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Yazar / Author:

Ü. Gülsüm POLAT

ORCID ID

0000-0001-7976-3892

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Yazar: Ü. Gülsüm POLAT*

**“A Hidden Hand” or “Arab Gangs”:
The Turkish Press’s View of the Beginning of the 1936-1939 Revolt in
Palestine**

Abstract: Protests, civil disobedience, cases of plunder and similar events that broke out in Palestine in April 1936 are regarded as a significant turning point for Palestinian history and Arab-Jewish relations. This study discusses how these Palestine-related events were covered and evaluated in the newspapers *Akşam*, *Cumhuriyet*, *Tan*, *Ulus*, *Son Posta*, and *Yeni Asır*. It aims to assess the place of Palestine-related events in the Turkish newspapers’ coverage of the incidents of that period, and to examine whether they questioned the recent history of the old imperial geography when interpreting the contemporary events there.

Keywords: Palestine, 1936-1939 Revolt, Turkish press, Jews, Turkey.

**“Gizli Bir El” Yahut “Arap Çeteleri”:
Filistin’deki 1936-1939 İsyanının Başlangıcında Türk
Basınının Bakış Açısı**

Özet: Filistin’de 1936 Nisan’ında patlak veren gösteriler, sivil itaatsizlik eylemleri, yağmalar ve benzer hadiseler Filistin tarihi ve Arap-Yahudi ilişkileri açısından önemli bir kırılma noktası olarak değerlendirilmektedir. Bu çalışmada *Akşam*, *Cumhuriyet*, *Tan*, *Ulus*, *Son Posta* ve *Yeni Asır* gazeteleri incelenerek Filistin hadiselerinin nasıl algılandığı ortaya konulacaktır. Filistin’deki olaylara o günlerin diğer hadiseleri arasında gazetelerce nasıl bir ağırlık verildiği, eski İmparatorluk coğrafyasındaki yakın tarihin bu bağlamda sorgulanıp sorgulanmadığı anlaşılmaya çalışılacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Filistin, 1936-1939 İsyanı, Türk basını, Yahudiler, Türkiye.

Introduction: Transition from Empire to the Mandate Government

The region that was called the Land of Palestine (*Arz-ı Filistin*) under the rule of the Ottoman Empire had administratively been divided into Jerusalem, Gaza, Nablus and Safed *sanjaks*. Muslim Arabs constituted the majority in the demographic structure of Palestine. In 1914, 83% of the population consisted of Muslim Arabs. The region's fate was to change rapidly with the First Zionist Congress convened in Basel in 1897 by Theodor Herzl, who vigorously defended the establishment of a homeland for the Jewish people in this ancient land. The negative attitude toward and persecution of the Jewish people in Europe, especially in Russia rendered this movement stronger and finally, the first significant immigration of the Jewish

* Assoc. Prof., Kütahya Dumlupınar University, Department of History, Faculty of Science and Art, gulsumpolat26@gmail.com.

people to Palestine, called the *aliyah*, took place between 1882-1903. The second *aliyah* under Ottoman rule occurred between 1905-1914.¹ World War I changed the history of Palestine dramatically. Secret treaties like the Sykes-Picot Agreement and secret negotiations like those between Sharif Hussein and the British Cairo High Commissioner McMahon (McMahon-Hussein Correspondence) sought to determine the fate of this region.² In all these undertakings, the initiative belonged to Britain. The Anglo-Egyptian Expeditionary Force under the command of British General Edmund Allenby occupied Sinai, Negev, and southern Palestine after a long and challenging military struggle and many casualties. Allenby captured Jaffa on November 16, 1918 and Jerusalem on December 9, 1917. The central part of Palestine was controlled by the military government founded by the British.³ Palestine was ruled by this military government from 1918 to 1920. When Palestine passed from the Ottoman to British rule, a total of 648.000 people inhabited it as of March 1919. Of these, 551,000 were Muslims, 65,300 Jews, 62,000 Christians, and 5,050 other groups (Druze, Armenians, Baha'is and others). The British, the new rulers of Palestine, proceeded to set up a ruling mechanism in the region following the war. However, they soon faced problems such as political division, decentralization, Jewish immigration and aggressive land purchases.⁴ These problems had also been present under the Ottoman Empire. For example, Abdülhamid II had attempted to take measures to prevent Jewish immigration, but the immigration waves had continued unabated. Arrangements in the land regime had also been made to prevent land sales to Jewish settlers, but these arrangements had been ignored in practice. As well, the lands in the possession of Jews had expanded at the expense of the

¹ Anita Shapira, *Land and Power. The Zionist Resort to Force, 1881-1948*, Translated by William Templar (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), 52; Saadia E. Weltmann, "Germany, Turkey, and the Zionist Movement, 1914-1918", *The Review of Politics* 23/2 (1961): 246-248. Edward Peter Fitzgerald, "France's Middle Eastern Ambitions, the Sykes-Picot Negotiations, and the Oil Fields of Mosul, 1915-1918", *The Journal of Modern History* 66, 4 (1994): 697-725. Articles of the treaty: J. C. Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East, A Documentary Record: 1914-1956*, II (Toronto, New York, London 1956), 18-22. About the ongoing effects of the Sykes-Picot Agreement after the WWI: F. W. Brecher, "French Policy toward the Levant 1914-18", *Middle Eastern Studies* 29/4 (1993): 641-663.

² Elie Kedourie, *England and the Middle East. The Destruction of the Ottoman Empire 1914-1921* (London: Mansell Publishing Limited, 1987), 38-39.

³ Look actions of Ottoman Army in that region: *Birinci Dünya Harbi'nde Türk Harbi. Sina-Filistin Cephesi*, IV/2 (Ankara: ATASE Pub.,1986), 315-433.

⁴ Gudrun Krämer, *A History of Palestine. From the Ottoman Conquest to the Founding of the State of Israel* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2008), 156-157.

Palestinians.⁵ This state of affairs would determine the fate of Palestine and give rise to the Arab-Jewish conflict continuing till today. Thus Palestine had gone through significant turning points before the revolt of 1936-39, the subject of this study. Looking into how the events that unfolded after the start of the revolt in April 1936 were reflected in the Turkish press will help grasp the attitude of Turkey to the Revolt in its beginning phase, which is a question left unattended by the literature.

For this purpose, first the general condition of the Turkish press in the 1930s will be examined and the perspective of the Turkish newspapers at the beginning of 1936-39 Arab Revolt will be discussed. Answers will be sought to the following questions: What were the factors in the Palestine-Turkey relations that affected this perspective? Was there any reference in the press to the turning points in the recent history of this former imperial province? Did it give open support to one of the two parties of the conflict, the Palestinian Arabs and the Jews? This paper will argue that the approach of the Turkish press to the events was in general objective and reflected the cautious approach of Turkey as far as its relations with the Arabs, Britain, and Italy were concerned.

