

Zeedan, R. (2020). The Palestinian political parties and local self-governance during the British Mandate: Democracy and the clan. In: Cohen, M. (ed.) *The British Mandate in Palestine* (pp. 83-101). Routledge

This is an Accepted Manuscript of a book chapter published by Routledge. The final and citable version is available online:

<https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/e/9780429026034/chapters/10.4324/9780429026034-5>

**E-mail the author at: [rzeedan@ku.edu](mailto:rzeedan@ku.edu)**

*The Palestinian political parties and local self-governance during the British Mandate: Democracy and the Clan.*

*Rami Zeedan.*

### *Introduction*

The relatively short period of 30 years of the British Mandate over Palestine was fraught with massive changes.<sup>1</sup> The mandate determined the Palestinian territory as we know it in modern history.<sup>2</sup> This contributed, along with the national awakening in the region, among other societal changes, to the establishment of Palestinian Arab society.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, the *Yishuv* was absorbing massive Jewish immigration, establishing new settlements, and establishing the political structure for the future state.<sup>4</sup> The Ottoman Millet System was modestly changed by the British, in the form of the Religious Communities Ordinance of 1926.<sup>5</sup> As a result, each resident of the mandate was associated with a specific millet.<sup>6</sup> Thus, religious authority became the only kind of political leadership formally recognized by the government of the mandate. As such, the social structure remained segregate along religious and kinship lines, while setting the stage for sectarian politics.<sup>7</sup>

The Palestine mandate is considered a critical period for the emergence of Palestinian nationalism. The period highlights the formation of many Palestinian institutions, such as the Supreme Muslim Council, the Arab Higher Committee, Arab municipal councils, and political parties. During this period there was only one, unsuccessful election attempt, for a Legislative Council in 1923, and three municipal election cycles - in 1927, 1934, and 1946/7. This chapter

focuses on local Arab self-governance during the period, political rivalry at the national level, and the competition between clans.

#### *Arab-Palestinian leadership at the national level*

Palestinian political parties and organizations were developing as early as 1918, such as the Arab Literary Club and the Executive Committee for Opposition.<sup>8</sup> The most important were the Muslim Christian Associations (MCA).<sup>9</sup> Within a few years, branches were established in many Palestinian cities. The MCA formed the Palestinian Arab Congress as a national body; but its leadership was based mainly on members of wealthy families, landowners, notables, and religious leaders. Musa Kazim Husseini was the head of the Executive Committee of the Palestinian Arab Congress from 1922 until 1934.<sup>10</sup> In the seventh and last Congress, held in Jerusalem in 1928, the Congress elected 48 members to its Executive Committee. These represented all the towns, districts and religions.<sup>11</sup>

The most important decision taken by the Palestinian Arab Congress was to boycott the 1923 elections to the Legislative Council.<sup>12</sup> The reason for the boycott was the under-representation of Arabs in the council proposed by the 1922 White Paper.<sup>13</sup> This was the result of the decision to include British appointed officials in addition to the 12 elected representatives.<sup>14</sup> As a result, only 107 Muslim secondary electors were elected out of 670 seats, only 19 Christians out of 59, and only 8 Druze out of 15, while among the Jews - 79 out of 79 were elected.<sup>15</sup>

The almost-complete Arab boycott of the elections prompted a protest in the House of Lords against the government's support for Zionism. Lord Islington, a veteran opponent of Zionism, protested that the whole Arab electorate had refrained from voting, "in protest against the new Constitution," as laid down in the recent White Paper. This, he protested, was "a definite violation of the pledge made by Great Britain to the Arab community", which had had an unfortunate affect "upon the whole Arab and Moslem world." The Colonial Secretary conceded that the result was disappointing, but did not agree that "the whole electorate" had refrained from voting.<sup>16</sup> However, the Lords' protest was political, against the government's policy in Palestine. It was never followed by any British campaign for the civic rights of the Palestinian Arabs. The Legislative Council election results were declared void, and an advisory council appointed in its stead.<sup>17</sup> In 1935, Sir Arthur Wauchope, the British High Commissioner, renewed the proposal to set up a Legislative Council – but in March 1936, the project was defeated in parliament, largely

due to the efforts of a Zionist lobby.<sup>18</sup> The elections of 1923 were the only ones held in mandatory Palestine.

During the 1920s, Haj Amin al-Husseini established his leadership. He was appointed by the British to the role of the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem in 1921, and in 1922, as the president of the Supreme Muslim Council.<sup>19</sup> Four others were also elected: Sheikh Muhamad Murad-the Mufti of Haifa, Abdel-Latif Salah from Tulkarem, Said al-Shawa from Gaza, and Abdullah al-Dajani from Jaffa.<sup>20</sup> The 1929 riots marked the beginning of the reign of Haj Amin al-Husseini as the dominant leader among the Palestinians.<sup>21</sup> His main rival was Raghieb Nashashibi, the mayor of Jerusalem from 1920 to 1934. This rivalry between them was at the top of the Palestinian political divide between the “Supporters” of Husseini, (*Majlisiyeen*), and his “Opponents” (*al-Mu'arada*), most of whom were supporters of the Nashashibis.<sup>22</sup> This represented the state of affairs of the Arab leadership at the time - traditional rivalries among the leading families that helped to form an aristocracy that comprised mainly Muslim landowners, the wealthy, and the well-educated.<sup>23</sup> These leaders assumed pre-eminence during Ottoman times and they or their descendants continued their control over the organized religious, political, and social life of the Arab community during the mandatory period.<sup>24</sup>

During the 1920s, several Arab parties were established with support from the British, mainly to help counter the leadership of the Husseinis. The Arab National party was established in Jaffa in 1923. Among its founders was Fakhri Nashashibi. The Palestinian People 's Party was established in 1925 in Nablus, led by Adel Zuaiter and Abdul Latif Salah. The Agricultural Party was founded in al-Dawayima in 1923. These three parties failed to mobilise any significant popular support, and they ceased their activities within a relatively short period. Following the political division among the opposition, the Palestinian Free Party was established in Jaffa in 1927.

