The Unmaking of PALESTINE

By W.F. Abboushi

MENAS Press Limited

Many interests conspired to change the face of Arab Palestine after 1917, and the spread of Jewish settlements and the development of Jewish institutions as well as their impact on the Arab community have been fully treated. This important new book examines the position of the other main actor in a process which led to the dismemberment of Palestine; Britain was this third actor and its role has been exhaustively and perceptively researched in the records of the British Mandate. The problems, the conflicts and on occasions the sheer horror of the events of the three unhappy decades leading to partition are clearly and simply presented. The writing is very approachable but sound historical scholarship underpins this significant new perspective on why the Palestinian issue has not been resolved.

Also distributed outside the U.K. by Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc., 948 North St., No. 8, Boulder, Colorado 80302, U.S.A.

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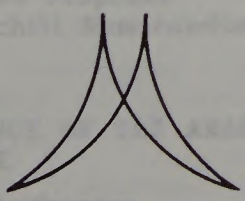

MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICAN STUDIES press limited

Published by Middle East and North African Studies Press Ltd.
Gallipoli House, The Cottons, Outwell, Wisbech,
Cambridgeshire PE14 8TN, England

ISBN 0 906559 20 0

Also distributed outside the UK by
Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc.
948, North Street
Boulder, Colorado 80302, USA

Printed by Whitstable Litho Ltd., Whitstable, Kent

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PREFACE AND INTRODUCTION

Until World War I there was no such political entity as Palestine, and the people of Palestine considered themselves Syrian Arabs. The territory was part of the Turkish Ottoman Empire, and much of it was part of Beirut province. Wealthy Beirutis owned the larger tracts of real estate in the province. They were mostly Christians, who of course would later become Lebanese when Beirut became the capital of Lebanon, primarily a French creation.

Palestine, in turn, was a British creation. The British army occupied Jerusalem in December 1917, and by September 1918 the whole territory was under British control. A military administration ran the country until 1920, under General Edmund Allenby, who had led the British forces into Jerusalem.

The story of Palestine begins some years before the international status of the country was established (in 1922) by the League of Nations. It starts with a series of promises made to Arabs and Zionist leaders - promises at best so vague as to encourage the most diverse interpretations, and at worst all but completely incompatible.

For example, during the first World War, the British made promises to Arabs in the 'Hussein-McMahon Correspondence' that were seen by Arabs as guarantees of a self-governing Arab state in Palestine. Then on November 2, 1917, the British issued the Balfour Declaration, promising Jews a National Home in Palestine. (This promise was conditioned by safeguards for the Arabs, that their civil and religious rights would not be prejudiced.) In April 1918, a Zionist Commission arrived in Palestine. It was authorised by the British government to assess the prospects of developing the Jewish National Home mentioned in the Balfour Declaration. The Commission and its activities were opposed by both the Arabs and the

British local administration.

Then the political picture was further complicated by other promises made to the French in the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916, and by the Anglo-French Declaration of November 7, 1918, which promised to set up an administration that derived its authority from 'the initiative and free choice of the indigenous population'. The latter promise applied to Syria and the Arabs of Palestine argued it applied to them since they were southern Syrians.

On April 25 the San Remo Conference designated Britain as the Mandatory power in Palestine, and in July 1920 the military administration of Palestine was replaced by a civil administration under a High Commissioner. The change took place while the international status of the country was not yet determined. This would not happen until July 24, 1922, when the Council of the League of Nations approved the Mandate Agreement for Palestine. The Agreement did not formally come into operation until September 29, 1923.

Obviously a book on the Palestine conflict has to deal with the period between 1915 and 1923. However, the conflicting promises are dealt with in the first chapter only briefly, because they come up later in the speeches of members of Parliament and in official statements of the British government. lndeed these promises could be considered the theme around which the Arab-Zionist conflict is woven. The book reports fully on all the various interpretations given to them by British leaders.

Although the book follows a chronology of events, it is much more than a historical narrative. The chronological approach presents an on-going dialogue on the complex issues of the Palestine conflict. By treating the dialogue chronologically, however, presents it in a historical context, that may avoid confusion and make the book useful to general readers.

Thus, I have tried to write a book which can add to the knowledge of scholars at the same time it would be understood by non-specialists and the public. lf scholars can endure the preliminaries, they will find much that will interest them in the details of the documents quoted, and some new information.

For instance, unless one has done research in this specific area (ie. the Palestine conflict) he is unlikely to know about the less publicised details of the reports of the various commissions mentioned in the preface. In fact, these details are largely ignored by scholarly works, which usually concentrate on the commissions' main findings and their recommendations. Yet, these unpublicised details of the report tell us so much about life in Palestine and the root causes of the conflict. Perhaps

interest in the details was weak because the commissions' reports were regularly rejected by both Arabs and Jews.

Yet, it was because Jews and Arabs both rejected the reports when they were published that they stirred my curiosity. A careful study of them convinced me of their value, particularly from the perspective of today. For the heretofore unpublicised details of the reports tell us so much about life in Palestine, and about the root causes of the conflict which has generated four wars since 1948.

Scholars will also be interested in what members of Parliament have said about Palestine. I have seen no detailed study of this aspect of the conflict. Yet these details are interesting and important. I have quoted generously from speeches of people like Winston Churchill, Herbert Samuel and Malcolm MacDonald, who played important roles in the Palestine conflict.

The book also destroys certain popular conceptions about certain individuals and issues. For instance, the Arabs have always believed that Herbert Samuel, the Jewish High Commissioner of Palestine from 1920 to 1925, was a Zionist. They were right initially because Samuel was instrumental in the making of the Balfour Declaration and was an ardent supporter of it. However, in the 1930s and the 1940s he was adamantly opposed to the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine. He was a strong advocate of an Arab political union in which the Jews, as a community not as a state, would take part. He was a believer in Arab-Jewish cooperation and in the revival of the old glory of the Arabs.

On the other hand, certain popular conceptions are proven correct in this book. For instance, the Arab belief that Winston Churchill was a gentile Zionist is confirmed. In fact, throughout his political life Churchill was an advocate of a Jewish state, although he wanted a Jewish majority to develop in Palestine through immigration before the Jewish state was established. I was unable to understand Churchill's motives except that he believed the Balfour Declaration was law and as such it should be fulfilled. But this motive is not sufficient because Churchill was inconsistent in his interpretation of the Delaration. In spite of the fact that successive British governments stated that the promise to the Jews was coequal with the promise of self-government to the Arabs, he believed the first promise had priority over the second. I suspect that Churchill was playing politics with the Palestine issue but I could not find evidence to confirm my suspicion.

Scholars will also be interested to see the striking similarities between British and American politics with respect to Jewish political activities - despite the two countries' different political systems. British politicians

were very sensitive to Jewish-Zionist influence, but were torn between domestic interests which argued for a pro-Zionist policy and foreign interests which argued for a pro-Arab policy. They usually responded to domestic pressures; but when Arab restlessness made Palestine very costly for Britain, or an international crisis developed, they would edge towards evenhandedness. In 1939, after a three-year Arab revolution and during Hitler's rise, the British swung to the Arab side. However, after World War II, when the Palestine problem was back into the international political arena, British politicians began to succumb to the powerful Jewish-Zionist lobby. This Zionist influence was bolstered by American pressure, making it difficult for the British government to live up to its commitments to the Arabs in the 1939 White Paper. The result was a British announcement to submit the Palestine question to the United Nations and later to withdraw altogether from Palestine, leaving the country to a bitter civil war between Arabs and Jews.

As in American politics, the executive branch of the government was more likely to be impartial. Parliament, especially the Commons, was susceptible to Zionist pressures through party politics. But even within the executive, impartiality was evident only during international or financial crises, with the pro-Zionist bias returning when the crisis was over. During the elections, of course, almost all politicians became pro-Zionist.

This book explains the conflict in terms of three different parties with different interests and aspirations. The Jews were able to get an international commitment to build a Jewish National Home, interpreted the commitment to mean a Jewish state, and went to work to attain their objective by increasing their numbers in Palestine. They were so efficient and forceful they pushed the British to the limits of their patience, and frightened the Arabs whom the Zionists either ignored or considered no more than a nuisance.

The Arabs were adamant in their opposition to the Jewish National Home and their leaders were uncompromising to the bitter end. They considered themselves the indigenous population and the rightful owners of the country. Because they were the majority of the population, they felt they should determine the political destiny of Palestine. The Arabs also considered the Jews 'aliens' and their immigration as an 'invasion' assisted by 'foreign capital' and 'British bayonets'.

The British were caught in the middle, and they had no one to blame but themselves. Their troubles started when they issued the Balfour Declaration (1917) in such vague terms as to encourage Arabs and Jews to give these terms their own interpretation. Their failure to clarify the ambiguities of their promises to Arabs and Jews caused

the two people to pursue diametrically opposed policies. They tried to restrain the Zionists and calm the Arabs but they failed because the aspirations of the two people were irreconcilable from the beginning. Neither the Arabs nor the Jews were willing to accept half a loaf, and there was no way to satisfy both. If the Arabs, and the Zionists ever agreed on anything, it was to damn the British.

When in 1939, the British swung to the Arab side it was too late. The Jewish National Home was already too strong to limit Zionist ambitions for a state. After World War II, the Home proved its vitality and power in a violent rebellion against the British and later in its successful establishment of the state of Israel.

The tragedy of Palestine was a polarisation that allowed only winners and losers, nothing in between. From the beginning the conflict never produced a compromise. Unhappily, this polarisation continued to characterise the conflict after the establishment of Israel. Wars were fought to only one conclusion - winner take all.

So far the Zionists have been the winners and the Arabs the losers. But in the long run the situation could change. Will this result in 'total loss' for Israel? Only two alternatives are likely. Since Israel is believed to have the atomic bomb, one alternative is to have no winners, only losers. Indeed we confront the dismal possibility that the losers would be the whole of mankind.

There is the other much happier, alternative, of course: a peaceful settlement of the conflict. This book, however, does not go beyond the creation of the state of Israel for it stops in 1948, when Palestine is no more.

Chapter 1

THE BASIS OF ARAB DISCONTENT

During World War 1, the Allies were deeply concerned with defeating the Turkish Empire as quickly as possible for the minimal sacrifice of their scarce human and material resources. The British realised that if they could get the Arab population to revolt against their Turkish rulers the task would be much easier. They therefore sought an Arab leader with sufficient power and prestige to influence his people into rebellion.

The man chosen for the task was Sharif Hussein of the holy city of Mecca, a direct descendant of the prophet Mohammed and a powerful figure in Arabia. These credentials enabled him to persuade the Arabs to fight against their coreligionists, who, as rulers, claimed to be enforcing Islamic law.

Promises and Counter-promises

The British had to make certain promises to Hussein in return for his cooperation. In 1915, their representative in Egypt, Sir Henry McMahon, corresponded with Hussein in an attempt to reach an agreement.(1) In a letter, dated July 14, 1915, Hussein had asked for Arab independence in an area which roughly included the Arabian peninsula (except Aden), contemporary Iraq, Syria and Jordan, and Palestine (now Israel).(2) McMahon was reluctant to recognise Arab independence in such an extensive area, and in a letter dated October 24, 1915, he specifically excluded territories 'west of Damascus, Hama and Aleppo' on grounds that they were not 'purely Arab.' However, he did commit his country to recognising Arab independence within the remaining territory.

Later, much controversy developed over these letters, and we will have numerous opportunities to acquaint ourselves with the conflicting interpretations of the documents. Briefly, however, the controversy involved

Palestine. Did McMahon exclude Palestine from the 'independent' areas? The British were to insist that he did, while, of course, the Arabs took the opposite view.

The Arabs argued that McMahon recognised the independence of all the territories mentioned in Hussein's July 14th letter, except the areas west of Damascus, and that since Palestine was not west of Damascus it was included in the areas promised independence. They argued that since Hama and Aleppo were north of Damascus, and no city south of Damascus was mentioned, the line delineating the excluded area should be drawn westward with Damascus as its southernmost point.

The Arabs also argued that McMahon could not have intended to exclude Palestine from independence, since the area was as much 'purely Arab' as those areas he had included.

After the War, however, the British consistently denied that they had ever intended to include Palestine in the area promised independence. This was the point stressed by Winston Churchill, then Secretary of State for the Colonies, in a memorandum dated June 3, 1922. (3) Moreover, McMahon himself went on record stating that at the time he wrote his controversial letter to Hussein he clearly intended to exclude Palestine.(4)

The British made other promises during the War, which were equally controversial. The British position was complicated by 'the clash of interests between France and the Arabs..." (5) The French seemed to have been unaware of McMahon's pledges to the Arabs, when these pledges were made, and some of their interests in the Eastern Mediterranean conflicted with Arab aspirations and British commitments.

In 1916, France and Britain negotiated the Sykes-Picot Agreement, without informing the Arabs. (In fact, the Arabs did not know about the Agreement until the Russians published it after the Bolshevik revolution.) The Agreement stipulated that in Palestine, "There shall be established an international administration the form of which will be decided upon after consultation with Russia, and after subsequent agreement with the other Allies and the representative of the Sharif of Mecca.' From an Arab point of view, the Sykes-Picot Agreement was in conflict with the McMahon pledges since it promised to internationalise an area which was supposed to become independent.

The Emergence of the Concept of a Jewish National Home in Palestine

Before Palestine was occupied by the British in 1917, it

was part of the Ottoman (Turkish) Empire, with no separate political or juridical status. Administratively, the Turks divided it into three separate districts. The northern section was part of the province *(vilayet)* of Beirut. It consisted of two districts *(sanjaks):* the district of Acre and the district of Nablus or Samaria. The southern section included Jerusalem, Lydda (Lod), and Gaza and was known as the *sanjak* of Jerusalem. Because the district contained the holy city of Jerusalem, the Turks treated it as a province. Like the province of Beirut, the Jerusalem administration was directly responsible to the central government in Istanbul, the Turkish imperial capital.

The Jerusalem *sanjak* surrendered to the invading British armies on December 9, 1917. General Edmund Allenby, the famous British commander, entered the city officially two days later. By the end of the year, a British military administration had already been set up with a Chief Administrator, responsible to General Allenby, in charge. However, the northern section of Palestine did not come under the jurisdiction of this military administration until October, 1918, when Palestine became a single entity under British occupation.

The British divided Palestine into thirteen administrative districts. (In 1919, the number was reduced to ten.) Each district had a British military governor assisted by a number of officials, mostly British but with a few Arabs.

The military administration was required by law to preserve the *status quo* created by the previous Turkish administration until the international legal status of Palestine was determined and a permanent civilian administration was established. Accordingly, Turkish Laws and 'systems of administration' continued with only few modifications. The old religious institutions were also continued, particularly the *sharia* (Islamic) courts and the waqf administration, which controlled the Islamic endowment funds.

Unfortunately, the administration was hampered from the beginning by the Balfour Declaration. Not only did this Declaration fetter successive administrations for the next thirty years, it was an important reason why in 1948 the British would decide to leave Palestine altogether. The Declaration was issued on November 2, 1917, in the form of a letter from A.J. Balfour, Britain's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, to Lord Rothschild, the well-known wealthy Jew. Although the letter was carefully discussed and approved by the British cabinet, it became a highly controversial document. Ironically, it was issued more than a month before the British entered Jerusalem, and almost a year before the rest of the country was

brought under their control. The Declaration stated:

> *"His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country".* (7)

Many, like the Arabs, argued that the Declaration was in conflict with both the McMahon pledges and the Sykes-Picot Agreement. The Declaration promised the Jews a National Home in Palestine; the 'pledges' regarded Palestine as part of an independent Arab state; and the Agreement stipulated that the country was to be international.

Reasons for the Declaration: What impelled the British to issue this highly controversial, very ambiguous document is still an unsettled question and a complicated mystery. According to George Antonius, the Arab author of the classic *The Arab Awakening,* the rationale behind the Declaration was basically to win over, to the British side, powerful Jewish interests in Germany, Austria, and Russia .(8) According to Antonius' theory, the Jews of Germany and Austria were pressuring their governments to influence their ally, Turkey, to recognise Zionist aspirations in Palestine then under Turkish control. At the time, Berlin was the centre of Jewish nationalism, according to Antonius.

Actually, Zionist contacts with Turkey predated the war. However, the Turkish ruler (Abdul Hamid) was uncooperative, and later the 'Young Turks', although initially sympathetic, had to reject Zionist demands because of the opposition in the Autumn of 1912 of the Arab deputies in the Ottoman Parliament. During the war, the Zionists thought Germany could persuade Turkey to change its policy since the Arabs were fighting on the side of the British and against the Turks. The implication of the Antonius theory is that the Zionists, at least early in the war, were trying to extract a bargain from whoever was willing to promise them Palestine.

As to the Russian Jews, Antonius argued, Britain wanted 'to mitigate the hostility of Jews in Allied countries towards Russia and give those Jews, who had been so active in overthrowing the Tsarist regime, an incentive to keep Russia in the war.'

Another reason Antonius cited for the Declaration was what he called the 'imperialistic motive .' That is the growing British feeling that Palestine was important to Britain strategically. This, he considered, was the 'more

dominant' reason and the one introduced by Lord Kitchener. He explained it this way: Before the war, it was generally believed that the Sinai desert was sufficient barrier to prevent outsiders from invading Egypt. Military science regarded deserts equivalent to 'a fortified frontier.' But in 1915, Turkish forces were able to cross the Sinai desert and reach the Suez Canal. In the following year, the British crossed it in the opposite direction with a bigger, better equipped army, and were able to build a railway and a pipeline. The experience convinced the British that they would need more than the Sinai desert to safeguard their interests in Egypt.

Antonius also theorised that Palestine had become important to British interests in the Persian Gulf, specifically Britain's interests in Iraq, where oil was known to exist. Consequently, the British wished to remain in the land bridge between Egypt and Iraq, where the Suez Canal in the former and oil in the latter existed as vital British interests.

Since, according to Antonius, the French had shown interest in obtaining Palestine, the British needed an argument to keep them out, and the Balfour Declaration was issued to provide the argument. In other words, the British wanted to be in a position to say to the French, 'we cannot give you Palestine because we are already committed to a national home for the Jews there.'

Although the Antonius arguments seemed logical and appealed to many people, including some Western scholars and of course the Arabs themselves, others found him inconsistent. Dr Chaim Weizmann, the well-known Zionist leader, denied the validity of the 'imperialist motive,' and claimed that 'when the British government agreed to issue the famous Balfour Declaration, it agreed on one condition: that Palestine should not be the charge of Great Britain.'(9)

Referring to this assertion made by Weizmann, Antonius argued that it did not harmonise with the 1921 Report of the Executive of the 12th Zionist Congress. This report stated that during the first round of negotiations both the Zionists and the British government were fully aware of the strategic value of Palestine for Great Britain.(10) Antonius implied that Weizmann was not being logical: how could Britain make promises about Palestine and not intend to control the country at least until the promises were delivered?

The imperialist motive was also denied by Lloyd George, Prime Minister in the government that issued the Declaration. In his *War Memoirs*, he gave as the real reason the British hope that American Jews would bring the United States into the war.(11)

Whatever the reasons for the Declaration, it was clear that Jewish-Zionist influence in London was evident

long before the Declaration was issued, and its object was to find a solution to the Jewish persecution problem. In 1905, Britain offered Uganda to the Jews. However, many Zionist Jews had their hearts set on Palestine. Later, in 1915, the Jewish nationalists tried again to get a British commitment on Palestine, but without success. The government of Prime Minister Asquith was in no mood to add to the already complicated responsibilities of Great Britain by making new concessions, despite the fact the Zionists had in the cabinet two staunch supporters of their cause. They were Herbert Samuel and Lloyd George, who would succeed Asquith as Prime Minister. Asquith, however, was vehemently opposed to the idea of a Jewish National Home in Palestine. In his *Memoirs and Reflections,* he wrote: 'The talk of making Palestine into a Jewish 'National Home' seems to me ... fantastic ...' (12)

During the war, Zionist influence grew, and the Zionist leader Weizmann became very active in British political circles. A Russian Jew, he had become a British citizen and an accomplished scientist. His political fortunes were enhanced by such powerful men as C.P. Scott, the editor of the *Manchester Guardian,* and by A.J. Balfour, whom he had met during the British elections of 1906.

When Asquith was succeeded by Lloyd George in December, 1916, and Balfour became the Foreign Secretary in the new cabinet, a favourable opportunity for the Zionists developed and they took advantage of it. Although they were ultimately successful in obtaining a British commitment for the idea of a National Home in Palestine, they fell short of their real aim, which was a promise for the creation of a Jewish *State* in Palestine.

Jewish Anti-Zionists: The Zionists were not unchallenged in their solicitation of British commitments. Most British Jews were not Zionists, and many of them opposed the Zionist programme. These Jews considered themselves British first and differentiated between their political and religious identities. They organised an anti-Zionist lobby to dissuade the government not to give in to Zionist pressure.

The anti-Zionist spokesman in the British cabinet was Edwin Montagu, the Secretary of State for India and the only Jew in the cabinet. Montagu considered Zionism a dangerous political ideology 'untenable by any patriotic citizen of the United Kingdom.' He felt that the British Zionists lacked loyalty to Britain. Indeed many Jews, especially in later years, worried about the implications of Zionism for their citizenships. Montagu was harsh to the point of being caustic in his remarks about the Zionists. A Zionist, he said, 'has always seemed to me to have acknowledged aims inconsistent with British citizenship and to have admitted that he is unfit for a

share in public life in Great Britain, or to be treated as an Englishman". (13) He was even more critical of Dr Weizmann, probably the most articulate of the British Zionists. Although Montagu recognised Weizmann's abilities as a scientist and appreciated his services to the Allied cause, he considered him 'near to being a religious fanatic.'(14)

According to Montagu, there was no such thing as a Jewish nation. He felt he was an Englishman who had nothing in common with French and German Jews except religion. To him the Zionist claim that the Jews were a nation was inconsistent as well as disloyal. 'I would willingly disenfranchise every Zionist', he asserted.

But Montagu was even more disturbed by the attitude of the British government and considered pro-Zionist policy to be anti-Semitic. The Declaration policy, he said, 'will prove a rallying ground for the anti-Semites in every country of the world.'(15) He believed the British government was trying to get rid of the Jews in their country by encouraging immigration to Palestine. He also believed that Jews were unpopular in Britain because they 'have obtained a far greater share of this country's goods and opportunities than (they) are numerically entitled to.'

The Problem of Self-Determination

From the beginning it was clear that Britain took the Balfour Declaration very seriously. Even before the international-legal status of Palestine was determined, the government was already heavily involved in the building of the Jewish National Home. When the Declaration was issued, the British military administration had not yet completed the political organisation of the country, and Palestinian military officials were not even certain about the meaning of the Balfour Declaration. Lacking experience in government and politics, they found their responsibilities exceedingly complicated by the uncertainties of the London government's new policy.

The Zionist Commission: Having succeeded in obtaining a British commitment for a Jewish National Home, the Zionists immediately set out to translate the promise into reality. Of course, Palestine was populated by Arabs, and had been for many centuries. And although there were Jews in the country, their number was small, about 56,000 in 1918. Consequently, the task required the immigration of Jews and the purchase of Arab land for their settlement. These became the Zionists' two main concerns.

In April 1918, a 'Zionist Commission' was authorised by the London government and sent to Palestine to determine what was necessary for establishing a Jewish

National Home. It was specifically instructed to establish good relations with the Arabs. The Commission soon aroused suspicion and fear among British officials and the Arabs. British officials were irritated by its insistence upon Jewish participation in the military administration of the country. Also, it demanded the creation of a 'land authority' to survey the resources of Palestine, for the purpose of Jewish 'colonisation', and, further, demanded recognition of its right to nominate the 'experts' to serve on that authority. More serious was the Commission's request to train Jews for military service in an exclusively Jewish force it proposed to create. The officials considered these demands unlawful and argued that the Commission had a misconception of its role and responsibilities. Nevertheless, the Commission secretly trained for a Jewish force.(16)

As to the Arabs, the Commission had aroused their 'suspicion as to the meaning and purpose of the Balfour Declaration.'(17) Arabs complained that the Commission was making 'premature demands' which violated the *status quo* to which the military administration was committed. In fact, the mere presence of the Commission in the country frightened the Arabs, who could not understand why it was demanding things the Arab majority did not like when the Jews were less than ten per cent of the population.

Arabs Intensify Political Activity: World War I officially ended with the Armistice Agreement of October 30, 1918, a few months after the Zionist Commission had arrived in Palestine. Exactly three months later, the Paris Peace Conference announced that Arab territories, including Palestine, would not return to Turkish sovereignty.

These events brought intensification of Arab political activity to assert Arab 'rights' and interests. At the time, the centre of the Arab nationalist movement was Damascus, in Syria, and since the Arabs of Palestine considered themselves Syrians they were part of that movement. Legally, there was no Palestine as yet: the British occupation had not yet been converted to a civilian administration, nor was there certainty about the international status of the country.

Until June 1919, the spokesman for the Arabs of Palestine was the Syrian Congress. Although not elected directly, this body was fairly representative. It made use of the old Turkish system of representation, a fact recognised by the King-Crane Commission which we will mention later. (It must be remembered that the British and the French refused to allow elections in territories they occupied.) (18)

In June 1919, the Congress met in Damascus to discuss Jewish Immigration and the Balfour Declaration.

It was attended by delegates from Palestine. It resolved to reject Zionist and French claims to Palestine, and expressed its desire to keep the country part of a free and independent Syria. Also, it elected the 'Arab Executive Committee' which would soon become the centre of the Palestine Arab movement. Although the Congress reorganised the Committee from time to time, it continued to exercise the leadership role in Palestine until about the mid-thirties, when Palestinians began to organise their own political parties.

In 1919, the Syrian Congress was primarily concerned with developments at the Paris Peace Conference, where the future of former Ottoman territories was being decided. A major question faced by the Conference was the feasibility of consulting the peoples of the territories concerned on decisions affecting their future. Arab hopes had already been raised by the Anglo-French Declaration of November 7, 1918, which promised an 'administration deriving their authority from the initiative and free choice of the indigenous populations, in Syria and Mesopotamia.' (19) At that time, the declaration was useful in assuaging Arab anger at the Sykes-Picot Agreement.

But, like other promises and declarations, the 1918 Anglo-French Declaration raised a question about Palestine. Did the new promise apply to it?

Some believed Palestine was excluded, but the Arabs argued that when the Declaration was made the Arab people of Palestine 'did not use the name Palestine, and knew the whole region as Syria.'(20) In addition, the Armistice was only a week old when the Declaration was issued, and therefore Palestine did not exist legally and could not be excluded. The League of Nations, which was to have the responsibility for Palestine, was not yet born. Furthermore, Arabs argued that copies of the Declaration were distributed by Allied authorities throughout Palestine.(21) If the Declaration did not apply to the Palestinian part of Syria, why would the Allies distribute it there?

Arab hopes had also been raised by President Wilson's fourteen points declaration of January 1918, in which he enunciated the principle of self-determination. When the question of consulting the wishes of the peoples of former Ottoman territories was raised at the Peace Conference, it was President Wilson who suggested the creation of an Allied Commission to ascertain these wishes. However, France and Britain were reluctant to participate, and the Commission as organised included only American members. They were Dr. Henry C. King, President of Oberlin College, and Charles Crane, a successful businessman.

The King-Crane Commission: Known by the name of its two

members, the Commission was no more than a fact-finding body. It arrived in Syria in May 1919 and held hearings through July, for a period of about six weeks. While there, they were able to visit thirty-six cities, and interview in Aleppo a delegation from Mesopotamia, later Iraq.

Unfortunately, the Commission's report had no influence on either the Peace Conference or President Wilson. Members of the Conference had signed the Versaille treaty on June 28, 1919, and Wilson was already suffering from bad health and an unfriendly American Congress. In fact, the Commission's report remained 'confidential' until 1922, when it was published for the first time.(22)

Nevertheless, the content of the report has historical value because it is one of the few sources on Arab 'wishes' in 1919. These wishes, according to the report were expressed in 'programmes presented to the Commission by all Moslems and two-thirds of the Christians of Syria ...' And the programmes ' ... were nationalistic, that is to say, they called for a united Syria under a democratic constitution, making no distinctions on the basis of religion'. In other words, it was, to use a familiar contemporary phrase, 'a democratic Secular State' which the Arabs of Syria wanted, and the State was to include Palestine and Lebanon in addition to the Syrian hinterland.

The report stated that Muslim and Christian Arabs were tenaciously opposed to Zionism. It left no doubt that in 1919 Arabs were not at all apathetic toward the issues of Palestine and Zionism. On the contrary, these were issues upon which they were completely united.

Another important finding of the Commission concerned Arab preferences if independence were not to be an option in the Peace Conference. They expressed the hope that if they were to be put under the tutelage of a foreign power, the United States would be chosen. They also indicated that their second preference would be Britain, but under no circumstances, would they accept France.

On the basis of these findings, the Commission recommended that Syria, including Palestine, be constituted as one state and be granted independence. In case independence was not acceptable, it recommended a US mandate for Syria, and failing that, a British one. As to Zionist aspirations, the recommendation was for a 'serious modification of the extreme Zionist Programme.' (23)

The League of Nations Mandate System: Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations created a Mandate System 'to those colonies and territories which as a consequence of the late war have ceased to be under the

sovereignty of the state which formerly governed them and which are inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world.'

Syria, including Palestine and Lebanon, was to go under this system, and the Mandate was to be based upon 'the principle that the well-being and development of such peoples form a sacred trust of civilisation.' The particular relationship of this principle to Palestine is important to an understanding of the legal controversy over the territory. Arabs would soon argue that since Palestine was recognised as a Mandate territory, and since over ninety per cent of its population was Arab in 1919, the principle had no meaning if it did not apply to them. The 'well-being and development' of the Arabs should 'form a sacred trust of civilisation.' Anything contrary to their well-being, such as superimposed, drastic, demographic changes, violated Article 22 of the Covenant.

Moreover, the independence of these 'certain communities' was envisaged in Article 22. It specifically stated that these communities 'have reached a stage of development where their existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognised subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a Mandatory until such time as they are able to stand alone.' Arabs argued that this provision recognised the 'provisional independence' of Palestine, and that implied in it, was a recognition that Palestine was to be a single political entity the partitioning of which would be contrary to the spirit of Article 22.

1920: The First of the Arab Riots: Behind Arab protests in 1920 was the feeling of having been betrayed by Allied powers and the international community. The Arabs of Syria and Iraq neither became independent, as promised in the McMahon letters, nor were they allowed to select their Mandatory Power according to Article 22 of the Covenant. Syria, which desired to remain united, was divided. France took the northern parts which ultimately became the Republics of Syria and Lebanon, and Britain took the southern part which became Palestine and Trans-jordan.

The last straw was the San Remo Conference of April 25, 1920, which formalised the British and French mandates in the area. No Arab was invited to the Conference. But Zionist Jews were allowed access to delegates, and they were aided by an avalanche of telegrams from Jewish ortganisations and sympathisers from many parts of the world. In short, while the Conference encouraged Zionist pressure and influence, it ignored the Arabs.

Arabs rioted before the end of the month, and many Jews were killed or injured. This was the first of a

series of outbreaks that expressed Arab resentment to and frustration with the British and the Zionists. A military commission of inquiry authorised by the British studied the causes of the riots, and found one reason to be 'Arab disappointment at the non-fulfillment of the promises of independence which they claimed had been given to them during the war.'(24). Another reason was 'Arab belief that the Balfour Declaration implied a denial of the right of self-determination.' The Arabs feared 'that the establishment of a National Home would mean a great increase in Jewish immigration and would lead to their economic and political subjection to the Jews.' In addition, the commission also found other causes for the riots: the growth of pan-Arab ideas; and the activities of the Zionist Commission.

As to the growth of pan-Arabism, the Palestinian riots of 1920 were not isolated incidents but part of a larger movement that encompassed Syria and Iraq. The 1916 Arab revolt against the Turks had been its first serious and distinct manifestation. In 1919, at the Peace Conference, both Lloyd George and General Allenby recognised the importance of the revolt in the Allied victory. According to one writer, E.A. Speiser, it accounted for 'something like 65,000 troops.' Still more affirmatively Speiser added that 'unquestionably, the British campaign in the Near East owed much of its ultimate success to Arab aid.'(25)

After the war, the Arabs tried diplomacy to obtain what they believed were their rights. The period of diplomacy ended in 1920, when the future of the area was sealed by the San Remo Conference, and the Arabs resorted to arms. From that time on, it was rare for a year to pass without some form of violence occurring. Iraq, for instance, revolted against the British in July 1920. And in 1925 the Syrians revolted against the French Mandate. In all these uprisings, whether in Palestine or Syria or Iraq, volunteers from one country were fighting in the other countries. There was no doubt that Arab nationalism was a significant force in the region.

As to the activities of the Zionist Commission, it should be recalled that the Palestinian military administration had complained about them as early as 1918. From the beginning, the Zionist Commission appeared arrogant to Arabs as well as to British officials. The British Chief Administrator in Palestine believed ' ... my own authority is claimed or impinged upon by the Zionist Commission'. He recommended 'that the Zionist Commission be abolished.' (26) On the other hand, members of the Zionist Commission believed the military administration was 'anti-Zionist in their views' and that this British attitude encouraged Arab riots. Some Zionists believed there were

anti-Semites in the administration.

