

# الثورة الفلسطينية

THE PALESTINIAN REVOLUTION

Chancery (Embassy, Amman) to Levant Department. September 17, 1954. Foreign and Commonwealth Office Political Correspondence, The National Archives, FO371/110879.



BRITISH EMBASSY  
AMMAN

1013/91/54  
Confidential

September 17, 1954

Dear Department,

We enclose summaries of the present position, membership, policies, and measure of support of the six main Jordanian political parties, in so far as we have been able to assess them. The details of the programmes and membership are already in your possession (our despatches Nos. 52 and 92 of the 7th of April and 8th of June respectively and our letter 1013/64/54 of the 21st of June refer) but a summary may be useful.

2. It will not be until a fortnight before the elections, scheduled for the 16th of October, that the final list of candidates will be available.

3. It must be realised in reading these summaries that the party system is of very recent growth in Jordan and while certain groups of politicians have chosen to associate themselves, the reasons that have brought them together are often personal and emotional rather than political. Moreover, Arab public opinion generally and Jordanian opinion as much as any, has sunk to such a depth of nationalist blindness that the terms of almost any political announcement are set by the measure of its author's courage rather than by any clear or original thought. This is not to say that the opinions therein vaguely expressed are not honestly and deeply held, but merely to attempt to explain the extraordinary degree of unanimity on policy which prevails among parties of every shade of political colour.

4. Moreover, the body of Jordan's legislators is still likely to be made up of "independents"; many of these will in fact be followers of Tewfiq Abul Huda who has not seen fit to form his own party, and may include a number of the King's "friends" (our letter 1013/60/54 of the 14th of June refers).

5. We are sending a copy of this letter to the British Middle East Office, Fayid.

Yours ever,

CHANCERY

Levant Department,  
Foreign Office,  
LONDON, S.W.1.



The People's Party (Hizb ul Umma)

Applied for registration as a political party in June 1954 under the leadership of Samir Rifai (Jordan Personalities 1953 No.93); the application was granted in July.

The party embraces a number of former deputies, and ministers and has some support among the professional and business classes.

The programme published at the time of the party's formation was a vaguely phrased manifesto recognising the independence and sovereignty of Jordan as a constitutional monarchy, calling for the elimination of foreign influence and the unification of all Arabs, and stressing the importance of the problem of Palestine.

The leadership of the party, rather than its programme, indicates that it holds moderate views and that, if only for reasons of expediency, it would be unlikely to seek to disturb seriously the present position of Her Majesty's Government in Jordan.

Personally Samir Rifai is agreeable to meet but politically he seems to be a spent force, lacking the strength of character to hold Jordan together, now that King Abdullah's firm hand is removed. He draws support therefore largely from the ranks of those who, while accepting Tawfiq Abul Huda's policy, either dislike him personally or see little prospect of their own advancement under him. While individual members will doubtless achieve election, it is doubtful if any large body of opinion would be glad to see another Samir Rifai Government.



The National Socialist Party (Al Hizb ul Watani ul Ishtiraki)

Applied for registration as a political party in May 1954 and the application was granted in July.

The leaders of the party are :-

Abdul Halim Nimr	{ Jordan Personalities 1953 No.13 }
Hazza al Majali	{ Jordan Personalities 1953 No.60 }
Anwar al Khatib	{ Jordan Personalities 1953 No.29 }
Shafiq Irsheidat	{ Jordan Personalities 1953 No.94 }
Hikmat al Misri	{ Jordan Personalities 1953 No.56 }

Its programme as published in the press recognises that Jordan is a constitutional monarchy, calls for the raising of the standard of living of the people and the guaranteeing of the basic civil liberties of opinion, speech and association. It recognises the unity ~~unity~~ of the Arabs and the desire of many for federation. It calls for the liberation of the Arab homeland from all foreign influence and the establishment of a strong Arab political and economic organisation to achieve this. Relations with foreign countries must be conducted as an equal. The Palestine problem must be settled by the full satisfaction of Arab claims, including the return of the refugees or their compensation.

From its composition the party may be judged to be radical, nationalist and leftist. A less extreme Ba'athi party.

It's support comes from the younger generation of Palestinian lawyers & politicians and the more sophisticated of the professional elements on the East Bank. Most of the leaders are new to positions of responsibility and some are unreliable in them.

The strength of the party's support in the country is considerable but it is a support derived more from the position of its members as men of local influence, than from the appeal of their politics.



The Liberation Party (Hizb al Tahrir)

A clandestine and obscure group which has inadvertently received recognition by the negligent registration of a candidate in its name.

The leader of the party is Shaikh Taqeddin Nabahani, a refugee fanatic from Haifa.

The party stands for the establishment of an Islamic state, whose head must be elected by the people, and whose law would be the Koran.

The party is strong in the Hebron district but is unlikely to receive much support elsewhere. A series of acid-throwing outrages in July 1954 in Amman, which were attributed to it, were widely and fiercely reprobated. Six candidates are standing for election in the party's colours, three of them in Hebron.