During the first years of the mandate, the Palestinian Arabs supported King Faisal, and a Pan Arabism that envisioned Palestine as part of a Greater Syria.<sup>25</sup> However, they abandoned the idea after Faisal's defeat by the French in July 1920. The 1929 riots are considered to be a turning point in the conflict over Palestine.<sup>26</sup> It was seen as the culmination of the shift towards local, Palestinian Arab nationalism - that began with Faisal's defeat in 1920.<sup>27</sup> In any case, there were still parties that called for pan-Arabism or pan-Islamism - such as the Arab Nationalist Bloc,

which was established in 1929, and the Muslim Youth Organization, which was established in Nablus in 1930.

The death of Musa Kazim Hussein in 1934 and the failure to agree on a permanent chairperson, resulted in the cessation of the operations of the executive committee of the Palestinian Arab Congress.<sup>28</sup> It opened the opportunity for Haj Amin to take over the leadership of the Palestinians officially, after he had established his leadership internally among Muslim Palestinians, and internationally among Arabs and Muslims.<sup>29</sup> Raghīb Nashashibi was defeated in the Jerusalem mayoralty elections of 1934 by a candidate supported by Haj Amin. This further widened the Nashashibi - Hussein divide and was the background for the establishment of new political parties in the 1930s, which again represented the interests of particular families and individuals.<sup>30</sup>

The two main parties were the “Hussein party” and the “Nashashibi party.” The Palestinian Arab Party was established in 1935 by Jamal Hussein, influenced by Haj Amin. This consolidated the power of the Hussein clan and their supporters.<sup>31</sup> The National Defense Party was established in Jaffa in 1934 by Raghīb Nashashibi, which did likewise for the Nashashibi clan and their supporters. It was founded after Raghīb Nashashibi lost his reelection campaign for the Jerusalem mayoralty. The National Defense Party was considered as a continuation of early efforts by the British to help Arab parties that opposed the Husseins.<sup>32</sup>

Two other parties were formed that were not attached directly either to the Nashashibis or the Husseins. The Independence Party of Palestine was established in Jerusalem in 1932 by Muhammad Izzat Darwaza and other supporters of pan-Arabism, who had worked previously with King Faisal.<sup>33</sup> The party did not gain much popular support and was not based on any prominent Palestinian clan. However, it did gather support among the middle-class. In 1935, a small group was formed in Haifa, the Palestine Youth Congress, which was generally regarded as Hussein supporters.<sup>34</sup> Among its founders was Yaqub al-Ghusein. Two additional, smaller parties operated for short periods only. The Arab Reform Party was established in Jerusalem in 1935 by Hussein Khalidi, the mayor of Jerusalem from 1934 to 1937.<sup>35</sup> The party’s supporters were mainly from Jerusalem and Ramallah. It was associated with the Husseins. The National Bloc Party that was established in Nablus in 1935, was associated with Nashashibis.

These developments in the Palestinian leadership in the 1930s continued the political rivalry between the Nashashibis and the Husseins. However, it also added a new political rivalry

between the traditional leadership and the growing, well-educated, urban-based leadership. Thus, it is not surprising that these new groups emerged mainly in big cities, such as Jerusalem, Jaffa, Nablus, and Haifa.

The 1936-1939 Arab revolt was the ideological and political implementation of Palestinian national demands when all the Palestinian political leaders joined forces.<sup>36</sup> It is believed that Arab anger, following the manhunt and killing of Sheikh Izzedin al-Qassam, a member of the Supreme Muslim Council, triggered the series of events that led to the beginning of the revolt.<sup>37</sup> In the beginning, Palestinian unity was established, by forming the Arab Higher Committee (HAC), in April 1936.<sup>38</sup> The Committee brought together all Palestinian political organizations and parties.<sup>39</sup> Haj Amin was its chairman. The HAC replaced the Executive Committee, following a gap of two years without any Palestinian organization leading at the national level.<sup>40</sup>

In contrast to the Executive Committee, the HAC did not comprise an elected leadership. Its 12 members were from the Palestinian elite, representing the six parties that existed at the time - the Youth Congress, the Arab Independence Party, the National Defense Party, the Palestinian Arab Party, the National Bloc Party, and the Reform Party.<sup>41</sup> It included Muslim Arabs as well as Christian Arabs, such as Ya'qub Farraj, an Arab Orthodox, who was a representative of the National Defense Party.<sup>42</sup> The massive Arab support in the demonstrations, as part of the Arab revolt, showed that the Arab Higher Committee enjoyed considerable popular support.<sup>43</sup>

During the second phase of the revolt, from summer 1937, Palestinian unity was lost, when the rivalry between the Nashashibis and the Husseinis turned violent. Haj Amin wanted to continue the fight against the British, while Raghib Nashashibi claimed that through negotiations with the British they could achieve more for the Palestinian cause. Despite being declared illegal by the British, the HAC managed to continue until 1939 when it ceased operations.<sup>44</sup> By the end of the revolt, supporters and opponents were fighting each other.<sup>45</sup>

During the stagnation period from 1939 to 1945, due to the Second World War, there was no clearly recognized Palestinian national leadership.<sup>46</sup> In the meantime, there arose another wave of Palestinian political parties. In 1944, the Palestinian Communist party - previously Jewish dominated, in the 1920s-1930s - split up and an Arab-led communist party was established.<sup>47</sup> Their efforts resulted in the formation of the National Liberation League.<sup>48</sup> Among its founders was Emile Habibi, Emile Touma, and Moussa al-Dajani. In 1946, the Muslim Brotherhood of Palestine was established. Among its founders were Shaykh As'ad al-Imam, Muhammad al-

Amad, and Shaykh 'Abd al-Bari Barakat. In addition, semi-military groups were established, such as al-Najjada, which was established in Jaffa by Muhammad Nimr al-Hawari.<sup>49</sup>

However, these new organizations proved unable to lead the Palestinian cause. The involvement of the Arab league in 1946 sponsored the establishment of the Second HAC, support by the Palestinian parties.<sup>50</sup> Once again Haj Amin took control, while his supporters and the Palestinian Arab Party dominated its leadership.