The British Mandate

It was no problem for the British to quell the riots of April 1920, and in July the military administration was finally replaced by a civilian one headed by a High Commissioner. The first to be appointed for this office was a British Jew, Sir Herbert Samuel, who with Lloyd George had supported the Zionist cause in 1917. The appointment was seen by the Arabs as a clear message that the London government was giving the Balfour Declaration first priority. The Arabs also saw it as British appeasement of the Jews who, they believed, had strong influence in British and international political circles. The conclusion they reached was that diplomacy did not pay and that perhaps violence was the only way.

However, Samuel turned out to be honourable and competent. True, he was a believer in the Jewish National Home and he had been involved in the making of the Balfour Declaration. But in the five years he spent in Palestine as High Commissioner, he tried to be fair to the Arabs within the limits of British policy. And if he seemed 'biased' it was because he was obligated to enforce the policy of the Balfour Declaration, which the London government regarded as the law of the land. Nevertheless, he was not liked by the Zionists either. Being a Jew, too much was expected of him, and he often had to remind the Zionists that he had obligations to the Arabs because they were the majority in the country. Much later, in 1937 and 1938, he would defend the Arabs on the floor of the House of Lords, while announcing his opposition to the creation of a Jewish State in Palestine.

At any rate, the civil administration needed a legal instrument, a sort of constitution, and it was to be the Mandate Agreement. In drafting the Agreement, the London government was heavily influenced by the Zionists. In fact, according to an official British source, the first draft of the Agreement was prepared with the cooperation of the Zionist Orgnisation in London, and the final draft did not differ from it except in a few 'minor' changes (27).

In spite of the influence they had on the drafting of the Agreement, and even though the Agreement was to involve only Britain and the League of Nations, the Zionists were not at all happy with these 'minor' changes. Article 25, inserted in the final draft, stipulated that 'in the territories lying between the Jordan and the eastern boundary of Palestine ... the Mandatory shall be entitled, with the consent of the Council of the League of

Nations, to postpone or withold application ... of this mandate.' (28) In essence, this meant that the territory east of the Jordan river would not be subject to the policy embodied in the Balfour Declaration. The excluded territory, more than three times the size of Palestine, was given to Prince Abdullah, son of Hussein, by the British to persuade him to abandon the military campaign he was organising against the French in Syria. The territory became known as Transjordan, later Jordan, and was granted 'independence' in 1928.

Another 'minor' change that disturbed the Zionists related to their desire to insert in the Agreement references to the 'Jewish Commonwealth' and 'the right of the Jews to reconstitution of Palestine as a National Home'. Obviously, the Zionists were trying to expand British commitments to Jews beyond the Balfour Declaration. The British insisted on the language of the Declaration, however.

The Arabs considered the Agreement most unfair. They felt the British were ignoring them, and they resented Zionist involvement in the drafting of an agreement to which they, the Zionists, were not legally a party. Furthermore, to the Arabs the Zionists were foreign born and non-Palestinians, claiming to represent at best only a minority in Palestine.

The Mandate Agreement contained no direct reference to the Arab people of Palestine. The Arabs were referred to as 'the other sections,' an evasion similar to the Balfour Declaration's 'existing non-Jewish communities.' Such references were insulting to the Arabs as their spokesmen often indicated.

Moreover, much of the Agreement applied to the Jews and direct references to them were made. The Jewish National Home was the document's central theme, and the Agreement contained the exact wording of the Balfour Declaration. In addition, a 'Jewish Agency' was to be 'recognized as a public body for the purpose of advising and cooperating with the Administration of Palestine in such economic, social and other matters as may affect the establishment of the Jewish National Home ...' The British government was to recognize the Zionist Organisation as this Agency, provided its constitution was acceptable.

Article 2 of the Agreement specified two responsibilities for the British Mandatory. The first required it to place 'the country under such political, administrative and economic conditions as will secure the establishment of the Jewish National Home.' The second required 'the development of self-governing institutions' in Palestine and the safeguarding of the civil and religious rights of its inhabitants.

Article 6 required 'The Administration of Palestine' to 'facilitate Jewish immigration under suitable conditions and shall encourage ... close settlement by Jews on the land, including State Lands and waste lands not required for public purposes.' However, this obligation was to be fulfilled 'while ensuring that the rights and position of other sections of the population are not prejudiced.'

Articles 2 and 6 became controversial in subsequent discussions of the Palestine problem, and we shall have many opportunities to understand the controversy. Briefly, however, Article 2 raises questions about the extent of British responsibilities in Palestine. Are the responsibilities mentioned in the Article compatible? Are they equal? Article 6 raised the question of whether the development of the Jewish Home was compatible with the 'rights and position' of the Arabs of Palestine. Also, did the guarantee of 'rights and position' include the majority 'position' of the Arabs? For example, was the Jewish National Home limited by the Arabs' majority 'position'?

The Zionists always argued that under the Mandate Agreement the Jewish National Home had first priority and could not be limited by anything other than the physical (economic) capacity of the country. Jewish immigration to Palestine, said the Zionists, should proceed unhindered until the Jews became a majority in the country at which point Palestine should become a Jewish state. Consequently, in the eyes of the Zionists, the majority status of the Arabs had no bearing upon the Mandate's legal foundations, and self-government was considered to be of secondary importance.

Generally, the Arabs believed that the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate Agreement violated their right to self-determination. However, when pressed on particulars and required to argue law and policy, they pointed to the contradictions in the Mandate. They believed the Mandate Agreement gave the British government two responsibilities that were *equal* at the same time that they were *incompatible*. Self-government, they believed, was as much a responsibility of the British as was the development of the Jewish National Home. Since self-government was meaningless without a recognition of the Arab majority status, the Jewish National Home could not be developed in harmony with the guarantee of self-government of Article 2, nor without violating their 'position' as guaranteed by Article 6.

The House of Lords Rejects the Mandate for Palestine:

Before the League of Nations was able to approve the Palestinian Mandate, the House of Lords discussed it on June 21, 1922.(29) Lord John Islington of the Liberal Party submitted an important motion stipulating:

'That the Mandate for Palestine in its present form

is unacceptable to this House, because it directly violates the pledges made by His Majesty's Government to the people of Palestine in the Declaration of October 1915 (McMahon's pledges to Hussein) and the Declaration of November 1918 (Allenby's Proclamation), and is, as at present framed, opposed to the sentiments and wishes of the great majority of the people of Palestine; that, therefore, its acceptance by the Council of the League of Nations should be postponed until such modifications have therein been affected as will comply with pledges given by His Majesty's Government.'

In defending the motion, Lord Islington stated that, if adopted, the motion 'would necessitate a modification of the Preamble of the Mandate and of Articles 4, 6 and 11 of the Mandate.' These articles deal with the Jewish National Home, and in his opinion, violate the 'fundamental principles of the Mandatory system' as these principles are embodied in Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations.

Islington believed that the establishment of the Jewish National Home on the basis of the present Mandate gives the Jewish minority in Palestine the power to dominate the Arab majority. He warned that the Mandate 'if ratified ... imposes on this country (Britain) the responsibility of trusteeship for a Zionist political predominance where 90 per cent of the population are non-Zionist and non-Jewish.'

He observed that the Mandate, which gives preference to Jews in commerce, industry, and developmental projects, directly violates British pledges to the Arabs. He mentioned McMahon's pledges to Hussein and more specifically the Allenby Proclamation of 1918, which, he believed, was 'extremely precise in character.' To stress the point, he quoted from the Proclamation the following important statement:

'The object of war in the East on the part of Great Britain was the complete and final liberation of all peoples formerly oppressed by the Turks and the establishment of national Governments and administrations in those countries deriving authority from the initiative and free will of those peoples themselves: ... that Great Britain agrees to encourage and assist the formation of native Governments and their recognition when formed.'

Islington was more emphatic: 'I say that the Proclamations of 1915 and 1918 constitute a definite undertaking to the Arab community by Great Britain, whilst Zionism, as embodied in the Balfour Declaration, as implied in the Palestine Mandate, and as given effect in the administrative system now prevailing, cannot

constitute other than a direct repudiation of these solemn and authoritative undertakings.' He concluded by appealing to the British government 'to apply the 'Geddes Axe' to Zionism in Palestine, and to constitute in its place a national system.'

The Earl of Balfour, Britain's Foreign Minister in 1917 in whose name the controversial Declaration was issued, spoke against the motion and took a pro-Zionist position. This was his first speech in the House of Lords after he had received his peerage and became the Lord President of the Council. He maintained that the Declaration of 1917 and the Palestinian Mandate complimented each other and were not inconsistent with the League's policies or those of the Allied Powers. The mandatory system, he said, 'was not sprung upon the League of Nations, and before the League of Nations came to existence, it was not sprung upon the Powers that met together in Paris to deal with the peace negotiations. It was a settled policy among the Allied and Associated Powers ever the Armistice came into existence.' He added that although the Mandate was not yet part of the law of nations, 'It is known to the Council of the League ... that we are carrying out that policy, and it is with their assent and approval that we are continuing to do so.'

However, the most important part of his speech was the clarification he made of an ambiguous phrase in the Balfour Declaration. The phrase guaranteed that the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine would not 'prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine.' Specifically, a question developed as to whether the *political* rights of the Arab population were guaranteed by the Declaration, and Zionists argued that they were not. Balfour disagreed:

> *'I cannot imagine any political interests exercised under greater safeguards than the political interests of the Arab population of Palestine. Every act of the Government will be jealously watched. The Zionist Organisation has no attributes of political powers. If it uses or usurps political powers it is an act of usurpation.'*

In fact, Balfour described charges that the Mandate was promoting Zionist domination of Palestine as 'fantastic fears.' Obviously, he understood the Declaration and the Mandate to guarantee the political rights of the Arabs.

But what motivated Balfour to issue the Declaration in 1917? This question has been on the minds of many writers on the subject of Palestine and researchers have been curious about the motives of others who were involved in the making of the Declaration. In his speech, Balfour gave gave us a clear explanation, one that sounds quite religious:

'Surely, it is in order that we may send a message to every land where the Jewish race had been scattered, a message which will tell them that Christendom is not oblivious of their faith, is not unmindful of the service they have rendered to the great religions of the world, and, most of all, to the religion that the majority of your Lordships' House profess, and that we desire to the best of our ability to give them that opportunity of developing, in peace and quietness under British rule, those great gifts which hitherto they have been compelled from the very nature of the case only to bring to fruition in countries which they know not their language, and belong not to their race. That is the ideal which I desire to see accomplished, that is the aim which lay at the root of the policy I am trying to defend; and though it be defensible indeed on every ground, that is the ground which chiefly moves me.'

In spite of Balfour's eloquent speech, many members of the House of Lords remained unpersuaded. Two members said they were among his 'followers' and admirers but expressed their disappointment that he did not deal with the legal elements of the motion. Balfour's speech was emotional and irrelevant to the case. Consequently, the House voted to accept Lord Islington's motion by 60 votes. Twenty-nine votes went against the motion.

The 1921 Riots

When the first immigration ordinance was issued to allow 16,500 Jews into the country during 1921 the Arabs resorted to arms. During the riots, forty-seven Jews were killed and 146 were wounded. On the Arab side, the figures were 48 killed and 73 wounded, and the Arab casualties were largely the result of British police action.(30)

Fortunately, a habit of the British was to organise commissions of inquiry for such events, and one was created to investigate the 1921 riots. Although the reports of these commissions were often rejected at the time they were issued by both Arabs and Zionists, they are today important sources of information. In retrospect, the reports are seen to be impartial and farsighted. And their value as references has increased over the years.

The 1921 Commission was headed by the Chief Justice of Palestine, Sir Thomas Haycraft, who gave it its popular and common name.(31) In its report, the Haycraft Commission stated that the root cause of Arab unrest was 'a feeling ... of discontent with, and hostility to, the Jews.' But, said the Commission, this hostility was

limited to 'political and economic causes,' and has something to do with 'Jewish immigration' and the Arab 'conception' of Zionist policy. This conception was derived 'from Jewish exponents' and was influenced by the Zionist Commission. According to the Commission, Arabs believed ' ... the Zionist Commission has either desired to ignore them as a factor to be taken into serious consideration, or else had combated their interests to the advantage of the Jews.'

The Zionist view of the 1921 Arab riots, as recorded by the Commission, became the standard Zionist view of all future instances of Arab resistance. It blames a few Arab *effendis* (notables) for stirring up usually apathetic Arab masses. According to this view, the *effendis* reacted to the loss of their privileges and the decline in the status they had enjoyed when the Turks were in charge of the country.

The Haycraft Commission rejected this Zionist argument and called it simplistic. It stated that Arab 'feeling against the Jews was too genuine, too widespread, and too intense to be accounted for in this superficial manner.' The Commission felt that the opposite of the Zionist argument was true. The Arab notables were 'always ready to help the authorities in the restoration of order' and 'without their assistance the outbreak would have resulted in even worse excesses.' Nor were the people apathetic: 'the people participated with the leaders, because they feel that their political and material interests are identical.'

The Commission warned that a European conception of society did not apply to the Arab people of Palestine. The Arabs, said the Commission, were not class conscious. At the time, the Arab workers were not aware of being 'proletariat' as their European counterparts were. In fact, this European conception had something to do with the riots. The Commission believed it was a group of Jewish socialists who contributed to the excitement, rather than the Arab notables. According to the Commission, these Jewish 'radicals' began their activities among the Jewish workers, but when they failed to take over the Jewish labour movement, they turned to the Arab workers for support. They imported Communist literature in Arabic to achieve their purpose. According to the Commission, 'their efforts fell completely flat.' Nevertheless, the Jewish radicals succeeded in arousing Arab fears of Zionism, and so were one of the 'immediate' causes of the riots.

The disturbances, reported the Commission, were neither racial nor religious in motivation. Arab 'anti-Jewish' feelings were very different from the anti-Semitism known in Europe. The Commission observed that if it were

not for the political and economic factors involved in the tension between Arabs and Jews '... there would be no animosity towards the Jews as such ... there is no inherent anti-Semitism in the country, racial or religious.' In fact, it was clear to the Commission that Arabs did not object to 'limited' Jewish immigration and would have appreciated Jewish assistance in developing the country if it were not for the Zionist motives of these immigrants: 'We are credibly assured ... that they would welcome the arrival ... of able Jews ... to develop the country to the advantage of all sections of the community.'

Unfortunately, Arab first experiences with organised Zionist activity were negative. One reason was the Zionist Commission, which treated them as non-entities. According to the Haycraft Commission, 'The only sentiment it has inspired in them is one of profound distrust.' In fact, there was evidence that the Zionist Commission discriminated against Arabs. 'We have had evidence,' reported the Haycraft Commission, 'to the effect that the Zionist Commission put strong pressure upon a large Jewish landowner ... to employ Jewish labour in place of the Arabs who had been employed on his farm since he was a boy.'

Arab fears were also aroused by what Zionists had said and published. The Haycraft Commission recorded some of these pronouncements, and left no doubt that they added fuel to the already inflamed political situation. In the Jewish *Chronicle* of May 21, 1921, a lead article stated that 'the real key to the Palestine situation is to be found in giving to Jews as such those rights and privileges in Palestine which shall enable Jews to make it as Jewish as England is English, or as Canada is Canadian.' In the June 4, 1921 issue of *Palestine*, the official organ of the 'Zionist British Palestine Committee,' the territory was portrayed as a 'deserted, derelict land.' Such Zionist descriptions of Palestine offended the Arabs, who felt the Zionists were using such phrases to argue that the 'primitive' or 'backward' Arabs did not deserve the country and that only the Jews could develop it. Indeed, this Zionist description of the country would recur as a theme in Zionist literature and propaganda throughout the Mandate period and even afterwards. However, the theme was not unfamiliar to Europeans. In the nineteenth century, they justified colonialism on similar bases.

At any rate, the Haycraft Commission did not agree with the Zionists on what Palestine was. 'This description hardly tallies with the fact that the density of the present population of Palestine, according to Zionist figures, is something like 75 to the square mile.' By Middle Eastern standards of 1921, this figure was very high, more than

double that of Egypt or Syria. It was also high by Asiatic standards (Cambodia, 36.3) and in comparison with US (35.5). But by European standards it was not, since England, including Wales, had a population density of 701 and France 187.(32)

The Commission stressed the fact that Arabs were not unaware of inflammatory Zionist statements and utterances. ' ... what is written ... by Zionists and their sympathisers in Europe is read and discussed by Palestinian Arabs, not only in the towns but in country districts.'

Other Arab grievances were mentioned in the Haycraft Commission Report. One dealt with Jewish influence in the government of Palestine. Arabs believed that the Mandate Administration had 'a disproportionate number of Jews' in its ranks, including the important position of Legal Secretary. The official occupying this position, according to the Arabs, was 'well known as an ardent exponent of Zionism.' However, the Commission stated that the Arabs made 'no personal attacks upon him,' but they did argue 'that the control which he is able to exercise over the Courts of law lessens their confidence in the administration of Justice.'

In addition, Arabs complained to the Commission about Jewish business practices. They believed that Jews were 'exclusive in business,' and they would not buy from Arabs if the merchandise was available in the Jewish market, and 'that a Jewish official who has the power to influence the granting of a Government contract will not let it go to anyone but a Jew ...'

Arabs complained that they were being made 'to pay for the Jewish National Home' and that the British Administration was promoting Jewish interests at Arab expense. They cited a number of examples to the Commission. One was in connection with the Transfer of Land Ordinance (1920) which required government approval for the disposition of immovable property. They claimed the law was introduced to keep down the price of land so Jews could take advantage of it. Another ordinance prohibited the exporting of cereals, which Arabs thought was designed to force the Arab landowner to sell his land, presumably to well-financed Jews, and to provide cheap food to Jewish immigrants.

The Commission passed no judgement on these complaints but it did find evidence that 'Jews enjoy greater facilities than Arabs in ... obtaining permits to travel on and to import merchandise by military railways.'

The Problem of Self-Government

The Mandate Agreement made the British government responsible for developing institutions for self-government. And Article 22 of the League Covenant made it clear that the Mandatory power had the obligation to prepare the territory it had ministered for eventual independence. However, Jewish and Arab aspirations conflicted, making British responsibilities in Palestine contradictory as well as impossible to achieve.

Arab-Jewish Aspirations: The Jewish nationalists, specifically the Zionists, wanted to transform Palestine to a Jewish state. From the beginning, they knew exactly what they wanted and pursued their aim with great skill and energy.

Their strategy was extremely intelligent. Until the end of World War 11 they were careful not to antagonise the British to the point of breaking relations with them. They were painfully aware that their numbers in Palestine were dangerously small. Despite their emotional attachment to Palestine, they were *outsiders* who needed to become *insiders* before they could build their cherished Jewish state. Without British good will and assistance they could not achieve their aims. They needed British cooperation to bring into Palestine more Jews and to obtain land for their settlement. Consequently, they had to fight two battles, one in Palestine involving the Arabs and the local British administration, and the other in London and in the international arena.

The Arabs also saw the Zionists as outsiders. But of course they saw themselves as insiders trying to hold on to their position. They believed that what the British and the Zionists were doing was to take from them what had been theirs for hundreds of years. Thus, while the Zionists tried to do everything possible to get in, the Arabs tried to do everything possible to keep them out.

This made an essential difference in their tactics. The Arabs found themselves always saying 'no' to anything and everything that related to the Jewish National Home, appearing 'negative,' 'uncooperative;' and 'uncompromising,' while the Zionists said 'yes' to anything that kept the doors of Palestine open for them, appearing 'positive;' 'reasonable,' and 'cooperative,' In the outside world, these descriptions became part of the Arab and Jewish images.

The British thought they had two legal responsibilities in Palestine: the development of the Jewish National Home and self-government. They usually tried to meet both, but failed because the two were incompatible. Specifically, the Jews wanted *more* national home and the Arabs wanted *more* self-government. To the Jewish

nationalists, a National Home meant eventual majority for the Jews and a dominant position in the country. To the Arabs, self-government meant a dominant position based upon their current majority. For them the *more* self-government, the *closer* they got to independence; and the *sooner* they became independent the *less* chance for the Jews to become a majority.

The British Proposal: The political controversy over these issues took concrete form in 1922, when the British began planning 'a scheme of government' for Palestine. (33) They had in mind the creation of a Legislative Council to advise the British Administration on questions of law and policy. Initially, the Council was to have eleven official and twelve non-official members. The non-official members were to be elected people, eight Muslims, two Christians and two Jews. The eleven official members were automatically in the Council by virtue of their positions in government.

In February 1922 an Arab delegation, headed by Kazim el-Husseini, was in London to discuss the British proposal, and on February 21 it sent a letter to Mr Churchill, the Colonial Secretary, rejecting it.(34)

The Arab objections centred around the premise that 'no constitution which would fall short of giving the people of Palestine full control of their own affairs could be acceptable.' Specifically, they objected to provisions giving the High Commissioner full powers. These provisions they believed, treated Palestine 'as a colony of the lowest rank,' and therefore violated Article 22, paragraph 4 of the League Covenant, which in effect placed Palestine in the 'A' category of Mandates whose 'existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognised.' Arabs argued that there was a difference between a Mandate and a colony and that the proposal did not make the distinction between them.

Also, the delegation's letter reminded Mr Churchill that Article 22 gave the role of the Mandatory as 'rendering ... administrative advice and assistance' to the people 'until such time as they were able to stand alone.' The British proposal, they said, reversed this relationship by giving the British government full powers over Palestine, allowing the Legislative Council, supposedly representing the people, only an advisory role. In essence, the proposal treated the British as if they were the natives and the natives as if they were the British.

Moreover, the Legislative Council was not properly constituted, argued the Arabs. The proposal did not give the Arabs a majority on the Council, something they were entitled to by virtue of their numbers. An alliance between the 'official' and the Jewish members, very likely on

questions relating to the Jewish National Home, could effectively prevent the representation of Arab interests. Furthermore, the provision requiring only ten members for a quorum could further complicate the Arab position by making it possible for a number, less than an absolute majority, to conduct official business of the Council without the elected Arab members.

The Delegation also noted that the proposal gave the High Commissioner the power to dissolve the Council without requiring him to call for new elections within a specified period. It also gave him the right to veto any measure passed by the Council. In effect, the Delegation argued, the Commissioner was to be the head of both the legislative and executive branches, something contrary to the accepted constitutional norms of ordinary systems.

The Delegation expressed its willingness to cooperate in the drafting of a constitution that would give the people of Palestine genuine institutions of self-government. In return for cooperation, it expected the British government to end all alien immigration and what it called the 'Zionist con-dominium.' Without this fundamental change in British policy, the constitution would put the Arabs 'in the position of agreeing to an instrument of government which might, and probably would, be used to smother their national life under a flood of alien immigration.'

Mr. Churchill replied to the Delegation's letter on March 1, 1922.(35) He stressed the point that the British government would not repudiate its obligations for the Jews. He resented the Delegation's reference to Jews as 'alien,' but understood Arab confusion with regard to British promises to the Jews. He said that on June 3, 1921, the British High Commissioner had issued a statement to clarify the ambiguities of the British promise, and that this statement was approved by the Colonial Secretary. The statement said that the words 'National Home' meant that 'The Jews, who are a people scattered throughout the world, but whose hearts are always turned to Palestine, should be enabled to found here their home, and that some amongst them, within the limits fixed by numbers and the interests of the present population, should come to Palestine in order to help by their resources and efforts to develop the country to the advantage of all its inhabitants.'

As to the Delegation's charge that Palestine was being treated as 'a colony of the lowest order,' Churchill said that his government had not made distinctions between Palestine and other colonies. The majority of colonies, he emphasised, were being governed under legal instruments very similar to the one being proposed for Palestine. They had legislative councils with 'official,' non-elected, majorities. But these official majorities were not

necessarily acquiescent and subservient to the will of the government. In Palestine, Churchill argued, the existing Advisory Council, which consisted of official members only, had often disagreed with the government. Nevertheless, Mr Churchill was willing to negotiate, making some changes in the composition of the proposed Legislative Council.

Churchill showed irritation with the Delegation's charge that High Commissioner Herbert Samuel was a member of the Zionist Organisation. This charge, he said, was unfounded, and the High Commissioner 'had no policy of his own in contradiction to that of His Majesty's Government.' Samuel was impartial.

Nor did he agree with the Delegation's interpretation of provisions relating to the High Commissioner's position. He denied that the High Commissioner had unlimited veto powers under the proposed constitution. Matters relating specifically to the Mandate would ultimately be decided by the London government.

As to the problem of the quorum, Churchill held out no hope for change. He said the requirement was necessary to expedite the business of government.

Apparently, Churchill's reply did not satisfy the Arab delegation, which sent another letter on March 16, 1922 (36). The letter contained old and new arguments. Two of them deserve mentioning. First, the Delegation argued that legally Palestine should not be treated as a colony. It expressed surprise that Mr Churchill would, in his letter, frankly admit that Palestine was a colony, although not of the lowest order, when the covenant of the League intended it to be one of the 'communities ... whose independence can be provisionally recognized'. Moreover, British policy relating to the Jewish National Home violated Article 3 of the Hague Convention, which clearly stated that a power occupying a country should, in as far as possible, preserve and carry out the laws and regulations of the preceding government. The article also stipulated that the occupying power should make no vital changes before the final status of the occupied territory was determined.

The Delegation argued that up to then, March 1922, the status of Palestine had not yet been determined because the League of Nations had not approved the Mandate. (This was accomplished on July 24, 1922. The Mandate Agreement went into effect on September 29, 1923.) Consequently, Palestine was still legally an occupied country subject to Article 3 of the Hague Convention.

Secondly, the Delegation insisted that Jewish immigrants were technically 'aliens' not included in Article 22's reference to 'the well-being ... of the people.' It was these Jews, argued the Delegation, who were

disturbing the public security of Palestine. Russian and Polish Jews in particular were continually smuggling arms into the country and were posing economic threats to the indigenous population.

The Delegation laboured the point that the Zionists did not represent Jews, since 'a large section' of Jews in Palestine and most Jews outside Palestine did not favour them. Implied in the Arab position was the view that British commitments, and indeed British policies, were out of tune with the realities of Jewish opinion and Jewish aspirations. According to the Arabs, not only were the Jews a minority in Palestine, but the Zionist Organisation which came to represent their aspirations and was legally recognized by the British to represent all the Jewish people, was in fact a minority within a minority.

The Delegation remained disturbed by Herbert Samuel's Zionism. It took issue with Churchill's claim that Samuel was *not* a member of the Zionist Organisation. It stated that the evidence that Samuel was a Zionist was Churchill's own admission of the fact in a speech he delivered in the House of Commons.

True, Churchill did say something of that nature on June 14, 1922; and the Parliamentary Debates do contain the evidence.(37) However, in that speech, Churchill stated that Samuel was 'a most ardent Zionist', which is not the same as being a member of the Zionist Organisation. Consequently, Churchill was not lying to the Arabs since, at least technically, his letter to the Delegation did not contradict his speech in Parliament.

But Churchill did mislead Parliament and, indirectly, the Arabs. While denying Samuel's affiliation to the Organisation, he should have admitted that the High Commissioner *was* a Zionist. Materially, this admission was relevant and vital to the issue. If Samuel was a Zionist, even though not a member, he would still be controversial with the Arabs, and the Arab objections to him should not seem so unfair. By hiding this vital information, Churchill was making the Arabs seem unreasonable and wrong. Although later Samuel would reject the idea of a Jewish state, Arab fear and suspicion of him was not unjustified in 1922.

The Churchill Memorandum: Obviously this kind of dialogue between Churchill and the Arab Delegation was getting nowhere. The Delegation itself was aware of its futility. In reference to the British proposal for a Palestinian Legislative Council, it stated that ' ... no object could be gained in discussing details when the foundation on which these details are built is a subject of disagreement.'

Disappointed with the Arabs' 'purely negative attitude', Churchill began to search for alternatives. He

realised that there were two important problems to be dealt with. The meaning of the Balfour Declaration must be cleared up so that Arab fears would subside, and something must be done to lower the profile of the Zionists, whose zeal and energy were causes for Arab concern. Churchill hoped a new policy might bring the Arabs to a cooperative position.

Consequently, he issued a policy statement, which became known as the Churchill Memorandum on June 3, 1922 . (38) The statement was sent to the Zionist Organisation before publication, and it was accompanied by a letter in which Churchill required the Zionist Organisation to follow the new policy. He insisted that 'not only that the declared aims and intentions of your Organisation should be consistent with the policy of His Majesty's Government, but that this identity of aim should be made patent both to the people of Palestine and of this country, and indeed to the world at large.'

Apparently, Churchill was not satisfied with Zionist policies and activities, and consequently, he needed 'formal assurance' that the Organisation would 'conduct its own activities in conformity' with the new policy.

In the policy statement itself, Churchill complained that unauthorised statements were circulating which said that the purpose of the Balfour Declaration was 'to create a wholly Jewish Palestine.' He said statements were being made to the effect that Palestine was to become 'as Jewish as England is English.' Britain, Churchill asserted, had no such intentions. British policy opposed the subversion of Arab culture and the subordination of the Arab people. The Balfour Declaration, the Zionists were reminded, did 'not contemplate that Palestine as a whole should be converted into a Jewish National Home, but that such a home should be founded *in* Palestine.'

He also stated that the legal status of citizens was to be Palestinian, not Jewish or Arab, saying 'it has never been intended that they, or any section of them, should possess any other juridical status.' This clarification had far-reaching implications. On a purely legal basis, it could mean that Palestine was to be treated as a single political entity and that partition could be viewed as contrary to British original intentions. This point is important because partition would become an issue in 1937.

However, the crucial question was: what was meant by a Jewish National Home? The Memorandum tried to clarify the ambiguities in these important words:

> *'When it is asked what is meant by the development of the Jewish National Home in Palestine, it may be answered that it is not the imposition of a Jewish nationality upon the inhabitants of Palestine as a*

whole, but the further development of the existing Jewish community, with the assistance of Jews in other parts of the world, in order that it may become a centre in which the Jewish people as a whole may take, on grounds of religion and race, an interest and a pride.'

Unfortunately, the statement left the old ambiguities intact. It did not say that the National Home was *not* a national *state*. Neither did it say that it was.

Another crucial question the Memorandum attempted to answer was Jewish immigration. Would there be any restrictions upon the number of Jews coming into Palestine? The criteria for Jewish immigration were to be economic: 'This immigration cannot be so great in volume as to exceed whatever may be the economic capacity of the country at the time to absorb new arrivals.' Also, 'immigrants should not be a burden upon the people of Palestine as a whole, and that they should not deprive any section of the present population of their employment.'

Until 1939, the 'economic absorptive capacity' was the concept upon which Jewish immigration was based. The concept became a highly controversial issue in Palestine and in Britain. Immigration quotas were always contested by Arabs and Jews, the former claiming they were excessive, and the latter claiming they were too low.

The Zionists accepted the policy embodied in the Churchill Memorandum. In a short letter to the Colonial Office, dated June 18, 1922, Weizmann, on behalf of the Zionist Organisation, declared 'that the activities of the Zionist Organisation will be conducted in conformity with the policy therein set forth.' (39) He also assured the British that 'the Zionist Organisation has at all times been sincerely desirous of proceeding in harmonious cooperation with all sections of the people of Palestine.'

The Arabs did not believe the Zionists. In a letter to Churchill dated June 17, 1922, the Delegation complained that practical experience in Palestine had shown that the Zionists did not live up to British policy. (40) The Zionists, said the Delegation, had always been inconsistent: they said one thing and did another. 'In Palestine, as everywhere else, deeds speak better than words.' According to the Delegation, the record was clear: the Zionists always interfered in the administration of the country, and pursued policies representing the exclusive interests of Jews. 'One military Administrator after another, and one British official after another, had to go because they could not and would not govern the country on lines laid down by the Zionist Commission.'

The Arab letter quotes from *The Times* of London (June 3, 1922) a statement by Charles R. Crane of the American King-Crane Commission, saying that 'the Zionist Commission

which has so much control over the political machinery of Palestine seems to have more power than the authorised (British) Government.'

The Delegation pointed to British favouritism towards the Jews. In the Mandate Agreement, they recognized the Jews as 'a public body,' and did not give similar recognition to the Arabs of Palestine, even though they represented over ninety per cent of the population. The Delegation asked 'Cannot the administration be trusted with the interests of seven per cent of the population when the welfare of ninety three per cent are entrusted in their hands'?

Furthermore, the Delegation observed, the Mandate Agreement allowed this Jewish public authority 'to construct or operate ... any public works, services and utilities, and to develop any of the natural resources of the country' provided the Administration did not undertake these activities itself. It asked why the Arabs were not given similar privileges. In essence, these privileges constituted monopolies. The Delegation claimed that one such monopoly was the 'Rutenberg Concession' which was approved by the British without accepting bids from non-Jews.

The Delegation questioned, with bitterness, the justice of giving the Jews a special status in Palestine. It did not think there was any reason for it. It argued that Jews who lived in Palestine before World War I 'never had any trouble with their Arab neighbours,' nor did they ever 'agitate' for a Balfour Declaration. 'Besides', said the Delegation, 'we have always claimed for this community the same rights and privileges as ourselves.'

The Delegation took issue wuth the concept of 'economic absorptive capacity,' which it considered to be meaningless in view of the fact that Jews were allowed into the country while there was unemployment, at least in certain occupations. To prove the point, the Delegation quoted from a telegram it received from Arab railway employees complaining that they had lost their jobs 'to make room for Jewish employees.'