The Muslim Brethren (Ikhwan ul Muslimin)

Not recognised as a party in Jordan, where the movement although treated with a certain amount of respect is not strong.

The leader in Jordan is Muhammad Abdul Rahman Khalifah, a former schoolmaster.

There are no members of the party standing for election as such.



The Arab Revival Socialist Party (Al Hizb al 'Arabi ul Ba'athi ul Ishtiraki - more commonly known as the Ba'ath Party).

The Ba'ath Party has existed for some years in Jordan. Originating among disillusioned Palestinian intellectuals after the collapse of Arab resistance in 1948 as a party of moderate reform, it has fallen more and more under the influence of the extremists. It existed clandestinely until in March 1954 it submitted an application for registration under the new Political Parties Law. After long deliberation, the Jordan Government rejected this application in June 1954 on the grounds that the party's aims were unconstitutional. Despite this and despite the suppression of its weekly paper, the party continues to be active.

The known leaders of the party include the former deputies Abdullah Rimawi (Jordan Personalities 1953 No.22) and Abdullah Na'was. Other prominent members are Amin Shuqair, Sulaiman al Hadidi, Bahjat Abu Gharbiah and Husni al Khafash.

The political programme of the party differs only in detail from a Communist manifesto. It proclaims the absolute unity of the Arab homeland and people, the need for federation, the duty to struggle against "imperialism" and corruption, the equality of women, equality before the law, equality of opportunity, the abolition of class distinctions and nomadism, the sovereignty of the people, the independence of the judicature, the right to work and freedom of speech, thought and association; it calls for the abrogation of treaties with foreign powers, the re-distribution of wealth and its sources, the nationalisation of public utilities and the basic industries, the sharing of profits and of responsibility for management with the workers, the re-distribution of land, the abolition of private banking and money-lending, the complete control of all trade by the Government and the industrialisation and development of the country. The party upholds the sanctity of the family and the marriage tie, and calls for the establishment of a comprehensive government scheme for social welfare and health, the enactment of just labour laws, providing for free trade unions; it desires to introduce a specifically Arab form of culture and education is to be directed towards this end: men of learning are to be protected, foreign and private schools closed, education made free, vocational training schools established and the teaching profession controlled. Finally the party demands the extermination of Israel.

Although the party appears to be small in numbers, with a limited support drawn largely from the West Bank and from the refugees, it is comparatively homogeneous and well-organised and is extremely vocal. It is known that it receives a financial support from the Syrian Ba'ath and there have been instances in the last year or so of cooperation between it and the Communists, principally in the organisation or exploitation of demonstrations (for example the demonstrations in Nablus and Amman after the Qibya incident). There is some evidence that this cooperation may be merely opportunist but the party's programme suggests that some Communist penetration may have taken place.

As a result of the Jordan Government's firm action against the party in the months preceding the election of October 1954, and inspired by a fear that they will not be returned, it is probable that in some constituencies the party will boycott the elections. In Ramallah however there has been talk of an electoral understanding with the Communists whereby the party would support the Communist Front Candidate.



The National Front Party (Al Jibhat ul Wataniyah)

Applied for registration as a political party in June 1954 and the application was rejected the same month.

The leaders of the party were not published at the time but they are known to be Abdul Qader Saleh, Qadri Tuqan (both former deputies for Nablus) Rashad Maswadeh (former deputy) for Hebron) and Dr. Abdul Rahman Shuqair, a lawyer.

The party, which is pure Communist in origin, has proclaimed its immediate aims to be the abrogation of the Anglo-Jordan Treaty, with the evacuation of all British forces, the abrogation of the Point IV agreement, the abrogation of all other treaties and obligations inimical to national sovereignty, resistance to any form of entanglement with imperialist military plans, and resistance, in common with other Arabs, to imperialism. It proclaims the unity of the peoples of the world in their fight against imperialism and lays the Palestine problem at the door of the imperialists, whose elimination alone can provide a solution, in which the rights of the refugees to return and compensation must be safeguarded. Simultaneously with this, imperialist plans for resettlement and peace with Israel are to be resisted and frustrated. The party seeks the establishment of a democratic regime which will guarantee freedom of speech opinion and association, the establishment of trade union and political parties and the enactment of a progressive electoral law which will ensure that the people's voice is heard. The interests of the people are to be guaranteed by the Government, the economy of the country must be freed from foreign influence and developed and education, especially against imperialist culture, must be spread.

It is difficult to assess the strength of support for the party in the country. The Jordan Government have wide powers to deal with communism and are probably not reluctant to use them. On the other hand the party is reasonably united and although they are of poor quality, the leaders are active. The refugee camps moreover offer a fertile field for the party's teaching. In Nablus the party is well set for the elections with three candidates, Qadri Tuqan, Abdul Qader Saleh and Dr. Abdul Majid Abu Hijli. In Ramallah Yahya Hammoudeh is standing for them, and, other things being equal and with Ba'athi support, may well be returned.