### *Local governance in British Mandatory Palestine*

Until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the Ottoman Empire was based mainly on a centralized government.<sup>51</sup> It also included sub-divisions that were controlled by Ottoman officials.<sup>52</sup> In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the Ottomans reorganized their administration. The Ottoman Vilayet Law (1864), laid the foundation for local government in rural areas by appointing *Mukhtars* as village chiefs.<sup>53</sup> The Municipalities Ordinance (1877) provided the legal framework for local municipalities in urban communities as differentiated from rural ones.<sup>54</sup> Based on this legislation, by the end of the Ottoman rule over Palestine there were 22 recognized municipalities.<sup>55</sup> These Ottoman administrative structures in Palestine helped maintain the segregated social structures that were based on social groups organized by religious sectarianism and kinship while leaving no place for political change and new leadership that was not based on the notables.<sup>56</sup> The elite of notable families dominated society, economically, by continued ownership of lands, and politically, by dominating Muslim religious bureaucracy, and local administration in the form of *Mukhtars* and council members.<sup>57</sup>

From 1918 to 1920, the British military administration in Palestine mainly maintained the status quo without changing the Ottoman laws that were in effect until the end of the First World War.<sup>58</sup> The administrative structure of districts and sub-districts was changed; however, the local government structure remained the same.<sup>59</sup> Except for a few, those Mayors holding appointments from the Ottoman period were allowed to continue in their positions.<sup>60</sup>

In the first years of the mandate, 65% of the total population of 757,000 was agrarian, living in villages or tribal areas.<sup>61</sup> Those living in municipalities were spread in the 22 municipalities recognized by the Ottomans (out of a total of 1,026 localities). This included 20 Arab or Arab-majority municipalities, as well as Jerusalem and Tiberias, the only mixed cities with a Jewish majority.

With the transition to a British civilian administration in 1920, the British government announced its intention to advance local self-government in the country.<sup>62</sup> The Local Councils Ordinance of 1921, which was intended for rural areas (amended in 1941) and the Municipal Corporations Ordinance of 1934, were designed to lay the ground for a structured local self-governance in Palestine.<sup>63</sup> This legislation allowed the British to recognize some cities, regional councils, local councils, and *Mukhtars*.

The Municipalities Ordinance of 1877 remained in effect until the Municipal Corporations Ordinance of 1934 was enacted. The High Commissioner appointed mayors and council members who represented the leading families. For example, in Safed, the British appointed four mayors during the period 1918 to 1926.<sup>64</sup>

#### *1927: The first local elections.*

The Local Councils Ordinance of 1921 set the regulations for local elections, including the requirement of residency and payment of taxes for eligibility to vote.<sup>65</sup> As a result, in most municipalities, only men who were heads of a household and owned property were eligible. The Municipal Franchise Ordinance of 1926 detailed further the requirements of local elections.<sup>66</sup> Eligible voters were men, older than 25 years, Palestinian citizens, not disabled, without a criminal record, the owner of a property within the municipal area who had paid the minimum property or municipal taxes.<sup>67</sup> The right to be elected was given to male citizens above the age of 30, who had paid taxes at a higher rate than the minimum required for the right to vote.<sup>68</sup>

The first municipal elections in mandatory Palestine were held in 1927 in all the recognized municipalities (Table 1). Only in Gaza, were the election results not approved, due to complaints of improper management.<sup>69</sup> In these elections, the number of eligible voters was not reported for all municipalities. However, for those municipalities where information is available, it is clear that only a minority of the residents were eligible to vote, ranging between 3.3% to 6.5%, out of the total. Nonetheless, the government claimed enthusiastically that the "...newly-elected Municipal Councils are fully representative of the constituencies..."<sup>70</sup>

In many of these elections, such as in Jerusalem, Haifa, Jaffa, Hebron, Gaza, and other municipalities in the north, the competition was between Husseinis and their supporters and the opposition led by the Nashashibis.<sup>71</sup> This helped establish centers of opposition in these municipalities.<sup>72</sup> The 1927 elections ended with victories for the opposition. In Jerusalem, Haifa,

Jaffa, and Safed the opposition's victory was facilitated by the help of the Jewish voters.<sup>73</sup> In Arab cities without any Jewish residents, supporters of the Husseini camp won the elections, i.e. in Jenin, Tulkarem, Lydda, Hebron, Bethlehem, Ramallah, Majdal, Gaza, Beersheba, and Beisan.<sup>74</sup>

Elections in other villages were not systematically reported by the British, as was the case in the 22 municipalities. One report of such elections in Qalqilya, states that none were held. Instead, "...each *hamouleh* nominated two members, the last nomination and appointment being in July of 1927...".<sup>75</sup> In the case of Qalqilya, no elections were held during the entire course of the mandate.<sup>76</sup> Although more evidence is required, this might shed light on the situation in other villages. The leadership of the notables was maintained, and clans and extended families still controlled the political structure.

#### *1934: The second local elections.*

As of 1931, 62% of the Palestine population of more than one million was agrarian, living in villages or tribal areas<sup>77</sup> - a small decrease from 65% in 1922. Besides formal definitions of rural and urban, most of these municipalities were not yet in fact of urban character, except four cities: Jerusalem, Jaffa, Tel-Aviv, and Haifa.<sup>78</sup> The other municipalities were described by the British as "...convenient centres for the marketing of rural products, or as large villages."<sup>79</sup> Palestinian society was seen by the British as quasi-feudal.<sup>80</sup> In any case, the local government structure included only 23 recognized municipalities. 38 villages were recognized to have local councils, out of which 11 were Arab villages. This was a minority compared to the 1,072 localities that did not have a municipality or a local council.

The next election cycle after 1927 was scheduled for 1930; however, due to the 1929 riots, elections were postponed until 1934.<sup>81</sup> The British feared that Husseini's supporters might gain more power following the impact of the 1929 riots and the withdrawal of the 1931 White Paper.<sup>82</sup> Most council members and mayors were permitted to continue in their positions. The Municipal Corporations Ordinance of 1934 replaced the Ottoman Municipalities Ordinance of 1877. Elections were held in all the municipalities following the new legislation. The new legislation gave the right to vote to male residents of Palestine, aged 25 or over, who had paid municipal taxes of at least 1 Mil per year.<sup>83</sup> The right to be elected was given to those male residents, aged 30 or above, who had paid municipal taxes of at least 3 Mil per year.<sup>84</sup> The High



Commissioner appointed from the newly elected council members a mayor and a deputy mayor. However, in contrast to previous legislation, this time the High Commissioner could appoint a council member as mayor, regardless of the actual results, or which council member received more votes.