The Delegation believed that immigration of a foreign element into any country always had political, social and economic effects upon the indigenous population. That is why, the Delegation argued, such immigration should not be allowed without the consent of the people already in the country. In Palestine, observed the Delegation, the people were never consulted on the matter of Jewish immigration, either directly or indirectly.

The Arab letter concluded that 'His Majesty's Government has placed itself in the position of a partisan in Palestine of a certain policy which the Arab cannot accept

because it means his extinction sooner or later.' As mentioned earlier, the Delegation rejected the British proposal, called 'constitution;' for a Legislative Council.

In spite of Arab opposition, the British went ahead and enacted, in August 1922, a law creating the Council with a slightly changed membership. The Council was to consist of twenty-two members, ten 'officials' and twelve elected. Of the elected group, eight were Arabs. Consequently, the Council as a whole would not include an elected Arab majority to reflect their proportion in the population of Palestine.

Because of this, the Arabs decided to boycott the councilmanic elections which followed the enactment of the law. The boycott was effective making the elections meaningless. Consequently, the High Commissioner appointed the additional members, but seven of the ten Arab members resigned under pressure from the Arab Executive. Consequently, the attempt was abandoned and the old all-British Council was reinstituted.

The attempt to establish self-government ended in failure because the Arabs would not cooperate in institutions which were only 'advisory' and which did not recognize their status as the majority in Palestine. And the failure created a situation in which the British administration was to be unbalanced in favour of the Jewish National Home. In time the gap between the obligation to promote self-government and the promise of the National Home grew bigger until it became impossible to reconcile the interests of Arabs and Zionists without a drastic reversal in British policy and a severe restriction of Zionist aspirations.

Chapter Notes

1. Cmd. 5957 (1937).
2. Royal Institute of International Affairs, *Great Britain and Palestine* (London: Oxford University Press, 1937), p.11.
3. See Cmd. 1700 (1922).
4. Philip P. Graves, *The Land of Three Faiths* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1923), p.53.
5. Harold William Temperley, *History of the Peace Conference* (London: H. Frowde and Hodder & Stoughton, 1920), vol.III, p.15.
6. Text of the Agreement in Jacob C. Hurewitz, ed., *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East: A Documentary Record* (Princeton, New Jersey: Van Nostrand, 1956), vol.II (1914 - 1956), Document 10.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
8. George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening* (New York: G.P.Purnam's Sons, Inc., 1946), pp.261-67.
9. From Weizmann's speech before the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London on June 9, 1936. Quoted in *ibid.*, p.264.
10. *Ibid.*, p.264. Antonius was referring to *Reports of the Executive of the 12th Zionist Congress* (National Labors Press, 1921). He noted that Dr Weizmann was present at the negotiations.
11. David Lloyd George, *War Memoirs* (London: Ivor Nichelson and Watson, Ltd., 1933), vol.II, p.50. Also *Hansard*, June 19, 1936, vol.1343.
12. Earl of Oxford and Asquith, *Memoirs and Reflections* (London: Cassell, 1928), vol.II, pp.65-66.
13. Great Britain, British Public Record Office, *Cabinet*, No. 24/24.
14. Cab. No. 24/28.
15. Cab. No. 24/24.
16. Palestine Government, *A Survey of Palestine*, 1945-46, vol.I, p.16.
17. *Ibid.*, p.16
18. J.M.N. Jeffries, *Palestine: The Reality* (London: Longmans, Green and Company, Inc., 1939), p.282.
19. Temperley, *op. cit.*, p.141.
20. The Royal Institute, *op. cit.*, p.16.
21. *Ibid.*, p.16.
22. For details see Harry N. Howard, *The King-Crane Commission: An American Inquiry Into The Middle East* (Beirut: Khayyat, 1963).
23. The Commission specifically referred to the demand, by the extreme Zionist, for the reconstitution of Palestine as a Jewish state.
24. The findings of the Commission were never published, but in 1929 the Shaw Commission's Report made references to

them. See *A Survey of Palestine*, vol.1, p.16.

25. E.A.Speiser, *The United States and the Near East* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1947), p.51.

26. Jeffries, *op. cit.*, p.358. Also, John Marlow, *The Seat of the Pilate* (London: The Cresset Press, 1959), p.51.

27. 'The provisional agreement of this draft resulted from discussions early in December 1919 between Mr Forbes Adam and Mr Malkin for the Foreign Office, and Mr Cohen for the Zionist Organisation'. *Draft Mandate for Palestine*, 285/3/320870, December 11, 1919, in *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919 - 1939*, vol IV, 1919, p.571.

28. Text in A Survey of Palestine, *op. cit.*, pp.4-11.

29. Quotes in this section come from *Parliamentary Debates, Lords*, vol.50, 1922, cols.994-1084.

30. A Survey of Palestine, *op. cit.*, p.18.

31. Quotes in the following passages come from the Commission's report in Cmd. 1540 (1921).

32. *World Almanac*, 1921; See also *Whitaker Almanac*, 1921.

33. Cmd. 1889 (1922).

34. Text in Cmd. 1700 (1922).

35. Text in Cmd. 1700.

36. Text in Cmd. 1700.

37. See *Parliamentary Debates, Commons*, 5th series, vol.143, col.285.

38. Cmd. 1700.

39. Text in Cmd. 1700.

40. Text in Cmd. 1700.

Chapter 2

THE DISINHERITANCE OF THE ARABS: THE FIRST DECADE

In Chapter 1 we limited ourselves to a discussion of British and Zionist plans for Palestine, and the reaction of the Arabs of Palestine to these plans. Zionist programmes became operational in 1920, the year the first immigration quota was authorised by the British. However, British plans were not formalised until September 29, 1923, when the Mandate officially came into force.

In this chapter, we will deal with the effects of these plans upon the Arab people of Palestine. And in order to understand the period between 1920 and 1929, it is necessary to begin with the year 1929, the high point of Arab resistance to what they considered to be the forces of British and Zionist alienation of culture and land in Arab Palestine. In that year, the Arabs resorted to violence and a British commission, known as the Shaw Commission, was organised to investigate the causes of 'the disturbances.' As usual, the Commission had to go back to the beginning of the Palestinian problem in order to prepare its report. Its report is a valuable source of information about what happened in Palestine during roughly the 1920s. We are using it as the main reference for this chapter; and quotations and statistical data appearing here are derived from it.(1)

The Shaw Commission arrived in Palestine on October 24, 1929, and remained in the country until December 29th. It held forty seven open meetings and eleven closed meetings and heard a total of 130 witnesses. In addition, the Commission examined 187 documents and 'collections' of documents before filing its report with the British government in March 1930.

The statistics used by the Commission were derived from official (British) sources. Sometimes it would employ Zionist and Arab figures, but only to state Arab and Zionist arguments. The Commission used quasi-judicial procedures to arrive at its conclusions.

The 1929 Disturbances

Initially, these disturbances occurred in Jerusalem in connection with the Wailing Wall, which has religious significance for both Jews and Muslims.

For the Jews, the Wall is the western exterior of the ancient Jewish Temple, and they revere it greatly because it is the only remaining part of that sacred structure. Since the Middle Ages, they had established a custom of visiting the place on religious occasions, especially the Fast of Tisha B'Av. Even non-orthodox Jews participated in the long-standing practice.

For the Muslims, the Wall is part of the Haram, 'an Islamic place of great sanctity, being reckoned next to the sacred cities of Mecca and Medina as an object of veneration.' Part of the Wall, known to the Muslims as the Burak, has a special meaning for them. According to Islamic tradition, it contained the chamber in which Mohammed's horse, called the Burak, was stabled when the prophet made his celestial journey from Arabia to the Rock in Jerusalem. The Rock itself stands within the Haram area and it is believed to be the altar upon which Abraham attempted to offer his son Isaac in sacrifice. Supposedly, it is also the place from which the prophet Mohammed ascended to Heaven on his way back to Arabia.

In its report on the incident, the Shaw Commission stated that the Wall was legally 'the absolute property' of the Muslim community. With the exception of that period in history when the Haram was in possession of the Crusaders' Latin Kingdom, the entire complex including the Wall, was in the hands of the Muslims for nearly thirteen centuries. These places were regarded 'as among the most treasured possessions of the Moslem World.' But it is important to remember that the place is sacred to the Jews as well, and that Jews had established a right of access to the Wall.

On occasions, questions regarding the extent of Jewish rights arose. They included the use of such incidentals as chairs, benches, and screens. Unfortunately, the British administration did not have a specific governmental agency to deal with issues relating to such matters, nor did it enact new regulations to govern such situations. Rather, the government relied on precedents established during the Islamic period of Palestinian history. In other words, the *status quo*, inherited from the Turks was accepted as the law.

However, serious incidents had not occurred in the past, perhaps because Jews and Arabs got along well, or perhaps because Jews did not hope for change while the area was under Muslim rule. But by the 1920s, Jews were pressing for a change in the *status quo*. Two factors

might account for the pressure. Palestine had acquired a new type of Jew who was immigrant, European and Zionist. Being a nationalist, this Jew was more aggressive than his Palestinian coreligionist, who was basically a traditionalist. Another reason might have been the feeling among immigrant Jews that a change in the *status quo* was now possible under the Christian British who had become the legal guardians of the Holy Place.

Whatever the causes, the Wall became the object of intense controversy. On September 24, 1928, the Jewish Day of Atonement, trouble developed when a group of Jewish worshippers violated the established rules by erecting a screen to separate the male worshippers from the female worshippers as required by their traditions. The Jews knew a rule against such structures existed; and the British had always enforced it.

The incident brought Muslim protests. Consequently, the British police forcibly removed the illegal screen. And this action angered the Jews who protested it to the London government and to the League of Nations Mandate Commission. Later, the British government issued a White Paper justifying the measures taken by the police, saying that the Jewish worshippers had disobeyed a specific order, issued the night before the incident, prohibiting the introduction of the screen.(2)

What followed was a period of intense excitement among Jews and Muslims. The Supreme Muslim Council saw the incident as part of a Zionist plot to usurp the Muslims' religious rights. It feared that Jews wanted to rebuild their ancient Temple, an act which could result in the total destruction of Muslim religious buildings. Jewish leaders denied such intentions, but the excitement continued, and it became obvious that during the crisis 'the Jews displayed obstinacy, the Arabs acrimony.' (3)

The Supreme Muslim Council reacted to the erection of the screen by starting building operations near the Wall. The Shaw Commission later observed that while the Council was within its legal rights to erect the structure, its action was intended to annoy the Jews. It also observed that Muslim claim that Jews were conspiring to rebuild their Temple was unfounded. However, the Commission agreed that the introduction of the screen by the Jewish worshippers was an act of provocation without which the Muslims would have felt no need to act.

On August 15, 1929, another incident took place and made matters much worse. The occasion was the Jewish fast of mourning for the destruction of the Temple, and about 300 young Jews marched to the Wall where they unveiled the Zionist flag and began singing the Zionist national anthem. The march itself was done with the

approval of the police, but the other activities, the singing and the raising of the flag, were not. Again, according to the Commission's report, the marchers had been warned 'not demonstrate ... not produce flags and ... not march down in military formation.'

The scene at the Wall was highly provocative. The Commission later reported that cries were heard saying, 'The Wall is ours,' and leaders read to the crowd resolutions passed in the previous day in Tel Aviv, declaring the Wall to be Jewish. However, it also reported that it found no evidence connecting responsible Jewish officials with the march.

The following day, Muslims held a counter-demonstration. About 2,000 people participated, including the officials of the Aqsa Mosque and individuals from outside Jerusalem, especially from the conservative Arab city of Nablus. No doubt the political atmosphere of the city was so highly charged with emotions that the slightest incident could touch off widespread violence.

Such an incident took place the day after the Muslim demonstration. A Jewish youth playing soccer went to retrieve the ball which had fallen into a tomato yard owned by an Arab. A quarrel between the owner and the Jewish youth ensued, and the youth was stabbed to death. His funeral the next day turned into a political demonstration, which the police had to put under control by dispersing agitators. Jewish leaders charged that the police were brutal in dealing with the demonstrators.

A week later, on Friday, August 23, during the Muslims' Sabbath, Arab villagers came to Jerusalem for prayers carrying sticks and clubs. Of course, the police became suspicious, and contact was made with the Muslim authorities, but it was too late to prevent a political demonstration from taking place. According to the Commission, Muslim leaders tried to restrain the demonstrators but to no avail. The march turned into a mob and began attacking Jews. The fighting was 'ferocious' and many Jews and Arabs were killed or injured. The Shaw Commission observed that ' ... the outbreak in Jerusalem ... was from the beginning an attack by Arabs on Jews for which no excuse in the form of earlier murders by Jews has been established.'

The violence spread to villages around Jerusalem. The following day the whole country was involved. The worst violence occurred in Hebron, where a very small Jewish community existed among large numbers of Arabs. According to the Commission, 'more than 60 Jews - including many women and children - were murdered and more than 50 people were wounded.' The Commission described the ugly scene in the following words:

'The savage attack, of which no condemnation could

be too severe, was accompanied by wanton destruction and looting. Jewish Synagogues were desecrated, a Jewish hospital, which had provided treatment for Arabs, was attacked and ransacked, and only the exceptional courage displayed by ... British police prevented the outbreak from developing into a general massacre of the Jews in Hebron.'

In Safad, a town in upper Galilee, Arabs attacked Jews and killed or injured about 45. The Commission reported that 'several Jewish houses and shops were set on fire, and there was a repetition of the wanton destruction which had been so prominent a feature of the attack at Hebron.'

The Jewish mob was also cruel and ferocious. On August 26, it attacked the Mosque of Okasha in Jerusalem 'a sacred shrine of great antiquity held in much veneration by the Moslems.' In that incident, 'The Mosque was badly damaged and the tombs of the prophets which it contains were desecrated.' In a place between Jaffa and Tel Aviv, 'there occurred the worst instance of a Jewish attack on Arabs in the course of which the Imam (religious head) of a mosque and some six other people were killed.'

Violence occurred in other parts of the country. All in all, the Jews lost 133 persons and 339 were injured. The Arab casualties were 87 killed and 181 wounded, and they were mainly the result of actions of the British military.

The Commission received a number of complaints from the Zionists. 'These complaints, taken as a whole, resolve themselves into a charge that the disturbances ... were in a large measure the direct result of organisation and incitement, the main responsibility for which must be attributed to the Mufti and the Palestine Arab Executive.'

The Mufti was Haj Amin el-Husseini. He was appointed Mufti of Jerusalem, an important religious position, by Herbert Samuel, the first High Commissioner, on May 8, 1921. The position was a tremendous source of political power, not only in the capital but in the country as well. Later, in the 1930s, Haj Amin would become the most powerful, and most popular leader in Arab Palestine.

According to the Commission, the Zionists believed the Mufti was playing politics because his position was threatened by the new draft Regulation of 1928, which if approved by the government would limit his tenure in office. His 'aggressive' role during the disturbances, according to this view, was motivated by a desire to become popular among his people so that he could secure reappointment.

The Shaw Commission did not accept this Zionist explanation of the disturbances. It pointed out that the

draft regulation allowed the Mufti nine years in office, a fairly long time for a feeling of insecurity to develop. In addition, the regulations allowed automatic extensions of the term unless the General Muslim Assembly decided otherwise. Also, it would be difficult to accept the theory, said the Commission, in view of the fact that the Mufti himself was involved in the drafting of the Regulations, which in the end received his signature.

The Zionists also claimed that the Mufti had religious reasons for inciting Muslims against Jews. However, the Commission believed Muslim fear for their religious rights, although unjustified, was genuine. But the religious motives, said the Commission, was only the manifestation of deeper causes that had nothing to do with religion. These causes were basically economic and political, involving Arab fear for Jewish domination. On the Jewish side, the religious motive was also secondary. What happened at the Wailing Wall was more political than religious. The Wailing Wall incident was merely an expression of an impatient desire on the part of the Jewish nationalists to transform Palestine into a Jewish commonwealth. The Wailing Wall was in part a manifestation of Jewish nationalist feeling.

As to the Mufti himself, the Commission believed that he participated in the activities of the so-called Organisation of the Burak which mobilised Arab opinion on the issue of the Wailing Wall. However, the Commission did not believe he had incited people to riot. Evidence produced by government officials established the point that the Mufti ' ... throughout the period of the disturbances exerted his influence in the direction of promoting peace and restoring order.'

Nor did the Mufti, as alleged by the Zionists, employ agents to incite riots. The Commission pointed out that in Hebron and Safad, where the worst riots took place, the Mufti's influence was very weak, a fact based 'on evidence laid before us.'

As to Zionist charges against the Arab Executive, the Commission believed they were largely based upon the movements and activities of the following members: Musa Kazim, the chairman; Taleb Markha, Hebron's representative; and Subhi Khadra, Safad's representative. According to the Commission, the evidence against Musa was unacceptable because it was 'superficial,' Taleb was already serving a sentence 'for inciting to conduct offensives against persons of another religion.' However, the court had absolved him of charges of 'incitement of a more serious character.' As to Subhi, he was known to be 'an ardent Arab nationalist.' During World War 1, he had deserted the Turkish army to fight with the Arabs in the allied cause. Although Subhi would,

according to the Commission, 'welcome any opportunity of furthering what he regards is the just cause of Arab nationalism;' it found no evidence to substantiate the charge against him. Consequently, the Commission reached the conclusion 'that the charge of deliberate incitement to disorder has not been substantiated against the Palestine Arab Executive as a body.'

In the opinion of the Commission, the disturbances of 1929 lacked organisation, and were not premeditated. This meant that no specific national leader or specific national organisation was responsible. The riots were simply spontaneous outbursts of angry feelings caused by a series of events snowballing into violence and extreme cruelty.

Immigration

One of the important causes of Arab alienation was, from the Arab point of view, the 'imposition' by the British of alien immigrants upon the people of Palestine. From a Zionist point of view, words like 'imposition' and 'alien' were inflammatory terms that should not be used in reference to Jewish immigration and Jewish relations with Palestine. For them, Palestine is the Jewish ancestral home and immigration is simply the act of 'returning' to that home.

From the Arab point of view, an immigrant is an alien regardless of his historical-territorial links. Arabs argued that this concept of alien is common the world over, and should not seem strange to anyone, especially to the American whose law embodies the same concept. The fact that Jews had, some two thousand years ago, populated parts of Palestine was irrelevant. If political boundaries are to be drawn on the basis of claims such as those of the Zionists, most countries would undergo radical and arbitrary demographic changes and the world map would look very different. By this logic, the Arabs could claim Spain, for they controlled it longer than the Jews controlled Palestinian territory.

But emotional and psychological factors, rather than the facts of history, were the inspiration of the Zionist argument. Biblical beliefs and notions had always influenced Jewish attitudes towards Palestine, and they were also elements in the subconscious of many Christians. A reading of the Palestinian debates of the British Parliament leaves no doubt that the Bible was a factor in the politics and attitudes of many of its members.

It is not easy to explain the place of the Bible in the attitudes of Jews and Christians. Many were not religious, yet few contested its pertinence to Zionist

claims. As a book of history, the Bible had a great deal to do with these secular people, especially the Zionist Jews (but also the secular Christians). But what gave it its power was the belief that it was the word of God. God is the authority of all authorities, and the Jews believe that their history was written under that authority.

This fact makes Jewish claims to Palestine hard to argue at a secular level. And Arab arguments that they had birth rights, that the Zionists and Jewish new-comers were alien, that Arabs had majority rights while Jews had only minority rights, and that the political future of the country should be determined by its majority - arguments which would have been quite acceptable in similar situations in other places - had little force for Christians and Jews. The subconscious of the Western World was incapable of objectivity on the question of Palestine, and it applied double-standards which it would not have applied to any other place, especially to its own national domains.

Of course, persecution of the Jews was also a factor, one which would become more critical in the 1930s and after World War 11. Zionism itself would have been weaker and probably less successful were it not for Jews' memories of their sufferings. And Western pro-Zionism would not have been as strong without the guilt feelings associated with the plight of Jews. Finding a solution to the Jewish problem was the task of Jewish Zionism, but also the concern of many Christians in the Western World.

Nevertheless, the issue of immigration was primarily political, not religious or even emotional. Emotions had more to do with the intensity of the issue rather than with its causes or consequences. Zionist influence in Britain had much to do with the formulation of the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate Agreement. lt also played an important role in the making of Britain's immigration policy for Palestine. The actual determination of immigration quotas reflected Zionist influence upon the London government, which was often forced to undercut the authority of its officials in Palestine.

The Shaw Commission and Immigration: ln testifying before the Shaw Commission the Chief lmmigration Officer of Palestine discerned three categories of Jewish immigrants. The first were immigrants with 'independent means;' the second were immigrants who had someone in Palestine to care for them; and the third were immigrants who came to Palestine to find employment.

According to the Immigration Officer, the numbers of the first two categories were unlimited. However, to qualify as an immigrant with 'independent means,' one

needed only five hundred Palestinian pounds, or approximately 2,430 dollars.(4) (Later, the figure was increased to about $4,860.00.) These immigrants, the official stated, usually exhausted their resources very quickly, and drifted into the labour market, thus becoming like immigrants of the third category.

The restricted third category was subject to the 'economic absorptive capacity' criteria discussed earlier. Translated into practical terms, the government issued a 'labour schedule' fixing the number of jobs available for prospective employees, and the figure determined the number of Jewish immigrants to be admitted in the next six-month period. The procedure allowed the Zionist Executive to request the immigration certificates available under the labour schedule. The Executive invariably disputed the government's estimates of the job market, taking the position that they were conservative.

Most of the certificates were for unskilled male workers. And they were issued *in blank* to the Zionist Executive, which always passed them on to the General Federation of Jewish Labour, the authority that took charge of immigration details including transportation and settlement of immigrants.

The Shaw Commission criticised this procedure. In arguing that it was defective, it relied on an important report prepared earlier by Sir John Campbell, who, with others, had been appointed by the Zionist Organisation to study the various aspects of 'Jewish colonisation' in Palestine. Campbell was a recognized authority on the refugee settlement, having done similar work for the League of Nations. In his report, he observed that the Federation of Jewish Labour had 'effective practical control' of immigration, and that political considerations influenced the Federation in formulating its own immigration policy. Also, he said, the Federation favoured industrial workers rather than workers who might do well in agriculture. According to another source consulted by the Shaw Commission, Dr Elwood Mead, this preference gave the Jewish colonies 'a character not in harmony with the ideals of the Jewish race.'

The immigration procedure, stated the Commission, reflected the British administration's tendency to relinquish responsibility in a vital area. It was also unfair to the Arabs ' ... the delegation of responsibility by the Palestine Government to a body (the Federation) whose members comprise less than 3 per cent of the population of that country cannot be defended. The present practice is bound to cause irritation among the non-Jewish inhabitants of the country.'

The Federation awarded the certificates for political reasons. The Chief Immigration Officer told the Commission

that the 'political creed' of prospective immigrants was a consideration in the allocation of certificates. This practice, he said, was contrary to 'the duty of the responsible Jewish authorities.'

Furthermore, the British administration in Palestine made a serious error not limiting immigration among those classified as having independent means. The number was often large. In 1925, more than one-third of the 33,801 immigrants admitted into the country belonged to this category, and they also came within a short period of time. Also, the amount of money required from persons in this category was not enough. The money was usually spent on buying homes, and immigrants had to borrow in addition. Although the money stimulated the building industry and created the need for more construction workers, the benefit, did not last long. After the money was spent, the immigrant became himself unemployed and heavily in debt.

The Commission provided official statistical data to support this point. Between 1924 and 1926, the heaviest immigration period since 1919, eighty per cent of the Jewish workers were engaged in the building industry and related occupations, like carpentry and blacksmithing. The Zionist Executive admitted that in the following year, 1927, the number of unemployed Jews was 8,440. Consequently, the Commission came to the conclusion that Jewish immigration exceeded the economic absorptive capacity of the country. This was the same conclusion that Sir John Campbell's report had reached earlier.

Yet the sixteenth Zionist Congress, held in Zurich in July and August 1929, complained, in a number of resolutions, that the system of the immigration was unsatisfactory. Specifically, it protested at the high amount of money required from Jews to qualify as immigrants 'with independent means.' Clearly, the Zionists did not want any restrictions on Jewish immigration and were not responsive to the economic and political consequences of such immigration. Campbell had stated that there was a strong feeling in the Jewish colonies that what 'really mattered was to get as many Jews as possible into Palestine'. He also believed that high officials in the Palestine government were fully aware of the Zionist position.

In fact, the Zionists were frank about their aims. The Chairman of the Zionist Executive told the Shaw Commission: ' ... frankly ... we hope one day ... there will be a Jewish majority in Palestine.' He made it clear that he wanted no restrictions on Jewish immigration. The leader of the Zionist Revisionists (extremists who believed in a Jewish state comprising Palestine and Transjordan) was more specific. He told the Commission 'Jews should

enter Palestine at the average rate of 30,000 per annum for the next 60 years ...' He considered it the duty of the Palestine government to 'actively ... promote Jewish colonisation with a view ... to establish a Jewish majority in Palestine.' The object of Zionism and the government, he declared, should be to create a Jewish state, 'so that ... the Jewish point of view should always prevail ...'

According to the Shaw Commission, the leader of the Revisionists did not believe there was much difference between his point of view and that of the 'moderate' Zionists. He quoted to the Commission from *New Palestine*, the official organ of the American Zionist Organisation, a statement saying that ' ... 'moderates' are no less extreme in their conception of the ultimate goal than the 'extremists' themselves, for both ardently desire a Jewish state ... in Palestine.' According to the same journal the two groups differed only in 'the road to be travelled for the next decade or so.'

The Shaw Commission came to two conclusions regarding the question of Jewish immigration. First, it stated that neither the British administration in Palestine nor the Zionist Executive followed the policy outlined in the 1922 Churchill Memorandum. It observed further that ' ... many of the demands contained in the resolutions passed at Zurich (by the Zionist Congress) clearly have little regard to that statement of policy.' This meant that the Arab Delegation had been right in 1922 when it complained to Churchill about the inconsistencies of the Zionists and the British administration with regard to Jewish immigration.

The Commission realised that a clear policy on immigration was needed to avoid Zionist manipulation and Arab misunderstanding. The present policy, the Commission believed, was so vague it could not fail to arouse Arab suspicion and fear and be itself a cause of greater violence.

Furthermore, Arabs were aware of the implications of the policy of immigration. And they were painfully aware of Zionist-Jewish influence in London. The policy's lack of clarity made them apprehensive about the ability of the Palestine administration to resist this influence. 'Now it is known to the Arab people of Palestine,' said the Commission, 'that pressure is constantly being exercised by Zionist authorities on the Palestine Government to admit immigrants in large numbers.' The Commission pointed out that Arabs understood the connection between immigration and economics. Arabs, stated the Commission, knew that 'the one period when immigration was heavy was followed by severe unemployment and economic disturbances.' Even the *fellah* (peasant) was, in the opinion of the Commission, conscious of the

negative effects of Jewish immigration. 'This ... analysis of the feelings of the *fellah* is a legitimate deduction from the facts as presented to us. We consider that the claims and demands which from the Zionist side have been advanced in regard to the future of Jewish immigration into Palestine have been such as to arouse apprehension in the Arab mind.' 'The further belief that the ultimate Zionist aim is that there should be a Jewish majority in Palestine would only serve to multiply his fears.'

The Land Problem

According to the Shaw Commission 'the fears of the Arabs that the success of the Zionist policy meant their expropriation from the land were repeatedly emphasised.' These fears 'are deeply seated in the Arab mind.'

Arab feelings about the land problem were succinctly stated in the testimony of the Arab mayor of Nablus before the Commission. He testified: 'in the early days the Jew ... worked on his land and employed Arab labour. Since immigration commenced in large numbers ... Jewish employers have turned away the Arab labourers and have employed Jews in their place thereby throwing out of work a large number of Arabs.' He also stated that 'I understand, as all Arabs understand, that the Zionist policy is to dispose of the Arabs in every possible way and to replace them by Jews.'

According to the British Director of Land in the Palestine government, the area of cultivable land in Palestine in 1929 was eleven million *dunoms*, or roughly 2,750,000 acres. Of this land, the Jews owned about 225,000 acres, or a little over eight per cent. (Zionist figures were 'slightly' higher, according to the Commission.) Very little of the Jewish-owned land was purchased from Palestinian Arabs. According to the testimony of the representative of the Zionist Executive 'relatively small areas not exceeding in all 10 per cent were acquired from (the local) peasants.' Most of the Jewish holdings 'have been acquired from the owners of large estates most of whom live outside Palestine.' In other words, more than ninety per cent of Jewish holdings in Palestine were sold by non-Palestinian Arabs, mainly Lebanese.

The largest sales were made by the Sursok family, 'a large and wealthy family of Christian Arabs established in Beirut.' Situated in the most fertile part of Palestine, the Vale of Esdraelon, the sale involved 'more than 200,000 dunoms,' or roughly 50,000 acres. Moreover, 'twenty-four villages were included in the sales,' villages inhabited by Arabs. The Arabs worked for the Sursocks

who either 'leased the land or allowed it to be worked on various conditions of tenure.'

To protect tenants and 'occupiers' of land, the Palestine government enacted in 1921 the Land Transfer Ordinance. The law required the consent of the government for the disposition of land and proof that a tenant of leased agricultural property would 'retain sufficient land in the District or elsewhere for the maintenance of himself and his family.'

In the opinion of the Shaw Commission, the 1921 law 'failed to achieve the objects' of its framers, namely to prevent the displacement and deprivation of Arab tenants and 'occupiers'. The British Director of Land told the Commission that there was not a single case in which 'sufficient land had been retained by tenants over whose heads an estate was being sold.' He frankly admitted that the 1921 law 'had in fact proved unworkable.'

In 1929, the Protection of Cultivators Ordinance was enacted. It repealed that part of the 1921 law requiring that tenants be allowed sufficient land for their livelihood before the transfer of land ownership, and required instead compensation in money before tenants were evicted.

The Shaw Commission expressed disappointment with the government for allowing the 1921 law to remain in the statute books for eight years even though it was proven 'unworkable'. It predicted that the 1929 law would also prove unworkable because it 'does nothing to secure to those dispossessed' alternative land which they needed for their main occupation. The Commission observed that the new law could not solve the problem of 'landless' Arabs, who lost the land they had cultivated for years as a result of the sales.

The Commission pointed out that in the Sursok sales the Arabs had to give up the land and leave twenty-three villages in return for compensational money. In the one village where they remained, the Sursok family allowed them 500 acres and the Jewish buyers another 767 acres. The Jewish contribution was in the form of a six-year lease at six per cent of the sale price, with the option to buy for the same amount as the original sale price. Of course, the Arab tenant, who usually lived at subsistence level, could not possibly afford the price offered by the Jewish owners, who were financed very generously by foreign contributions.

There were conflicting figures regarding the number of Arabs displaced as a result of Jewish acquisition of Arab land. The representative of the Zionist Organisation testified before the Commission that the total figure was between 700 and 800. He claimed that nearly all the displaced Arabs found alternative land within the same district where the sale occurred. On the other hand, the

representative of the Arab Executive said the number was 8,730, involving 1,747 families. He observed that some of the displaced Arabs migrated to America, some found work of a temporary nature, but most were 'scattered all over' since 'nothing was left to live on.'

The Shaw Commission believed that the Jewish companies which purchased Arab lands were not subject to criticism because they paid compensational money to tenants and occupiers at a time when the law did not require them to do so. Also, the Jewish companies had acted with the knowledge of the government.

The second largest sale involved the land known as *Wadi el Hawareth*, amounting to about 7,707 acres (30,826 dunoms). Twelve hundred Arabs lived on the land, cultivating about two-thirds of it and using the remaining third for grazing. They owned about 3,000 head of stock and had an income, in 1928, of about $34,020 from the sale of melons, their principal crop.

The land was bought by the Jewish National Fund for $203,260. Arabs protested the sale because a number of the Arabs occupying the land had eviction orders. Although the new Jewish owner offered them alternative land in the Beisan area, the land was not enough to take care of the evicted Arabs. In addition, it was poor land, and to make it more productive large amounts of capital were needed to irrigate it. The evicted Arabs had little experience in modern irrigation methods, and moreover, the land had no grazing area for their stock. This was a serious drawback since some of the Arabs involved were tribal and grazing was the *chief* source of their income. The Commission believed that the Beisan property was not suitable for the preservation of their tribal identity and that, if re-located, the tribal Arabs would become a 'scattered community.'

The Commission noted that during the time it was in Palestine, the police had not enforced the eviction order because there was in Palestine no other place to which 'they could move the present occupants and their flocks.' It also noted that the police were risking being held in contempt of court because the Jewish owners were 'not predisposed to abandon any of their rights.'

Tension was high. The Arab occupiers of the land in question were in a 'state of extreme apprehension,' and Arab cultivators in other parts of the country were fearful 'lest the fate of those who live in the Wadi ... may also be theirs.' In other words, Arab cultivators everywhere in Palestine feared that big Jewish companies financed from abroad would collaborate with their non-Palestinian overlords, mainly Lebanese, and ultimately cause their displacement or deprivation.

The Commission observed that the real problem was

that a dispossessed tenant was 'unlikely ... to find alternative land to which he can remove.' This problem was common to all situations involving large purchases of land by Jews. Furthermore, the Commission underscored the point that 'the cultivators who were or may be dispossessed have a strong moral claim to be allowed to continue in occupation of their present holding.'