Arab-Jewish conflicts in Palestine after World War I, Turkey's Position

Before proceeding to the Revolt of 1936-39, it will be useful to recall the preceding events that had exacerbated the relationships between the Jews and Arabs after the establishment of British rule. These were the 1920 Nabi Musa riot, the Riots of May 1921, and the 1929 Revolt of the Palestinians against the British policies and regulations. In these conflicts, both Arabs and Jewish people died. It seems that there were more Jewish than Arab casualties during the events of violence in the 1920s. Despite this, Jewish settlements increased dramatically in Palestine, and the resentment of the Arab population toward the immigrants, who moreover brought along a European way of life, increased correspondingly.⁶ The relations between the Arabs and Jews deteriorated considerably after the revolt of 1929. The profile of the Jewish immigrants coming to Palestine also changed over time. For example, the number of immigrants categorized as bringing along 5000 dollars increased

⁵ Martin Bunton, *Colonial Land Policies in Palestine 1917-1936* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 72.

⁶ Krämer, 210-211.

quickly. It was reported that the number of such immigrants increased to 3250 in 1933 and 6309 in 1935, while it was only 178 in 1930.⁷

The solution of the problems between the Jews and Arabs in Palestine was getting difficult day by day, and this led to the emergence of more radical solutions and figures. Izz al-Din al-Qassam, who was born and grew up in Ottoman Syria, organized 250 volunteers against the Italian occupation of Libya in 1912. This attempt did not prove successful. He settled in Haifa in 1921 after World War I. He took part in the Arab national movement in 1919-20, when Faisal I was struggling for Syrian independence. He joined an anti-French uprising in Jabal Sahyun, and was sentenced to death by a French military court. After the collapse of Faisal's Damascus regime, he fled from Syria and settled in Haifa with around fifty followers. He was appointed as the imam of al-Istiqlal mosque in this city. As his anti-Zionist thoughts influenced an increasing number of Arabs, he adopted a more radical line in the 1930s. He established a secret organization called "The Black Hand" (*al-kaff al-aswad*), with which he directed attacks against the Jewish settlers in northern Palestine. Undertaking a revolt against the British in the Jenin hills, al-Qassam and some of his men were killed on 20 November 1935. This was a significant turning point. The Arab leaders demanded from the British High Commissioner the following on 25 November 1935: a halt to Jewish immigration, the prohibition of land sales to Jews, and the establishment of self-rule for the Arabs of Palestine. Later on, Qassamite groups would be effective during the events in the April 1936.⁸

Before beginning to examine how Turkish press covered the beginning of the 1936-1939 Revolt in Palestine, it will be useful to remember the developments that shaped the relations between the Arab world and the Turkish Republic after World War I. Initially, the Turkish Republic, founded a few years after the war, was engaged for a long time with seeking solutions to the problems remaining from the Lausanne Treaty. Although the abolition of the Caliphate was interpreted as a breaking point with the Muslim world, this did not lead to any change in real politics. Turkey was a model whose rapid modernization and planned industrialization methods in the 1930s were followed with curiosity by Islamic countries. The word "model" here should not be misunderstood. Indeed, Amanullah Han in Afghanistan and

⁷ Walter Hollstein, *Filistin Sorunu. Filistin Çatışmasının Sosyal Tarihi* (İstanbul: Yücel Pub., 1975), 138.

⁸ Shai Lachman, "Arab Rebellion and Terrorism in Palestine 1929-39: The Case of Sheikh Izz Al-Qassam and His Movement", *Zionism and Arabism in Palestine and Israel*, Ed. Elie Kedourie and Sylvia G. Haim (London: Frank Cass 2005), 64-78.

Rıza Şah Pehlevi in Iran attempted to emulate the steps taken in Turkey. However, these steps were not considered as a model in the Arabian Peninsula under the Saudi rule, in Yemen, or in Egypt which stood under the strong influence of the al-Azhar ulema.⁹

On the other hand, after the proclamation of the Republic, Turkey generally followed a foreign policy toward the old imperial geography that could be characterized as follows: The anti-occupation struggles in the Syria-Iraq border were supported in accordance with the strategic concerns of Turkey. Furthermore, according to the British authorities there was contact between the Palestinians and Mustafa Kemal Pasha.¹⁰ The Turkish Consulate General of Jerusalem was opened in 1925, only two years after the Treaty of Lausanne. Hasan Basri (Lostar, 1890-1946) served as the first Consular.¹¹ Ahmed Umar (the term of office: 7.12.1934 - 24.7.1938) was serving as the consular in Jerusalem in 1936 when the revolt broke out. There was a certain development in the relations between Turkey and the British Mandate of Palestine in the 1930s, which drew attention. A development requiring Turkey to focus its attention on Palestine occurred when the Mufti of Jerusalem, Hajj Amin al-Husseini, sent invitations to the presidencies of Arab and Muslim countries for the Islamic Congress to be held in Jerusalem.¹² Turkey did not want a debate on the Caliphate to be brought up in this conference. When the issue was raised at the parliament, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Tevfik Rüştü Aras and deputies expressed their aloof stance as regards the whole idea of the congress, for it was heard that there would be attempts to re-elect Abdulmejid, the last Ottoman Caliph, as the new Caliph¹³. It appears from the Turkish diplomatic documents that the Arab-Jewish clashes throughout the 1930s in Palestine did not lead to any political

⁹ Yann Richard, "Kemalizm ve İran", *Kemalizm ve İslam Dünyası*, Ed. İskender Gökalp-François Georjeon, Translated by Cüneyt Akalın (İstanbul: Kaynak Pub. 2007), 79-96. Also see in same book: Maged Mansy-Paris, "Biçim ve Reform: Mısır ve Kemalist Türkiye", 105-137.

¹⁰ Ü. Gülsüm Polat, *Türk-Arap İlişkileri. Eski Eyaletler Yeni Komşulara Dönüşürken* (İstanbul, Kronik Book, 2019), 288.

¹¹ <http://kudus.bk.mfa.gov.tr/Mission/About>, [access:19.04.2020]

¹² After the abolition of the Caliphate in 1924, the Pan-Islamists considered Cairo or Mecca as the new seat of the caliphate. Jerusalem was not one of the seats considered. Nicholas E. Roberts, "Making Jerusalem the Center of the Muslim World: Pan-Islam and the World Islamic congress of 1931", *Contemporary Levant* 4, (2019), 3. For the approach of the Arabic and Hebrew press to the abolition of Ottoman caliphate see Selim Tezcan, "Caliphate in the Arabic and Hebrew Press of Palestine, 1922-1924", *Middle Eastern Studies* (2020), 1-16.