As shown in Table 2, formal elections were held in 14 municipalities, while in the remaining seven municipalities no elections were held, because the number of candidates equaled the number of vacancies. Therefore, the candidates were appointed by the High Commissioner. In any case, a UN report states that as of 1935 there were 22 elected municipal councils in mandatory Palestine, without mentioning the different methods of “election.”<sup>85</sup>

This time, in contrast to 1927, the Husseinis were victorious. The Nashashibis and their supporters lost Jerusalem, while the Husseinis and their supporters won a majority of council seats in Jenin, Nablus, Ramallah, Bethlehem, Hebron, and Gaza.<sup>86</sup> However, the High Commissioner still appointed mayors who were council members that supported the Nashashibis. Opposition mayors were also elected in Gaza, Jenin, Nazareth, Lydda, Ramleh, Safed, and Hebron.<sup>87</sup> In other municipalities, the opposition did not win any seats. Having no other legal choice, the High Commissioner appointed mayors who were from the Hussein camp.<sup>88</sup> For example, in Acre, Majdal, Tulkarem, Beisan, Jericho, and Beersheba.

In the 1934 elections, like the 1927 elections, the number of eligible voters was not reported for all municipalities. However, as shown in Table 2, for those municipalities where information is available, it is clear that, once again, only a minority of residents - between 2.7% to 9.1% - were eligible to vote, except for Beersheba with 26.2%.

#### *1946: The third local elections.*

According to the Municipal Corporations Ordinance of 1934, local elections were scheduled for every five years.<sup>89</sup> Thus the next election cycle after 1934 was scheduled for 1939. However, elections were postponed until after the Second World War, due to security concerns.<sup>90</sup> Some council members and mayors were dismissed by the British, in a move that was seen as punishment following the 1936-1939 Arab revolt. As a result, in 1939 eight Arab municipalities were managed by appointed commissions, not by an elected leadership. By 1945, some Arab and mixed municipalities were also managed by appointed commissions, including Jerusalem, Haifa, Tiberias, and Gaza.

As shown in Table 3, local elections were held in 1946 in 16 out of 22 municipalities.<sup>91</sup> In seven municipalities, the same mayor that had been elected in 1934 was reelected. One was reappointed with no elections. In total, 14 new mayors were appointed following the results of the 1946 elections. The Husseini-Nashashibi rivalry ended this time with more gains for the opposition camp, as in 1927, and in contrast to 1934. Again, as in 1934, the High Commissioner appointed mayors who were council members that support the opposition, as in Jenin, Nablus, Bethlehem, Hebron, and Gaza.

In this election cycle, there is more information on the number of eligible voters. In some municipalities, there was a modest improvement in the number of eligible voters. The average percentage of residents that were eligible to vote was for the first time 10%, while Haifa (20.2%) and Jaffa (21.2%) enjoyed the highest percentages.

### *Conclusions.*

There was a minimal degree of Arab local governance during the mandate. A municipality or a local council existed only in less than 5% of about 1,000 Arab localities. Therefore, the vast majority of Arab localities were operated by the traditional local leadership. The Peel Royal Commission (1936-37) noted that the mandate had helped the *Yishuv* establish local self-government; however, it had failed to encourage the same pattern among the Arabs.<sup>92</sup>

Local politics were controlled mainly by clan-politics, which was also the case in many municipalities and local councils. They were aligned to the nation-level rivalry between the Nashashibis and Husseinis. Some accuse the British of staging the political divide among the Palestinians.<sup>93</sup> Further, British legislation did not encourage the Arabs to support the establishment of elected local councils in their villages. The number of eligible voters remained very low, due to the restrictions of gender, age, and high taxation. This resulted in the perpetuation of a leadership based on notables, clan leaders, extended families, and religious leaders. In that sense, local Arab self-government continued the same pattern of the Ottoman Mukhtar - a tool that served mainly the central government.<sup>94</sup>

Arab local self-government was too dependent on the High Commissioner's rule. Most of the critical positions in the municipalities were appointed by him: mayors and deputy mayors, treasurers, sanitary inspectors, doctors and veterinarians. The High Commissioner also supervised the municipalities' budgets. The Municipal Corporations Ordinance of 1934 gave the

district governor the authority to supervise the budgets of the municipalities, its activities, and also to dismiss council members and replace them with appointed officials. In addition, the legislation provided the district governor with more flexibility in appointing a mayor. For that reason, some mayors were merely representatives of the mandate government more than representatives of their people.

Elections were not held regularly. Local elections were held only in three elections cycles - in 1927, 1934 and 1946. In addition, they were held in only a small portion of the municipalities. In most of these elections, candidate represented clans, or clan-alliances, not political parties. In many of the municipalities, only a list of pre-agreed lists of candidates was submitted. This forced the cancellation of many elections and the acceptance of the candidates as the elected representatives. Thus, most Palestinians were not involved in voting and did not experience the process of electing local representatives.

Members of the local councils and mayors came from wealthy families. Despite the limited extent of their independence, the municipalities were the arena of competition between the families of the urban elite, mainly because of the prestige of the public office and the possibility of influencing the appointment of officials. For example, the Jerusalem municipality was established in 1864; until 1920, there were 17 different appointed mayors, of which seven were members of the Husseini clan.<sup>95</sup>

Previous research states that the Palestinian leadership at the national level was selected in different patterns. In the first stage, the leadership was elected; in the second, it was the result of a party coalition, and in the third, it was appointed.<sup>96</sup> In this study, we conclude that this was different at the local level during the mandate. During the entire period, most of the local Arab leadership was appointed in the form of village *Mukhtars* and local councils. Only in less than 20 Arab and mixed municipalities, and not during all of this period, were Arab leaders at the local level elected. British conceptions of democracy were for home consumption only, never exported to the colonies.