The moral claim existed before the British acquired Palestinian territory. According to the Commission, the Turkish system protected the tenant, who had rights under a feudal system similar in some respects to the one that existed in Europe many centuries before. As long as the tenant paid his landlord the share he had agreed he was entitled to protection against extortion and physical threats.

The Commission did not delve into the question of how Lebanese landlords came to possess so much land in Palestine. It only mentioned that aristocratic families had obtained the land from small farmers in return for protection and certain material rewards. It did not mention that many of these small farmers had to sell the land either because they could not pay its taxes, because they could not pay their debts or because they could not compete with the big landowners. Protection and guarantees of minimal economic security became indispensable under the circumstances. To the tenants, it was a benefit that the landlords of Beirut lived away from their estates; this allowed them greater freedom with the land, and they usually preferred an absent landlord.

There was nothing unusual about a resident of Beirut owning land in Palestine. Before World War I, the land was in the province of Beirut and it was natural for Beirutis to buy land in their province. There was no thought that Palestine would become a separate country under a different ruler (the British) from the one who would govern Beirut (the French). The separation, however, encouraged the Lebanese landowner to get rid of his 'Palestinian' property. Since local pressures and the nascent nationalism of the area did not affect him, he sold it to the highest bidder, which happened to be the Jewish companies, effectively eliminating potential Arab buyers.

Normally, there would have been no objection to Jews buying land from Arabs. This had happened before. But during the Mandate the buying was mostly by foreign Jews and by companies financed with foreign money. Moreover, greater amounts of land were being sold, and the buying had strong political overtones. It was associated with the Zionists' effort to convert Palestine to a Jewish state, and Arabs saw a difference between a transaction to buy property and a transaction to buy a country. According

to the Arabs, the Jews were trying to buy a country in Palestine.

The Commission studied the problem of securing alternative land for Arabs. In 1929, the Arab rural population was 460,000 excluding the bedouins of the desert area of southern Palestine. Assuming an average of five per family, the rural Arab population consisted of 92,000 families. Available land, excluding land owned by Jews and by the state, was estimated at about 2,275,000 acres. This meant an average of 27 acres for each family. The Commission stated that Zionist sources had estimated that an average family required much more than 27 acres for its support. Consequently the Commission concluded that ' ... taking Palestine as a whole, the country cannot support a larger agricultural population than it at present carries unless methods of farming undergo a radical change.'

Intensive cultivation offered hope for increasing agricultural output. However, it depended on the availability of large quantities of water, which was scarce in most of Palestine. Even in the coastal area, where intensive agriculture was possible, it was 'doubtful whether water was available for irrigating a large portion' of it. The Valley of Esdraelon, another relatively fertile place, was 'at least as closely populated as its productivity warrants.' Still, intensive cultivation was possible, and had been tried by Jews; but the cost in terms of capital and machinery was enormous. According to the Commission 'it requires capital expenditure to an amount which no ordinary cultivator can afford.' This was especially true of orange-growing which 'in addition to requiring a large initial outlay of capital, does not yield any return for some years after the planting of the trees.'

Intensive cultivation raised the problem of making capital available to cultivators, especially the poorer ones, who were often Arabs. Only Jews had the financial resources for the costly irrigation projects. The Arab cultivator, who in those days had no external sources of financial assistance, needed his government to provide the necessary capital. The Commission noted that at the time there was no credit facility in the country to make money available to Arab cultivators. The Agricultural Bank which existed at one time was no longer operating. Consequently, the Commission recommended that government loans should be made available for cultivators and that the defunct Agricultural Bank be revived. Without credit institutions, stated the Commission, intensive cultivation and other agricultural reforms would be impossible for the Arabs.

However, intensification should be gradual. Rapid

intensification, warned the Commission, could result in 'economic disaster.' If undertaken by Jews, it should include the Arabs or it could hurt them. The Commission commended those Jews who were aware of the problem and tried to be 'fair to their Arab neighbours.'

Most important were the Commission's observations about the effect on the land problem of the increase in population. It pointed out that the British government of Palestine had succeeded in reducing the death rates, by improving the health and sanitary condition of the people, and as a result there had been marked increases in the population. Consequently the government needed to fix 'the rate at which newcomers are admitted to agriculture.' Otherwise, even with intensive cultivation and improved methods, agriculture would not be able to sustain the population.

The Commission expected that the existing population problem would become worse, because many important agricultural reforms had to wait for the completion of the surveys being undertaken by the government. In the meantime, there would be repetitions of the Wadi experience, and there would also be incidents of evictions 'of large bodies of cultivators with no alternative land to which they can be moved or upon which they can settle.'

The Commission stated that Jewish immigration could no longer proceed without displacing Arabs. 'The plain facts of the case are ... that there is no further land available which can be occupied by new immigrants without displacing the peasant population.' It warned that the continuation or the acceleration of Jewish settlement of the land would be 'fraught with serious danger to the country.' It stated that the Protection of Cultivators Ordinance of 1929 could not possibly 'check the tendency,' already in motion, of dispossessing cultivators. In fact, 'the mere provision of compensation in money may even encourage it.'

The Problem of Self-Determination

The failure of the Palestinian Arabs to obtain a measure of self-government was a major factor in the disturbances of 1929, as it had been during the riots of 1921. The Commission believed that it would also be an important factor in all future disturbances.

Events and developments in the neighbouring Arab countries were influencing Palestinian Arabs. A substantial measure of self-government had been achieved by these countries even though their populations were not as advanced as the Palestinian Arabs. Transjordan became

'independent' in 1929, and Iraq was only three years from being independent. Both countries were, like Palestine, under British control. In Palestine, Arabs argued that had it not been for the Zionists they too would have become independent or would have at least been on their way to achieving independence. The Commission agreed that the Balfour Declaration made the situation in Palestine different and that the Arabs of Palestine had good reason to see the issue in those terms. It stated that Arab resentment of Jews was motivated by their conviction that the presence of Jews in Palestine was 'the obstacle to the fulfillment of their aspirations,'

According to the Commission, there was the feeling among Palestinian Arabs that Palestine was included in the British promise of independence to Hussein. Whether the feeling was justified or not is immaterial, said the Commission. What was important was that the feeling was genuine 'and no argument (was) likely to shake their belief.' Arab witnesses before the Commission tried to prove their argument by referring to an incident that took place during World War I. At the time, the British were trying to persuade Arabs serving in the Turkish army to desert and join the cause of the Allied Powers. They dropped leaflets from airplanes in areas within Palestine urging Arab soldiers to join in the fight against the Turks. According to the Commission, these leaflets were 'escape and come to us' kind of appeals addressed specifically 'to the Arab officers and soldiers in the Turkish Army *in Palestine*' and signed 'The British Army *in Palestine.*' The leaflets contained a proclamation by Hussein calling upon Arab soldiers and officers to 'Come and join us who are labouring for the sake of religion and freedom of the Arabs so that the Arab kingdom may again become what it was during the time of your fathers ... ' Many Arab officers and soldiers heeded the call and deserted. One of them was Subhi el-Khadra, who, as mentioned earlier, was a witness before the Commission and an important nationalist leader.

Arabs asked why British planes would drop these leaflets on Palestine and address them to Palestinians if Palestine was not intended to become part of the independent Arab Kingdom promised by the British. They argued that Palestinian Arabs, indeed other Arabs as well, would not have joined in the fight against their co-religionists, the Turks, had they known that British promises were nothing but ' ... a deception practised in the moment of her need by a great nation upon the credulity of a trusting and confiding people.' They also argued that at the time these leaflets were dropped they did not know a Jewish National Home was to be created in Palestine. Had they known the intentions of the

British they would not have fought on their side. For by doing so, they would in effect have agreed to the creation of a National Home 'for those whom they regard as an alien race in the country in which they have lived for thirteen hundred years.'

The Shaw Commission went back to the records of the Military Court which investigated the disturbances of 1920 to pick up the details of the leaflet affair. The Court had observed that the leaflets were effective in changing Arab attitudes from one of loyalty to the Turks to 'one of friendliness' to the British. According to the Court, there was no question that pro-British feelings among the Arabs were 'encouraged during the war by every kind of propaganda available to the War Office.' The propaganda went on even after the Balfour Declaration. The Commission stated that 'As late as June 1918, active recruiting was carried on in Palestine for the Sherifian Army (Hussein's Army) ... the recruits being given to understand that they were fighting in a national cause and to liberate their country from the Turks.' The Balfour Declaration was not mentioned to these Arab fighters, whose 'real impression' was 'that the British were going to set up an independent Arab State which would include Palestine.'

Arab witnesses reminded the Shaw Commission that the British not only did not fulfill the promise of independence for Palestine, they also failed to develop self-governing institutions there. Under the Turks, they at least had representation in the national parliament, guaranteed by the 1908 constitution. From the territory which was now Palestine six representatives sat in the Chamber of Deputies in the Capital. Under the British this right of representation did not exist at all.

According to these witnesses, the Turks also allowed a measure of local freedom. Although important functions were controlled by the central government, the provincial units were by and large autonomous. Provided he paid his taxes, the Arab peasant 'could feel that, through the exercise of his voting power, he had a voice in the control of his village, and indirectly through the system of secondary elections, in the control of the affairs of the larger administrative units up to the Ottoman Empire itself.' Arabs argued that in contrast the British now allowed self-government only in certain municipal areas and 'under strict supervision.'

The Commission pointed out that in spite of the Arab arguments the new system in Palestine was superior to the Turkish system, although the latter allowed greater representation. The existing British system with 'direct administration by a bureaucratic government is ... a considerable improvement on the system of government

which prevailed under the Turkish regime.' In other words, the British regime was more efficient and more functional than its predecessor.

The Commission also reminded the Arabs that if it were not for their uncooperative attitude towards the 1922 legislative proposal, there would now be adequate representation of people in the government of Palestine. To this reminder, the Arabs charged that the 1922 proposal was not genuinely representative and had only advisory functions. In addition, they argued, the concept of a Jewish National Home was inconsistent with the concept of self-government and was a serious obstacle to its development.

Both the Arabs and the Commission missed the point. Neither the Turkish system nor the British system allowed meaningful representation for the people of Palestine. The former was handicapped by its feudal structure and tax system, and the latter was restricted territorially to only a few local government units. Of course, there was no representation at the national level in the British systems of Palestine, and there were severe restrictions on voting at the local level.

The Zionists had their own arguments regarding the problem of self-government. They told the Commission that the Arabs exaggerated their case. They argued that the average Arab, particularly the *fellah*, had no interest in politics. Popular feelings against the Balfour Declaration were 'the result of propaganda promoted artificially and for personal ends by men who wish(ed) to exploit' the situation.

The Commission disagreed with the Zionists. It stated that 'the contention that the *fellah* takes no personal interest in politics is not supported by our experience in Palestine.' It observed that no one who travelled in Palestine or listened to the *fellah* or observed his interests could fail to come to the same conclusion or share the same experience as the Commission.

The Arabs of Palestine had a vigorous press, said the Commission. Fourteen newspapers were available to readers. Some of them reached the villages and were read avidly by those who could read, and read to those who could not - especially during the off-season periods 'when the soil cannot be tilled' and the *fellah* had time to spare. In any case, the Commission believed that 'the Arab *fellaheen* (plural of fellah) and villagers are ... probably more politically minded than many of the people of Europe.'

Of course, propaganda did aggravate popular feelings among the Arabs. However, the Arab leaders were not simply motivated by personal ambition as the Zionists claimed. According to the Commission, 'Arab leaders, as

a whole, have been inspired by a genuine feeling of patriotism.' In addition, the Commission stressed that the Arabs of Palestine were not as disunited as Zionists liked to believe. On the contrary 'The position today is that the Arab people of Palestine are united in demanding some measure of self-government.'

The problem, explained the Commission was that in Palestine 'the great majority of people have no recognized channel of approach to the Administration while a small minority of a different race (the Jews) have close and official relations with the Administration through the exercise of which the interests of that section of the people can be pressed upon the Government.'

The Commission pointed out that it was not only the Zionist Executive, the local representative of the Jews, which enjoyed close relations with the administration. The Zionist Organisation in London also had a similar connection with the London government. lt stated that it could understand Arab feelings on the subject and how Arabs could come to the conclusion that decisions were being made in Jerusalem and in London that 'subordinate their interest.'

Other Grievances

The Shaw Commission investigated four 'minor' grievances which had something to do with Arab feeling of frustration and alienation.

The first involved the government's policy of granting concessions to individuals and companies desiring to exploit the natural resources of the country or to construct projects of a utility nature. The 'Rutenberg Concession' and another concession granted to Moses Novemeysky were the subject of heated controversy. The first was designed to generate electricity for most of Palestine while the other proposed to extract salt from the waters of the Dead Sea. The two concessions were approved in 1921 and 1927 respectively.

The Arabs' objection was based on the belief that valuable natural resources were being 'handed over' to Jews, and on the belief that the profit from these enterprises would benefit only 'foreign capitalists.' Their position was that natural resources should be developed by the government for the benefit of the whole country. lf Jews were to undertake the task, then the government should make sure that profit beyond cost should be used for the benefit of the population as a whole.

The Commission did not think the government had the financial resources to undertake the work involved in the two concessions. Nor could the government borrow

without assuming exorbitant rates of interest. In the case of the Novemeysky concession, the activity involved was speculative, requiring the development of extensive marketing facilities. The government, stated the Commission, could not properly undertake business of a speculative nature.

The Commission reached the conclusion that the Arab complaint was not 'well-founded.' It observed that the development of natural resources by Jews might well prove to be beneficial to all sections of the population.

The second Arab grievance involved the status of a number of Arabs who were born in Palestine but residing abroad. The government had refused to grant them Palestinian citizenship because they had left the country before 1919. They were abroad as stateless persons without the protection of any government.

Arabs pointed to the irony of a British policy which allowed Jews, who were not born in Palestine, to become citizens while Arabs born in the country but who resided in foreign countries could not. To the Arabs, this was an example of British inconsistency. 'Birth rights' were given to aliens while they were denied to persons truly born in Palestine.

British officials explained the policy in terms of their desire not to create 'a large class of persons' who could claim British protection while permanently residing abroad. They argued that the law of Palestine allowed these Arabs to return to their native land as immigrants claiming the same rights as the Jewish immigrants. The Commission saw no reason to reject the British explanation. It came to the conclusion that this Arab complaint was also 'not well-founded.'

The tax structure of Palestine was the third issue that stirred strong resentment among the Arabs. The Arabs claimed that taxes were too high because the Jewish National Home was a heavy burden upon the country as a whole, creating additional demands for costly public services. They argued that if it were not for the Jewish National Home, there would be no need for large security forces and the expenses that they incurred. There was a strong feeling among Arabs that they were being forced to pay for the Jewish home in their own country.

Of course, the Zionists disagreed, and they argued that capital totalling $1,277,000,000 had come to the country because of the Jewish National Home. In addition, Jews paid proportionately more taxes than the Arabs thereby contributing to services shared by the Arabs.

The Commission agreed with the Zionist argument regarding Jewish contribution to the national revenue but only if revenues from railway, posts and telegraph were excluded. It stated that this contribution was 'so high

as to disprove the Arab contention.' The Commission was also satisfied that material benefits did accrue to Arabs from the importation of Jewish capital.

But it also agreed with the Arab argument that taxes were high, especially in terms of 'the low standard of living ... among large sections of the Arab people.' However, the burden was not as heavy as it seemed, it concluded; the proceeds from taxes were well-spent on public services that benefited a large portion of the Arab population.

Finally, there was the issue of remitting part of a debt owed by the Jewish city of Tel Aviv to the government of Palestine. The Arabs argued that the cancelling of the debt was another example of government favouritism towards the Jews.

According to a memorandum submitted by the Palestine Treasury Department to the Commission, the Tel-Aviv council had run into 'embarrassing' financial troubles early in 1926. The difficulties were 'due to unsound finance ... in embarking upon works, largely unproductive, and services in excess of its means ...' However, the government found it 'imperative' to assist the council 'in order to pay arrears of wages to the police and employees and to satisfy pressing creditors.' By October 31, 1929, the government had paid Tel-Aviv $432,335. The money was in the form of a loan, but when it later became clear that Tel Aviv could not pay back its debt, the government decided to 'write-off' the sum of $367,508. In making the decision, the government was influenced by 'the fact that Tel Aviv did not in the past receive government grants proportionate to other municipalities.' A condition to the write-off was that the Zionist Executive would agree to cancel its loan to the city in the amount of $144,347. Other Jewish organisations were also expected to cancel debts totalling $45,553.

According to the Commission's own calculations, about half the amount by which the debt was reduced fell upon the Arabs. However, taking into consideration the proportionately higher Jewish contribution to government revenues, and the fact that Tel-Aviv had not received its share of grants, it concluded that the Arab complaint did not constitute 'a serious grievance.'

The Mandate Weaknesses

The crucial issue in the tense relations between Arabs and Jews in Palestine had to do with the contradictions in the Mandate system. The Commission attempted to explain these contradictions.

The Balfour Declaration, said the Commission,

contained two sections: one promising the Jews a National Home in Palestine, and the other promising that this National Home would not prejudice the civil and religious rights of non-Jews. The same two sections were embodied in the Mandate document, the legal instrument by which the British administration in Palestine as well as the British government in London were bound.

'Read the whole declaration as you will,' said the Commission, 'and you will find it to be 'a guarded statement.' How to reconcile the one section with the other was a problem that haunted every administration since the beginning of the British mandate. Almost every policy formulated by the government reflected that difficulty.

Among the examples of these difficulties cited by the Commission, the problem of protecting Arab tenants and cultivators from becoming dispossessed as a result of Jewish purchases of land was probably the most illustrative. On the one hand, one could argue that Jews should not be allowed to buy large estates because there was no alternative land to which dispossessed Arab tenants could migrate to, and because these tenants had 'an elementary right to be guarded against removal from the land on which they depend for their existence.' If removed, one could argue, their 'rights and position,' protected under Article 6 of the Mandate, would be endangered and the government would legally be obligated to 'provide them with an effective safeguard.'

On the other hand, 'the adoption of the line of policy suggested by the Arabs must have the inevitable result of putting an end to the Jewish purchase of land ...' It could be argued that such a policy would contradict the same article which also obligated the government to 'encourage ... close settlement by Jews on the land ...'

Another illustration of these difficulties was the policy relating to the establishment of 'staple industries in Palestine.' According to the Commission, staple industries were essential to absorb the large number of Jewish immigrants into the economic life of the country. It was argued that, without natural resources like coal and other minerals, these industries could not be created 'unless in their infancy at least they are offered a substantial measure of protection.' Such measures would bring into play 'all the old familiar arguments on the tariff issue ...' In Palestine, the issue was aggravated by the fact that industry was largely in Jewish hands. Consequently, the British administration in Palestine found itself in the embarrassing situation of having to deal with a problem that 'embraces racial as well as economic issues ...'

The Commission came to the conclusion that 'it is ... incontestable that difficulties inherent in the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate are factors of supreme importance in the consideration of the Palestine problem.'

In 1922, Winston Churchill tried to resolve the difficulties arising from the inconsistencies in the Declaration and the Mandate, but his statement (the Churchill Memorandum) 'was designed as a corrective to the aspirations ... of Jewry rather than as a definition of the rights of the non-Jewish sections of the community in Palestine.' Consequently, 'Mr Churchill's statement failed to remove the uncertainty which in 1922 prevailed as to the future conduct of policy in Palestine.'

The 'uncertainty' had been the product of two factors, said the Commission. First, no section of public opinion in Palestine appreciated or recognised 'The difficulties inherent in the task of ... government.' Both Arabs and Jews failed to appreciate 'the dual nature of the policy which the Palestine Government have to administer.'

Secondly, there was the problem of Zionist deviation 'from the undertaking given by the Zionist Organisation in 1922 that they would conduct their policy in conformity with Mr Churchill's statement.' There was ample evidence to prove the point that Jews were not living up to their promise of 1922. Sir John Campbell, who was commissioned by the Zionists themselves, reported 'that in the matter of immigration there has been a serious departure by the Jewish authorities from the doctrine accepted by the Zionist Organisation in 1922 that immigration should be regulated by the economic capacity of Palestine to absorb new arrivals.' Also, he said, 'leaders of important sections of Jewish opinion are now strongly opposed to the development of self-government in that country, which was a cardinal element in the programme of policy laid down in 1922.' Finally, the violation of the policy was obvious in the resolution passed by the Sixteenth Zionist Congress, which met in Zurich in August of 1929.

The Commission observed that this violation of British policy by Jews was 'known to the Arabs in Palestine' who became apprehensive about the future of their country. These Arabs were also aware 'that the Zionist Organisation, through pressure at home, can influence the acts of His Majesty's Government ...' The Commission detected a strong resentment on the part of the Palestinian Arabs to ' ... the present position in which, while they, a preponderating element in the population, have no means of direct access to His Majesty's Government, the present Jewish Agency through its head office in London can, and is frequently known to, make representations to the Secretary of State for the Colonies

without first submitting these through the High Commission.'

The Commission urged the British government to resolve the problem of contradictions in the Mandate system or at least clarify the ambiguities once and for all. The London government's clarification should be in terms of a concrete policy. What was needed most, which the Churchill Memorandum failed to satisfy, was a 'more positive definition of the meaning which they (the British) attach to the second section of the Balfour Declaration,' which provided for the protection of the rights of non-Jews.

The Arab Worker

The conditions and problems of the Arab worker were best stated in the report of Sir John Hope-Simpson from which the information in the section is derived. (5) Hope-Simpson was appointed by the London government to provide expert opinion on the problems of immigration, land settlement, and development. In essence, he was to test the findings of the Shaw Commission.

His report of October 1930 made it clear that the Arab worker was in a very bad condition, suffering from unemployment and low pay. The latter problem had nothing to do with Jewish economic activity. It was the product of the weaknesses of the traditional economic system, which the Arabs still used. However, the problem of unemployment was very much related to Jewish economic activities. Specifically, it was a by-product of Jewish settlement of land and Jewish methods of colonisation.

According to Hope-Simpson, the older Jewish communities were organised in such a way as to benefit both Jews and Arabs. They were developed largely by the effort of the Palestine Jewish Colonisation Association, known by the French initials of PICA, beginning in 1882. The generous contribution of Baron Edmond de Rothschild kept them going. In 1930, they numbered thirty-four colonies.

Until after World War I, the PICA colonies raised no protests among Arabs. According to Hope-Simpson, the old policy of the Association was friendly to the Arabs and the colonies were useful to them. At the time, relations between Arabs and colonists were good. 'It is ... very noticeable, in travelling through PICA villages, to see the friendliness of the relations which exist between Jew and Arab. It is a common sight to see an Arab sitting in the verandah of a Jewish house.'

The situation in the Zionist colonies was 'entirely different.' The evidence brought out by Hope-Simpson

strongly supported the Arab contention that their main difficulty was not with the Zionist because he was Jewish but because, from the beginning of Zionist colonisation, he pursued separatist policies that excluded them entirely from his planning and his activity.

Hope-Simpson uncovered evidence that Zionist discrimination against Arab workers was an iron-clad policy. For instance, Article 3 of the constitution of the Jewish Agency, ratified at Zurich on August 14, 1929, stipulated that 'The Agency shall promote agricultural colonisation based on Jewish labour, and in all works and undertakings carried out or furthered by the Agency, it shall be deemed to be a matter of principle that Jewish labour shall be employed ... ' The same article stated that 'land is to be acquired as Jewish property ... the title of the land acquired is to be taken in the name of the Jewish National Fund, to the end that the same shall be held as the inalienable property of the Jewish people.'

In leasing property, the Jewish National Fund (Keren Kayemeth), would deal only with Jews, who were required to sign a standard lease which stipulated that ' ... the lessee undertakes to execute all works connected with the cultivation of the holding only with Jewish labour.' The contract required the payment of ten Palestinian pounds (about $49.00 in 1930) for each violation of this provision. After three violations 'The Fund may apply the right of restitution of the holding, without paying any compensation whatever.' The lease also stipulated that the fund's property could never be held 'by any but a Jew.' Even if the holder died and his heir was a non-Jew, the Fund retained 'the right of restitution.'

When the Jewish Palestine Foundation Fund advanced money to Jewish settlers in the colonies, the latter had to sign an agreement article 7 of which obligated them to hire 'Jewish workmen only.' In the type of colonies known as Emek colonies, article 11 of the agreement signed by the settler required him 'not to hire any outside labour except Jewish labour.'

Hope-Simpson pointed out that the Zionists practised discriminatory labour policies while proclaiming in public that they were for fair labour policies. 'Attempts are constantly being made to establish the advantage which Jewish settlement has brought to the Arab. The most lofty sentiments are ventilated at public meetings and in Zionist propaganda.' For instance, the 1921 Zionist congress passed a resolution which 'solemnly declared the desire of the Jewish people to live with the Arab people in relations of friendship and mutual respect, and, together with the Arab people, to develop the homeland common to both into a prosperous community which would ensure the

growth of the peoples.' This resolution was frequently quoted to create an image of Zionist benevolence and good will towards the Arabs of Palestine. The Jewish Federation of Labour pursued labour policies that discriminated against Arabs, but concealed this fact from the public. It had told the Shaw Commission, as Simpson reports, that 'The Jewish Labour Movement considers the Arab population as an integral part of this country' and that 'Jewish immigrants (who come to this country ... regard the Arab working man as their compatriot and fellow worker, whose needs are their needs and whose future is their future.'

However, when Hope-Simpson confronted the Executive of the Federation with the inconsistencies between their public pronouncements and their practices, they 'were perfectly frank on the subject.' They explained their 'Jews only' labour practices in terms of the desire of Jewish contributors to the Fund to help Jews only. They argued that if jobs were open to competition in the labour market, Jewish workers would 'fall to the lower standard of the Arab.'

Hope-Simpson accepted these arguments as 'thoroughly logical,' but said that the labour practices of the Federation were illegal since they violated article 6 of the Mandate which required that Jewish immigration and Jewish settlement of land should not prejudice non-Jews. Hope-Simpson wrote that 'the principle of the persistent and deliberate boycott of Arab labour in the Zionist colonies is not only contrary to the provisions of the Mandate, but is in addition a constant and increasing source of danger to the country.'

What disturbed Hope-Simpson even more was the Federation's use of 'every effort' to extend its policy of discrimination to the colonies of the PICA. 'Great pressure is being brought to bear on the old PICA colonies in the Maritime Plain and its neighbourhood - pressure which in one instance at least has compelled police intervention.' The Federation's pressure tactics achieved 'some considerable success.'

Hope-Simpson believed Zionist colonisation was causing Palestinian land to be 'extraterritorialised.' The land, he asserted 'ceases to be land from which the Arab can gain any advantage either now or at any time in the future.' As a result, 'The Arabs discount the professions of friendship and good will on the part of the Zionists ... '

The Arab Fellah (Peasant)

The Arabic word *fellah* means peasant, but Arabs use the word in different ways. Sometimes they use it to

distinguish 'rural' from 'urban' persons. At other times, they use it in reference to a small farmer who either owns the farm or just works on it, in which case he is usually called *harrath*. In any case, a *fellah* is someone who derives his livelihood from farming. In the 1920s, he was in a situation as desperate as the Arab worker.

Hope-Simpson summed up the problem of the Arab *fellah* in the following words: 'He has no capital for his farm. He is ... heavily in debt. His rent is rising, he has to pay very heavy taxes, and the rate of interest on his loan is incredibly high.' Yet this *fellah* was 'intelligent and hardworking, and pitifully anxious to improve his standard of cultivation and his standard of life.'

Whether the *fellah* owned his farm or not, he had no working capital. On the average, the amount invested on a farm was no more than twenty-seven Palestinian pounds or, using the 1930 exchange rate, about $131.00. And if we add what the *fellah* owned in livestock (sheep, cows, goats, and fowl), the investment should average about $430.00.

The *fellah's* gross annual income from a farm of 48 acres (120 *dunoms*) was about $195.00 (40 Palestinian pounds). From this amount he had to pay $49.00 in taxes known as *tithe*. Not accounting for the expenses he paid for rent and for feeding his animals, he was left with $146.00 to care for his family.

If we accept these figures, which Hope-Simpson derived from Zionist sources, it should be obvious that the Arab *fellah* had no money to spare or use on improvements of his farm. According to Hope-Simpson, the *fellah* was 'neither lazy nor unintelligent,' and was a 'competent and capable agriculturalist.' He was painfully aware of the desperate need for improving his farm. Given the chance of learning better methods of farming and the capital needed for improvements 'he would rapidly improve his position.'

The *fellah's* most serious problem was indebtedness. According to Hope-Simpson, the average debt per family was about $131.00, and 30 per cent was not an uncommon rate of interest. Credit was usually based on the *ashara khamstash*, or the ten-to-fifteen, system. This meant for every ten Palestinian pounds borrowed during the sowing time, fifteen pounds were expected back at harvest time. Many debts carried interest rates higher than the common rate of 30 per cent.

There was a government ordinance which fixed the interest rate at nine per cent, but the law was no more than 'a dead letter.' The moneylender found ways to circumvent it, and debtors were afraid to use it for fear they might incense the moneylender and lose their credit.

The problem of debt was so common that the *fellah* almost never had cash for repayment. He either went deeper in debt or sold his land and hoped some cash would be left after repaying his debt. Some sold the land very cheaply, usually to the moneylender. According to Hope-Simpson, 'it is no exaggeration to state that the *fellah* population as a class is hopelessly bankrupt.'

Until 1928, an additional burden to the *fellah* was the payment of the *tithe* tax, which 'was based on the average yields and prices of the four preceding years.' Unfortunately for the *fellah*, the government assessed the value of his yields on the basis of prices in the urban market rather than in the village market which was always lower.

And if taxes, debts and lack of capital were not enough, the problem of scarcity of land haunted his children, since it meant there would be no future for them. This last problem was caused by the increase in the *fellah* population, a product of effective government sanitation and health programmes and, initially, the end of the Turkish conscription system. People had to divide and subdivide the available land. Those who could not find new land to buy tries to rent it, but the demand was so great that rents were too high. Hope-Simpson reported that in many cases the *fellah* had to offer 50 per cent of the produce to get the land. However, the most common rate was 30 per cent of the produce plus the *tithe* tax.

If the *fellah* could not survive these harsh conditions he either sold the land to pay his debts or went to prison. Supreme Court figures for a two-month period in 1930 showed that 2,677 warrants were issued and 599 persons were actually imprisoned for non-payment of debt. Since these figures did not include the large districts of Jaffa and Haifa, they were high for a small country like Palestine with a population in mid-1930 of 921,699.

The Magistrate's Court of Haifa reported that in its sub-district of 67,800 inhabitants it had 8,701 proceedings for non-payment of debt while 2,756 applications for imprisonment were filed. Hope-Simpson calculated that 64.2 per cent of the families in the sub-district were involved in these proceedings. The percentage was much higher because 20 per cent of the population of the sub-district were Jews, who usually did not use the court to resolve debt problems. These Jews had their own agencies and associations, and when they had debt troubles they usually went to their own authorities to resolve the conflict. Also, Jewish debt problems were not great because there were well-financed organisations to satisfy their financial needs.

The British administration in Palestine reported that 29.4 per cent of the 86,980 rural Arab families were

landless.(6) Although landlessness was partly caused by factors that had nothing to do with Jews, Jewish colonisation was important. it increased the demand for land, thereby making it expensive to buy or rent. Furthermore, the exclusiveness of Zionist land and labour policies effectively kept the Arabs out of Jewish enterprise and agriculture.

The government of Palestine was not very helpful. In 1930, after thirteen years in Palestine, the British administration could only tell Hope-Simpson that it was in the process of reviewing the tax structure and other problems of the *fellah* and that it hoped it would soon implement programmes for his benefit.

Yet the *fellah's* desperate situation could not be improved without the government. The traditional Turkish economic and social system still influenced his life. For centuries, the system had ignored economic developments, and as long as the government got its taxes and people did not endanger public security the Turks usually saw no need for economic planning or involvement. The socio-economic structure was such that individual initiative and energy were perpetually locked into oppressive traditions, and there was urgent need of fundamental reforms to free the *fellah* from centuries of social bondage and economic deprivation. Between 1920 and 1930, reforms were either ill-conceived or too sluggish to make a substantial difference in the *fellah's* standard of living or his social life.

The government of Palestine operated under the principle that Palestine should pay its way - be 'dependent on its own resources.'(7) Government sources revealed vital information on this subject. In the 1920s, there were surpluses in the yearly budgets, sometimes amounting to substantial sums.(8) Grants-in-aid by the London government were limited to paying, during the first two years, the cost of the special forces known as the Gendarmerie, and to paying Transjordan's frontier forces, whose services had nothing to do with Palestine. And Colonial Development Funds, which were available for Palestine, were not used until fiscal year 1933-34.(9)

Obviously, Palestine did not cost London much. The surplus from its own revenues should have been spent to deal with the *fellah's* predicament since he constituted the majority in the Arab population. Unfortunately, the government continued its budgetary policies even after the Hope-Simpson Report. According to the government's own records, budgetary surpluses were 'substantial' between the years 1932 and 1936.(10)

Article 22 of the League's Covenant had stipulated that the 'well-being and development' of the Mandate peoples formed 'a sacred trust of civilisation.' Being the

Mandatory power in Palestine, this well-being was not only a sacred trust but Britain's legal responsibility. Although Palestine was better off under the British than it was under the Turks, the British did not, obviously, live up to their responsibilities.