¹³ Philip Mattar, *The Mufti of Jerusalem. Al Hajj Amin Al-Huseyni and the Palestinian National Movement* (New York: Colombia University Press, 1988), 60. Özlem Tür, "Türkiye ve Filistin-1908-1948: Milliyetçilik, Ulusal Çıkar ve Batılılaşma", *Ankara Üniversitesi SBF Dergisi* 62/1, 239-240.

debates. However, these clashes were covered in the press. For example, the events that occurred during 1929 riots were reported by hearsay information. In addition, the Islamic Conference convened in 1931 and the revolt and strike in 1933 were reported in newspapers, as was the Arab Revolt of 1936-1939. Style of reporting was similar in all these cases.¹⁴

The Turkish Press and its View of the 1936-1939 Revolt in Palestine

The freedom of the press is an important democracy parameter in all countries. The way how each government directly or indirectly controls the news coverage of the press is called the "press regime."¹⁵ The Turkish press during the 1930s generally accepted the Turkish revolution of 1923 and the following reforms. After the assassination attempt on Atatürk's life in İzmir in 1926, most of the relatively oppositional voices in the press were silenced for a while. The publication of *Tevhid-i Efkar*, *İstiklal*, *Sayha*, *Aydınlık* and *Orak Çekiç* was stopped on the grounds of the Law of *Takrir-i Sükun*¹⁶. Nevertheless, Arif Oruç began to publish *Yarın* in İstanbul in 1929. This newspaper opposed the ruling People's Party and supported Serbest Fırka party founded in 1930. In addition to *Yarın*, *Son Posta*, *Hizmet*, *Halkın Sesi* and *Yeni Asır* were also in opposition. The increasing criticisms of these newspapers caused heated debates in the parliament in 1931, and they were perceived as attempts to overturn the regime. İsmet Pasha stressed that the government endorsed the freedom of press but some newspapers misused this freedom. He pointed out that the government had the right to close down a newspaper, even though it was reluctant to do this frequently.¹⁷ The solution brought up by the government for this problem was a law draft that would preserve the freedom of the press but prevent its "misuse." The Press Law dated 1931 was prepared on this occasion. The Directorate General of Press and Information, abolished in 1931, was re-established in May 1933 and affiliated to the Ministry of Interior. It would be under the control of Şükrü Kaya, the Minister of Interior, until the death of Atatürk¹⁸. In short, it can be said that the press had a

¹⁴ For an analysis of the coverage of the 1929 revolt, the Islamic Congress of 1931, the events of 1933, and the 1936-1939 revolt by Turkish newspapers see Celil Bozkurt, "Filistin Sorunu ve ilk Arap-Yahudi Çatışmalarının Türk Basınındaki Yankıları (1929-1936)", *IASSS* 5/8, 265-295.

¹⁵ Nilgün Gürkan, *Türkiye'de Demokrasiye Geçişte Basın (1945-1950)* (İstanbul: İletişim Pub., 1998), 15-16.

¹⁶ *Cumhurbaşkanlığı Cumhuriyet Arşivi*, [Archives of Presidency of Turkish Republic, Republic Archive, Hereafter: BCA], 30.18.1.1/13.12.12.

¹⁷ *TBMM.ZC* (Minutes of the Turkish Grand National Assembly), 4. Dönem, 3. Cilt, 35. Birleşim, 25 Temmuz 1931: 374

¹⁸ Hıfzı Topuz, *100 Soruda Türk Basın Tarihi* (İstanbul: Gerçek Pub., 1973), 147-153.

controlled freedom in Turkey after 1931, and thus also by 1936 when the revolt in Palestine broke out.

At this point, it might be asked whether there was a stereotyped Arab image in the mind of Turks, which came to be reflected in the newspapers' coverage of the Revolt. In this context Dakuki has argued, albeit on the basis of a rather inadequate body of source material, that the Turkish intellectuals and politicians opposed all events they saw likely to arouse Islamist tendencies in Turkey.¹⁹

The Revolt broke out in Jaffa and Tel Aviv on April 19, 1936. According to rumors, some Jews had killed two or three Arabs in Tel Aviv. This news was unfounded, but it spread quickly. Fourteen Jews and two Arabs died in the conflicts on April 20. A general strike started in Arabic towns and villages in Palestine at the end of April.²⁰ It is observed that the official reports of the Consulate General of Jerusalem, the representative of Turkish Government in that region, were limited during the revolt. No details about the outbreak of the revolt were included in the report sent by the Consulate General of Jerusalem on May, 15, 1936. It was simply indicated that a general strike was ongoing. Also reported were the developments related to the murder of an Arab worker at a quarry around Jerusalem on May 13 and the retaliatory murder of two Jews by gun and knife in the middle of a street on the following day. Among this correspondence there was also a letter written by the Foreign Ministry, indicating that a telegram had been sent by Arab kings to the Arab Committee about the events in Palestine, and that the Government of Great Britain would take a fair decision.²¹ The revolt continued with protests, strikes and acts of sabotage by the Arabs. Regarding the demands of the Arab Higher Committee (AHC), including three articles (namely the prohibition of Jewish immigration, imposition of a ban on the sale of real estate to the Jews, and the establishment of a national Arab government), the Turkish Consulate of Jerusalem reported that if these demands were not accepted, the protests would go on.²² It is understood from the report that Arab demonstrators gathered and cheered around the Turkish embassy in Jerusalem on the following days. Furthermore, the young Arabs asked for help from Turkey. It is indicated in the report that no response was made to this cheering of the crowd, and stated clearly that the reason for this was the concern to avert any

¹⁹ İbrahim al Dakuki, "Arab and Turkish Images of Each Other", *Imagining the Arab other: How Arabs and Non-Arabs view Each Other*, Ed. Tahar Labib (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2008), 287.

²⁰ Matthew Kraig Kelly, "The Revolt of 1936: A Revision", *Journal of Palestine Studies* 44/2 (2015), 29-30.

²¹ BCA, 30.10.0/266.793.17, November 24, 1936.

²² BCA, 30.10.0/266.793.13, May 15, 1936.

possible reactions from the British High Commissioner.²³ It can be argued that the official Turkish representation was acting prudently in its avoidance of giving open support to the Revolt.²⁴

The newspapers examined in this study are as follows: *Ulus* (based in Ankara), *Yeni Asır* (based in İzmir), and *Akşam*, *Cumhuriyet*, *Tan*, and *Son Posta* (all four based in İstanbul). Considering the histories, ownership and the editorial staff of these newspapers, it emerges that nearly all of them had witnessed the foundation of the Republic and some also supported the government. *Ulus*, formerly *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, had been established as the voice of Anatolian movement in the most critical period of the War of National Liberation. It changed its name to *Ulus* on November, 28, 1934.²⁵ Another newspaper covering the 1936-1939 revolt was *Akşam*. Its owner and editor was Necmeddin Sadak. The newspaper, published firstly on September 20, 1918, continued to be published after the proclamation of the Republic.²⁶ The newspaper *Cumhuriyet*, starting publication on May 8, 1924, was founded by Yunus Nadi. The newspaper undertook the task of the explanation of Atatürk's reforms to the public in the latter's lifetime. This caused it to be considered as a semi-official publication of the regime.²⁷ *Tan*, another newspaper examined in this study, was founded by İş Bankası in 1935. Significant journalists such as Burhan Felek were working for this newspaper, which was initially managed by Ali Naci Karacan. The newspaper was purchased in August 1936 by Ahmet Emin Yalman, who recruited Zekeriya Sertel and Halil Lütfi Dördüncü to his staff.²⁸ The newspaper *Yeni Asır* was one of the significant organs of the İzmir press. Founded in 1895 in Thessaloniki with the name *Asır*, it was renamed *Yeni Asır* in 1908. It was closed down when Thessaloniki was invaded by Greece in 1912. The newspaper remained closed during World War I but reopened in Thessaloniki afterwards. Its last issue there was published on September 24, 1924. After Ali Şevket (Bilgin), the owner of *Yeni Asır*, and his family came to İzmir, it began to be published in this city as of September 7, 1924.²⁹ Finally, the newspaper

²³ BCA, 490.0.0/607.102.13, September 12, 1936.