Appendices

**Table 1.** 1927: Local Elections in Arab and Mixed Cities.

<b>District</b>	<b>Sub-district</b>	<b>Municipalities</b>	<b>Election Day</b>	<b>Population (as of 1922)<sup>97</sup></b>	<b>Eligible Voters<sup>98</sup></b>	<b>Percentage of Eligible Voters</b>	<b>Elected Mayor<sup>99</sup></b>
Southern	Gaza	Gaza	8-9 April 1927	17,480	N/A	N/A	Elections results canceled
		Khan Yunes	6 April 1927	3,890	N/A	N/A	Haj Salim Effendi Hussain Jaser al-Agha
		Majdal	7 April 1927	5,064	N/A	N/A	Taj-Eddin Sha'th
	Beersheba	Beersheba	12 April 1927	2,356	N/A	N/A	Taju effendi Sha't
	Jaffa	Jaffa	27-29 May 1927	47,709	2,713	5.6%	Assem Bey al-Said
	Ramleh	Ramleh	2 May 1927	7,312	N/A	N/A	Sheikh Mustafa al-Khairi
		Lydda	26 April 1927	8,103	N/A	N/A	Ahmed Effendi Husseini
Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	5-7 April 1927	62,578	2,055	3.3%	Raghib Nashashibi
	Hebron	Hebron	13-14 April 1927	16,577	N/A	N/A	Sheikh Mukhlis Hammuri
	Ramallah	Ramallah	24 March 1927	3,104	N/A	N/A	Musa Effendi Khalil Musa
	Bethlehem	Bethlehem	27 March 1927	6,658	N/A	N/A	Nicolas Attalah Effendi Shahin
		Beit Jala	27 March 1927	3,101	N/A	N/A	Jiries Effendi Juma Abu Awad
Northern	Nablus	Nablus	7 April 1927	15,947	N/A	N/A	Suleiman Bey Abdel Razak Tukan
	Jenin	Jenin	31 March 1927	2,637	N/A	N/A	Aref Effendi Abdulrahman
	Tulkarem	Tulkarem	13 April 1927	3,350	N/A	N/A	Abdulrahman Effendi al-Haj Ibrahim
	Baisan	Baisan	30 March 1927	1,941	N/A	N/A	Haj Mahmud Effendi Abdullah el-Safadi
	Haifa	Haifa	16-18 May 1927	24,684	N/A	N/A	Hassan Bey Shukri
		Shafa 'Amr	*	2,288	N/A	N/A	Da'ud Sulaiman Talhami
	Acre	Acre	11 April 1927	6,420	N/A	N/A	Abdul Fatah el-Sa'adi
	Nazareth	Nazareth	9 April 1927	7,424	N/A	N/A	Selim Effendi Bishara
	Tiberias	Tiberias	26 April 1927	6,950	452	6.5%	Zaki Haddef
	Safad	Safad	12 April 1927	8,761	329	3.8%	Mohamed Effendi Hasan Abd al-Rahman

Note: \* No official information was found regarding the elections in Shafa 'Amr and Jericho.

**Table 2.** 1934: Local Elections in Arab and Mixed Cities.

District	Sub-district	Municipalities	Election Day	Population (as of 1931) <sup>100</sup>	Eligible Voters <sup>101</sup>	Percentage of Eligible Voters	Elected Mayor <sup>102</sup>
Southern	Gaza	Gaza	26 June 1934	17,046	840	4.9%	Fahmi Effendi Husseini
		Khan Yunes	23 November 1935	N/A	N/A	N/A	Al-Saidi Abdul Rahman Mohammed el-Farra
	Beersheba	Majdal	9 June 1934	6,226	170	2.7%	Yusef Nijim
		Beersheba	7 June 1934	2,959	775	26.2%	Taj-Eddin Sha'th
		Jaffa	7 July 1934	N/A	N/A	N/A	Assem Bey al-Said
		Ramleh	Ramleh	9 July 1934	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Lydda	.*	-	-	-	Ahmed Effendi Husseini	
Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	26 September 1934**	90,503	3,650	4.0%	Dr. Hussein Fakhri Effendi al-Khalidi
	Hebron	Hebron	5-6 July 1934	N/A	N/A	N/A	Sheikh Mukhlis Effendi Hammuri
	Ramallah	Ramallah	.*	N/A	N/A	N/A	Dr. Saadallah Qassis
	Bethlehem	Bethlehem	.*	6,815	331	4.9%	Issa Effendi al-Bandak
		Beit Jala	5 April 1934	N/A	N/A	N/A	Andria Mansour
Northern	Nablus	Nablus	.*	17,189	747	4.3%	Suleiman Bey Abdel Razak Tukan
	Jenin	Jenin	8 August 1934	2,706	163	6.0%	Fahmi Effendi 'Aabushi
	Tulkarem	Tulkarem	12 August 1934	N/A	N/A	N/A	Abdulrahman Effendi al-Haj Ibrahim
	Baisan	Baisan	13 August 1934	N/A	N/A	N/A	Muhammad Sa'id Effendi Halbuni
	Haifa	Haifa	.**	-	-	-	Hassan Bey Shukri
		Shafa 'Amr	-	-	-	-	Jabbour Yousef Jabbour
	Acre	Acre	9 October 1934	7,897	718	9.1%	Husni Effendi Muhammad Khalifa
	Nazareth	Nazareth	28 July 1934	8,756	458	5.2%	Selim Effendi Bishara
	Tiberias	Tiberias	.*	-	-	-	Zaki Haddef
	Safad	Safad	26 July 1934	9,441	510	5.4%	Salah Effendi 'Ezz al-Din Qaddura

Notes:

a. No elections were held in these municipalities- Bethlehem, Ramallah, Lydda, Nablus, and Tiberias.<sup>103</sup> The reason is that the number of candidates submitted equaled the number of vacancies.

b. No elections were held in most of the divisions in Jerusalem and Haifa for the same reason.<sup>104</sup> No official information was found regarding Jericho.