British political responsibilities were not matched by British financial generosity. The assumption of the Covenant was that the Mandatory power would help the Mandate people stand on their own feet. In Palestine, the British wanted to govern but did not want to pay. In effect, the British attitude left the Arabs of Palestine *economically* largely on their own, suffering from an antiquated social system and a large-scale Jewish colonisation that cared very little about Arabs. Even the League's Mandate Commission worried about Jewish colonisation. 'In such economic and social conditions as prevail in Palestine, a scheme of colonisation undertaken on so vast a scale was bound, as soon as it began to develop independently of the active intervention of the public authorities, to cause a profound disturbance in the lives of that section of the population which was not concerned with the movement.'(11)

Neglected by the British, unbalanced and alienated by the self-centred schemes of the Zionists, and chained by the evils of the traditional system, the Palestinian Arab began to look for revolution as the only way out of his impossible predicament.

Conclusion

In June 1930, the Permanent Mandate Commission of the League of Nations met to discuss the 1929 disturbances. (12) In these meetings, it criticised both the British government and the Shaw Commission. It blamed the British government for failing to adopt 'a more active policy which would develop the country's capacity to receive and absorb immigrants in large numbers with no ill results.' Because of this failure, the Jews had to organise their own colonisation and the Arabs had to suffer the consequences: ' ... had the mandatory Government concerned itself more closely with the social and economic adaptation of the Arab population to the new conditions due to Jewish immigration, it would have served the interests of both sections of the population.'

Being an arm of the League of Nations, the Commission could not question the validity of the Balfour Declaration, which was embodied in the Mandate Agreement and approved by the League. Consequently, it could not deal with difficulties of reconciling the document's two sections, dealing respectively with the Jewish National

Home and the rights and position of non-Jews in Palestine. The Commission assumed the two goals were compatible, and their mutual fulfillment possible.

Yet, the British found them impossible to reconcile. Any fair assessment of Britain's position requires recognition of the contradictions inherent in the Balfour Declaration; and if the British were to be blamed, it was mainly for putting themselves into such an awkward position by setting up impossible objectives. No administration could have reconciled, in terms of practical policy, a Jewish Nationalism intent on creating a Jewish State through immigration and land settlement, and an Arab nationalism that saw the Balfour Declaration and the Zionist objective as a negation of the basic rights of the indigenous population.

Yet, the Commission was right in criticising the British government for not affecting a massive programme of development in Palestine. Such a programme would have increased the economic capacity of the country and decreased the negative economic impact of Jewish colonisation. It might even have lessened some of the frictions between Arabs and Jews, if it were aimed at integrating the two communities. Still, given the intentions of the Zionists, the British could not have integrated the two communities without risking Zionist opposition. They would have had to superimpose their programmes, and force the Zionists to change their policies and their aims.

The Mandate Commission's criticism of the Shaw Commission's report was largely limited to the accounts of the 1929 Arab 'riots.' It disagreed with the report's conclusion that the disturbances were unpremeditated and unbidden or that they were not directed against the British. Moreover, the Mandate Commissions entertained 'doubts whether the kindly judgement passed by the majority of the Commission of Inquiry (the Shaw Commission) upon the attitude of the Arab leaders, both political and religious, was fully justified ...'

It seemed that while the Shaw Commission insisted on hard facts, before incriminating the Arab leaders, the Mandate Commission was satisfied with less evidence and with the mere employment of 'common sense.' Perhaps the difference was in the fact that the Shaw Commission was chaired by a judge, who was influenced by judicial principles which presumed the innocence of defendants and which demanded hard evidence before making adverse judgements. Furthermore, the Mandate Commission did not itself investigate the disturbances. It met in Switzerland, far removed from where the disturbances occurred.

The Shaw Commission's conclusions regarding the other issues, immigration, land settlement, self-government etc., remained intact, perhaps because these conclusions

were reinforced by the Hope-Simpson report,(13) 'the first detailed attempt to assess the population capacity of Palestine.'(14)

Like the Shaw Commission, Hope-Simpson believed that there was not enough land in Palestine to support the increasing rural population at a decent standard of living. Nor was there enough unoccupied state land for Jewish colonisation: 'It is an error to imagine that the government is in possession of large areas of vacant lands which could be made available for Jewish settlement.' With the exception of the large underdeveloped tracts already owned by the Jews, there was no more land in Palestine for the settlement of the Jewish immigrants.

Hope-Simpson's basic conclusion was that the Mandate could not be carried out without the massive development of Palestinian agriculture. He believed this could be achieved through large scale irrigation, the abolition of Arab Mesha's (communal) system, the institution of intensive agriculture, the encouragement of Arab co-operative societies, especially credit institutions, and the development of education. Hope-Simpson pointed out that 'the educational budget is far too small for the requirements of the country.'

Hope-Simpson also concluded that in the short run the country could not absorb 'agricultural' immigration, but in the long run it could take 20,000 such immigrants provided massive programmes for the development of the *whole* country were undertaken. He was sure there was an Arab unemployment problem and believed 'it is not right that Jewish workmen from other countries should be imported to fill existing posts.'

However, work in industry was a different matter. Hope-Simpson believed the Arab industrial worker could not be in a worse situation if Jewish workers were imported 'since Jewish capital was only imported with the definite object of employing Jewish labour.'

The Mandate Commission's major criticism of Hope-Simpson's report related to his estimate of the area of cultivable land: 'the figures ... represented a drop of almost 40 per cent on most previous estimates.'(15) The Zionists charged that Hope-Simpson's estimates were too low, thereby making his conclusions about the country's economic capacity very doubtful.(16)

Even if Hope-Simpson's estimates were low, his conclusions were not basically different from those of his predecessors who employed larger estimates. For instance, the Shaw Commission and Sir John Campbell agreed that Jewish immigration had exceeded the absorptive capacity of the country, and were also critical of Zionist policies. Campbell was hired by the Zionists themselves, and he could not be accused of pro-Arab bias. Of course, the

Zionists had the right to disagree with him, but one must remember that they had interest in larger estimates.

Yet the quarrel over the absorptive capacity of Palestine could have been resolved had the issue been tackled from a different angle. True, Palestine's absorptive capacity in 1930 was very limited. Jewish immigration had reached its limits, and Jewish colonisation had unsettling effects upon Arabs. But Palestine had a *potential* for a greater capacity, like most 'developing' countries. This is why Sir John Campbell, the Shaw Commission and Hope-Simpson urged the undertaking of programmes for the development of Palestinian agriculture. The task required large amounts of money, but the Zionists had the technology and the money to do the job. Unfortunately, their clannish policies were directed toward a separate National Home. Hence the government inherited the responsibility. Of course, the Arabs of Palestine could not have done it because they lacked the money and were handicapped by the political threat posed by Zionism.

It is fair to say that Jewish colonisation was not handled properly. The government that issued the Balfour Declaration should not have left immigration and colonisation entirely under private control of the Zionists because the latter were too zealous to assess properly the consequences of their design upon the whole country.

Politically, however, Jewish colonisation was handicapped by Zionist determination to transform Palestine, as quickly as possible, into a Jewish State. Naturally the Arabs refused to acquiese to such a political project, one that would relegate them to the status of a minority in a land that they had occupied for centuries. Consequently, instead of becoming a heaven for Jews and Arabs, the Holy Land was being transformed to a hell in which neither side could live in peace and tranquility.

Chapter Notes

1. See *Report of the Commission On the Palestine Disturbances of August, 1929,* cmd. 3530 (1930).
2. Cmd. 3229 (1928).
3. John Marlow, *The Seat of Pilate* (London: The Cresset Press, 1959), p.114.
4. At the time, one Palestinian pound equalled one English pound. In 1929, an English pound was equal to about $4.86. In this book dollar amounts were based on exchange rates derived from *Whitaker Almanac*, London, 1929-48.
5. *Report on Immigration, Land Settlement, and Development,* cmd. 3686 (1930).
6. *Statement of Policy By His Majesty's Government In the United Kingdom,* cmd. 3692 (1930).
7. Palestine Government, *A Survey of Palestine 1945-46,* vol.1, p.123.
8. Excess of revenues over expenditures occurred in the fiscal years 1921, 1923, 1924, 1925, 1926, and 1929. By March 1932 the total surplus in the budget was 730,772 Palestinian pounds. See *Report of the Government to the Council of the League of Nations for the year 1932,* Colonial No.82, p.131.
9. *A Survey of Palestine,* Vol. 1, p.126.
10. *A Survey of Palestine,* Vol.1, p.126. By March 1937 the surplus balance was 4,835,129 Palestinian pounds. Of this surplus 4,104,357 Palestinian pounds were accumulated between 1932 and 1936. See table in *The Report of the Government to the Council of The League of Nations for the year 1937,* Colonial No.146, p.173.
11. League of Nations, Permanent Mandate Commission, *Minutes of the Seventeenth (extraordinary) Session held at Geneva from June 3 to June 21, 1930,* C.355, M.147, 1930, VI, p.142.
12. League of Nations, *Minutes of the Seventeenth (extraordinary) Session held at Geneva from June 3 to June 21, 1930, including the Report of the Commission to the Council,* C.355, M.147, 1930, VI, pp.137-146.
13. Cmd. 3686 (1930).
14. The Royal Institute of International Affairs, *Great Britain and Palestine 1915-1936* (London: Oxford University Press, 1937), p.50.
15. *Ibid.,* p.53.
16. Jewish Agency for Palestine, *Memorandum on the Palestine White Paper of October 1930,* November, 1930.

Chapter 3

THE ARABS RESORT TO ARMS

The 1920s established a cycle that was to be repeated in the 1930s. Violence followed the failure of diplomacy; commissions of inquiry investigated the causes of violence; and reports came out of these commissions followed by official statements of policy. At that point the pattern would be repeated.

Whenever decisions on Palestine were made in international conferences by foreign powers, the Arabs of Palestine were either ignored or misunderstood and underestimated, and they invariably lost the diplomatic battle for what they considered to be their rights and legitimate claims. This was obvious in the Hussein-McMahon Correspondence, the Sykes-Picot Agreement, the Balfour Declaration, the Paris Peace Conference, the San Remo Conference, and the Mandate Agreement. Also, in all of these matters, except the first two, Jewish-Zionist influence worked against Arab interests as the Arabs understood them.

Whenever an impartial authority investigated the conflict in Palestine, the findings were sympathetic to the Arabs and showed greater understanding of their plight. But these authorities lacked political power and their influence on subsequent events was almost nil. This was evident with the reports of the King-Crane Commission and with the three commissions of inquiry of 1920, 1921 and 1929. It was also evident with the report of Hope-Simpson and in some of the conclusions of Sir John Campbell.

The only way the Arabs were able to influence British policy was through armed rebellion, but the influence was minimal, especially when rebellions were brief. After the unrest of 1920 and 1921, the Churchill Memorandum was written to conciliate the Arabs. And in 1930, after the more serious unrest of 1929, the British government issued a White paper to allay Arab fears by promising developmental programmes. However, neither the 1922 Memorandum nor the 1930 policy changed the

status quo. It took another three-year revolution, from 1936 until 1939, for the Arabs to force a drastic change in a situation which favoured the Zionist Jews.

In almost every instance, we see another important element. When calm had been restored and the Arabs stopped fighting, Zionist-Jewish groups went to work on the London government. A period of intense diplomatic activity followed, and the Zionists usually got what they wanted. Their victories showed in the increase in the statistics of immigration. It was clear that the basis of Zionist-Jewish success was good organisation, good finances, the support of Jewish groups and allies, and the manipulation of British weaknesses, especially those of the political system. There was no doubt that the British government was highly susceptible to pressure by organised minorities, especially on issues where no counterbalance from inside could effectively develop.

Arab influence was 'external' to the British system, which usually did not respond to it until British national interests were threatened by an Arab revolution, by the heavy financial burdens of British foreign commitments, or by an international crisis in which Britain vitally needed Arab friendship.

Gradually, the pattern led Arabs to ask if violence were not the only way to achieve what they considered to be their rights. They could almost say 'when you cannot use the ballot to influence the British you must use the bullet.' This saying was to become a firm principle of radical Palestinian-Arab nationalism. To persuade their people that violence was the only way to influence 'outside' parties dealing with their political future, all that radical leaders had to do was to have them read from British documents their history between the two world wars.

Much later, the principle of armed resistance was to be adopted to deal with any Western power replacing British influence in the area. The radical leaders of Palestinian-Arab nationalism could not later differentiate between Britain and the United States, for instance. For them the bullet was the ballot of Arab diplomacy regardless of the identity of the foreign power involved. As long as that power had anything to do with what they considered to be matters of 'national' destiny, force was the only option available. Generally, therefore, the Palestinian-Arab nationalists were, from the beginning, inclined to suspect diplomacy and favour the use of the gun to achieve their 'national rights.'

Events Preceding the 1936 Revolution

The Arabs participated in the diplomatic activity that followed the 1929 disturbances. A delegation appointed by the Arab Executive arrived in London March 30, 1930, to discuss the future of Palestine. Neither the demands of the delegation nor the British reply were different from earlier confrontations. Arabs desired an end to Jewish immigration; they wanted a British declaration making Arab land inalienable; and they wanted the creation of a democratic state on the basis of proportional representation of Arabs and Jews, Britain told the delegation that their demands were contrary to Mandate law and therefore could not be accepted,

The 1930 White Paper: In spite of the failure of the negotiations, the British government went ahead and issued the White Paper of 1930.(1) The paper stressed 'the double undertaking' required by the Mandate Agreement and the British difficulty of balancing its parts. It complained that both Jews and Arabs were reluctant to help the government carry out its responsibilities, and expressed government determination 'to continue to administer Palestine in accordance with the terms of the Mandate' since this was ' ... an international obligation from which there can be no receding.' The paper recognised that there had been 'certain administrative defects' and 'special economic problems' connected with Palestine that needed to be remedied in order to attend to the welfare of all sections of the population. But it suggested no solutions. In fact, on immigration it reaffirmed the 'economic absorptive capacity' formula. However, it did recognise the 'landlessness' problem of the Arab *fellah* and the need for a policy for land development. As to the financial responsibilities of Britain in Palestine, it stated that it was British policy 'that Palestine should be self-supporting.' However, without making a definite commitment to contribute from its own resources to Palestinian revenues, the British government promised 'earnest consideration' of the country's financial needs.

There was a British attempt to introduce changes even before the issuance of the White Paper. In March 1930, the Palestinian police force was organised and enlarged, and special measures were introduced to protect isolated Jewish settlements. In May the government decided to withhold the undistributed balance of immigration certificates, allegedly to give Hope-Simpson time to complete his report on the problems of immigration and settlement. The real reason might have been Arab excitement and the need to allow calm and peace to develop after the 1929 disturbances.

In the month after the issuance of the White Paper,

there were signs that the British government was becoming aware of the need to spend more money on development. It announced that a loan of 2.5 million pounds (about 21 million dollars) would soon be raised 'to increase the general productivity of Palestine.'(2) Unfortunately, the government failed to raise the loan.

Later, in December 1931, the British appointed Lewis French, a respected expert, to head the Palestine Development Office. However, the new director found his job extremely difficult because neither the Jewish Agency nor the Arab Executive would cooperate with him. In the same year, another expert, C.F. Strickland, was sent to Palestine to promote the growth of cooperative societies, particularly among the Arabs; but he, too, failed. Nevertheless, the two men had ideas about reform, and, like their predecessors, urged action and changes in the Palestinian situation.

Zionist-Jewish Pressure: Unfortunately, consideration of reform became entangled with Zionist-Jewish pressures, both in Palestine and in London. Although the 1930 White Paper introduced no substantial change in the *status quo,* it was at least an attempt to soothe Arab feelings. According to an official British source 'the tone of the Statement of Policy inclined even more towards the Arab side than had the Shaw or Hope-Simpson reports.'(3) But the White Paper was not acceptable to the Zionists. They argued that the paper was more than a soothing of feelings; and Weizmann believed it was 'inconsistent with the terms of the Mandate and in vital particulars marks the reversal of the policy hitherto followed by His Majesty's Government with regard to the Jewish National Home.'(4)

On the issue of the White Paper, Weizmann resigned as President of the Zionist Organisation and as President of the Jewish Agency. Lord Melchett, the Chairman of the Political Committee of the Jewish Agency, and Felix Warburg, Chairman of the Agency's Administrative Committee, also resigned. What followed was high pressure politics.

Pro-Zionist forces were mobilised, and the conservative opposition parliamentary party was utilised to exert pressure on the government. On October 30, 1930, three leaders of the opposition, Stanley Baldwin, Neville Chamberlain, and L.C. Amery published a letter in *The Times* accusing the government of pursuing a policy inconsistent with the Mandate. (Baldwin and Chamberlain would later become prime ministers.) Also in a letter to *The Times*, Lord Hailsham and Sir John Simon criticised the White Paper on legal grounds.(5) Even General J.C. Smuts, a founder of the League of Nations and a former prime minister of South Africa, was brought into the

battle, sending a telegram protesting the policy.

One may consult Weizmann's *Trial and Error* as a help in understanding Zionist pressure politics during this episode.(6) Weizmann believed that Lord Passfield, the Colonial Secretary, was unfriendly to the Zionists. (The White Paper was known by his name.) He had refused to meet with Weizmann and had shown irritation with Zionist influence and activity. Weizmann then arranged to see the Secretary's wife. This unconventional tactic showed the dedication and the persistence of the Zionists, who would go to great lengths to attain their goals. It turned out that Lady Passfield was not very knowledgeable about the problem of Palestine. She demonstrated unusual naivety when she remarked to Weizmann that she could not understand 'why the Jews make so much a fuss over a few dozen of their people killed in Palestine' when 'as many are killed in London in traffic accidents, and no one pays any attention.' Weizmann did manage to see Lord Passfield but apparently he was not successful in changing the Secretary's mind.

Weizmann also tried to meet with the prime minister, James Ramsay MacDonald, who had been reluctant to see the Zionist leader. He attempted to use the prime minister's son, Malcolm, to gain access to the father. Malcolm was sympathetic to the Zionist cause but, according to Weizmann, only until he became the Colonial Secretary in Chamberlain's cabinet. The meeting of the two produced no positive result. Apparently, the father was still adamant.

Learning that the prime minister was scheduled to be in Switzerland for a meeting, Weizmann decided to follow him. He took a boat to cross the Channel and on the boat he met the famous Lady Astor. Weizmann found her very friendly and relates in *Trial and Error* that he decided to use her to gain access to the prime minister. He does not tell whether Lady Astor was helpful, but in Switzerland the meeting with the prime minister did take place. In fact, Weizmann was able to meet with other international personalities in Switzerland for the same purpose as MacDonald, including the American Secretary of State.

Trial and Error reports on another meeting (in London) with the Prime Minister and other British officials. In that meeting, Weizmann said, 'one thing the Jews will never forgive, and that is having been fooled.' When a grin showed on the faces of the Prime Minister and the officials, Weizmann became irritated and he decided to hit harder: 'I can't understand how you, as good British patriots, don't see the moral implications of promises given to the Jews, and I regret to see that you seem to deal with them rather frivolously.' At this point

'the grin disappeared.'

The pressure became almost unbearable to the government. According to Weizmann, it involved 'powerful figures in the non-Jewish world.' Finally, a meeting was arranged between a special committee of the British cabinet and a group of individuals representing the Jewish Agency, which included such influential men as Harold Laski, James de Rothschild, Professor Selig Brodetsky, Professor Lewis Namier, Leonard Stein, Harry Sacher, and Weizmann himself. The Zionist effort paid off: a change in policy was at hand.

It came in the form of a letter from Prime Minister MacDonald to Weizmann. Perhaps to give it publicity, the letter was read in the House of Commons, printed in *Hansard*, and published in *The Times* on February 13,1931. It stated that the 1930 White Paper did not imply any change in the government's immigration policy, nor did it place any restrictions on Jewish purchase of land. In addition, the letter stated that the government recognised the right of the Jewish Agency to formulate 'only Jewish labour' policies. As to Zionist irritation with Arab claim to state land, the letter assured Weizmann that only Arabs who could provide evidence that they were displaced as a result of Jewish purchases of land, and could not find alternative land, would be given first priority.

The letter, which the Arabs referred to as the 'Black Letter,' was obviously a British attempt to ease Zionist concern over the White Paper, which itself was a way of assuaging Arab resentment to British immigration and land policies. In the British eyes, neither of the two documents represented a departure from previous policies. However, just as the White Paper had caused Zionist alarm, the MacDonald letter stirred the Arabs. According to one official source, the letter had the effect of increasing 'Arab antagonism to the principle of the Mandate.'(7) Also, the belief that Zionist Jews 'always had their way' with the British found greater credibility among the Arabs.

The 1933 disturbances: Early in 1931, a financial commission affected a cut back in public works and social services in Palestine and a reduction in staffs. The object was to save money, but the effect was a retraction of earlier commitments to increased social and economic development. The action did not fail to strengthen Arab doubts about British promises.

In October, Palestine acquired a new High Commissioner. The appointment of Arthur Wauchope was seen by the Arabs as another instance of British bias. The Zionists had much to do with the selection of Wauchope, and Weizmann admitted that the Prime Minister had consulted him before the appointment was made.(8) No

similar effort was made to consult the Arabs, and it was clear that Wauchope had the enthusiastic support of the Zionists.

The two events persuaded the Arabs that the situation had become devoid of hope for equity. In 1932, they decided not to cooperate in any field that involved Jews. They boycotted the Levant Fair in Tel Aviv. They declined membership in a government educational committee. They withdrew the two Arab members already serving on the Road Board.

They also began to appreciate political organisation and the need for political parties. Two parties were established in 1932: the *Istiqlal* (Independence) Party and the Congress of Nationalist Youth. This was the first time that Arabs of Palestine had organised political parties.

In 1933, Jewish immigration jumped to 30,327, the highest quota since 1920, except for 1925.(9) True, Jewish capital increased as a result, but the policy of 'only Jewish labour' continued with greater intensity. The official census of November 1931 had shown a total population of which only 16.9 per cent were Jews.(10) The Jewish immigration of 1933 was seen by the Arabs as a step further in the Zionist drive for higher Jewish percentages of the population. More disturbing was illegal Jewish immigration, which, in 1933, was estimated by the government at 22,400.(11) Most of these Jews had entered the country legally on visitor's visas, but failed to leave when the visas expired. Others had simply evaded frontier controls. This illegal immigration had been going on for a number of years, and every year the government promised to tighten controls, but the problem continued and Arab concern with it did not abate.

For a number of years, Zionists had complained that Jewish immigration was too low. Some of them were disappointed with their own people for not showing greater interest in Palestine. Only 1925 and 1933 fulfilled the expectations of Revisionists like Jabotinsky, who, in 1929 had demanded the admission of 30,000 Jews every year.

Of course, Hitler's rise to power and economic depressions in the United States and elsewhere were important in the sudden increase of Jewish immigration to Palestine. But there was no doubt that Zionist influence on the British government was also a factor.

Naturally the Arabs became alarmed. In March 1933, a manifesto issued by the Arab Executive warned that 'the general tendency of Jews to take possession of the lands of this holy country and their streaming into it by hundreds and thousands through legal and illegal means has terrified the country.'(12) In the city of Jaffa, a public rally attended by the Mufti was held and resolutions boycotting British and 'Zionist' products were

passed.

In the Zionist camps, too, feelings were running high. The extremists were not satisfied with the policies of the Zionist establishment, and in June 1933, Dr Arlosoroff, a prominent official of the Jewish Agency was assassinated; British official sources suspected he was the victim of 'Jewish political terrorism.'(13) There was a struggle for power between the Revisionists and the Histadrut, the Jewish Federation of Labour. The Revisionists intended to intensify the conflict in Palestine.

The tension increased as the Arab press and the Arab leaders began mounting a massive anti-immigration campaign. Arab rioting followed and it lasted for six weeks. Twenty-four civilians were killed and 204 were injured.

As usual, the government ordered investigations and a commission of inquiry headed by Sir William Murison was organised.

The Commission submitted its report in February 1934,(14) and it showed the causes of the riots to be the same as before. Basically, they were the result of '... a general feeling of apprehension among the Arabs engendered by the purchase of land by the Jews and by Jewish immigration.' The Commission also stated that Zionist behaviour was a contributing factor to Arab unrest. The Jewish press dramatised the arrival of Jewish immigrants and 'expressed joy' in their coming to Palestine. Also, ' ... at the Zionist Congress at Prague, immigration was discussed in such terms as to inspire alarm in the minds of the Arab population.'

However, three conditions separated the 1933 riots from previous ones. First, they were directed against the British Mandate itself. Previous Arab riots had been aimed at Jews, with the Arabs believing that the Jewish National Home was the cause of their troubles. But by 1933, the Arabs had come to the conclusion that the British were the cause. Without the British, they believed, the Zionists could not achieve their aims. Moreover they came to see the Mandate as an instrument for realising the Balfour Declaration. To stop the Zionists, then, they must fight the Mandate and put an end to it before it was too late.

That Arab distrust of the British was now complete was evidenced in the fact that Arab scouts were patrolling the borders of Palestine to prevent illegal Jewish immigration. (This was ineffective, of course, since most illegal immigrants came as legal visitors through recognised legal channels.)

A second difference in 1933 was that there was no longer any doubt about the responsibility of the Arab leadership for inciting the riots. Such doubts had existed

during the 1929 riots; but in 1933 the Arab press and the Arab leadership were openly and directly involved.

Thirdly, the 1933 riots were limited to urban areas. This fact had an educational value for the Arab leadership. It taught them that urban riots were not national revolutions. They did not last long and their impact was slight. The need for an all-out revolution became obvious. But this was impossible without organising the majority of Arabs, who were rural.

Arab Organisation: From World War 1 until 1932, the Arabs had one leadership, the Arab Executive. Political parties did not exist. Then in 1932, the Independence Party and the Congress of Nationalist Youth were organised; and in 1934 four more appeared. The most important of the six were dominated by the big families of Jerusalem. The National Defence Party, for example, was organised by the Nashashibi family who were in competition with the Husseini family, the established leadership in Arab Palestine. (From the Husseinis came Kazim, who in 1922 headed the Arab delegation to London, and Haj Amin, the Mufti of Jerusalem, who was a central figure in the 1929 disturbances. In 1936, Haj Amin was already the most powerful and popular leader in Arab Palestine.)

A cousin of the Mufti, Jamal el-Husseini, organised the Arab Party in 1936; and this party became the largest Arab party in Palestine. Its popularity had less to do with principles and organisation than with the prestige of the Husseinis, who many people believed were related to the prophet of Islam. The fact that the Mufti was a religious leader gave the Husseini's party the advantage over other parties because of its strong appeal among the rural people. The Arab party was also uncompromising with the British, and appealed especially to the young and the fighting men.

The third party, the Arab Reform Party, was organised by the Khalidis, another prominent Jerusalem family. This party was more interested in internal changes than in the politics of the Mandate. Its appeal outside Jerusalem was extremely limited, and it was less controversial because it emphasised education and social reform. The last party, the National Bloc Party, was the only party that had its centre and leadership outside Jerusalem. it was organised in Nablus, one of the most conservative cities of Palestine.

By 1934, the Independence party, one of those founded in 1932, showed signs of being the most sophisticated and modern. Its Secretary General, Awni Abdul-Hadi was a successful lawyer from Jerusalem and among its leaders were influential men from Nablus, Haifa, Safad, Tiberias and Jenin. Its leadership was more national than

the others, but although it had influence in national politics, it had very little appeal locally, especially among the rural people. Its power and influence was based on the good character and reputation of its founders and on the enlightened leadership of its Secretary-General.

None of these parties was a challenge to the Mufti (the Arab Party) and some of them did not mind cooperating with him. In fact, Pro-Muftis were among the founders of the Independence Party. In addition, the parties were primarily cliques competing for prestige and influence, and at the local level leaders of the same party were often rivals. For example, Fahmi Abboushi, the mayor of Jenin, and Awni Abdul-Hadi were both founders of the Independence Party and members of its national leadership committee. The two men had much respect for each other and cooperated in national politics. But in local politics, the Abboushis and the Abdul-Hadis were sworn enemies, and in the municipal elections in Jenin they fought bitterly to dominate the council and win the mayorship.

Later, in 1938, Fahmi Abboushi would be fired as mayor by the British for supporting the Arab revolution. He was replaced by an Abdul-Hadi. Abboushi left the country and went to Beirut because the revolution had deteriorated and Arabs were assassinating Arabs. Life had become insecure for the urban 'aristocracy' of Palestine, and consequently, Beirut acquired a new community of political refugees made up of well-to-do Palestinians.

The example related here comes from the author's memory, for Fahmi Abboushi is his father. It is typical and illustrates the contradictions of party politics in Palestine of the 1930s.

But Palestine's Arab rivalries should not be exaggerated. Zionist politics were similar in the sense that they too were factional. In fact, the Jews had more political parties and political factions than the Arabs, in addition to their own radical and extremist groups. If they were more effective in forming and implementing unified policies it was because they were more Western and modern, and because the political battles involved a foreign power, Britain. Also, Zionist politics operated in a more modern community while Arab politics operated in a traditional, Asiatic community. No doubt the different levels of culture of the two communities contributed to their political successes and failures.

It would also be a mistake to assume that because the Arabs had six parties, their leadership was not cohesive or not reasonably united. First, the 'official' and real leadership still resided in the Arab Executive which, in 1935, would include representatives from five

of the six parties. Later, the Arab Executive would become the Arab Higher Committee and all parties would be represented. Secondly, disagreements among the parties were on means rather than ends. All agreed on the issues involving the Jewish National Home, and all desired independence for Palestine. But where the National Defence Party was more inclined to cooperate with the British and to use diplomacy to attain goals, the Husseinis had little confidence in the British and favoured revolutionary means.

However, Arab disunity became a fact after the 1936 Revolution. Its failure disrupted a leadership that until then had displayed remarkable unity and cohesiveness.

New Zionist Gains: During 1934, the Arabs became increasingly alarmed by the influx of Jews to Palestine, which by the end of the year reached 42,359, the highest annual quota since 1920. Also, they were especially disturbed as more and more Palestinians began selling land to Jews. The early sales had been mostly by non-Palestinian Arabs, and even though it was the larger tracts of land that were sold by them, the sales by Palestinian Arabs had a different meaning. To the nationalists it meant that Palestinians were committing acts of treason, for to them selling land to Jews was tantamount to selling the country to the enemy.

However, the Arab leadership seems to have exaggerated the extent to which Arab Palestinians were selling land; for apparently non-Palestinian involvement in sales to Jews went beyond the 1920s. Official sources indicated that even as late as 1938 most land was being sold by non-Palestinians.(15) Since after 1939, the selling of land to Jews was restricted by law, it appears that up to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, a large portion, possibly most, of the land bought by Jews was sold to them by non-Palestinian Arabs, especially Lebanese.

The Arab Executive protested to the British High Commissioner. They tried to explain to him that Jewish purchase of land would have been all right were it not for its political objective of creating a Jewish state. The Executive also warned the High Commissioner that Jewish immigration in 1933 and 1934 had been excessive and had already exceeded the absorptive capacity of the country. (16) On this last point, the High Commissioner did not agree.

The High Commissioner himself was an issue with the Arabs. Wauchope was probably the least liked by the Arabs of all the men who had occupied the office, including the Jewish Samuel. Not only did Jewish immigration go up under him, but the promise he made in 1933 to crack down on illegal immigration was not

fulfilled. If he cracked down at all, it affected the Arabs rather than the Jews. Official statistics for 1934 showed that the number of non-Jews, mostly Arabs, deported for 'immigration offences' was twice the number of Jews deported for the same offences. Everyone knew that illegal immigration was a Jewish practice and how the official statistics came to show it as an Arab one was a puzzle to the Arabs. It was as if Wauchope's administration had promised to exert its efforts against the least offending party. Of course there were Arabs illegally entering Palestine but unlike the Jewish illegal immigrants they did not stay long. As soon as the seasonal work was over, they went back to their permanent homes in Transjordan, Syria, and Egypt.

Another incident made the High Commissioner even more objectionable to the Arabs. In 1934, he decided to transfer the Hulah Concession originally granted to its Arab owners by the Turks, to a Jewish group. The concession gave its owners the right to some 200,000 acres of swampland provided they drained it for development. The original Arab owners had obtained the concession in 1914.

The High Commissioner explained his action by pointing out that the Jewish group was better equipped to drain and develop the land and that they had agreed to increase the area reserved for Arab settlement from 36,800 acres under the old concession to 60,000.(17) Although on purely economic-technological grounds the Commissioner's decision was sound, it lacked political wisdom and a real sense of fairness to the Arabs. It became obvious to the Arabs that Arab rights were worth less than economic growth. The step would have been less inflammatory had it not involved the Zionists, who were self-centred and politically motivated in their desire to improve the land. To the Arabs, the Hulah Concession was a classic case of colonists' treatment of indigenous populations: the well-financed foreign capitalists, supported by British colonialism were usurping the rights of the natives in the name of progress and modernisation.

The Hulah Concession, like the Rutenberg and other concessions, made the Arabs question whether they were being punished for being non-European. They felt invaded by foreign capital and foreign power, and wondered whether (or when) they would be squeezed out of their homeland. To them it was clear that Jewish colonisation was no longer a simple case of modernisation. It was a case of an expropriation of rights that would eventually result in the total displacement of the Arabs and the creation of the Jewish state.