²⁴ BCA, same document.

²⁵ Fuat Süreyya Oral, *Türk Basın Tarihi Birinci Kitap-Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Dönemi* (Ankara: Yeni Adım Pub., 1967), 75.

²⁶ Mustafa Özyürek, "Sosyolog ve Gazeteci Yönüyle Necmeddin Sadık Sadak", *Atatürk Dergisi* 4/2, (2015), 88-89.

²⁷ Topuz, 155.

²⁸ Topuz, 155-156. Tekin Erer, *Basında Kavgalar* (İstanbul: Rek.Tur Kitap, 1965), 15-19.

²⁹ Ali Dur, *Yeni Asır Gazetesi ve Ege Bölge Gazeteciliği* (Marmara University, Social Sciences Institute, Faculty of Communication, Unpublished Master thesis, İstanbul 2007), 30-36.

Son Posta, founded in 1930, was published by Zekeriya Sertel, Selim Ragıp Emeç, Ekrem Uřaklıgil and Halil Lütü Dördüncü. These four individuals, who did not fully share the same ideological position, authorized Zekeriya Sertel to manage the policy of the newspaper.³⁰

Of these newspapers, *Yeni Asır*, *Son Posta* and *Tan* took a discreetly critical stance against the Ankara government. On the other hand, *Ulus*, *Cumhuriyet* and *Akşam* were regarded as newspapers close to the Ankara government. The ways in which these newspapers reflected the beginning phase of the revolt in Palestine, which both resembled and differed from each other to some extent, will help understand both their general view of this portion of the former imperial lands and the Turkish foreign policy of the period.

The world was quite preoccupied in April - May 1936, when the uprising in Palestine broke out. It was getting gradually prepared for a war. So, the coverage of the Turkish press mostly included subjects like the following: The developments in Europe, which was approaching war day by day, the Italian invasion of Abyssinia, the Turkish Foreign Minister's attempts to contact Balkan countries, and the Balkan Entente initiatives. A chief topic was the re-examination of the Straits regime. All these subjects had a broad coverage in the Turkish press. So, the Arab revolt in Palestine had a relatively modest part in their coverage. In almost none of these leading newspapers were Palestine-related events discussed in an editorial column. Moreover, no friendly or critical approach was displayed toward the Arabs in the commentaries on news. Nor was there a friendly discourse toward the Jews. It is clear however that Zionism was considered in a negative light. On the other hand, the Turkish press seemed to hold a dim view of the acts of plunder and arson against the Jewish settlements.

It is not clear from which sources the news about the revolt were reported in Turkish newspapers as well as in Anadolu Agency and Havas Agency. One source might be the Arabic press of Palestine. There were seven influential newspapers in Palestine in the mid -1930s: *Filastin*, *al-Liwa*, *al-Difa*, *al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya*, *al-Karmil*, *al-Jadid*, and *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim*. Of these newspapers, *Filastin* was the most influential.³¹

³⁰ Topuz, 146.

³¹ Mustafa Kabha, "The Palestinian Press and the General Strike, April-October 1936: "Filastin" as a Case Study", *Middle Eastern Studies* 39/3 (2003), 170-171; Examining the Arab press of Palestine, it is observed that British military rule did not feel the need to exercise a substantial amount of control on the press in most of the 1920s. Following the incidents in August 1929, however, attention was drawn to the local press and a partial censorship was implemented; Giora Goodman, "British Press Control in Palestine during the Arab Revolt, 1936-39", *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 43/4 (2015), 701. More interesting was the fact that some articles

News Coverage of the Events in the Arab Revolt

The first aspect of the Turkish newspapers' coverage of the Revolt is that they provided information about daily developments, reporting the number of casualties on both sides. It was stated in the first report of *Ulus* about the Revolt that bloody clashes took place between Arabs and Jews in Jaffa and Tel Aviv, resulting in 9 deaths and 40 injured.³² *Cumhuriyet* reported these first clashes with the words "It was like a battle" with a picture from Jaffa bazaar place devastated during the uprising.³³ Numbers were different. *Son Posta* reported that nine Jews had died and eleven Jews had been injured in the clashes, while two Arabs had been killed and fifteen Arabs had been injured by the police guns.³⁴ Regarding the outbreak of the clashes, *Cumhuriyet* reported that the events had started after a Jew named Israel Hassan was killed. Then two Arabs had died during the intervention of municipal police in the street demonstrations held after Hassan's death. This was considered as a hostile act by the Arabs, and led to the further unfolding of the events.³⁵ In the context of the same incident, it was reported in *Tan* that 19 people had died and 130 people had been injured. However, Burhan Felek, the chief columnist of the newspaper, did not write anything on the revolt, neither on the first day nor later.³⁶ All newspapers reported the proclamation of martial law.

It was reported in *Akşam* that Arabs had begun to leave Tel Aviv, and that the roads in Palestine were blocked due to attacks of arson and sabotage.³⁷ There were also reports in *Cumhuriyet*, *Tan* and other newspapers to the effect that the difficulties suffered by the Jews were reported within black frames in

written by authors funded by the Zionists in Arab were published in Arab newspapers, praising Arab-Jew brotherhood. Purchased newspapers, editors and writers were trying to shape the Arabs' attitude toward Jewish immigration and settlement; Hillel Cohen, *Army of Shadows. Palestinian Collaboration with Zionism, 1917-1948*, Translated by Haim Watzman (London, Los Angeles, Berkeley: University of California Press: 2008), 28-31.

³² "The situation is very serious in Palestine [Filistin'de Vaziyet çok vahim]", *Ulus*, April 21, 1936.

³³ "Arabs and Jews clash in Palestine [Filistin'de Araplarla Yahudiler çarpışıyor]", *Cumhuriyet*, April 21, 1936.

³⁴ "Bloody clashes took place between Arabs and Jews" [Araplarla Yahudiler arasında kanlı çarpışmalar oldu]", *Son Posta*, April 21, 1936.

³⁵ "Blood bath in Palestinian cities [Filistin şehirlerinde kan gövdeyi götürüyor]", *Cumhuriyet*, April 22, 1936.

³⁶ "The situation is serious in Palestine. Details of Events. A News from the Jewish Agency [Filistin'de Vaziyet Vahim. Hadiselerin Tafsilatı. Yahudi Ajansının Bir Tebliği]", *Tan*, April 22, 1936.