**Table 3.** 1946: Local Elections in Arab and Mixed Cities.

District	Sub-district	Municipalities	Election Day <sup>105</sup>	Population (as of 1945) <sup>106</sup>	Eligible Voters <sup>107</sup>	Percentage of Eligible Voters	Elected Mayor <sup>108</sup>
Gaza	Gaza	Gaza	4 February 1946	34,170	1,622	4.7%	Rushdi Effendi al-Shawa
		Khan Yunis	8 September 1946	11,220	450	4.0%	Al-Saidi Abdul Rahman Mohammed el-Farra
		Majdal	6 May 1946	9,910	329	3.3%	Al-Sayyid Abu-Sharkh
Lydde	Jaffa	Jaffa	28 April 1947	94,310	20,000	21.2%	Dr. Yousef Heikal
	Ramleh	Ramleh	10 November 1946	15,160	N/A	N/A	Sheikh Mustafa al-Khairi
	Lydda	Lydda	29 November 1946	16,780	N/A	N/A	Muhammad Effendi al-Kayyaly
Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	*	157,080	26,700	17.0%	-
		Bethlehem	1 April 1946	8,820	590	6.7%	Issa Effendi al-Bandak
		Beit Jala	15 May 1946	3,710	N/A	N/A	Wadi'a Effendi Musa al-Da'amas
	Hebron	Hebron	22 December 1946	24,560	980	4.0%	Sheikh Muhammad 'Ali al-Ja'abari
	Ramallah	Ramallah	15 April 1946	5,080	800	16.0%	Khalil Salah
Samaria	Nablus	Nablus	6 May 1946	23,259	1,619	7.0%	Suleiman Bey Abdel Razak Tukan
	Jenin	Jenin	23 March 1946	3,990	327	8.2%	Hilmi Effendi 'Aabushi
	Tulkarem	Tulkarem	-	-	-	-	Hashim Al Jayousi
Haifa	Haifa	Haifa	*	138,300	28,000	20.2%	Shabtai Levi
		Shafa 'Amr	-	3,640	N/A	N/A	Jabbour Yousef Jabbour
Galilee	Acre	Acre	28 July 1946	12,360	1,341	10.8%	Husni Effendi Muhammad Khalifa
	Baisan	Baisan	4 March 1946	5,180	N/A	N/A	Ahmad Effendi Abu 'Ali
	Nazareth	Nazareth	19 May 1946	14,200	1,150	8.1%	Selim Effendi Bishara
	Tiberias	Tiberias	*	11,310	1,900	16.8%	Shimon Dahan
	Safad	Safad	*	11,930	510	4.3%	Zaki Qaddura
(not affiliated)	Beersheba	Beersheba	27 February 1946	5,570	N/A	N/A	Shafiq Effendi 'Arafat Mushtaha

\* Notes: Elections in Jerusalem, Haifa, Tiberias, and Safad were last held in 1934. Instead, a commission was appointed.<sup>109</sup>

## Notes

---

1. Roger Owen, *State, power and politics in the making of the modern Middle East*, London: Routledge, 2013, pp. 5-22.
2. Bernard Lewis, Palestine: On the history and geography of a name, *The International History Review* 2/1, 1980, pp. 1-12.
3. Baruch Kimmerling, *The Palestinian people: A history*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009, pp. 3-37.
4. Anita Shapira, *Israel: A history*, Lebanon, Mass.: University Press of New England, 2012, pp. 65-137.
5. Great Britain, *Report By His Majesty's Government to the council of the League of Nations on the administration of Palestine and Trans-Jordan for the year 1929*, London: His Majesty's Stationery Office (HMSO), 1929.
6. Great Britain, *Palestine Order in Council -1922*, London: HMSO, 1922.
7. Ibid.
8. Bayan Nuwehid Al-Hout, The Palestinian political elite during the mandate period, *Journal of Palestine Studies* 9/1, 1979, pp. 85-111.
9. Kimmerling, *The Palestinian people*, pp. 67-101.
10. Hasan Ahmed Naser Mu'tasem, Jerusalem municipality and political conflict: 1918-1942, *International Journal of History and Philosophical Research* 4/1, 2016, pp.1-15.
11. Al-Hout, The Palestinian political elite, pp. 85-111.
12. Neil Caplan, The Yishuv, Sir Herbert Samuel, and the Arab Question in Palestine, 1921–25, in: *Zionism and Arabism in Palestine and Israel*, edited by Haim Sylvia G. and Elie Kedourie, London: Routledge, 2005.
13. Neil Caplan, *Palestine Jewry and the Arab question, 1917-1925*, London: Routledge, 2012, pp. 107-182.
14. Great Britain, *Palestine Order in Council*, 1922.
15. Reply by the Duke of Devonshire, the Colonial Secretary, to Lord Islington, *House of Lords Debates (H.L. Deb.)*, vol 53, 27 March 1923, cols. 658-59.
16. *ibid*, cols. 639, 644-46, 658-59.
16. *ibid*, cols. 639, 644-46, 658-59.



- 
16. *ibid*, cols. 639, 644-46, 658-59.
  17. Elie Kedourie, Sir Herbert Samuel and the government of Palestine, *Middle Eastern Studies* 5/1, 1969, pp. 44-68.
  18. Michael J Cohen, *PALESTINE: Retreat from the Mandate, The making of British policy, 1936-45*, London/New York: Paul Elek, 1978, p. 12.
  19. Philip Mattar, *The Mufti of Jerusalem: Al-Hajj Amin al-Husayni and the Palestinian National Movement*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1992, pp. 19-32.
  20. Taysir Jabara, *Dirasat fi Tarikh Filastin alhadith [Studies in the History of Modern Palestine]*, Palestine: Hebron University Press, 1980.
  21. Ilan Pappé, Haj Amin and the Buraq Revolt, *Jerusalem Quarterly* 18, 2003, pp. 6-16.
  22. Jamal Ibrahim, *Sirae Alflstynyn Bayn Majlasiyyn waMuearidin bein 1920-1934, waDawr Sulutat Alaintidab fi 'Iitharatiha waTaeziziha (Alaintikhabat Albaladiat Anmwdhjaan)* [The Palestinians' Conflict between the Supporters (*Majlisiyeen*) and their Opponents during 1920-1934 and the Role of the Mandate Authorities in Stirring and Strengthening it (Municipal Elections as a Model)], *Journal of Al-Quds Open University*, 2014, 36/1, pp. 181-224.
  23. Don Peretz, Palestinian social stratification: the political implications, *Journal of Palestine Studies* 7/1, 1977, pp. 48-74.
  24. *Ibid*.
  25. Abbas Kelidar, States without Foundations: The Political Evolution of State and Society in the Arab East, *Journal of Contemporary History* 28/2, 1993, pp. 315-339.
  26. Hillel Cohen, *Year zero of the Arab-Israeli conflict 1929*, Lebanon, Mass: Brandeis University Press, 2015, pp. 207-254.
  27. Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian identity: The construction of modern national consciousness*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2010, pp. 145-176.
  28. Zvi Elpeleg, Shmuel Himmelstein, *The Grand Mufti: Haj Amin al-Husseini, founder of the Palestinian national movement*, London: Routledge, 2012, pp. 29-35.
  29. Freas Erik, Hajj Amin al-Husayni and the Haram al-Sharif: A Pan-Islamic or Palestinian Nationalist Cause?, *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 39/1, 2012, pp. 19-51.
  30. Naser, 'Jerusalem municipality', pp.1-15