Such Arab feelings were leading towards revolution and the total rejection of British rule with *all* its

implications, of course including Jewish colonisation. The admission of 61,854 Jews in 1935 was the last straw. As mentioned earlier, five political parties joined to form a united front in opposition to the Mandate. The sixth party was to join later.

The New Jewish Immigrants: More than half the total Jewish immigration since 1919 came in the short period from 1933-35. Obviously, such massive influx of 'aliens' could not fail to arouse the fears of the indigenous Arabs, and the revolution of 1936 owed much to this condition.

While the 1933-35 immigration was going on, the country experienced temporary prosperity. The reason was the fact that the new immigrants were affluent and brought money with them. The immigrants of the 1920s were poor and after the peak year of 1925 the country experienced an economic recession that lasted until 1928.

The earlier immigrants were mostly East European and Soviet Jews who had very little capital to bring with them. The reasons why Soviet and East European Jews came to Palestine in larger numbers than Western European Jews were obvious. First, most Jews concentrated in these areas. According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica* Jews in the world numbered 14,900,000 in 1914.(18) Seven million of these Jews lived in Russia, including present-day Poland and the Baltic states. Two and a quarter million lived in Austria-Hungary, and 250,000 were located in Rumania. Of the remainder, three million lived in the United States and about half a million in the British Empire.

Secondly, Jews living in Western Europe and the United States were rapidly assimilating, while those living in the Soviet Union and East Europe were not, primarily because of mistreatment and outright persecution. Zionism grew where persecution took place. In fact, the leadership came from these areas, and the movement had its main support there.

Polish Jews were dominant in the earlier immigration, but in 1933 the Germans outnumbered the Poles, obviously a result of Hitler's regime in Germany. Soviet Jews, which in the earlier period were the second largest group, almost disappeared in 1933 and after, as the Soviet Union began requiring $500 from prospective immigrants before leaving the country. The Soviet government explained its policy as an effort to preserve human resources whose development had cost the state a great deal of capital.

The German Jews brought money with them. According to Zionist sources imported capital amounted to $49,000,000 in 1934 and $78,000,000 in 1935.(19) Arabs claim that most of the benefit from this capital went directly to the Jews. Whether their claim is true cannot be ascertained for lack of British statistics. However, the British

administration benefited from the increase in its revenues which doubled during the period of heavy immigration.

Unfortunately, the British administration did not take advantage of the tremendous increase in its revenue. In spite of the rising cost of defence due to the unrest of the Arabs, the administration still had a huge surplus - $30,000,000 in 1936 which was more than the total government expenditures in the previous year.(20) This appalling statistical fact, derived from government sources, argued that the government was not living up to its 1930 promise to develop the country and benefit the Arab *fellah*. (In fact, British statistics would continue to show surplus revenues as late as fiscal year 1942-43. (21) The surplus did not vanish until 1945, and the deficit of that year was caused by the requirements of the war, rather than by expenditures on social services.)

Furthermore, the economic boom associated with the new immigration was not entirely caused by the Jewish ecnomic activity. The Arabs made a substantial contribution to it. According to official sources, 80 per cent of the value of exports came from citrus products, half of which were produced by Arab owners.(22) At the time, citrus products were Palestine's major industry and the industry was doing well because the competition from Spain was reduced by the Spanish civil war.

The prosperity had little effect on the Arab *fellah*, who constituted well over 60 per cent of the Arab population of Palestine. Indeed, a four-year drought had left rural Arabs 'approaching starvation in some cases.' (23)

In any case, the economic boom did not last long. By the end of 1936, Jewish unemployment became once again a problem.(24) There was Arab unemployment, too, but reliable statistics were not available.

Also, if there were any benefits for the Arabs from the economic boom of 1933-35, these benefits were politically irrelevant. The Arabs' position was best explained by one of their leaders, Emile Ghory, in a letter to the *Observer:*

> *'Prosperity and economic improvement are not everything of worth in life. There are other phases of life which are more dear to the Arabs than money and gold. 'Man cannot live by bread alone,' said Jesus Christ. The Arabs appreciate and understand this golden saying. Their case could not and should not be discussed or argued as a case of 'bread and butter.' They desire to enjoy the right of every people to live in peace of mind as well as body, now and in the future, in their own country, as seems best for them. They prefer to be destitute and poor, but independent and free, in their*

country, than prosperous and rich in a country which will in a few years time be theirs no more.' (25)

The Battle over the 1935 proposal for a Legislative Council

Zionist gains in the three years before the 1936 Arab Revolution were too much for the Arabs to tolerate. For them, the Jewish National Home had become a threatening reality and a national obsession. They blamed the British for their condition and asked what had happened to the promise in the Mandate Agreement that self-government would be developed. After fifteen years the promise had not been fulfilled.

The British Palestine Administration was aware of the limits of Arab patience. Realising the seriousness of the situation, they announced in 1935 their intention to create another Legislative Council for Palestine - to consist of 28 members, five of whom were to be 'official,' eleven 'nominated unofficial,' and 12 'elected.'(26) The 'official' members were to be on the Council by virtue of their government positions, and, therefore, their membership was automatic. The 'nominated unofficial' members were to be appointed by the High Commissioner and consist of three Muslims, four Jews, and two Christians. Finally, the elected members were to consist of eight Muslims, three Jews and one Christian.

According to British sources, the initial Arab reaction to the proposals was not negative: 'Although the proposals were criticised in the Arab press, the united leaders of the Arab parties did not reject them, and there were indications that Arab public opinion was generally in favour.'(27) The same source stated that 'The Jewish leaders refused them uncompromisingly.'

The Zionists rejected the proposals on the grounds that an Arab majority on the council 'precluded the establishment of the promised National Home ...'(28) The British disagreed, arguing that the Council would not have the authority 'to discuss the Mandate or the Jewish Agency or to interfere with immigration.' As to why an Arab majority on the Council, the British believed that 'the representation proposed ... was fair in proportion to the population of 825,000 Muslims, 100,000 Christians, and 320,000 Jews.'(29)

From the beginning of the Mandate, the Zionists were on record opposed to any constitutional scheme that recognised the majority status of the Arabs. On this issue, they were completely united, and even non-Zionist Jewish groups, like Agudath Israel were opposed to such recognition.(30)

On the other hand, it was clear that the Arabs considered self-government to be essential. And they would accept no scheme that did *not* recognise their majority status, that did not give the Legislative Council sufficient powers, or that did not allow representation on the basis of population. When they rejected the Legislative Council scheme of the early 1920s, it was because the offer did not recognise their majority status and because the Council had purely advisory functions. Again in 1935 they showed little enthusiasm for the proposed Council because the offer did not give it sufficient powers. The exclusion of immigration issues and the Mandate from Council discussions seemed to the Arabs to preclude the possibility of a meaningful role for the Council.

Unfortunately, British politics remained sensitive to Zionist-Jewish influence, and the constitutional plan for Palestine was in trouble from the moment it was proposed. It was discussed in the House of Commons on March 24, 1936,(31) and in the House of Lords on February 26 and March 5,(32) and the debates had the effect of killing the proposal. But since they reveal much about current opinion, we will explore them here.

The House of Commons: With the exception of two speakers, A.C. Crossley and Clifton Brown, all participants in the debates were solidly pro-Zionist and opposed to the plan. The opposition came from Conservatives and Labourites and included such powerful men as Churchill, L.C. Amery, and T. Thomas.

The main argument of the pro-Zionists was that time was not ripe for Palestine to have a Legislative Council. The Arab people of Palestine were not ready for it, and the 'modern' Jewish community did not want it.

No one mentioned the fact that the Jews had self-government and the Arabs did not. The Jews had their own quasi-governmental apparatus, and there was no doubt that the Jewish National Home was already a state within a state. Objectively, the Jews could afford to reject the proposal. They did not need it, and it could only give more power to the Arabs.

Churchill argued that the Mandate was functioning well and that the introduction of self-government at this time would be detrimental. 'Do not be in a hurry to overturn the existing system. It is working well,' he declared.

The pro-Zionists also argued that an Arab majority in the Council would be obstructive. Amery argued that the Arab majority would be hostile, and that the government should not 'give effect to that hostility.' He believed the Arab population was dominated by a small minority of 'agitators' who could be expected to use the Arab majority in the Council to harass the Jews. Major Proctor

concurred with Amery,'s argument and added that it was 'the effendi class' (the Arab notables) that was agitating for self-government, not the rank-and-file of Arabs. Sir A. Sinclair said the Arabs were opposed to the Mandate and a council with an Arab majority would not 'be other than a drag on the government.' He stated that the Arabs, not the Jews, were 'the stumbling-block at the present time.'

Many speakers mentioned the need to develop local government before setting up the National Council. A local government had been in effect since 1934, but many speakers believed not enough time had passed to warrant the conclusion that it was working well or that the Arabs had gained sufficient experience from it. Churchill, for instance, believed that the experiment in local government was 'very brief' and that 'with a race like the Arabs and conditions so deplorable' the time period was especially too short. Churchill believed local government was an 'educative process,' a very necessary step towards greater self-government. But, like many others in the House, he had very little confidence in the Arabs. He stated that 'Arabs have been quite incapable of affording elements out of which these local institutions could be made.' T. Thomas provided figures to prove a similar point. He said that with the exception of Jerusalem 'the number of voters on the register is little more than one per cent.' He blamed the government for the slow process of training for self-government. The point, however, was that the voters were not sufficiently trained 'to cast an intelligent vote' for members of the Legislative Council.

Although this argument was not devoid of merit, any reading of the debates must raise the question of whether the speakers were using the argument to block the proposal because the Zionists were opposed to it or were sincerely doubtful of its workability. Two things suggest that many were opposed only if the idea were to be applied to the Arabs. First, the argument should be relevant to a discussion of self-government as it related to all peoples of the developing world, not just the Arabs. And if it were so discussed and so related, one should be frank to admit that self-government should be denied to all peoples living outside the Western World, until they had reached the point in modern development where self-government could succeed. But this would make the argument largely academic, because the developing nations would neither accept it nor cease to demand self-government. As one African leader once said, 'we have the right to have our *own bad* government.'

Secondly, the comments made by many of the pro-Zionist speakers about the Arabs were derogatory, involving generalisations and stereotyped thinking. In

fact, the most astonishing fact about the speakers was their portrayal of the Arabs as an uncivilised people. Indeed the Arab image was an important factor in the negative attitudes of members, and one might add that this image was a problem in British politics as a whole.

One die-hard pro-Zionist speaker referred to the Arabs of Palestine as 'the aboriginal inhabitants of that place.' However, the speaker, Colonel Wedgwood, promised that his Labour Party, 'would be the last body in this House to urge the colonisation of Palestine by Jews if that colonisation would result in the same destruction of the native races' as in Mexico, Peru, North America, and the Congo. He further stated that in Palestine the government made slow progress but at least 'by the use of civilisation we can help natives instead of destroying them.' Somehow, Wedgwood thought that the Arabs of Palestine were mostly Bedouin, when in fact the Bedouin element was less than seven per cent of the population. But he had a sense of pride that 'the spread of civilisation' had broken the back of the Bedouins who admittedly 'suffered and must suffer as civilisation advances ...' Also, he had the idea that there was desperate need to protect the poor Arab against the rich Arab, and believed the enemy of the Arabs was not the Jew but rather the Arab rich. Whether there was no need to protect the poor Jew from the rich Jew or the poor Arab from the rich Jew did not seem to concern him.

Of all the speakers, Wedgwood was the most condescending towards the Arabs. Although he was not uninformed about Palestine, he was often heedless of Arab interests and ignorant about the forces at work in the area. For instance, he believed that Arab nationalism had much in common with Nazi ideology and that self-government for the Arabs would suffer from 'the danger of dictatorship.' There was evidence that Wedgwood believed the Arabs were anti-Semitic and the evidence was contained in his statement that 'The Christian Arabs are far more anti-Semitic than the Mohammedan Arabs.'

The pro-Arab Crossley had a difficult time correcting the pro-Zionist perceptions of the Arabs. In fact, he was interrupted several times, and he seemed under a compulsion to begin his presentation by saying 'I certainly am not an anti-Semite. I have many Jewish friends, some of whom are Zionist and some of whom ... are not Zionists.' Crossley warned his colleagues of the danger of generalisations about the Arabs and told them that he had known the Arabs and had visited Palestine. He said that the Arab of Palestine was neither Bedouin nor 'a wholly ignorant person,' and insisted that Arabs 'made some steps towards civilisation' even under the Turks.

Nevertheless, the main concern of the pro-Zionists was to protect the rights of the Jewish minority, and this concern weighed heavily in their opposition to the Legislative Council. Captain Gazalet implied that the suffrage for the 'illiterate' Arabs would endanger the Jewish National Home. He stated that the Arabs would obstruct the legislative process by turning discussions in the Council into racial debates. Even Churchill believed that the Council 'would be a very great obstruction to the development of Jewish immigration ... and to the development of the national home of the Jews ...'

For the peotection of minority rights in Palestine, Amery had concrete proposals. He believed that 'the burden of defending the minority must not be thrown on the shoulders of the Government exclusively.' The Jews must be in a position to protect themselves and this could not be accomplished with an Arab majority on the Council. He suggested setting up a system of equal representation for the two communities in Palestine. The system, he believed, was the only way of guaranteeing 'the right of the Jew to go to his national home as freely as the right of the Arab to stay in his national home.' However, the Jews must accept this equality to be permanent: 'Jews must recognise clearly that if they get equality today they cannot claim more than equality when they become a majority in the country.'

If the principle of equal representation could not be realised, an alternative system was possible, according to Amery. Provisions should be adopted for the Standing Orders of the Council to guarantee 'that no vote shall be a valid vote unless it has secured the concurrence of a majority of members of each section.' Amery also suggested the possibility of a system based on the principle of 'functional representation' but he did not elaborate on its meaning. Whatever the system, it was clear Amery wanted the Jewish minority to have sufficient powers to prevent the will of the Arab majority from being decisive on any issue.

Few realised the contradictions in the Mandate system itself, for whatever proposal was adopted it was understood that it would be based on the Mandate Agreement and the Balfour Declaration. Amery, for instance, admitted that the real problem was whether it was possible to reconcile the Mandate with Arab nationalism, and believed that the two were incompatible. Crossley agreed that the Mandate was 'a contradiction in terms' and believed that it was impossible to 'make a small country a national home for a great world people without, at the same time, prejudicing the rights of the existing inhabitants.' But unlike Amery, Crossley believed the problem was not Arab nationalism, rather it was Zionism.

He said ' ... most Jews really want the whole of Palestine in time ...' He added as a warning that these Jews wanted to reduce the Arab majority in Palestine to 'hewers of wood and drawers of water.'

There was no doubt the 'unfortunate Jews' was a theme in the pro-Zionist speeches and that speakers were unable to discuss the Palestinian problem and Arab rights without tying these matters to the question of Jewish persecution.'. The future of the Jews as a people could not be discussed separately from the future of Palestine, and this fusion of the two made it difficult for the British to recognise the rights and understand the views of the indigenous Arabs of Palestine. In 1935 no one in the British Parliament asked why the Palestinian Arab should 'pay' for something (the persecution of the Jews) he did not do. Nor did anyone discuss solutions to the Jewish problem that might concern directly those responsible for the persecution and the circumstances of the particular victims. Obviously, a subconscious element was the assumption that Biblical Palestine should be the solution, perhaps because it was away from the persecutor and very near to the hopes of the victims. No one, certainly, had offered Britain or any Western country as a home for the persecuted Jews. And it so happened that the Zionist movement was not thinking in those terms either.

In fact, all the speakers openly connected Palestine with the problem of Jewish persecution. In a very emotional fashion Churchill reminded his colleagues that he could not discuss Jewish immigration except 'in connection with Palestine.' He said this was especially important because the discussion was taking place 'at a time when the Jewish race ... is being subjected to most horrible, cold, scientific persecution ...' He predicted that Palestine would remain open to Jewish immigration: 'surely the House of Commons will not allow the one door which is open, the one which allows some relief, some escape from these conditions, to be summarily closed ...' Other speakers also believed that Palestine was the only door open for them. Colonel Wedgwood, for instance, declared that ' ... if you look around the world, you find nowhere for these unfortunate people to go.'

While the Arab image was damaging to the Arab case, the Jewish image was useful to the Zionist case. Almost all speakers, including Churchill, were influenced by the fact that Jews were Western. Wedgwood, for instance, referred to the Jews as 'coming very near to ourselves in culture and civilisation.' Many speakers were also influenced by the difference in cultural levels of the two communities in Palestine. D. Hopkin spoke of the 'modern miracle' in connection with the work of Jews in Palestine, and stressed the benefits to the Arabs that

came from Jewish modernisation. He provided a contrast to show these benefits: 'it is only necessary to take the road up the Vale of Sharon to compare the differences in the Arab villages with the Arab villages on the hills.' The assumption, of course, was that Arab villages in the vale had Jewish influence while those in the hills did not because they were not close to Jewish settlements.

There was the interesting notion that whenever the Arab made progress it was because of Jewish influence, and when he did not it was because he did not interact with the Jews. Although it would be erroneous to deny any benefit from Jewish influence, the generalisation was unfair to the Arabs not only in Palestine but in the other Arab countries. The Arabs, especially the Palestinians, were highly civilised in spite of the fact that they were rural and the Jews were industrial. Also, the argument assumed that the British administration in Palestine had nothing to do with anything that was modern in Palestine. Only the Jews were modern and progressive and everyone else was hopelessly backward and primitive.

T. Thomas explained how 'The Jews have taken the desert that was Arab, and life has burst forth in a myriad forms.' This became the essence of the Jewish 'modern miracle;' and because of it many speakers thought it was the duty of the British government to help the Jews.

Some argued that the Jews could be trusted, and implied that the Arabs were untrustworthy. Major Proctor, for instance, stated that ' ... the Government ... should make Palestine a country full of people who are friendly towards this country.' He spoke of the importance of Palestine to the security of the Suez Canal. Colonel Wedgwood urged the government to allow the Jews to continue the development of Palestine with ' ... English justice, financed by Jewish capital and inspired by the desire of a great people for freedom.'

The pro-Zionists often got carried away with the problems of the Jews and with enthusiasm for their achievements. Sir A. Sinclair thought 'Jewish ... contribution towards the prosperity of Palestine entitles them to parity of representation in the council,' even though they were a minority of the population. Colonel Wedgwood implied that the modern elements in Palestine should have greater political power. He observed that voting in Palestine 'is not limited by any educational or property test ...' This he thought was a threat to the modern Jewish community. He deplored the lack of moderation among the Christians of Palestine and explained this problem in terms of their being Arab and anti-Semitic.

As mentioned earlier, only two speakers were pro-Arab. One of them, Crossley, believed the solution to the

Palestinian problem was in a system of cantonisation, something the Arabs could not accept in 1935. The other, Clifton Brown, was more conscious of British interests than he was of Arab rights. The Arab countries, he said, 'constitute our means of communication with the East, and if the inhabitants are not, at any rate, friendly, our material communications may be endangered.' But Brown was also friendly to the Arabs. He said Arab fear of the Jews was not unreasonable, because the Jewish 'invasion' of their country was very real. He also explained that another source of friction between the two people was Jewish political influence. He said the Arabs 'realise that as far as the Western world goes, the Jew is able to pull the string in this Parliament, and at Geneva or elsewhere more than they ever hope to do.' He was the only speaker who urged the House to support the Legislative Council proposal. He warned that if the House did not 'we should require soldiers and have to face what we had to go through seven years ago.'

But the pro-Zionists had their way. Captain Gazalet warned that the proposal would be a new source of friction, if adopted. He likened the proposal to Chateaubriand's saying: 'I know that people beat their heads together against an existing wall, but I have never known people first building a stone wall and then beating their heads against it.'

The House of Lords: The debate in the House of Lords was much more technical than in the House of Commons. Speakers discussed the legislative proposals without the distractions of emotional elements such as the persecution of Jews and Jewish pioneering. Unlike the Commons, the Lords confined themselves to the particulars, and avoided stereotyping about the Arabs.

The exception was Lord Melchett who spoke on behalf of the Jewish Agency. He repeated the familiar notion that the average Arab was not opposed to the Jewish National Home and that only few agitators from among the upper class were. He also stressed that the Jewish National Home had a civilising effect upon the backward Arabs. 'It is the Jewish population ... which has brought into Palestine a culture of which many Europeans might be proud.' The point was elaborated by his asking ' ... is there an Arab University in Palestine? Is there an Arab theatre? Is there an Arab symphony orchestra?' No doubt the questions carried the old theme of 'backward Arabs.'

Moreover, Lord Melchett predicted that the Jewish National Home would benefit the Arabs in spite of themselves. He said the time would come when the Palestine Arabs would be able to provide the Arab world with 'leaders who have been educated and who have grown

up in the civilisation, which we (the Jews) shall create.'

There were no pro-Arabs among the speakers, not a single one. Everyone worried about minority rights and ignored majority rule in the discussion of the legislative proposal. Lord Melchett in particular was frank to admit that 'if 'National Home' is to have a real meaning we cannot of our own volition and free will accept a minority *status* there.' Of course, Lord Melchett was himself Jewish, and speaking for the Jewish Agency he was more reflective of Zionist opinion. There was no doubt that he opposed the legislative proposals to give Jews time to become a majority in Palestine. His ultimate objective was the creation of a Jewish state with a Jewish culture: 'There is a job to be done. There is a new country to be created. We can do that job, the Arabs cannot, and we want to be allowed to do it.'

Neither Melchett nor others raised the question of how Palestine was to become 'a new country' dominated by the Jewish culture without jeopardising the rights and 'position' of the Arabs and violating the Mandate Agreement which guaranteed them. On the contrary, most speakers accepted the theory, advocated by Churchill, that the Mandate gave priority to the Jewish National Home. Although none denied that the Arabs had rights under the Mandate, all seemed to reject the official argument that the Mandate gave the two, Arab rights and the Jewish National Home, equal legal status.

As to the proposed Legislative Council itself, the arguments in the House of Lords were very similar to those in Commons. Lord Snell, the leader of the opposition Labour Party in the House of Lords, thought a Legislative Council for Palestine 'would exacerbate racial feelings.' He urged postponement of the proposed constitutional measure.

Like others, Lord Snell seemed to argue that a Jewish Palestine would be more friendly to British interests than an Arab Palestine. He suggested the development of a Jewish Defence force to help safeguard British interests in the area.

Those urging postponement of the constitutional measure had to assume that everything was well in Palestine. Here, they underestimated the situation which a representative of the London government tried to explain. The Earl of Plymouth warned that if Parliament refused to support the proposal 'you would, I think, with certain justification, be charged with bad faith by that section of the population (the Arabs) that wishes to see these pledges put into effect.' As representative of the government, he assured them that the High Commissioner in Palestine was behind the proposal. The latter believed that it was high time for the British government to begin

delivering its promise for self-government to the Arabs. If such a step was not taken immediately, the Arabs would no longer have any confidence in the British government.

The Rebellion

Violence had already erupted in Palestine as the proposal was being debated. The first sign of a full-scale revolution appeared in November 1935, when al-Qassam, with a group of armed men, confronted British soldiers with the first organised attack since the beginning of the Mandate. The battle followed a British discovery of large quantities of arms in Jaffa, which were suspected to have come to Jews from Belgium. The Arab press publicised the incident and Arab leaders called for a one-day strike. The country came to a halt, and there was no doubt the people were obeying their leaders.

Al-Qassam was killed in the battle. His funeral in Haifa 'led to a strong wave of Arab patriotic feeling,' (33) but violence was not repeated until April 1936, a few days after the legislative proposal was killed in the House of Commons, and Arab hope for self-government was completely destroyed. Armed Arabs killed three Jews who were travelling on the Tulkarm-Nablus road, and the incident was described by the British authorities as a 'hold-up' and the armed men as 'robbers.'(34) However, the Arabs did not doubt the fact that the incident was the beginning of a widespread rebellion against the Mandate.

Five days after, the Arabs began to organise in the towns and the villages. National committees were formed and the Supreme Arab Committee, subsequently known as the Arab Higher Committee, was created to replace the Arab Executive. All six parties joined in the new leadership body, including the Istiqlal Party, which until then was outside the United Parties Front formed in 1934. The new Arab Higher Committee supported a decision, made earlier by the Front, to call for a general strike that would go on for six months. It declared its objective 'to continue the general strike until the British Government changes its present policy in fundamental manner, the beginning of which is the stoppage of Jewish immigration.'(35)

There was to be no dissension in the upcoming national effort. Christians were represented on the Committee to emphasise total unity and to refute allegations that the Christian Arabs had separate inclinations from their Muslim brethren. The Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin, was elected the Committee's President

and became the recognised leader of the country. It was he who would become the object of Zionist hate and the cause of their fears.

The so-called National Committees were really local. There was one in each local community, and their purpose was to provide organisational unity among the various groups in each community and liaison between national and local leaders. Occasionally, a national conference of these committees was convened to serve as a popular base for the national leadership. In May such a conference was held and it resolved to urge Arabs not to pay their taxes to the British administration of Palestine. It also warned the British government that the situation was desperate and would get out of hand unless a drastic change in policy took place soon.

Evidently the government underestimated Arab threats, for in May it issued a Labour Schedule which would allow 4,500 Jewish immigrants into the country in the next six months. The reaction of the Arabs was swift. According to the government, 'the strike was effectively imposed; Jaffa port was put out of action; there were intermittent local demonstrations and assaults on Jews; there was destruction of Jewish property and sniping at Jewish settlements.' A guerilla movement was developing quickly: ' ... armed bands, swelled by volunteers from Syria and Iraq, made their appearance in the hills.'(36) The rebellion was in full swing.

Anti-rebellion measures: The British retaliated by interning a number of Arab leaders and by bringing more troops from Egypt and Malta. But the reinforcements were not sufficient to bring the situation under control. Resentment now involved every segment of the Arab population, and even Arab senior civil servants and judges, who had some loyalty to the government, could not disaffiliate from the rebellion. On June 30, 1936, they submitted a memorandum to the High Commissioner condemning British policy and expressing sympathy with their countrymen. The senior officials were followed by members of the civil service's second division who protested government policy as 'detestable.'

After May 20, 'disorder was general throughout the country.' The government stated that it was 'impossible to retain any illusion that it (the rebellion) was confined to the leaders, or to a few extremists.'(37)

With the intensification of Arab attacks, the British became more severe in dealing with the Arab populace; and some of the measures they took were contrary to accepted civilised standards. Collective punishment and punishment by association were characteristic, and included blowing up sections of a town or village, jailing relatives of Arab guerillas, imposing collective fines, and

interning Arabs in 'concentration camps.' The imposition of a seven-year jail sentence for the possession of a pistol bullet was not uncommon, nor was the practice of detaining the entire population of a town or village while the authorities searched their homes. Churches and mosques were used as jails, and in some instances the people of the town were gathered in the open under the blazing sun. Women were, of course, always separated from men, a token gesture to local traditions. Consequently, the children were always a problem, for they could not stay at home and had to join the father or the mother. Fear filled their hearts. Moreover, Arabs claimed, prisoners were tortured, people were banished, and relatives of suspected rebels were jailed without recourse to law.

In order to understand these 'security measures,' reference should be made to the Palestine Defence Order-in-Council and the Emergency Regulations of April 19, 1936, and to subsequent addition to these laws.(38) In essence, they granted the administration extraordinary powers, which included the occupation of buildings; the requisition and control of food, forage, and stores; the acquisition of local transport vehicles and control of their use; the imposition of curfews; the censorship of parcels, letters, telegrams, and press matter; the control of publications; the control of telephones; the right of the police to arrest without warrant; the right of entry and search of houses and confiscation of goods; and the right to search suspected persons and vehicles.

Most disturbing was the power given to the administration to deport citizens.

On May 22 the Emergency Regulations were expanded to empower local officials 'to place persons under police supervision and to restrict their movement from one part of Palestine to another,' On June 1, they were further expanded to empower local officers to force the opening of shops and businesses which had closed on account of a strike. Most shocking was the power granted to the same officials 'to order the detention of persons in internment camps for a period not exceeding one year.' The power to arrest individuals without warrant, which had at first been granted only to the police, was now granted to military personnel as well.

Five days later, on June 6, the administration was given the power to 'impound labour' for a variety of purposes, such as the clearing of obstructed roads. Finally, new provisions were enacted to allow the imposition of 'collective fines in money or kind upon inhabitants of towns or villages who had committed an offence or connived at its commission.' The blowing up of houses from which firing had come was authorised.

Even the terminology used in British reports was horribly frank. In the government's 1936 annual report on Palestine, reference was made to 'the establishment of a concentration camp by Government.'(39) Although British concentration camps should not be likened to their German counterparts, the terminology itself was unfortunate, especially in the 1930s when Hitler's regime in Germany was making use of such camps in their most savage form.

In practice, the most oppressive Regulations were those for curfews, the imposition of fines, and the demolishing of Arab homes. Curfews were frequent, and people could expect to be confined to their homes almost any time that a violent incident occurred within their corporate limits. Examples of curfews were those imposed on Lydda (Lod) on June 26 and Jaffa on August 15. No Arab city or town escaped curfews. In fact, there were times when the whole country was under dusk-to-dawn curfews.

Collective fines were also common. Examples were imposed on the cities of Nablus, Acre, Safad and Lydda in June 1936 and on Jaffa in August.

The demolishing of homes occurred in many Arab cities, nor was it limited to specific homes as the Regulations had authorised. Rather, whole sections of towns were destroyed in many cases. The most extensive occurred on June 19, 1936, in Jaffa, where according to the Government's 1936 Annual Report, 237 houses were demolished.

The procedure used in these operations involved the Arab mayor of the town or city in which the demolishing was to take place. He was asked to designate the houses and buildings to be destroyed. If he refused cooperation, he became suspect with the British authorities, and he could lose his job. If he cooperated, he was suspected by his people and was even considered a traitor. He usually became the target of Arab gunmen.

The End of the Strike: When the general strike began, the British believed it would not last, but it continued for six months. While the strike was on, the British were reluctant to cooperate with the Arabs at the diplomatic levels. On May 18, the Secretary of State for the Colonies told Parliament that the Arab delegation, which earlier was invited to visit London, was no longer necessary.(40) Instead, the London government planned to organise another Royal Commission to investigate the causes of the unrest in Palestine.

British policy towards Jewish immigration would not be altered, and in July, the Colonial Secretary announced that immigration would continue according to the Labour Schedule and no change in British immigration policy should be anticipated until the Royal Commission had

completed its investigations.(41)

Thus neither the British nor the Arabs were willing to yield. A third party was needed to bring an end to violence and the strike that crippled the country. The Arab governments entered the field and on June 6 and August 7, unproductive attempts were made by Amir (prince) Abdullah of Transjordan to persuade the Arab Higher Committee to call off the strike. On August 30, however, the Committee accepted the diplomatic intervention of the King of Iraq, thinking he could obtain concessions from his British ally. The King of Saudi Arabia and the Imam of Yemen were said to be in support of the move. The actual work of mediation was undertaken by General Nuri es-Said, the Foreign Minister of Iraq.

While the effort was being made, Zionist intervention in British politics at home continued. Weizmann wrote the Colonial Secretary expressing his fear lest the government make concessions to the Arabs. The Secretary assured the Zionist leaders that his government did not invite or authorise Arab intervention.(42) The Arabs interpreted his statement to mean that Britain was not interested in compromise.

Yet the Arab leaders wanted to end the strike because the economic situation had deteriorated to the point where it began to hurt Arabs. The British and the Jews were well financed from outside, but the Arabs of Palestine were dependent on their own internal resources. Other Arabs were either too poor to help, or too underdeveloped to understand, or under foreign rule and could not help very much. Those who could were supplying the Palestinians with arms and men to fight in the battles.

The Palestinian leaders needed an excuse to call off the strike without losing face. Since British concessions were not forthcoming, they could not take the responsibility without at least sharing it with others. They decided to consult the Congress of National Committees, which by now had become the unofficial 'parliament' of the Palestinian Arabs. The Congress was scheduled to convene on September 17, but the British authorities would not allow it to meet. Consequently, each National Committee met separately in its home base, and on October 12 it was announced that the strike would no longer be in effect. The decision was preceded by an appeal to end the strike by the Arab rulers of Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Transjordan, and the Yemen, and this too helped the Palestinian leaders make the decision without feeling humiliated.

The strike had lasted for six months. No doubt, it 'was remarkable ... for the length of time the Arabs held together;'(43) and it proved that leaders and followers were united in their national purpose. When one

considers the limited resources of Palestinian Arabs, one is likely to concede that six months of total economic inactivity was no small sacrifice on their part. In addition, the violence accompanying the strike was costly not only for the Jews and the British but for the Arabs as well. According to government estimates, by October 15, the total number of casualties was 1651. In addition, the British had been forced to increase their military burden threefold.

However, the end of the strike made the British optimistic that the end of violence would soon follow. The promised Royal Commission had been organised and was waiting for relative calm before coming to Palestine. On November 11, it arrived and immediately began its work. The Arab Higher Committee originally decided to boycott the Commission, but pressure from the Arab governments dissuaded it. Twelve days before the departure of the Commission for Palestine, Arab cooperation materialised.