³⁷ "The situation is very tense in Palestine [Filistin'de Vaziyet çok gergin]", *Akşam*, April 24, 1936.

the Jewish press.³⁸ There were also reports relating that the communications between Tel Aviv and Haifa were cut off shortly after the start of the riots, and that the Arabs were setting fire to private cars and trucks loaded with provisions and placing nails on roads to block transport. Moreover, it was indicated that the Jews were invited to take shelter in Jerusalem from the regions where bloody clashes had taken place in 1929.³⁹

News about the “Italian Intrigues” in Palestine

As the Jews began to take refuge in Jerusalem and the attacks of Arabs were ongoing, a striking claim was reported in nearly all Turkish newspapers. According to this claim, Italy was provoking the uprising in Palestine. The first column on this issue was written by Muharrem Feyzi Togay in *Cumhuriyet*.⁴⁰ According to the author, Italy was provoking clashes in Palestine because Britain opposed its invasion of Abyssinia. The strategic importance of Palestine for Britain was pointed out.⁴¹ This claim continued to be raised in the newspapers in following days. According to news reported from Brussels, some foreign agitators provoking Arabs and Jews were caught in Palestine and discovered to be Italian agents. Measures were taken to prevent the Italians from causing further disturbances in Palestine.⁴² According to another news reported from the London-based *Daily Herald* newspaper, most of the agents behind the events that had resulted in the death of nineteen Jews were Italians. It was reported that the Nazis were also trying to incite the Palestinian Arabs to rebel, with the Italians taking advantage of this.⁴³ According to another news reported by *Yeni Asır* from London, Locker Lampson, a Conservative MP, had declared during

³⁸ “Palestinian people are in dismay. Haifa Arabs set fire to approximately a thousand Jewish homes [Filistin halkı dehşet içinde. Hayfa Arapları bin kadar Yahudi evine ateş verdiler]”, *Tan*, April 23, 1936. “Blood bath in Palestinian cities, [Filistin şehirlerinde kan gövdeyi götürüyor]”, *Cumhuriyet* April 22, 1936; “Jaffa was set on fire, Jews fled from Tel Aviv [Yafa’ya ateş verildi, Yahudiler Telaviv’e kaçtılar]”, *Son Posta*, April 23, 1936.

³⁹ “Crops also began to be set on fire in Palestine [Filistin’de ekinlere de ateş verilmeye başlandı]” *Son Posta*, April 25, 1936.

⁴⁰ Muharrem Feyzi Togay, “Alliance between Italy and the Arab countries [İtalya ve Arap memleketleri arasında birlik]”, *Cumhuriyet*, April 20, 1936.

⁴¹ “Palestinian Jews take refuge in Jerusalem. They are beaten by sticks made by white nations [Filistin Yahudileri Kudüs’e iltica ediyorlar. Beyaz milletlerin hazırladığı sopa ile kendilerine dayak atılıyor]”, *Cumhuriyet*, April 25, 1936. This claim would then be repeated. This news was referenced to Daily Telegraph. “Italian finger in the Palestinian events [Filistin hadiselerinde İtalyan parmağı]”, *Cumhuriyet*, April 29, 1936.

⁴² “Is Italy making investigations in Palestine? [İtalya Filistin’de Tahrakat mı Yapıyor?]”, *Cumhuriyet*, May 14, 1936.

⁴³ “Secret intrigues in Palestine [Filistin’de dönen gizli dolaplar]”, *Cumhuriyet*, May 17, 1936.

proceedings in the House of Commons that Italian radios were broadcasting anti-British propaganda to Indian and Palestinian people in their native languages.⁴⁴ *Ulus* indicated in a report based on sources from London that the Italians were provoking Arabs against Jews, but that British newspapers did not publish this fact to avoid provoking the British public.⁴⁵ In the following days, *Ulus* reported from the newspaper named *Giornale d'Italia* based in Rome that the Jewish and Italian newspapers were engaged in a heated debate on the role of the Italians in the conflict.⁴⁶ It is likely that these claims were followed by the Turkish press with a certain sensitivity, because Turkey was also uncomfortable about the expansionist attempts of Italy. Indeed, most newspapers reported this news about "the Italian hand" in the Palestinian Arab revolt. Some other newspapers like *Yeni Asır* did not directly mention the Italians, but debated in general terms whether the events might have been organized by a "hidden hand" from outside the region.⁴⁷

News about the Events and the British Reaction

News about the events in Palestine were published in the newspapers almost every day in late April and early May. Among these was also the three-article list of demands brought up by the AHC, which was an important development in the events in Palestine and which would be a determinant in the following phases of the Revolt.⁴⁸ The newspapers also reported that the Tel Aviv fair, opened by the British High Commissioner at the end of April despite conflicts, was attacked.⁴⁹ According to the report of the Havas Agency,

⁴⁴ "Broadcast of the Italian radios [İtalyan Radyolarının Neşriyatı]", *Yeni Asır*, May 27, 1936.

⁴⁵ "The role of Italy in the Palestinian disturbances [Filistin Karışıklıklarında İtalya'nın Rolü]", *Ulus*, May 14, 1936. "Italian finger in the Palestinian disturbances [Filistin iğtişasında İtalyan parmağı]", *Akşam*, May 17, 1936.

⁴⁶ "Jewish and Italian newspapers are also in conflict [Yahudi ve İtalyan gazeteleri de çekişiyorlar]", *Ulus*, May 20, 1936.

⁴⁷ "A hidden hand: The rebellion was incited by distributing money to Jerusalem Arabs [Gizli bir el. Kudüs Araplarına para dağıtılarak isyan çıkarmış]", *Yeni Asır*, April 26, 1936.

⁴⁸ "Arabs demand a national Jewish government in Palestine [Araplar Filistin'de milli bir Yahudi hükümet istiyorlar]", *Cumhuriyet*, April 27, 1936. "A big fire started in Jerusalem [Kudüs'te büyük bir yangın çıktı]", *Akşam*, April 27, 1936; "A severe fire broke out in the city of Jerusalem [Kudüs şehrinde şiddetli bir yangın çıktı]", *Tan*, April 27, 1936, "The situation in Palestine [Filistin'de Vaziyet]", *Ulus*, April 27, 1936; Fires began to appear in Jerusalem [Kudüs'te Yangınlar baş göstermeğe başladı]", *Son Posta*, April 27, 1936.

⁴⁹ "Disturbance is expanding in Palestine [Filistin'de kargaşalık genişliyor]", *Ulus*, May 1, 1936; "They were also setting fire to the Tel-Aviv fair [Tel-Aviv panayırını da yakıyorlardı]", *Cumhuriyet*, May 24, 1936, "New riots in Palestine. They wanted to set fire to the Tel Aviv Fair [Filistin'de yeni hadiseler. Tel Aviv Panayırını yakmak istediler]", *Ulus*, May 24, 1936.

Jaffa had taken on “the appearance of a dead city.”⁵⁰ It was reported that four bombs were exploded in Haifa and the automobile of a Jew from Hungary was attacked by Arabs, ending in the death of the people in the automobile.⁵¹ Many reports were published on the Arabs' acts of civil disobedience and attacks on the properties of Jews. It also strikes the attention that these events were sometimes compared to those in India, with the comment that the Arabs “imitated Gandhi.”⁵² This is interesting in view of the fact that Gandhi was a proponent of peaceful resistance and strongly opposed armed revolts.