- 
31. Abboushi Wasef, The Road to Rebellion Arab Palestine in the 1930's, *Journal of Palestine Studies* 6/3, 1977, pp. 23-46.
  32. Muhammad Muslih, Arab politics and the rise of Palestinian nationalism, *Journal of Palestine Studies* 16/4, 1987, pp. 77-94.
  33. Muhammad Muslih, The Rise of Local Nationalism in the Arab East, in *The Origins of Arab nationalism*, edited by Rashid Khalidi, Lisa Anderson, Muhammad Muslih, and Reeva S. Simon, New York: Columbia University Press, 1991, pp. 167-188.
  34. Shmuel Dothan, Attempts at an Arab-Jewish agreement in Palestine during the Thirties, *Studies in Zionism* 1/2, 1980, pp. 213-238.
  35. Naser, Jerusalem municipality, pp.1-15.
  36. Ted Swedenburg, *Memories of revolt: The 1936–1939 rebellion and the Palestinian national past*, Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2003, pp. 76-106.
  37. Mahmoud Yazbak, From Poverty to Revolt: economic factors in the outbreak of the 1936 rebellion in Palestine, *Middle Eastern Studies* 36/3, 2000, pp. 93-113.
  38. Al-Hout, *The Palestinian political elite*, pp. 85-111.
  39. Martin S. Widzer, *Becoming a State: Zionist and Palestinian Movements for National Liberation*, University of Denver, Electronic Theses and Dissertations, 2015, pp. 118-145.
  40. Elpeleg and Himmelstein, *The grand mufti*, pp. 29-35.
  41. Al-Hout, *The Palestinian political elite*, pp. 85-111.
  42. Laura Robson, Communalism and nationalism in the Mandate: the Greek Orthodox controversy and the national movement, *Journal of Palestine Studies* 41/1, 2011, pp. 6-23.
  43. Jacob Norris, Repression and Rebellion: Britain's Response to the Arab Revolt in Palestine of 1936–39, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 36/1, 2008, pp. 25-45.
  44. Thomas Mayer, Arab unity of action and the Palestine question, 1945–48, *Middle Eastern Studies* 22/3, 1986, pp. 331-349.
  45. Kanafani Ghassan, *The 1936-39 revolt in Palestine*, New York: Committee for Democratic Palestine, 1972, pp. 35-60.
  46. Al-Hout, *The Palestinian political elite*, pp. 85-111.
  47. Joel Beinen, The Palestine Communist Party 1919-1948, *MERIP Reports* 55, 1977, pp. 3-17.

- 
48. Johan Franzéen, Communism versus Zionism: The Comintern, Yishuvism, and the Palestine Communist Party, *Journal of Palestine Studies* 36/2, 2007, pp. 6-24.
  49. Haim Levenberg, *Military preparations of the Arab community in Palestine, 1945-1948*, London: Frank Cass, 1993, pp. 126-145.
  50. Mayer, Arab unity, pp. 331-349.
  51. Farid Al-Salim, *Palestine and the Decline of the Ottoman Empire: Modernization and the Path to Palestinian Statehood*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2015, pp. 1-17.
  52. Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire, 1700-1922*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, pp. 90-110.
  53. Al-Haj, Henri Rosenfeld, *Arab local government in Israel Westview*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1990, pp. 1-22.
  54. Ibid.
  55. Rashid Sabri Nidal, Rania Yaser Jaber, Managerial performance of Palestinian local authorities, *Transforming government: people, process and policy* 1/4, 2007, pp. 350-363.
  56. Al-Haj, Rosenfeld, *Arab local government*, pp. 1-22.
  57. Beinen, The Palestine Communist Party, pp. 3-17.
  58. Gideon Biger, *The Boundaries of Modern Palestine, 1840-1947*, London: Routledge, 2004, pp. 41-79.
  59. John J. McTague, The British Military Administration in Palestine 1917-1920, *Journal of Palestine Studies* 7/3, 1978, pp. 55-76.
  60. Ylana Miller, *Government and society in rural Palestine, 1920-1948*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985.
  61. J. B. Barron, *Report and General Abstracts of the Census of 1922, 23 October 1922*, Jerusalem: Greek Convent Press, 1923, p. 5.
  62. Ibid, pp. 1-4.
  63. Government of Palestine, *Local Councils Ordinance 1921*, Jerusalem: The Palestine Gazette, No. 42, 1 May 1921; Government of Palestine, *Municipal Corporations Ordinance 1934 Notices, No. 1*, Jerusalem: The Palestine Gazette, No. 414, 12 January 1934, Supp. 1, p. 1.
  64. Mustafa Abbasi, *Safad fi 'Eahd Alaintidab Albritanii 1917- 1948- Dirasah Aijtimaiah Wasiasiatah [Safed in the British Mandate period 1917-1948- a social and political*