More Violence and Less Politics

The end of the strike, however, did not bring about the end of violence. But there was a noticeable change in the quality and pattern of fighting. The violence increased, the fighting was more fierce, but the Arab effort was no longer centralised and coordinated.

Divided Leadership: In June 1936, the political leadership lost control of the revolution, partly because of disunity and partly because of British repressive, anti-revolutionary measures, which had become comprehensive as well as exceedingly harsh. In the House of Commons, the Colonial Secretary announced that the Arab Higher Committee 'have publically dissociated themselves from the outbreak.' He also stated that he and the High Commissioner believed the Committee 'can now exercise little influence on the situation owing to the widespread character of the disturbances.'(44)

On July 3, 1937, the National Defence Party withdrew from the Arab Higher Committee. The event marked the beginning of dissension within the leadership. But the dissension was not caused by disagreement over objectives, and less than three weeks after the withdrawal of the Defence party, both groups announced their rejection of the Royal Commission's report, which had been published on June 22.

The cause of dissension was disagreement over methods. Some leaders believed only force could attain the national goals. Others believed gradualism and diplomacy would be more effective methods. Naturally, the 'revolutionaries' had no confidence in the British

while the assumption of the gradualists-diplomatists was that the British could be reasonable. The latter group also believed the Arabs, at that stage, were not capable of prolonged warfare.

The Palestinian Arabs were now divided mainly into two camps. The pro-Mufti revolutionaries became known as the *majlisiyeen* (pro-Council). Their new name was to indicate that they supported Haj Amin, the President of the Supreme Muslim Council. In essence, they supported the Husseini family of Jerusalem. The other group was known as the *moarideen* (the opposition). This amorphous group generally supported the position of the Defence Party led by the Nashashibi family. However, in the group there were prominent leaders who did not belong to the Defence Party.

The anti-Muftis were very much urban, and their greatest political weakness was the lack of influence in rural Palestine. On the other hand, the pro-Muftis' greatest weakness was their conservatism and lack of modern leadership. Haj Amin was a religious leader who got into politics through his religious position and his family connections. His style was traditional, reflecting deeply religious elements. But he was always mindful of the Christian Arabs, whom he included in his leadership organisation. Emile Ghory, for instance, was a fiercely pro-Mufti Christian Arab. Even after Haj Amin's political influence had greatly diminished, Ghory remained loyal to him. And there were other such Christians.

In October 1937, the British succeeded in destroying the influence of the pro-Muftis. The administration declared the Arab Higher Committee and all National Committees unlawful associations. It also ordered the arrest and deportation of six prominent leaders, including the President of the Arab Party and Mayor Khalidi. The Mufti was dismissed from his office of President of the Supreme Muslim Council and had to flee the country. By fishing boat he arrived secretly in Lebanon, where he set up his headquarters. His cousin, Jamal, who headed the Arab party, also managed to go to Syria before the authorities were able to arrest him. The other five leaders were captured and deported to the Seychelles in the Indian Ocean.

With the national leadership imprisoned or out of the country, the revolution became politically unco-ordinated. It was clear that the British desired an end to it without making concessions to Arab demands. There was no alternative for the guerillas but to aimlessly continue the fight. The failure of the political leadership and the reluctance of the British to make concessions made the national aims unattainable. From then on, the revolution gradually turned inward. Arabs began shooting

Arabs.

The Military Leadership: During the strike period, the military aspect of the revolution was fairly well coordinated and relatively effective. Although there was no single commander, the most popular guerilla leader was Fawzi el-Kawokji, who was also the most respected and the most effective. In fact, his name and that of the Mufti were synonomous with the revolution; he as the military leader and the Mufti as the political leader.

Kawokji was not a Palestinian. He was a Syrian who had served with distinction in the Turkish army during World War I. Later, he became an intelligence officer in the French military in Syria and he received the Legion of Honour for his services. However, Kawokji was a revolutionary and a nationalist, and he fought with the Syrians when they launched their revolution against the French in 1925. Afterwards, he served as a military adviser to the King of Saudi Arabia. He was one of the few commanders in the Palestine revolution with adequate military training and experience.

There were other non-Palestinian Arabs in the revolution. The lack of military training of Palestinians created the need for them. Soldiers as well as officers were conspicuous. For instance, the British revealed that a high percentage of casualties in the battle fought on September 3, 1936, near Tulkarm were volunteers from Syria and Transjordan. This battle was considered the largest during the first six months of the revolution.

British anti-rebellion efficiency drove many of these non-Palestinians out of the country. Soon after the end of the strike,. the British succeeded in driving Kawokji out of Palestine into Transjordan, and with Kawokji out of the way, the Arab military effort changed qualitatively. Untrained Palestinian commanders had to fill the vacuum. Although being Palestinians had always made their fighting more fierce, they were poor strategists, and none of them had sufficient prestige to provide the leadership role for the military wing of the revolution.

At the beginning there were also many sincere and honest Palestinian commanders, but these too were being destroyed. Unlike the Syrians and other Arabs, Palestinians did not have the option of leaving the country, not because this was physically impossible, but because they considered Palestine to be their home. This emotional factor explains why after the departure of Kawokji the fighting became more fierce (albeit less coordinated).

The capture and the subsequent execution of Sheikh Farhan es-Saadi, a prominent guerilla commander, on November 22, 1937, increased the 'inward' tendencies of the revolution. Commanders who viewed Zionism and British colonialism as the main enemy of the revolution

were being overshadowed by commanders who viewed 'Arab traitors' as the real enemy of the revolution. As the anti-British, anti-Zionist commanders became more scarce, because of capture or violent death, the more assassinations of Arabs by Arabs took place. There was no doubt that in 1938 and 1939, the revolution was transformed into a series of reprisals and counter-reprisals among Arabs. Of course, guerillas continued to fight the British and the Jews, but they actually caused more casualties among Arabs than among their original enemies. If the casualty statistics are used to rank the revolution's enemies, these statistics make it clear that in 1938 and 1939 the 'Arab enemy' was first followed by the Jewish and the British.

The Urban-Rural Dichotomy: With the departure of Kawokji, and the absence of the country's political leadership, the Palestine Arab revolution became fragmented. Local commanders directed it and they were mostly rural.

As mentioned before, early instances of unrest and violence (1920, 1921, 1929 and 1933) were largely urban. Because the national leadership did not seriously involve the rural population, the urban riots did not develop to a national revolution. In 1936, the situation changed and the rural population was successfully organised.

It is not always easy to organise rural people. They tend to be conservative and politically less mobile. In Palestine, the big families and the landowners dominated them. The *fellah's* economic security depended on the existing social structure which favoured these elite groups. Although Palestine did not have the kind of landowners found in other Arab countries, like Egypt, Syria and Iraq, in the sense that they were not as rich and did not own as much land, they nevertheless were politically dominant. Their recruitment into the ranks of the revolution guaranteed the active participation of the peasant.

There was no doubt that the successful organising of the rural population had much to do with the fact that Haj Amin was a religious official. While the people of Jerusalem, Haifa, Jaffa, and even the people of small towns like Jenin, Tulkarm, and Safad, were more nationalistically inclined, the rural population was influenced primarily by religion. Consequently, Haj Amin was stronger in the countryside than he was in the urban centres. Early in the revolution, he commanded both. But after his departure, the urban population 'defected' and the rural population became leaderles. The result was an unleashing of rural anger against urban timidity. The worst casualties were among city dwellers who had government affiliations, such as Arab policemen, civil servants, and mayors. But there were also casualties among members of the wealthy big families.

The assassination campaigns were made more frequent and efficient by the fact that the local commanders were mostly rural. The urban elite was almost defenceless. In the Jenin districts an illiterate *fellah* by the name of Abu Dorrah became the nightmare of the town's elite.

Money intensified the disorganisation. The urban elite sought to buy security by paying the rural commanders, and since these commanders needed the money, which had become scarce since the Mufti and Kawokji departed, they accepted such offers. This in turn encouraged the commanders to plot against each other. Commanders loyal to one family ordered the assassination of commanders loyal to rival families. The old feuds reappeared, this time backed by modern weapons.

Many of the big urban families decided to leave Palestine. Paying the commanders did not guarantee their security, and the only other option was to collaborate with the British. Many of them refused to do this, although some did. The urban, upperclass exodus was large. According to the government, 'the great majority of Arabs who had hitherto been prominent in the life of the country and who had not either been deported ... or detained ... found it prudent to leave.' The same source revealed that 'any who remained and attempted loyalty to the (British) Government or refused assistance to the rebels were subjected to intimidation, abduction and murder.'(45)

The Final Act: The exodus was a factor in the gradual diminishing of revolutionary vigour during 1939. Another factor was the death of Abdul Rahim Mohammed, who was killed in action by the British. Mohammed was probably the last of the commanders who had not lost sight of the real aims of the revolution and had kept out of the family feuds and the assassinations. Lesser commanders were now in charge, and they were occupied with their own personal vendettas against other Arabs.

There was also evidence that the people were getting tired of the revolution, because of Arabs shooting Arabs and because of economic problems. By the summer of 1939 more people were willing to resume the payment of taxes to the government. Others looked forward to the development of peaceful conditions and the opportunity to improve their economic security and well-being.

The distressing fact about the revolution was the attitude of the big wealthy families. Until the revolution turned inward, they supported it, but their support was minimal. Few of their members carried arms, and the revolution was largely fought by the *fellah* and the 'common man'. Though the rich did not betray the revolution, they did very little to help it. The sons of the rich were reared in a tradition that emphasised the mystical, rather than the material, elements of patriotism.

They urged fighting but did not fight themselves: they delivered speeches and appeared in conferences and committees, but had very little use for the details of organisational work. Some gave money, however, and a few actually died fighting the British.

However, when the heat became intense they got out of the kitchen - and they left the 'common man' to roast. Many of them congregated in the coffee houses of plush Beirut where they talked politics and pretended that they knew what was happening in far-away Palestine. They were an important factor in the dismal failure of the revolution.

In 1939, the revolution was slowly dying out as shown by the declining number of incidents: 3,315 as compared to 5,708 in the previous year. The number of British and Jewish casualties resulting from Arab attacks were small in 1939. The British suffered 37 dead and 66 wounded, and the Jews 94 dead and 159 wounded. The greatest number of casualties from Arab attacks were suffered by Arabs: 414 dead and 373 wounded.(46) There was no doubt that the revolution had become a system of reprisals.

Realising that the revolution had failed, the British decided to return the country to normality. Perhaps as a gesture of good will, they released the Seychelles exiles who, a few days later, arrived in Lebanon to consult with the Mufti. The British government had announced its intention to convene a London conference in which Jews, Palestinian Arabs, and delegates from Arab countries would participate. The Seychelles exiles helped the Mufti select the delegation to represent the Palestinian Arabs at the conference. It was decided not to include the Defence Party in the delegation; although in Cairo representatives of the Arab states tried unsuccessfully to persuade the Palestinian delegation to include them. In the meantime, the Defence party organised its own delegation, and when the time came the two delegations arrived in London to participate in the same conference. Fortunately, the two agreed to merge and save themselves and the British government the embarrassment of having to resolve the conflict over who should represent the Palestinians. Jamal Husseini, head of the Arab Party, was elected to head the delegation.

Fearing that the British government might make concessions to the Arabs, the Jews in Palestine began their own campaign of violence, even as the conference discussed the future of Palestine. In the past, Jewish attacks on Arabs had been infrequent, although as vicious as Arab attacks on Jews. For instance, in July 1938 ' ... bomb explosions in the Arab fruit market at Haifa caused the death of 74 Arabs and injury to 129 others.' In fact,

according to the government, from the end of June, 1938, 'the Jewish attitude in all sections of the community underwent a change ...'(47)

Jewish attacks on Arabs increased as a result of the London conference of February 7, 1939. During one single day, February 27, Jews attacked Arabs throughout the country killing 38 and wounding 44.(48)

The London Conference failed after both the Arab and Jewish delegations rejected the British proposals. Neither of the two sides was willing to change the positions they had formulated in the early 1920s. The British indicated that they would have their own plan for Palestine and that they would soon make it public. Rumours had it that they intended to make concessions to the Arabs; and consequently, the Jews mounted an anti-British campaign which was accompanied with violent acts. In April, the Histadrut issued a manifesto urging Jews to participate in a 'campaign of resistance' against British policy.

Tension among the Jews heightened when the rumours were confirmed in the White Paper issued by the British government of May 17, 1939.(49) The new Statement of Policy declared unequivocally that the government had no intention of creating a Jewish state in Palestine. It explained that the creation of a Jewish state had never been promised to the Jews either by the Balfour Declaration or by the Mandate Agreement, and that such a notion was in fact contrary to those two documents. Finally, the 1939 White Paper promised that in ten years Palestine would become independent. Although the promise depended on Arab-Jewish cooperation during the period, there was no doubt that the British had accepted the principle that the Arab majority had a right to rule in Palestine under conditions and guarantees that would safeguard the interests of the Jewish minority.

More will be said about the White Paper of 1939. But it was clear that the new policy was a shocking document for the Zionists, who now believed that the Arab argument that 'violence pays' was justified. Ironically, the Arabs believed the argument applied only to themselves, not to the Jews, who had the advantages of diplomacy and political influence which the Arabs did not have.

Nevertheless, the Zionists had intended to use violence, and a Jewish rebellion would have materialised had it not been for World War II. The Zionists became concerned about Germany, and knew that if Hitler were to win there would be no Jewish state, or Jewish people. Consequently, it was in the interest of Jews to join the Allies and make sure Germany would be defeated. The Jewish rebellion would have to wait until after the war.

World War II not only prevented the development of

a large-scale Jewish resistance, it prevented the prolongation of the Arab rebellion as well. According to official sources, 'the Arabs of Palestine ... demonstrated their support of the democracies at the outbreak of the war.' The same source stated that 'there were spontaneous appeals in the Arab press to Arabs to rally to the side of Great Britain and set aside local issues.' (50)

But this was not true of some Arabs, who actually took the side of Germany. The Mufti was one of them. His sympathy with Germany was based upon the Arab proverb 'my enemy's enemy is my friend.' In October 1939, he left Lebanon for Iraq, where a group of nationalists were trying to overthrow the Hashemite pro-Western regime. When the attempt failed he fled to neighbouring Iran. From there he went to Rome and finally to Berlin where he remained until the end of the war.

Chapter Notes

1. *Statement of Policy by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom*, Cmd. 3692 (1930).
2. Palestine Government, *A Survey of Palestine 1945-46*, Vol.1, p.29.
3. *Ibid.*, p.28.
4. Quoted in *Ibid.*, p.28
5. *The Times*, London, November 14, 1930.
6. Quotations come from his autobiography, *Trial and Error*, (New York, Harper & Brothers: 1949), p.321-325.
7. *A Survey of Palestine*, Vol.1, p.29.
8. Weizmann, *op. cit.*, p.335.
9. *A Survey of Palestine*, Vol.1, p.185.
10. *Ibid.*, p.30.
11. *Report of the Mandatory Power for 1933*, p.15.
12. *A Survey of Palestine*, Vol.1, p.31.
13. *Ibid.*, p.31.
14. Report of the Murison-Trusted Commission of Enquiry, *Palestine Gazette*, Supplement, February 7, 1934, p.104.
15. See the statement of the Deputy Chief Secretary to the Government of Palestine to the Permanent Mandates Commission during the Eighth Meeting of June 13, 1939, *Minutes of the Thirty-Sixth Session*, Permanent Mandates Commission, 1939, p.64.
16. *A Survey of Palestine*, Vol.1, p.185.
17. See the reply of the representative of the Mandate Government to the petition of Jamal Husseini to the Permanent Mandate Commission, League of Nations, *Mandates*, 1936, p.187-188.
18. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 14th edition, 1929, Vol. 13, p.62.
19. Zionist Federation of Great Britain, *Points about Palestine*, p.9. Also see the Royal Institute of International Affairs, *Great Britain and Palestine 1915-1936*, p.68.
20. *Report by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom of Great Britain & Northern Ireland to the Council of the League of Nations on the Administration of Palestine*, Colonial No. 112, p.21.
21. *A Survey of Palestine*, Vol.1, p.125.
22. *The Royal Institute, op. cit.*, p.72.
23. Statement by the British Accredited Representative to the Permanent Mandates Commission. 1934, *Minutes of the Twenty-Fifth Session*, p.14.
24. Colonial Office, *Report of the Mandatory Power*, 1935, p.117.
25. The *Observer*, London, October 4, 1936; also, the Royal Institute, *op. cit.*, p.76.
26. Cmd. 5119 (1936).

27. A Survey of Palestine, *op. cit.*, p.34.
28. The Royal Institute, *op. cit.*, p.81.
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Ibid.*
31. Official Report, Fifth Series, *Parliamentary Debates, Commons,* Vol.310, cols.1079-1150, and cols.1166-73.
32. Official Report, Fifth Series, *Parliamentary Debates, Lords,* Vol.99, 1935-1936, cols.750-95, and cols.925-940. The quotations in the next two sections are derived from these two sections.
33. *A Survey of Palestine,* Vol.1, p.33.
34. *Ibid.*, p.35.
35. *Ibid.*
36. *Ibid.*, p.36.
37. The Royal Institute, *op. cit.*, p.82.
38. See the 1936 and 1937 *Reports to the Council of the League of Nations on Palestine and Transjordan,* Colonial No.129, p.9-11; and Colonial No.146, p.42-49.
39. *Reports to the Council of the League of Nations on Palestine and Transjordan,* 1936, Colonial No.129, p.11.
40. Official Report, Fifth Series, *Parliamentary Debates, Commons,* 1933-36, Vol.312, col.837,
41. Official Report, Fifth Series, *Parliamentary Debates, Commons,* Vol. 315, col.426.
42. Royal Institute, *op. cit.*, p.86.
43. *Ibid.*, p.87.
44. Official Report, Fifth Series, *Parliamentary Debates, Commons,* June 19, 1936, Vol.313, col.1314.
45. A Survey of Palestine, *op. cit.*, p.45.
46. *Ibid.*, p.49.
47. *Ibid.*, p.45.
48. *Ibid.*, p.50.
49. Cmd. 6019 (1939).
50. A Survey of Palestine, *op. cit.*, p.57.

Chapter 4

PLANS TO PARTITION PALESTINE

Once again Arab resort to arms stirred the by now hallowed British tradition of organising an impartial commission to study the causes of the trouble. This latest group was organised on August 7, 1936, under the chairmanship of Earl Peel, a cousin of King Edward VIII. As mentioned earlier, the violence in Palestine delayed its arrival until November 11, 1936. The delay obliged members of the Commission to study the Palestinian problem from a distance, mainly from Zionist and government documents.

Because the Arabs did not cooperate with the Commission until twelve days before its departure (January 18, 1937), it never had the opportunity to assimilate the Arab point of view into its report, which was issued in July.(1) Consequently, the report was full of references to Zionist arguments, statistics, and documents. Nevertheless, it showed a good understanding of both Arab and Zionist views, and an even greater understanding of the complexities of the conflict among these two groups and the British administration in Palestine.

The Content of the Report

Although the solution that the Commission finally recommended (partition) was disagreeable to almost everyone, its study of the conflict was unusually perceptive, indeed often prophetic. Consequently, a detailed analysis of the report is made here. From the perspective of the 1970s, it is extremely valuable for an understanding of the Palestinian problem.

Historical Background: The report began with an outline of both Jewish and Arab histories in Palestine. Jewish involvement was traced from the second millenium before Christ to around 135 AD., when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem, put to death a large number of Jews, and

carried many more into slavery.

Of course, this history of the Jews has been familiar to the world because of biblical references and because of the persecutions that inspired interest in their fate. What is not familiar is the Arab relationship to Palestine, which began in the first half of the seventh century, and continued until the creation of the State of Israel in 1948. For this reason the Commission's account bears restating.

The Commission tells of the Arabs' rebuilding of Jerusalem and establishing a universsity there that became the local centre of learning. They also built the magnificent architectural structure known as 'The Dome of the Rock,' 'the only great work of art which has survived from the age of Arab independence.' Jerusalem, stated the Commission, was a holy city for the Muslims on the account of the *haram esh-sharif,* and it ranked with Mecca and Medina as one of the three centres of Islamic worship. At one time, Muslims were required to face in the direction of Jerusalem when praying. Only later did custom change to give Mecca a more prominent place in Muslim prayers.

In the eleventh century, the Commission observed, the Seljuk Turks reduced the Arab Empire to impotence, and from 1095 onwards Palestine became the battleground of the Christian Europeans who crusaded to wrest the country from Muslim rule. The Crusaders succeeded for some time until the Mameluk dynasty of Egypt reconquered the country, holding it until 1517, when the Ottoman Turks incorporated it in to their growing empire. Palestine remained under the Turks until World War I, when the British occupied it.

One must add certain historical facts that the Commission overlooked. The most important contribution made by the Arabs to Palestine was the long period of peace that the land experienced under their tolerant rule. Under the Arabs and then the Muslim Turks, Palestine was free of war for more than seven centuries, the longest period of peace the country ever experienced.

On the other hand, the contribution of the Jews to Palestine was not peace. In fact, even when they were in control of it, Palestine was in constant turmoil, and the country saw the devastations of many wars. Jewish contribution to the land lay elsewhere, in their great spiritual activity and in their attempt to make it a prosperous country. It is also true that they and the Philistines were the only people to make Palestine the centre of their political and cultural life. Under the Arabs and the Turks Palestine was always part of an empire whose centre was elsewhere. But while the Arabs were successful in giving the country a permanent cultural identity the Jews were not. The people of Palestine

remained Arab until they were displaced by the Jews in 1948, eleven years after the Commission issued its report.

The Commission read history correctly when it observed that the Arabs treated the Jews very well. In 'Arab' Spain 'Jewish life attained the highest point it had reached since the loss of its homeland.' There, the Jews were free because 'all walks of life were open to them, rural as well as urban.' They became 'secretaries of the Caliph, diplomatists, financiers, scientists, physicians, scholars ...' Under Arab rule, they revived the Hebrew language; and Maimonides (1135-1204), who was born in Cordova and lived in Egypt, became one of the greatest Jewish scholars of all times. In return, Jews assimilated into Arab life 'in everything but religion, they spoke Arabic, took Arab names, and adopted Arab ways.' In these times, the Committee observed, 'the common Semitism of the two peoples could operate unhindered.'

The Committee also reminds us that 'the era of persecution, which was to transform the conditions of Jewish life in the Diaspora, began not in the Muslim world but in the Christian.' Even the Crusaders would not leave the Jews undisturbed: 'the wrath of the Crusaders fell as much on the Jews as on Muslims, and it soon seemed as much an act of piety to kill Jews in Europe as to kill (Arabs) in the Holy Land.' Much later, when Spain was no longer Muslim, the Christian Inquisition dealt the Jews a blow from which they did not recover for centuries to come. In 1492 'all Jews who refused to be converted were expelled.' Many of them went to live in the Arab world, where the tolerance of Islam made life more enjoyable for them.

The Commission also outlined the familiar history of Jews in the European Diaspora, the rise of Jewish nationalism (Zionism), and its development throughout the twentieth century. It stressed the fact that Jews in the Diaspora never forgot Palestine, and that the longing for Zion was manifest in some of their finest poetry. Wherever they lived, they still prayed for rain when it was needed in Palestine.

And while Jews lost in numbers and in wealth as a result of persecution, they gained in intensity and power. Jewish nationalism was strongest where persecution was most cruel, and a 'hot-house' of nationalism first developed in the Jewish ghetto.

In the Arab world, Jews increased in numbers as a result of European mistreatment. During the Arab Empire, they concentrated in the principal towns. Later, they were 'blotted out' by Mongol invasions and the Crusades - and only 'slowly recovered' under Ottoman Muslim rule. Their numbers swelled as a consequence of their terrible experiences in sixteenth century Eastern

Europe.

In Palestine, Jews tended to concentrate in Galilee in northern Palestine. The city of Safad (Tsefat) was an important centre of Rabbinical learning. 'There was no schism between those Jews in Galilee and the Muslim and Christian (Arab) peasants among whom they lived.' The Jews of Palestine spoke Arabic and 'there was little to distinguish them from their neighbours.'

The Commission believed that the anti-Semitism of Europe, particularly Eastern Europe, led to the idea that the only hope for Jews was in 'physical escape in large-scale emigration.' In the second part of the nineteenth century, various Jewish organisations were set up for the purpose of colonising Palestine.

In Palestine, the immigrant Jews were very different from native Palestinian Jews. Palestinian Jews 'had long adapted themselves to life among the Arabs,' but the immigrants 'were not going to merge themselves in the life of Palestine.'

The new Jews brought with them the ideas of Zionism and the determination to build a Jewish state in Palestine. The Commission tells the familiar story, told earlier in this book, of how the Zionists were involved in the international politics which brought forth the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate Agreement. It also documents the consistent Arab resistance to both the Declaration and the Mandate, describing how Arab nationalism grew stronger as the Jewish National Home developed to become more overt and more powerful.

The Commission's report gets to the crux of the 1936 rebellion after ninety pages of history. Although commission histories are normally not the best, this one by the Peel Commission was an exception. In any case, the Commission recognised that an understanding of the present required an understanding of the past, and it did its best to shed light on both.

The Causes of the Rebellion: Of course the Commission's main concern was 'to ascertain the underlying causes of the disturbances' of 1936. It was also instructed to study Arab and Jewish grievances and make recommendations 'for their removal and for the prevention of their recurrence.' Finally, the Commission was required 'to inquire into the manner in which the Mandate for Palestine is being implemented in relation to the obligation of the Mandatory towards the Arabs and the Jews.'

According to the Commission's findings, the 1936 rebellion 'followed the same lines' as previous disturbances. It employed strikes as an economic weapon; it consolidated nationalist forces and united Christians and Muslims; and attacked 'with the same reckless ferocity' Jews and Jewish property. However, the 1936 disturbances

were different in that they lasted much longer, were more efficiently organised and included the whole country.

The rebellion also differed in two other important ways. The first was the complete support which it received from Arab officials in the government. This time British administration had difficulty relying on Arab officials and Arab policemen. The second difference was the support received from Arabs who were not Palestinians. ' ... a substantial number of volunteers, including the ultimate leader of the rebellion (Kawokji), came from Syria or Iraq, and the Arabs of Transjordan were with difficulty prevented from joining the conflict.' Moreover, Arab governments became involved for the first time. These governments had difficulty restraining their subjects because of the excitement aroused by the Palestine rebellion.

The 'root' causes of the rebellion, acknowledged the Commission, were the same as in the disturbances of 1920, 1921, 1929, and 1933. From the beginning of the Mandate, the Arabs had rejected the Jewish National Home and strived to obtain national independence.

The 'immediate' causes included the effect on Palestinian Arabs of the attainment of national independence by neighbouring Arab countries; the feeling that Jews had greater access to, and influence on, British institutions and British public opinion; lack of confidence in the ability of the British government to carry out its promises to the Arabs; alarm at Jewish purchases of land; the intensity of Jewish nationalism; and uncertainty about the ultimate intentions of the British government.

The Jewish National Home: The Commission's report included a section on the development of the Jewish National Home; and it took a much more favourable view of Jewish contribution to Palestine than previous commissions had.

It pointed out that the Jewish National Home had grown to four times what it was at the beginning of the Mandate, to more than 400,000 people. Development in agriculture was impressive, but it was in the cities that the greatest achievements were made, and the Commission stated that the remarkable new urban developments were mainly Jewish. There was no doubt the Jewish colonisation of Palestine was 'essentially European' in character. The Commission pointed to the contrast between the all-Jewish city of Tel Aviv and the all-Arab city of Jaffa (Joppa). The implication was clear: 'with every year that passes, the contrast between this intensely democratic and highly organised modern community and the old-fashioned Arab world around it grows sharper, and in nothing (more), perhaps, than in its cultural side.'

Thus the Commission pointed to an important aspect of the conflict between Jews and Arabs: the cultural

differences between the two people. Yet, it was not a conflict between a Jewish and Arab culture, but one between a European culture and a more traditional one. Arab culture was 'born ... of Asia' and as such ' ... has little kinship with that of the National Home, which, though it is linked with ancient Jewish tradition, is predominantly a culture of the West.' According to the Commission, 'nowhere ... is the gulf between the races so obvious.'

Another aspect of the Jewish National Home noted by the Commission was that 'the most missionary-minded Jews are often Jews in race alone and not in faith.' 'There are fewer Jews now,' it said, 'whose mandate is the Bible and more whose bible is the Mandate.' Moreover, it was obvious to the Commission that 'the civic sense of Jewish youth in Palestine is not Palestinian.' To the Jews, Palestine was only a means to an end. The end, of course, was the Zionist hope of creating a Jewish state. 'It should be frankly recognised, then, that the ideal of the National Home is a purely Jewish ideal.' In that ideal, 'the Arabs hardly come into the picture except when they force an entry with violence and bloodshed.'

Yet, the Commission concluded, Jews did not wish 'to oppress the Arabs or to keep them poor and backward.' The opposite was true. However, while Jews argued that their National Home offered benefits to the Arabs, in reality, they usually ignored them. 'Although a sense of kinship with the Arabs existed in the older Jewish colonies,' observed the Commission, 'There is little of that left now, and there has never been much of it among the modern Western-minded, urban Jews.' The Commission 'got the impression that the social conscience of the National Home tends to concentrate on Jewish needs and to leave the Arabs to the care of Government.'

Jewish nationalism posed a serious problem, explained the Commission, because it did 'reject, consciously or unconsciously, the very idea of a real Palestinian community.' It appears to deny or ignore 'the theory that Arabs and Jews are members of one Palestinian society.' Palestinian citizenship seemed to Jews as 'nothing but a legal formula devoid of moral meaning.'

The Commission observed that relations of Jews with the Mandatory government were better than the relations of Arabs with the same government partly because the Jews needed the government to foster their goals. The Jewish Agency could criticise the government and resent its policies but never to the point of challenging its authority. The Jewish Agency must always contain extreme Jewish nationalism, and Jewish extremists could not 'go all out' for freedom from British rule 'since a free Palestine

in present circumstances means an Arab state.' Nor could they deny the government their allegiance since the government protects them 'from the enmity of the Arab world.'

But the Agency itself was 'not altogether moderate.' It often made unreasonable demands on the government, for example, in the sensitive areas of immigration and the sale of land. Said the Commission ' ... when in these and other matters they do not get their way, they are tempted to forget that the Mandatory obligation is two-fold and to complain that the administration is culpably 'pro-Arab.'

Part of the problem of Anglo-Jewish relations was that the British government was 'an alien ... to all but a tiny handful of the Jews in Palestine.' Also, relevant was the fact that the Jewish National Home had 'a highly educated, very politically-minded, and unusually young community.' Consequently, colonial form of government was ' ... not a suitable form of government for a numerous, self-reliant, progressive people, European for the most part in outlook if not in race.'

The Commission recognised that both the Arabs and the Jews were 'able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world,' a fact that made the Mandate inconsistent with the ultimate aspirations of the two peoples. In fact, the Mandate by its very nature tended 'to impair the political health of the National Home,' by breeding 'one of the worst of political ailments - irresponsibility.'

Jewish demands on the British government were described by the Commission as involving 'a forcing of the pace.' This meant ' ... more immigrants, more land, more rural and urban development ...' The problem was that Jews 'want it all in a hurry.' And because they did not want independence or self-government for Palestine, since these meant an Arab Palestine, ' ... the disease continues unchecked by its natural remedy.' The Commission deplored the 'regrettable weakness in the life of the National Home that its young community should be growing up in an atmosphere of irresponsibility with regard to the gravest issues that confront it.'

Had the Jewish Home developed differently, the conflict between Arabs and Jews would not have been so sharp. Arab fear would have been much less 'if Jewish immigration had only trickled in, if Jewish colonisation had been predominantly agrarian and only gradually extended, if there had been no great urban and industrial development.' Yet the Commission believed the reasons for Jewish haste were understandable. Jews had a problem to solve, and Palestine was seen by them as the solution.

Arab reaction was also understandable, stated the

Commission. 'Nobody in Palestine can fail to realise how much more bitter, how much more widely spread among the people, Arab hatred of the National Home is now than it was five or ten years ago.' And Arab resentment had extended beyond Palestine. Although 'in earlier times there had been little, if any, anti-Jewish sentiments observable in Egypt or Iraq,' there was now resentment in Cairo and Baghdad. In Transjordan, people 'were only restrained with difficulty from joining the fight across the river.' The Commission had reliable information that during the disturbances in Palestine 'a Jewish settler could only enter the country (Transjordan) ... at the risk of his life.'

The Commission deplored the extension of the conflict to include non-Palestinian Arabs, because the Arab world could profit from Jewish capital and enterprise. Normally, the Arabs would have accepted Jewish help, but they were resentful because 'the creation of the National Home has been neither conditioned nor controlled by the Arabs of Palestine.' The Jewish National Home, said the Commission, 'has been established directly against their will' and 'that hard fact has had its natural reaction on Arab minds...'

Thus, while the Jews had a right to their National Home, because it was internationally sanctioned, this right had the effect of alienating the Arabs and of depriving them of their right to self-government. The resulting conflict between the two people 'might become dangerously aggressive,' the Commission predicted, adding that there might be future circumstances in which 'the Jews might have to rely mainly on their own resources for the defence of their National Home.' Jews were aware of this possibility and believed 'the more immigrants, the more potential soldiers'; but their haste and anxiety created a vicious circle, since the more immigrants there were the more the Arabs resented them.

