mu’assasat*, pp. 401–2; Cohen, *Army of Shadows*, pp. 137–40.
- 53 Danin and Shimoni, *Te’udot u-demuyot*, p. 28.
- 54 Danin and Shimoni, *Te’udot u-demuyot*, p. 28; Porath, *The Palestinian Arab National Movement*, p. 248.
- 55 The transfer of land from Arabs to Jews became a political issue *after* the rise of Zionism, which, in its “practical” mode, aimed to steadily accumulate and colonize a land base on which to build a Jewish state, while removing resident Palestinians in the process. Palestinian responses to this issue were complex, especially since much of their capital was tied up in landed property, but land and landownership were increasingly seen in terms of the nationalist struggle against Jewish

- colonization from at least the early twentieth century forward. See, variously, Abdul-Wahhab Kayyali, *Palestine: A Modern History* (London: Croom Helm, 1978), chaps. 1–2; Lesch, *Arab Politics in Palestine*, pp. 67–75; Rashid Khalidi, “Palestinian Peasant Resistance to Zionism Before World War I,” in *Blaming the Victims: Spurious Scholarship and the Palestinian Question*, ed. Edward W. Said and Christopher Hitchens (New York: Verso, 1988), pp. 207–33; Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), chap. 6; and Cohen, *Army of Shadows*, pp. 31–35, 43–50.
- 56 Danin and Shimoni, *Te’udot u-demuyot*, p. 27–28; Nimr Sirhan and Mustafa Kabha, *Bashir Ibrahim: Al-qadi wa-l-tha’ir fi thawrat, 1936–39* (Ramallah: Markaz ghunnam lil-kumputir wa-l-khidmat al-ta’limiyya, 2000), pp. 10–11, 24; Mustafa Kabha, “The Courts of the Palestinian Arab Revolt, 1936–39,” in *Untold Histories of the Middle East: Recovering Voices from the 19th and 20th Centuries*, ed. Amy Singer, Christoph K. Neumann, and Selçuk Akşin Somel (London: Routledge, 2011), pp. 200–201.
- 57 Musa, *Thawrat ‘am 1936*, p. 294; Kabha, “The Courts,” p. 208.
- 58 Events in the bands’ camp, 21.9.38, HA 281/105.
- 59 Survey, 29.9.38–6.10.38, CZA S/25 – 22437.
- 60 Anderson, “From Petition to Confrontation,” pp. 942–65.
- 61 See Sirhan and Kabha, *Bashir Ibrahim*, app. 2, pp. 57–61.
- 62 Narrative dispatch #10, HC to CSS, 24.10.38, p. 55, BNA – CO 935/21.
- 63 H. M. Wilson diary, p. 11, Middle East Centre Archive, St. Antony’s (Oxford); Sirhan and Kabha, *Bashir Ibrahim*, p. 23.
- 64 Letter from Nablus, n.d. [March 1938?], CZA S/25 – 22191; Anderson, “From Petition to Confrontation,” pp. 929–34, 948–50.
- 65 Survey, 1.8.38–11.8.38, CZA S/25 – 22437; Musa, *Thawrat ‘am 1936*, p. 294.
- 66 Zu’aytir, *Yawmiyat*, p. 422.
- 67 Survey, 12.8.38–18.8.38, CZA S/25 – 22437.
- 68 Examples may be found in cases discussed by former rebel district court judge, Bashir Ibrahim: Sirhan and Kabha, *Bashir Ibrahim*, app. 2.
- 69 Information from Hebron, 11.5.38, and Political information on Arab affairs: survey, 6.7.38, p. 19, CZA S/25 – 22191; Narrative dispatch #10, HC to CSS, 24.10.38, pp. 55–56, BNA – CO 935/21; quotes from last. See also Anderson, “From Petition to Confrontation,” pp. 930–33.
- 70 Political information on Arab affairs: survey, 6.7.38, p. 19, CZA S/25 – 22191; Narrative dispatch #10, HC to CSS, 24.10.38, pp. 55–56, BNA – CO 935/21; Porath, *The Palestinian Arab National Movement*, p. 249; Anderson, “From Petition to Confrontation,” pp. 931–32, 1026–27.
- 71 The terror around Jerusalem, 21.7.38 and 24.7.38, CZA S/25 – 22191; DC-Southern to Chief Secretary, 5.10.38, p. 8, BNA – CO 733/372/18.
- 72 Report on the situation in Palestine, Sept 1938, enclosure to: Todd (WO) to Downie (CO), 9.9.38, BNA – CO 733/366/4.
- 73 Narrative dispatch #9, HC to CSS, 13.9.38, p. 46, BNA – CO 935/21.
- 74 On both new forms of collective punishment, see Anderson, “From Petition to Confrontation,” chap. 10.
- 75 Anderson, “From Petition to Confrontation,” pp. 1086–93.
- 76 Anderson, “From Petition to Confrontation,” p. 1025; Porath, *The Palestinian Arab National Movement*, p. 267. On the system of rebel taxation and its progressive quality, see Anderson, chap. 9.
- 77 Anderson, “From Petition to Confrontation,” pp. 1078–85.
- 78 Kabha, “The Courts,” p. 209.
- 79 Kabha, “The Courts,” p. 205.

- 80 Specifically, they advocated for an independent Arab Palestine under treaty with Britain on the model of Iraq. See Anderson, "From Petition to Confrontation," pp. 770–76.
- 81 After Munich, the British military had direct command of two troop divisions (15,500 men in all), an enlarged police force (3,000 British and 6,000 Jews), and 700 men in the RAF. Additionally, the British helped to erect what Walid Khalidi has called an "auxiliary colonial army," known as the Jewish Settlement Police (JSP), that numbered at least 16,000 by the close of the revolt. See J. C. Hurewitz, *The Struggle for Palestine* (New York: Schocken Books, 1976 [1950]), p. 94; Martin Kolinsky, "The Collapse and Restoration of Public Security," in *Britain and the Middle East in the 1930s*, p. 157; David Ben-Gurion, "Britain's Contribution to Arming the Haganah," in *From Haven to Conquest: Readings in Zionism and the Palestine Problem until 1948*, ed. Walid Khalidi (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1971), pp. 372–74; and Walid Khalidi, "The Hebrew *Reconquista* of Palestine: From the 1947 United Nations Partition Resolution to the First Zionist Congress of 1897," *JPS* 39, no. 1 (Autumn 2009), p. 32.
- 82 Khalidi, *The Iron Cage*, p. 106.