- 
- study*], Beirut: Institute for Palestinian Studies, 2005, pp. 45-54. The four were Nayef Sobh, Mohammed Salim Shama, Saeed Mahmoud Murad, and Mohamed Hassan Abd al-Rahman.
65. Great Britain, *The Local Councils Ordinance 1921*.
66. Government of Palestine, *The Municipal Franchise Ordinance 1926*, Jerusalem: The Palestine Gazette, 11 October 1926, pp. 528-533.
67. Ibid.
68. Ibid.
69. Government of Palestine, *Orders Under the Franchise Ordinance, 1926*, Jerusalem: Palestine Gazette, No. 196, 1 October 1927, p. 690.
70. Great Britain, *Report by His Majesty's Government to the Council of the League of Nations on the administration of Palestine and Trans-Jordan for the year 1927*, London: HMSO, 1927.
71. Elyakim Rubinstein, *Yehudim Ve-aravim Be'retz Yisrail (1926- 1933) Yerushalaim V'Arin Acherot* [Jews and Arabs in the Municipalities of Eretz Israel (1926-1933) Jerusalem and other cities], *Katedra*, 51, 1989, pp. 122-147.
72. Peretz, *Palestinian social stratification*, pp. 48-74.
73. Ibrahim, *The Palestinians' Conflict*, pp. 181-224.
74. Ibid.
75. Government of Palestine, *Letter from the District Commissioner of Samaria to the Chief Secretary of the Government of Palestine on "Municipal and Local Council Elections"*, Jerusalem, 3 December 1947, File: "Elections to Municipal and local Councils", Israel State Archive (ISA)- G-41-47.
76. Ibid.
77. Eric Mills, *Census of Palestine: Population of Villages, Towns and Administrative Areas*, Jerusalem: Greek Convent & Goldberg Presses, 1932.
78. Eric Mills, *Census of Palestine 1931*, Alexandria: Government of Palestine, Volume I, Palestine Part I, Report, 1933, p. 12.
79. Ibid.
80. Peretz, *Palestinian social stratification*, pp. 48-74.
81. Ibrahim, *The Palestinians' Conflict*, pp. 181-224.
82. Ibid.

- 
83. Government of Palestine, *Municipal Corporations Ordinance No. 1 1934*.
  84. Ibid.
  85. United Nations Special Committee on Palestine, *Report to the General Assembly: Official records of the second session of the general assembly*, Lake Success: United Nations Special Committee on Palestine, Supplement no. 11, Vol. 1, 1947.
  86. Ibrahim, *The Palestinians' Conflict*, pp. 181-224.
  87. Abbasi Mustafa, The Arab Community of Safed 1840-1918 A Critical Period, *Jerusalem Quarterly*, 17, 2003, pp. 49-58.
  88. Ibrahim, *The Palestinians' Conflict*, pp. 181-224.
  89. Great Britain, *Municipal Corporations Ordinance No. 1 of 1934*.
  90. Tamir Goren, The Position of the Leadership of the Jewish Yishuv on the Mayorality of Haifa and Preparations for Elections, 1940–1947, *Israel Affairs* 14/1, 2008, pp. 29-48.
  91. Government of Palestine, Sir Henry Gurney, Chief Secretary to the Government of Palestine, Internal report on the status of overdue elections, Jerusalem: Government of Palestine, 13 January 1948, File: Elections to Municipal and local Councils, ISA- G-41-47.
  92. Great Britain, *Palestine Royal Commission Report*, Cmd 5479, 1937. London: HMSO
  93. Ibrahim, 'The Palestinians' Conflict', pp. 181-224.
  94. Miller, *Government and society*.
  95. Ibid.
  96. Al-Hout, The Palestinian political elite, pp. 85-111.
  97. Barron, *Report and General Abstracts*.
  98. Al-Haj, Rosenfeld, *Arab local government in Israel*, pp. 1-22; Tamir Goren, The Second World War as a turning point in Arab–Jewish relations: the case of Jaffa and Tel Aviv, *Middle Eastern Studies*, 54/2, 2018, pp. 216-237, Naser, *Jerusalem municipality*, pp. 1-15, Abbasi, *Safed in the British Mandate*, pp. 45-54, Rubinstein, *Jews and Arabs*, pp. 122-147; Tamir Goren, Tel Aviv and the question of separation from Jaffa 1921–1936, *Middle Eastern Studies*, 52/3, 2016, pp. 473-487.
  99. Government of Palestine, *Orders Under the Franchise Ordinance, 1926*, Jerusalem: The Palestine Gazette, March to October, 1927.
  100. Mills, *Census of Palestine 1931*.

- 
101. Abbasi, *Safed in the British Mandate*, pp. 45-54; Al-Haj and Rosenfeld, *Arab local government*, pp. 1-22; Naser, *Jerusalem municipality*, pp. 1-15.
102. Government of Palestine, *Municipal Corporations Ordinance 1933 notices*, Jerusalem: The Palestine Gazette, No. 350, 23 March 1933, 23 March 1934 to 28 December 1934, 17 January 1935 to 3 December 1935.
103. Government of Palestine, '*Municipal Corporations Ordinance 1934 notices*', 15 May 1934 to 29 September 1934.
104. Ibid, 10, 21 September 1934.
105. Government of Palestine, Sir Henry Gurney, *Municipal Corporations Ordinance, 1946 notices*, Jerusalem: The Palestine Gazette, supplement 2, from 24 January to 14 December 1946.
106. Government of Palestine, *Village statistics, 1943*, Jerusalem, 1 April 1945.
107. Al-Haj, Rosenfeld, *Arab local government*, pp. 1-22; Abbasi, '*Safed in the British Mandate*', pp. 45-54.
108. Government of Palestine, '*Municipal Corporations Ordinance 1946 notices*': Jerusalem: The Palestine Gazette, supplement 2, 20 February to 26 December 1946; *Letter from the District Commissioner of Haifa to Chief Secretary to the Government of Palestine on Municipal and Local Council Elections*, Jerusalem, 2 December 1947, File: Elections to Municipal and local Councils, ISA- G-41-47.
109. Government of Palestine, Letter from the District Commissioner of Jerusalem to Chief Secretary to the Government of Palestine on "Municipal and Local Council Elections", Jerusalem, 11 November 1947, File:" Elections to Municipal and local Councils, Government of Palestine, *Letter from the District Commissioner of Haifa*, *ibid*.