The newspapers also reported the declaration of martial law in a part of Jerusalem on May 15. It was related that while entries and exits to these neighborhoods were restricted, some Jews left the city under the control of the police. The newspapers also mentioned the speech of James Henry Thomas, Colonial Secretary, at the House of Commons in which he had declared that the number of soldiers in Palestine would be increased.⁵³ Another news reported in the newspapers was that the Jews were about to change their attitude toward the uprising in the middle of May. In their reports of the funeral ceremony held after the killing of three Jews in Jaffa on 19 May, the newspapers drew attention to the clues about the possible turn of events to come in the following days. One of these clues was the speech of a Jew who had taken the floor at the funeral ceremony. “These are the last victims we lost against the Arabs and the government,” he had said. “We will not let them kill us any longer.” It was stated in the newspapers that the Jews accused the British High Commissioner of not preventing the killing of the Jews. They also indicated that no measure was taken to prevent Jewish immigration, and the immigration of more than 4000 Jews was approved by the British High Commissioner.⁵⁴ The newspaper *Akřam* included a picture of the Jewish group arriving in the port in its report on the subject.⁵⁵ *Ulus* reported that the Arab porters in Tel Aviv attempted to organize strikes and protests to prevent the

⁵⁰ “Arab-Jewish fights ended [Arap-Yahudi kavgaları bitti]”, *Son Posta*, April 26,1936.

⁵¹ “19 Jews died [19 Yahudi öldü]”, *Yeni Asır*, May 2, 1936.

⁵² “It is likely that they took Gandhi as the example! [Gandi'den örnek aldılar galiba!]” *Cumhuriyet*, May 16, 1936.

⁵³ “Jerusalem Jews leave the city [Kudüs Yahudileri řehri terk ediyor]”, *Cumhuriyet*, May 15, 1936.

⁵⁴ “The situation is terrible in Palestine [Filistin'de vaziyet korkunç]”, *Ulus*, May 19, 1936. “The situation is very serious in Palestine [Filistin'de Durum çok vahimdir]”, *Yeni Asır*, May 19,1936; “The situation is getting worse in Palestine. Giving immigration certificates to 4500 Jews led to chaos again [Filistin'de vaziyet kötüleşiyor. 4500 Yahudi'ye göç vesikası verilmesi yeniden kargařalıklar çıkmasına yol açtı]”, *Ulus*, May 21, 1936.

⁵⁵ “Arabs reject starting negotiations [Araplar müzakereye girişmeyi kabul etmiyorlar]”, *Akřam*, May 19, 1936.

approach of steamers to the port.⁵⁶ *Yeni Asır* noted that imposing severe sanctions on those carrying guns was also considered as a measure.⁵⁷ After giving details indicating that the events were still ongoing on 23 May, *Cumhuriyet* referred to the statement of Herbert Samuel, the first Palestinian High Commissioner. According to Samuel, Britain had assumed a responsibility for the Jewish people in Palestine with the Balfour Declaration. Upon this guarantee of Britain, three hundred thousand Jews had immigrated to Palestine and brought along ten million pounds, so Britain could not go back on its promises.⁵⁸ There was also a report in *Yeni Asır* to the effect that a committee was set up to ask help from Ibn Saud for calming down the strikes in Palestine; it would soon set out for negotiations.⁵⁹ About the same event, *Ulus* wrote that a committee would be sent to King Abdullah.⁶⁰ A day later, it was reported that the Arab mayors of cities such as Jerusalem and Nablus were dismissed and Jewish mayors were appointed instead. It was also indicated that Arabs threw stones at police around Nasirah, and the municipal police was compelled to resort to their guns. It was also reported that Hasan Sidqi Al Dajani, an important political figure and the president of the general committee of the strike, who would die by assassination in 1938,⁶¹ was banished from Jerusalem for a year, and that some other Arab leaders like Salih Abid were imprisoned.⁶² *Yeni Asır* reported on 28 May that the conflict between the Arabs and British soldiers had turned into a real war, with the British transferring reinforcements from Egypt and Jewish neighborhoods coming under attack.⁶³ It was also reported that the British families in Palestine were moved to British barracks due to security concerns. In addition, the Arabs were committing various acts like setting up barricades on streets against police squad and cutting off the telephone and telegram wires. It was also stated that the publication of the Jewish newspaper *Doar Hayom* was halted for five days. The Turkish press pointed out that this was a

⁵⁶ "Arab dock workers [Arab dok işçileri]", *Ulus*, May 22, 1936.

⁵⁷ "New riots in Jerusalem [Kudüs'te yeni hadiseler]", *Yeni Asır*, May 21, 1936.

⁵⁸ "Guarantee given by Britain to the Jews [İngiltere'nin Yahudilere verdiği teminat]", *Cumhuriyet*, May 23, 1936.

⁵⁹ "Palestine is in a revolutionary fire [Filistin İhtilal Ateşi İçinde]", *Yeni Asır*, May 23, 1936.

⁶⁰ "Arabs sent a committee to Emir Abdullah to demand his intervention [Arablar müdahalesini istemek üzere Emir Abdullah'a bir heyet gönderdiler]", *Ulus*, May 23, 1936.

⁶¹ *Exiled from Jerusalem, The Diaries of Hussein Fakhri al-Khalidi*, Ed. Rafiq Husseini, (London, New York: I.B Tauris, 2020), 2, 331.

⁶² "Palestine has rebelled [Filistin Ayaklanmıştır]", *Yeni Asır*, May 26, 1936.

⁶³ "Conflicts in Palestine [Filistin'deki Karışıklıklar]", *Yeni Asır*, May 28, 1936.

measure rarely taken against Jewish, as opposed to Arabic newspapers.⁶⁴ It was also reported that violent clashes had started between Arab gangs and British forces on May 29. A British unit taking shelter with a machine gun was depicted in a photograph in *Cumhuriyet*.⁶⁵ Just a day later, the newspapers claimed that the Revolt was gradually growing stagnant. On the very next day, however, reports appeared to the effect that there were new clashes in Palestinian cities. It was indicated that Britain's Mediterranean fleet commander had flown to Jerusalem, and that the Arab Committee had rejected the settlement proposal of the Jews.⁶⁶

The Statements by Important Palestinian Actors in the Turkish Press

The Turkish newspapers also reported the statements of some of the Arab actors in the region.⁶⁷ One of these was Hussein Khalidi, the mayor of Jerusalem at that time. According to *Son Posta*, he had made the following statement: "There is no possibility for a settlement between Jews and us. Accordingly, we demand the British Government to keep their promises to the non-Jewish population made in the Balfour Declaration. Our wish is that Britain explain clearly the equal position between the Arabs and Jews. In fact, we are not opposed to the notion of a national home for the Jews. Our wish is solely not to be threatened in our own country."⁶⁸ This interview was also published in *Yeni Asır*. There were also the following statements by the mayor: "The British Government must find a solution to the issue of Palestine, otherwise the strike will continue. Palestine is an Arabic country and it must remain so. We will close the door of our country to the Jewish industry. There is no Arab industry, but there is a Jewish industry and when the Jews see this industry endangered, they will be concerned."⁶⁹ This statement was also reported in *Tan*.⁷⁰

Another figure whose statements were included in Turkish newspapers was Hasan Sidqi Dajani. Stressing that the problems of the Jewish people

⁶⁴ "The conflict in Palestine turns into a revolution [Filistin'deki kargařalık ihtilal řeklini alıyor]", *Cumhuriyet*, May 27, 1936.

⁶⁵ "The Palestine revolution [Filistin İhtilali]", *Cumhuriyet*, May 28, 1936.

⁶⁶ "There were clashes again in Palestinian cities" [Filistin řehirlerinde yine çarpıřmalar oldu], *Cumhuriyet*, May 30, 1936.

⁶⁷ "Arab gangs fire farms in Palestine [Arap çeteleri Filistin'de çiftlikleri yakıyormuř]", *Son Posta*, April 28, 1936.

⁶⁸ "Arabs say, we cannot settle with Jews [Araplar, Yahudilerle anlařamayız, diyorlar]", *Son Posta*, April 29, 1936.

⁶⁹ "Excitement in Jerusalem [Kudüs'te Heyecan]", *Yeni Asır*, April 30, 1936.

⁷⁰ "The struggle in Palestine will continue until the end [Filistin'de mücadele sonuna kadar devam edecek]", *Tan*, April 29, 1936.

could not be solved by letting them immigrate to Palestine, Hasan Sidqi Al Dajani said the following:

The Jews forget that Palestine is not their ancient homeland, awaiting their settlement with wide-open doors. This is an Arab country where eight hundred thousand Arabs versus forty thousand Jews were living before World War I. They are now four hundred thousand people, and by letting sixty thousand of their brothers immigrate every year, they hope they will achieve the majority in a few years. But this will not take place.

In the subsequent part of the interview, Hasan Sidqi drew attention to a threat that was considered very grave at the time: Communism. He stated that "Since most immigrant Jews are communist, there are now ten thousand [Communist] Jews in Palestine, where Communism was not known before. It should be feared that this will make this crisis worse."⁷¹ The perception of a Communist threat in Palestine seems to have brought about actual counter-measures, including the detention of 76 Communists to prevent a possible conflict in the opening of the Tel Aviv Fair.⁷² The statement of Hasan Sidqi was reported widely in the Turkish press. On 10 May, *Son Posta* reported the following expressions of Hasan Sidqi: "The Arab nation is not considering to give up the strike." Developments concerning Hasan Sidqi continued to be covered. It was reported for example that he would appear in the court due to his declaration of civil disobedience and official strike.⁷³

Another figure whose statements were reported was Awni abd al-Hadi, one of the famous lawyers of Palestine and the founder and first president of the Palestinian Istiqlal (Independence) Party. In this interview, the days of separation from the Ottoman Empire were discussed. He related what took place in the World War I as follows:

The Allied Powers were in a bad situation. McMahon, the Cairo High Commissioner at that time, wrote a letter to Sharif Hussein in which he demanded us to revolt against the Ottoman Empire. In return for this, he promised that we would become independent. We were deceived by these words and signed that agreement by our blood. Even those who were in Damascus started to get into action despite Cemal Paşa. As we aimed to prove our fidelity to France, we lost thousands of our citizens in exile. None of the promises given us were kept after the war ended; first Allenby and then

⁷¹ "There will be no Jewish majority in Palestine [Filistin'de Bir Yahudi Ekseriyeti Olmayacaktır]", *Yeni Asır*, May 5, 1936.

⁷² "Conflict is expanding in Palestine [Filistin'de kargaşalık genişliyor]", *Ulus*, May 1, 1936.

⁷³ "Unarmed revolt in Palestine [Filistin'de silahsız isyan]", *Son Posta*, May 10, 1936.

[Herbert] Samuel began to rule us and then the Zionists. The victorious states are planning to found a Jewish country in Palestine. They have failed to carry out what was required in return for the abundant bloodshed of the Arabs.⁷⁴

Abd al-Hadi added that the Arabs were aware of the plans of these states and would not let Jews found a country.⁷⁵

Another significant figure whose statements were reported in the Turkish press was Hajj Amin Al-Husseini, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem and the head of the Supreme Muslim Council. The interview was made by the French newspaper *Le Journal* and reported in *Cumhuriyet*. The anonymous journalist making the interview indicated that this was an unfamiliar interview type, since he had received the answers in written form. While he was waiting for his application to be accepted by the Mufti, one of his friends had whispered that "Mufti was more British than the British people," a statement that he had not been able to understand completely.⁷⁶ *Cumhuriyet* quoted all the questions and answers in full. To the question whether the events taking place had been planned in advance, the Mufti responded that this was certainly not so, but what was in course was a revolt against the daily increase in the population of Zionists, and also against the fact that the Mandate administration allowed this increase. The Mufti stated that their goal was not only the independence of Palestinian Arabs but also the independence of all Arab countries. Another question asked by the journalist was whether the events in Palestine had any connection with the ones in Egypt and Syria. The Mufti responded that there was indeed a similarity insofar as all were directed to the aim of establishing the Arab unity. When the journalist asked whether the British House of Representatives was in a position to determine a basis for negotiations, he responded that this was impossible, since the existing order established in accordance with the Zionist aspirations would not allow this. So, the Arabs intended to persist with their national struggle until their requests would be accepted, and they would not bargain. Addressing in the rest of his statement the entire world and especially the French people, who were the audience of *Le Journal*, the Mufti said that Palestine was oppressed because of the British love for Zionism, and that Zionism was a problem not only for the Palestinian Arabs but also for all Christians. He called on the Christian world to support the Arab nation in its struggle against the "disaster" of Zionism in Palestine.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ "Why do Arabs and Jews quarrel [Araplarla Yahudiler niin bođuşuyorlar]", *Son Posta*, May 4, 1936.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ "Martial law in Palestine [Filistin'de rfi idare]", *Cumhuriyet*, May 21, 1936.

⁷⁷ "Statement of the Mufti of Jerusalem [Kuds mftsnn beyanatı]", *Cumhuriyet*, May 21, 1936.

He also commented on the current revolt in the news as follows: "We will continue our strike till Jewish immigration ends. The Muslims and Christians must come together in order to expel the Zionists."⁷⁸

It is significant that such a detailed and outspoken interview could be explicitly reported by *Cumhuriyet*, a major pro-government newspaper in Ankara. It seems that the expressions like Arab unity and anti-Zionism did not cause annoyance in the ruling circles. *Cumhuriyet* also reported the next day that 814 Arabs were arrested when protesting the unloading of Jewish goods at the port of Tel Aviv, and that they said they would continue the strike.⁷⁹

Other Relevant Topics and Visual Material in the Turkish Press

While the uprising in Palestine was ongoing, General Allenby's death was reported by the Turkish press as the death of "the British commander who had fought against the Ottoman military in Palestine in 1917."⁸⁰ The next day, another report appeared in *Son Posta* with the signature Celal Dinçer. According to the report, while the British general John Shey was talking about the military victories of Allenby on the London radio following his death, he had claimed that Allenby's victories had inspired the Turkish National Struggle. Celal Dinçer responded to this claim by a fairly long column. He heatedly argued against it as follows: "Marshall Allenby gained experience by carrying out incorrect military operations in Palestine and he was beaten by much smaller Turkish forces on the West Bank line. Even the last attack that brought him victory was considered incorrect. Our National Struggle for Independence was a masterpiece of high command and control."⁸¹ So Allenby could not be accepted as a source of inspiration for the Turkish National Struggle.

The only caricature that appeared in the Turkish press that directly commented on the events taking place in Palestine in April-May 1936 was a caricature by Orhan Ural. The caricature depicted a brutal looking Arab who was throwing oranges that resembled hand grenades at the head of a Jew fleeing before him. The title above the caricature read "Bloody clashes are taking place between the Jews and Arabs at Jaffa," and below it was written

⁷⁸ "Bloody demonstrations were made yesterday in Haifa and Jaffa [Hayfa ve Yafa'da dün de kanlı nümayişler yapıldı]", *Son Posta*, May 2, 1936.

⁷⁹ "814 Arabs were rearrested in Palestine [Filistin'de yeniden 814 Arap tevkif edildi]", *Cumhuriyet*, May 22, 1936.

⁸⁰ "Marshal Allenby [Mareşal Allenby]", *Son Posta*, May 15, 1936.

⁸¹ "The strange speech of a British General last night [Bir İngiliz Generalinin dün geceki garip nutku]", *Son Posta*, May 16, 1936.

“Orange Season in Jaffa” (see Figure 1). There were also some caricatures that projected a generally negative image of the Arab lands. In an example published in *Akřam* a schoolchild is requested by his teacher to draw a map of Abyssinia on the blackboard, but he draws a camel instead. (see Figure 2).



Figure 1. A caricature from *Son Posta*, April 30, 1936.

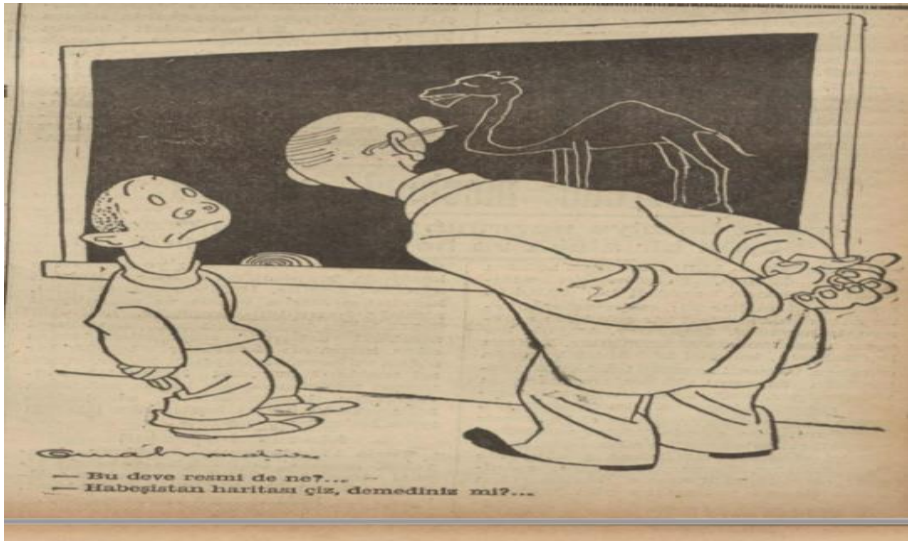


Figure 2. A caricature from *Akřam*, May 18, 1936.

Conclusion and Discussion

It may be observed that the Turkish newspapers adopted a very cautious approach in reporting the events that started in 1936 with the outbreak of the Arab Revolt in Palestine. This was equally true for all the newspapers examined in this study. A notable aspect of the Turkish press's coverage of the events was that they did not publish any editorials or other columns commenting on the events. A cause of this might be the newspapers' preoccupation with Italy's invasion of Abyssinia, an important topic on the world's agenda at that time. It seems that the attention of the Turkish press was drawn to such aggressive acts of European countries at the time when the Palestinian revolt broke out, and this caused the latter subject to be marginalized. An examination of the approach of the newspapers to the subject does not suggest that they openly backed one of the parties in their reports. They did refer to the increasing population and landholding of the Jews in Palestine, evaluated the Zionist policies of expansion and immigration as dangerous, and legitimized the Arab resistance through the regular use of the expression "the Arab national struggle."⁸² But it cannot be stated on this basis that the newspapers gave wholehearted support to the Arab cause. Their claims that there was an "external hand" behind the demonstrations and that these were provoked by fascist countries indicate that they adopted a rather aloof attitude toward the Revolt. Moreover, the Jews were depicted as hard-working, zealous and patient while the Arabs were asserted to have been impoverished after selling their lands for gold and then wasting all that money.⁸³ When Hajj Amin al-Husseini declared "Palestine Day" on May 16, along with a general strike, the Turkish newspapers did not report this news in detail, but simply remarked that the general situation was getting worse in Palestine.⁸⁴ It should be remarked in this connection that not all Palestinian newspapers gave full support to the revolt either. Some Palestinian newspapers adopted a negative attitude towards the AHC.⁸⁵

Overall however, it is not easy to charge the Turkish newspapers with adopting a non-objective stance toward the Jewish-Arab conflict and being prejudiced against the Arabs. Indeed, the Turkish press was sensitive on the issue of Hatay around this time, a bone of contention with the Arab Republic

⁸² "Martial law in Palestine [Filistin'de örfi idare]", *Cumhuriyet*, May 21, 1936.

⁸³ "The inner face of Palestinian events [Filistin hadiselerinin iç yüzü]", *Yeni Asır*, May 30, 1936.

⁸⁴ Examples from titles of 16th-17th May in Turkish newspapers: "Palestine Conflict Improves, [Filistin İğtişası Büyüyor]", *Son Posta*, May 16, 1936, "They will not pay tax. Britain examine on Arabs decision, [Vergi vermeyecekler, Arapların kararı, İngiltere tarafından tetkik edilecektir]", *Yeni Asır*, May 16, 1936.

⁸⁵ Kabha, 174-175.

of Syria that would only be solved in 1938.⁸⁶ However, this does not seem to have led them to adopt a discriminatory language against the Palestinian Arabs when reporting the news of their revolt in April-May 1936. Finally, no reference was made in the Turkish press to the events in the recent history that had ended with the loss of Palestine, this former imperial province.

⁸⁶ Sarah D. Shields, *Fezzes in the River. Identity Politics and European Diplomacy in the Middle East on the eve of World War II*, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2011, 36-37.

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