The Commission said 'it is impossible ... for any unprejudiced observer to see the National Home and not wish it well.' In helping towards its creation Britain made relevant Lord Balfour's comment that 'Christendom has shown itself not oblivious to all the wrongs it has done.' However, the Commission warned sympathisers not to underestimate the difficulties of the Jewish National Home: 'it does it no service to brush them aside, to say all will be well if we wait a little longer ...' The best well-wishers of the Zionist cause could do 'is to recognise frankly that the situation in Palestine has reached a deadlock and to bend their minds to find a way out.'

Arab Progress: According to the Commission, between 1920 and 1936 the Arab population of Palestine grew from 600,000 to 950,000. Thr growth was possible because of

the improved public health facilities developed by the Mandate administration - unlike the population growth of the Jewish National Home, which was largely the result of immigration. The Arab increase was remarkable in view of the fact that the population of Palestine during Ottoman times was more or less static.

The Commission seemed to argue that the increase in Arab population was a sign of progress. It accepted the view that the Jewish National Home had brought prosperity to the country which in turn was partially responsible for the progress made by the Arabs. This seems to support the Zionist argument that their National Home was beneficial to the Arabs.

However, the Commission admitted that this argument needed 'sociological inquiry,' which was not available to it or to the government. Consequently, it warned that its 'judgement must be taken as only a rough, though ... fair, opinion on a complicated question.'

Nevertheless, it was sure that the Arab upper class did benefit from the sale of land to Jews. In earlier times, these sales were mostly made by non-Palestinian Arabs. But in recent years, many sale transactions had involved Palestinian Arabs, mostly of the upper class. According to the Commission, the sales amounted to $4,159,000 in 1933, and $8,270,000 in 1935.(2) These land sales were partly responsible for the substantial investments made by the Arab upper class, much of which was in the citrus agriculture. Arab citrus land increased six times between 1920 and 1936, representing an investment of $31,629,000. Some of the investment was also in industry, which had increased from 1,200 establishments before the war to 2,200 in 1936.

The prices the Jews paid for land was very high. A member of the Arab Higher Committee told the Commission 'nowhere in the world were such uneconomic land prices paid as by Jews in Palestine.' But Arabs made it clear that the prices were political and not economic, meaning that Jews were buying more than real estate. They were buying a country.

Regarding industrial development, however, the Commission said that Arab industry had no prospect of succeeding, because it 'cannot in the long run compete with ... Jewish' industry. The more Jewish industry expanded, the more Arab industry declined. This trend was already visible. The soap industry, which was one of the Arabs' largest industries, had suffered as a result of Jewish competition.

Also, the Arab *fellah*, who constituted a majority of the Arab population did not share in the prosperity resulting from Jewish economic activity. In 1920, it was already clear that Palestine did not have enough land to

maintain the *fellah* and his family at a decent level. Since then the tremendous increase in his numbers had made land even more scarce. The result, according to the Commission, was a rural exodus to the urban centres and although industry had absorbed 60,000 of them, most lived in 'shacks' so that a city like Haifa could be called 'Tin Town.' In addition, many former *fellaheen* were were unemployed.

But some improvements in the condition of the *fellah* were noted by the Commission. The unpopular and oppressive tax known as tithe had been abolished and replaced by 'a more equitable tax on rural property.' A beginning had been made establishing some sixty Arab cooperative societies. And the *fellah* was becoming a more efficient cultivator.

On this matter of benefits, the Commission arrived at three conclusions. First, in a broad sense 'the Arabs have shared to a considerable degree in the material benefits which Jewish immigration has brought to Palestine.' Secondly, 'the economic position of the Arabs, regarded as a whole, has not so far been prejudiced by the establishment of the National Home.' Thirdly, 'Arab prosperity is tied to the fortunes of the Jewish National Home, whatever happens to the latter will affect the former.' The Commission noted that if the National Home were to experience unemployment, Arab labour would be the first to suffer. Furthermore, if the political conflict continued, neither Arabs nor Jews could benefit from the Jewish National Home: 'Two peoples at war cannot promote each other's benefit.'

The Commission's conclusion that the Jewish National Home benefited the Arabs was, no doubt, a victory for the Zionists, who had insisted on this position all along. The conclusion was at variance with the conclusions of previous commissions of inquiry and with the Hope-Simpson report, all of which doubted the validity of the Zionist thesis. Those reports distinguished between the specific Arab gains and specific Arab losses, recognising both without giving the Zionist thesis the blanket aproval given by the Peel Commission.

Arab Nationalism: The Peel Commission's Report had a section on Arab nationalism which included quotes from an interview with the Mufti. According to the Mufti, the Arab cause in Palestine aimed at independence and in that sense it did not differ 'from movements amongst the Arabs in all other Arab countries.' He suggested a solution to the Palestinian problem 'on the same basis as that on which were solved the problems of Iraq, Syria and the Lebanese.' He recalled that in Iraq, for instance, British interests were guaranteed by a treaty and proposed that a similar guarantee be tied to the independence of

Palestine.

In this connection, the Commission observed, the Arab position had 'not shifted by an inch' since 1920. Events in the last seventeen years only stiffened Arab resistance. The position itself was purely political, since on economic grounds Arab nationalism should have no complaints about the Jewish National Home. But even if the Arabs were to admit the economic benefits from the National Home, they would still demand independence for their country and would also reject the Jewish National Home on the grounds that it was a threat to their dominant position in the country.

Arab feelings about the National Home were expressed 'in figurative language' by an Arab witness before the Commission: 'You say we are better off, you say my house has been enriched by the strangers who have entered it. But it is *my* house, and I did not invite the strangers in, or ask them to enrich it, and I do not care how poor or bare it is if only I am master in it.'

In regard to the Jewish National Home,the Commission stressed that in essence the conflict was not 'an inter-racial conflict, arising from any old instinctive antipathy of Arabs towards Jews.' It reminded readers that 'there was little or no friction ... between Arabs and Jews in the rest of the Arab world until the strife in Palestine engendered it.'

The problem of Palestine, said the Commission was 'as elsewhere, the problem of insurgent nationalism.' As such, it was not different from the problems of neighbouring Arab countries. In fact, it followed the same pattern as in Iraq, Syria, and Egypt where there were 'no National Homes.'

Arab opposition to the Jewish National Home was the result of many factors. First, 'the establishment of the National Home involved at the outset a blank negation of the rights implied in the principle of national self-government.' Secondly, the National Home proved to be 'the only serious obstacle to national self-government. Thirdly, with the growth of the Jewish National Home, the prospects of a national government by a Jewish majority increased. The Commission said 'this is why it is difficult to be an Arab patriot and not to hate the Jews.'

But what would be in Palestine had there been no Jews? The Commission predicted that 'the mainspring of Arab agitation would remain untouched.' The Arabs would still want independence. However, the attainment of independence had been made almost impossible by the presence of Jews in Palestine. The Jewish National Home, said the Commission, 'big or samll ... blocks the way to national independence.'

Contrary to Zionist belief that Arab nationalism was

artificially induced by a handful of agitators and privileged families, the Palestinian movement, said the Commission, was 'not a new and transient phenomenon' because 'it was there at the beginning, its strength and range has steadily increased, and it seems evident it has not yet reached its climax.' In 1937 the movement was 'sustained by a far more efficient and comprehensive political machine than existed in earlier years.' It was as strong as the nationalist movement of any Arab country - and it was fully united. 'All the political parties present a 'common front' and their leaders sit together on the Arab Higher Committee. Christians as well as Muslims are represented on it ... in every town there is a National Committee, which has representatives in the neighbouring villages.' Arab unity was manifest, said the Commission, in the fact that as long as the Arab Higher Committee maintained a boycott against the Commission 'no Arab came near us.'

The nationalist organisation, observed the Commission is supported 'by a copious and vigorous press.' During the disturbances, the Press articulated national issues without any 'trace of moderation in their tone.' Even the schools supported the movement, as evidenced in the fact that not a single school was open during the strike. All the senior schoolmasters and the Arab officials in the Education department signed the anti-government manifesto of June 3, 1936. Two of these schoolmasters were interned in the Sarafand concentration camp. The youth scouts made sure that the strike was obeyed. Some of them, according to the Commission, were suspected of being 'assassins'; and when the Arab leadership became 'too slow or too timid' the youth quickly denounced it. The most extreme in the movement were the young, who cared little about economics and were highly political. The Commission agreed with an unnamed British person who once said 'British talk of balanced budgets and higher standards of living is poor cold stuff compared to the heroics of the nationalists.' The Arab youth was not different from the youth of other countries. 'No gallant youth of any race would hesitate for a moment under which banner to enlist.'

The Arab nationalist movement of Palestine had strong support in other Arab countries, especially in Syria. When Syria became sovereign and independent, the Commission predicted, France would not be able to restrain it as it did earlier. And the Syrians would then throw more weight on the side of their Palestinian brothers.

The Commission believed that Palestinian Arab terrorism was not different from the terrorism of other nationalist groups. It reminded us of the terrorism of the Irish after World War I which was very similar to that

of the Palestinians during the 1930s.

In concluding the section on Arab nationalism, the Commission warned that 'Jewish nationalism is as intense and self-centred as Arab nationalism. Both are growing forces, and the gulf between them is widening.'

The British Administration: In a short section on the British Administration of Palestine, the Commission observed that the government's problem was that 'it (is) poised ... above two irreconcilable communities.' No other country in the world had an arrangement 'less enviable.' Because the Mandate 'was framed mainly to realise the nationalist ideals of Zionism,' it developed to an instrument of separating the two Palestinian communities instead of uniting them. First, it imposed the used of three official languages (English, Arabic, and Hebrew). Secondly, it accepted as legal obligation 'the right of each community to maintain its own schools for the education of its own members in its own language.' Thirdly, it recognised the Jewish Agency as a public body, and, although the Arabs were not given similar recognition, a Supreme Muslim Council and an Executive existed for the Arabs. Consequently, 'the two communities instead of being drawn together by the common forms and symbols of a single citizenship, have adopted the forms and symbols of separate nationhoods.' In Palestine, said the Commission, there were three flags: the Union Jack; the red, white, green, and black flag of the Arabs; and the blue and white banner of Zionism. Unfortunately, in Palestine 'Nobody wants a Palestinian flag.' Also, the British and the Jews had their own national anthems. Consequently, it was clear that Palestine really had three administrations: the Mandatory administration, the Jewish Agency, and the Arab Higher Committee. 'They might almost be called three governments.' The Commission emphasised 'it is the simple truth that of the three, the Government of Palestine makes the least appeal to the national loyalty of either the Arabs or the Jews.'

The British Administration had faithfully tried to meet its obligations to both communities. However, the Mandate encouraged 'a kind of mechanical impartiality which makes neither for good government nor, in fact, for better relations between the races ... the government of Palestine might almost be described as government by arithmetic.

The British Administration was so scrupulous in maintaining impartiality 'that the three cars provided ... for our (the Commission's) personal use were hired from Muslim Arab, Christian Arab, and Jewish Arab respectively.' Unfortunately, this British impartiality was not appreciated by either Jews or Arabs. Whatever the government did was seen by Jews as pro-Arab and by

Arabs as pro-Jewish.

The two communities were irreconcilable in the demands that they made on the government and in their distorted views of the Mandate. The Arabs did not understand British obligations to the Jews, and the Jews did not understand British obligations to the Arabs. Each side saw only British obligations to itself. The Commission noted that the British could not abandon 400,000 Jews who had come to Palestine ('not only with our permission but with our encouragement') ... to the good intentions of an Arab government.' Moreover, the Jews were known to be arming themselves and 'they would fight rather than submit to Arab rule.'

On the other hand, the Jews wanted no restrictions on immigration or the sale of Arab land. They wanted to become a majority and to create a Jewish state. In wanting these things 'they underrate the strength of Arab nationalism throughout the country and particularly among the young.' They forgot that in spite of Arab willingness to cooperate with them at the local level, 'Arab moderation has never extended to the higher plane of politics.' The Commission emphasised that 'Arab moderates have always been nationalists.' It predicted that the Arabs 'will resist the gradual conversion of the country to a Jewish majority,' because 'they regard (Jewish) entry, maintained as it is ... by force in the teeth of their resistance, as in the nature of an invasion, and the process by which they gradually rise towards a majority ... as a sort of creeping conquest.'

The Mandate was also often troubled by inconsistencies in the policy of the government. For instance, the Commission produced a table showing government expenditures from 1920 until 1937 in which it was evident that the government had annual surplus revenues during twelve of the seventeen years of the Mandate. On April 1, 1936, this surplus amounted to $30,495,122.(3)

Before the Commission the Arabs argued that the surplus was a clear indication that the government was not doing enough for the Arabs, who constituted the majority of the population. The Commission agreed, and it cited specific areas of Palestinian life that needed development by the government. The amounts spent on education, for instance, were indeed meagre. Figures on public expenditures from 1931 to 1937 showed that education was given low priority compared with other types of expenditures. In 1931, only 6.34 per cent of total expenditures was allocated for education. The percentage declined in subsequent years until it reached 3.99 in 1936-37. The statistics also showed that the government spent on 'police and prisons' more than three times what it spent on education. Of course, education in Palestine was

the responsibility of the central government in Jerusalem, but Jewish education was in the hands of the local Jewish authorities. This meant that the Arabs relied on government for the education of their youth. The Commission admitted that 'it is most regrettable that, after 17 years of Mandatory rule, the Government system is able to satisfy no more than half the Arab demand for education.' It added that 'of recent years nearly 50 per cent of the applicants for entry into schools, in areas where schools exist, have had to be refused for lack of teachers and accommodation.' Add to this the areas in which the government had created no educational facilities within accessible distance and you would have a problem of great magnitude. According to the Commission, only 42,700 out of an Arab population of school age of 260,700 were in schools. What made this a tragedy was the fact that Arabs were eager to send their children to school and had offered to pay, in addition to their taxes, part of the cost 'This is deplorable in that many Arab villagers are willing, if only the Government will do its share, to contribute towards the creation of school buildings.' In addition, whatever secondary schools there were were not adequate to absorb students finishing the elementary schools. Of course, Palestine had no university for the Arabs and would not have one for as long as the British controlled the country.

However, the Commission found that the surplus was offset by debts obtained primarily to maintain public order and security. 'The entire surplus is found to be so heavily mortgaged that it is little more than a reasonable provision for existing commitments.' But this was no excuse for the government's failure to fulfill its obligations in the area of education. The Commission urged the government to find the money and to do something about education. It also commended the Palestinian Arabs for viewing education as of utmost importance to their future.

Aside from the surplus issue and the problem of education, Arab complaints regarding the partiality of the administration were generally considered unjustified by the Commission. However, the complaint that government protection of infant industries injured the Arabs could not be judged for lack of statistical data. The Arabs claimed that since infant industries were mostly Jewish, employing Jewish workmen only, the price increase resulting from government protection were not offset by other benefits.

The lack of statistics weakened the Arab position in the Peel Commission's investigations and had done so during investigations conducted by previous commissions and authorities. Arab leaders had neither the technicians nor the staff to develop the data. The Arab Higher

Committee's staff was nothing compared with the elaborate structure of Zionist institutions like the Jewish Agency, which was akin to a full-fledged government. Consequently, Arab arguments could only be valid if statistical data derived from other sources supported them. And so when an Arab argument was accepted it was because British officials or British statistics agreed with it, or because common sense or abstract analysis made it credible. This was never a Zionist problem. The Jews were always ready with modern surveys and detailed information, and it was often difficult for the Commission to disprove Zionist arguments without at least having the backing of government statistics.

Nevertheless, the Commission believed the Jewish National Home was economically beneficial to the British administration in Palestine because it brought in more revenues. In addition to the normal taxes Jews paid the government, public revenues increased from custom duties on imported Jewish goods.

The Land Problem: The Commission's report also deals with the highly-controversial issue of land, making it the thirteenth inquiry into this crucial subject. The Peel Commission reviewed twelve previous studies and attempted, in addition, to investigate the problem on its own. Its basic conclusion remained the same: 'unless there is a marked change in the methods of cultivation, the land of Palestine is unable to support a large increase in the population.' Obviously, this conclusion favoured the Arab point of view on the subject, which had been advanced in the early 1920s.

The Commission deplored the government's failure to satisfy repeated demands for development, which was considered essential for the enlargement of Palestine's capacity to absorb population. It explained this failure in terms of the contradictions inherent in the Mandate system, and the legal limits placed on the High Commissioner's authority to regulate the purchase of land.

Failure, to develop the land contributed to the bad situation of the Arab *fellah*, observed the Commission. The land required intensive cultivation before it could sustain the Arabs at a decent economic level, and unfortunately, 'the Arab peasant has at present neither the capital nor the education necessary for intensive cultivation.' The Jews had both in abundance. However, ' ... the lack of these two essential requisites does not justify the expropriation of the Arab to make room for the richer and more enterprising (Jewish) colonist ...'

The Commission dealt with the Arab complaint that 'Jews had already received too much land' and that this Jewish 'land-hunger' had created 'a class of landless Arabs.' It did find that 'the official total of landless

Arabs' was 'only a' portion of the displacement of Arab population resulting from Jewish land purchases.' In other words, the Commission agreed that the number of landless Arabs was greater than the number recorded by the government.

Moreover, the Commission recognised another equally important problem: 'Jews ... have restricted the employment of Arab labour on lands held by them.' Like the Shaw Commission of 1929, it stated that 'there has in fact been a movement to intimidate those Jewish farmers who employ Arab labour. In 1927, the government enacted a law, known as the Prevention of Intimidation Ordinance, to deal with the problem but the law was ineffective. In 1936, it was amended to make it more effective, but sufficient time had not passed to indicate that it succeeded.

However, the Commission did not agree with the Arabs that Jews bought too much land. It saw Arab landlessness as less the product of Jewish purchase of land than the increase in Arab population. The land purchased by Jews was mostly 'sand dunes or swamp' and could not have been the reason for the shortage of land in Palestine. (Later, the Commission produced statistics showing that Jewish purchases of land were extremely small compared to the area remaining in Arab hands.)

The Commission also found the Zionist argument that the government was reluctant to release state owned land to Jews to be unjustified. It said that much of the state land was unsuitable for development, and that the bulk of the cultivable land was already occupied by Arabs who could not be evicted without creating still another problem. However, it agreed with the Zionists that consolidation of land holdings could create possibilities for development schemes.

Jewish Immigration: Perhaps the most important part of the Commission's report was the one dealing with the problem of Jewish immigration. Along with the land issue, this issue was considered by the Zionists to be the most crucial for the success of Zionism. The Commission was fully aware of the importance of immigration to Zionist aspirations. It acknowledged the fact that without immigration, the Jews could hardly become a majority in Palestine. Their natural increase was not adequate, especially when 'Arab population is increasing at the rate of 24,000 persons per annum.' Even with immigration, it would take a long time for the Jews to catch up with the Arabs. The Commission calculated that with an annual Jewish immigration of 30,000 the Jews would not equal the Arabs before the mid-sixties. Of course, the higher the immigration figures the shorter the period before parity was attained. (Parity would be attained by 1954 if the

immigration annual rate was 40,000, by 1950 if it were 50,000, and by 1947 at an annual rate of 60,000.)

The Zionists of course did everything to bring more Jews into Palestine even, as mentioned earlier, encouraging illegal immigration. The Peel Commission found interesting techniques used by the Zionists to increase immigration. For instance, they arranged marriages between male citizens and alien Jewish women to qualify the women to immigrate to Palestine or stay there and eventually become citizens if they had already entered the country on temporary visas.

As soon as the purpose was accomplished, the marriages were dissolved, and the Commission noted that divorce rates in the Jewish community of Palestine were unusually high. 'The ratio of Jewish divorces to recorded Jewish marriages is 40 per cent.' It concluded that 'a substantial part of the abnormal divorce rate is due to the marriages and divorces which enable foreign women to enter Palestine or remain in the country ...' and asserted that the Zionists maintained a professional class of husbands who were available for the sole purpose of increasing Jewish numbers in Palestine.

Although the Commission expressed sympathy with the Zionist view of immigration, it warned that it was inconsistent with the economic and political realities of Palestine. In the first place, 'Palestine is one of the smallest and also one of the least self-contained of all countries.' In the second place, it was politically sensitive. Without peace there could be no National Home. The Commission gave credit to the British government without whose assistance and protection a Jewish National Home of 400,000 people would not have been possible.

So far, the Commission observed, immigration was determined by economic criteria only. Political, psychological, or social considerations had not entered into the picture. Yet, it was these non-economic factors that were the more important and should have counted. The reason was obvious: 'the continued impact of a highly intelligent and enterprising race, backed by large financial resources, on a comparatively poor indigenous community, of a different cultural level, may produce in time serious reactions.' 'Can it be the duty of the Mandatory,' asked the Commission, 'or indeed is it in the interest of the National Home itself to allow immigrants to come into the country in large numbers without any regard to an increasing hostility which from time to time finds expression in violent disorder?' 'Do the Jewish people wish to maximise numbers at the cost of repression and constant rebellion?' 'Do the British people really wish to continue sustaining sacrifice in British life to fulfill their obligations to Jews?' These questions, the Commission

said, were 'quite plain and should be squarely faced by everyone concerned.'

The existing immigration system was inadequate, and the administration's control of it was also inadequate. The Commission said that the administration controlled the admission of only one fourth of Jewish immigrants. The Jewish Agency controlled the rest. Such a situation, observed the Commission, should not be acceptable because it 'might operate to prejudice the good government of Palestine.'

According to the Commission, 'By 1936 the Jewish National Home had practically grown into something like a state within a state.' Consequently, it must be understood that the Mandatory power, Britain, had faithfully lived up to its promise to the Jews: ' ... the Mandatory has so far fully implemented his obligation to facilitate the establishment of a National Home for the Jewish people in Palestine.'

The Commission recommended 'a definite limit to the annual volume of Jewish immigration' not to exceed 12,000 immigrants per year for the next five years. The limit was necessitated by Arab reaction and the fact that Jews had become 'a formidable fraction of the total population.' In addition, the Jews had become a very powerful group: 'In education and enterprise, in the modern methods he pursues and the capital he can cammand, in the help he can get from the Jewish world outside, the average Jew is more than a match for the average Arab.' Moreover, regardless of its size, the Jewish National Home had prevented the Palestinian Arabs from becoming politically independent, like Arabs in the neighbouring countries who had already attained independence or were on the way to it.

The Commission was of the opinion that the Palestinian experiment, a British creation, had failed in spite of British fairness and impartiality. The best evidence of failure was shown in the fact that Jews had no interest in Palestinian citizenship. On December 31, 1936, there were 384,000 Jews in Palestine, only 166,000 of whom ever bothered to become citizens of the country in which they lived. Although 92,000 did not qualify for the citizenship on account of a two-year residency requirement, 126,000 opted not to become citizens. This was 43 per cent of the Jewish population of Palestine. The percentage would have been much higher if we assume that many of the unqualified non-citizens would not apply even when they qualified.

(The Arabs, on the other hand, had no such problem. Although there were non-citizen Arabs in the country, they were relatively small in number and mostly seasonal workers from neighbouring countries. According

to the Commission, these seasonal workers usually returned to their countries when work was available or during agricultural work seasons. Arabs complained to the Peel Commission, as they did on other occasions, that there were some 40,000 Palestinian Arabs residing outside the country since the early 1920s who were unjustly denied citizenship by the government. The Committee found this Arab complaint lacking in substance.)

The Solution: The major conclusion of the Peel Commission was that the situation in Palestine was impossible. First, the Mandate assumed that British obligations to Arabs and Jews were compatible. These obligations were made under the stress of World War 1 and time had proved beyond doubt that they could not be reconciled. Secondly, there were simply no common grounds for a meaningful working relationship between Jews and Arabs in Palestine: 'The Arab community is predominantly Asiatic in character, the Jewish community predominantly European.' As mentioned earlier, the Commission believed that the conflict was not between a Jewish 'race' and and Arab 'race' but between a European culture and an Asiatic culture. Thirdly, the aspirations of the two peoples were almost incompatible - there was a conflict between two nationalisms. The Arabs, according to the Commission, wanted the Jews to accept a minority status, but they were willing to give them a status similar to the one they occupied historically in Muslim Spain. The Jews, on the other hand, ignored the Arabs altogether. According to the Commission 'the Arabs would be as much outside the Jewish picture as the Canaanites in the old land of Israel.' The Commission predicted that the conflict between Arabs and Jews would increase in time, if no immediate solution was found. The conflict would become acute as the Arabs became more educated and more economically developed.

Who in the end should govern Palestine? The Commission said that neither Arabs nor Jews should govern the country. Only by 'a surgical operation' could the problem be solved, believed the Commission. This meant partition.

The Commission recommended that a Frontier Commission of technicians should be organised to work out the details of a viable partition plan. But it proceeded to suggest a plan of its own, because it felt that its job would not be complete without such a plan.

Three separate states were proposed, a Jewish state, an Arab state, and a new British Mandate to include mainly the holy places of Palestine.

Unlike the existing Mandate system, the proposed new Mandate would be permanent and free of any relevancy to the Balfour Declaration. Furthermore, only the League

of Nations could terminate it. The people of the Mandate would be told that provisional independence, guaranteed by article 22 of the Covenant, would not be promised to them.

In partitioning the country, a guiding principle was to separate Jews and Arabs. However, the Commission said in Palestine 'No frontier can be drawn which separates all Arabs and Arab-owned land from all Jews and Jewish-owned land.' Since the Jews did not own enough land to create a purely Jewish state, it was unavoidable to draw the boundaries to include Arab property and Arab population in the proposed Jewish state. The Commission estimated that the Jewish state would have 225,000 Arabs and the Arab state would have only 1,250 Jews. To solve this problem, it recommended the transfer of population so that neither state would have a minority problem. It realised that this was an extremely difficult task, but felt that peace would not be possible without it.

The Commission recommended that Transjordan should be incorporated into the proposed Arab state. Since the Arab state was not expected to be economically viable, subsidies should be paid to it by the British government and the Jewish state. The latter should be required to pay the subsidy, because its territory would be enlarged at the expense of the Arabs. The British subsidy was justified on the grounds that it was required for Transjordan which would become part of the Arab state under the Commission's plan.

The plan also recommended that the Arab state be given commercial access to Haifa, 'the only deep-water port on the coast.' And the Jewish state should have free transit privileges in the Arab state to allow access to the Egyptian frontiers and to the port of Aqaba. These privileges belonging to the two states should be guaranteed by treaties between them and the Mandate state.

The Woodhead Commission

As recommended by the Peel Commission, the precise boundaries of partition were to be determined by experts. A commission of such experts was organised by the Colonial Secretary in March 1937 and it was headed by Sir John Woodhead by whose name it became known. The Commission arrived in Palestine on April 27 where it conducted investigations until August 3, the day it returned to London. It held fifty five sessions in Jerusalem and later nine more in London.

No Arab witness appeared before the Commission

because of their total opposition to partition. The Commission was charged to examine the partition plan proposed by the Peel Commission but was free to consider other options.(4) Three principles were to guide it. First, the boundaries were to be fixed to allow the least number of people and land of each 'race' in the other 'race's' state. Secondly, the proposed states must be militarily defensible and economically self-sufficient. Thirdly, British responsibilities must be practical and reasonable.

The Woodhead Commission first considered the Peel Commission's plan, which it classified as Plan A. It concluded that it was deficient, mainly because militarily it was not defensible and because it was not the best arrangement for having the least number of people and land of each 'race' in the other 'race's' state.

The Commission figured that in Plan A, there would be 221,400 Arabs and 80,200 Jews in the Jerusalem and Nazareth 'enclaves' which were to become a British Mandate. In the two 'enclaves' the Arabs would own seventeen times as much land as the Jews.

The Woodhead Commission attempted to modify Plan A to eliminate these weaknesses and the modified plan was classified as Plan B.

In developing Plan B, the Commission consulted military experts to make sure that the boundaries of the states would be defensible. These experts told the Commission that no really defensible boundaries could be drawn anywhere west of the Jordan River. Nevertheless, the Commission drew the boundaries in Plan B to be 'tactically defensible against rifle and machine-gun fire.' To reduce the number of Arabs in the Jewish state, Galilee and an area south of Jerusalem were taken out of the Jewish state of Plan A. But the modifications on Plan A could not eliminate the problem of an Arab minority in the Jewish state. There were still too many Arabs owning too much land in the Jewish state. The Commission then decided to put together a wholly new plan of partition which it classified as Plan C.

It had come to the conclusion that only the central part of Palestine could be subjected to partition 'without injury to either Arabs or Jews.' But this meant that the areas allotted to the Jewish and Arab state would be too small. In Plan C, therefore, the Mandate state was the largest of the three. It was to have an Arab population of 502,800 and a Jewish population of 157,400. In the Mandate, the Arabs would own land more than six times that of the Jews.

The Arab state under Plan C would have an Arab population of 444,100 and a Jewish population of 8,900. Only 15,950 acres would be owned by Jews and the rest, 1,832,422 acres, would be owned by Arabs. Consequently,

there was no question that the Arab state would almost be purely Arab.

The Jewish state in Plan C would have 226,000 Jews and 54,400 Arabs, almost one Arab for every four Jews. And, in land ownership, the Arabs would still have almost twice as much land as the Jews. Nevertheless, the Commission believed that this was the best it could do to have the least number of Arabs in the Jewish state. However, in order to accomplish this, the Jewish state had to be the smallest of the three.

Other provisions were attached to partition. The Mandate state was no longer to be regulated by the Balfour Declaration. In all three states, immigration would be entirely up to national authorities. However, in recommending general principles of immigration policies, the Commission said the Mandate authorities should give preference to Jews, but without any legal obligations to do so. Immigration from the Arab and Jewish states, as well as from the state of Transjordan, to the Mandate state would not be allowed except in very exceptional cases.

Also, the Commission considered the creation of the Jewish state to end British obligations to Jews: 'The object of establishing a national home for the Jews in Palestine should be deemed fulfilled by the setting up of the proposed Jewish state.'

In recommending Plan C as the best possible scheme of partition, the Commission was frankly pessimistic about its workability. It recommended it only to be constructive and to live up to the expectations of the British government as best it could. However, it was fully aware of the enormous difficulties involved in its proposal, and it made important observations regarding these difficulties.

It said that the country was simply too small to be divided. It was impossible to partition Palestine in such a way as not to deprive the Arabs of places which they considered to be their homes and at the same time to give the Jews 'sufficiently extensive, fertile, and well situated' areas while allowing the 'dense and rapid settlement' of Jews.

The Commission was also aware that the Arabs would reject any plan of partition and that the Jews would not accept a plan 'which gave them a state inadequate for their needs.' The Jews had told the Commission they would also reject a plan that did not give them Haifa, Galilee, and a part of Jerusalem.

Also, since the British government had already expressed its vehement opposition to compulsory transfers of population, there was not much that could be done to rid the Jewish state of its Arab minority problem. Furthermore, the British government did not want heavy

responsibilities in Palestine. Plan C would create a large Mandate State, and, in addition, required heavy financial costs for the British government. 'It was impossible,' said the Commission, 'whatever boundaries we might recommend, to set up an Arab state which would be self-supporting.' The Arab state needed subsidies.

Finally, the Commission believed that without requiring the Jewish and Arab states to form a customs union with the Mandated territories the partition would not work at all. It recommended, therefore, that the Mandatory government be in charge of the fiscal policies of the proposed customs union. Obviously, the Commission did not trust the Arabs or the Jews or any arrangement involving them alone to manage the union. Yet, the Commission was aware of the implication of such an arrangement: it would deprive the two states of an important element of sovereignty. In fact, observed the Commission, the two states 'would not be sovereign independent states.'

Chapter Notes

1. Cmd. 5479 (1937). Quotations in the following sections are taken from this report.
2. Correspondingly, 854,796 and 1,699,488 Palestinian pounds. For exchange rates see *Whitaker Almanac* (London, 1929-48).
3. Equivalent to 6,267,000 Palestinian pounds.
4. See the report of the Commission, Cmd.5854 (1937). Quotes in this section come from this report.

Chapter 5

THE FAILURE OF THE PARTITION PLAN

When the Peel Commission had first proposed partition, the reaction of the British government was surprisingly favourable, and embodied that view in a statement of policy published in 1937, simultaneously with the Peel Commission's report.(1)

In the statement, the government said that when Britain accepted the Mandate in the early 1920s, it had assumed that its obligations to Jews and Arabs were not incompatible. The acceptance was based upon the assumption 'that in the process of time the two races would so adjust their nationanl aspirations as to render possible the establishment of a single commonwealth under a unitary government.' This was indirect admission of the validity of an old Arab argument that neither the League of Nations nor the British government itself had ever anticipated the partition of Palestine. (The Arabs had always argued that Article 22 of the League's Covenant promised ultimate independence to Palestine, but a Palestine having the boundaries which existed at the time that the Mandate was created.)

However, the statement continued, the initial assumption of the Mandate had been proven wrong by subsequent events. Consequently, 'a single commonwealth under a unitary government' was no longer possible, and partition was 'the best and most hopeful solution' to the deadlock that had developed in Palestine.

The new position of the government was a frank admission that the Mandate had failed. No realistic person who knew enough about Palestine and who was not influenced by political, religious or British nationalistic, considerations could possibly disagree with the government's 'discovery.' Indeed some might argue that the Mandate was stillborn before it officially began, because its basic assumptions were false. However, while agreeing with the government's diagnosis, one might still question the treatment. Whether partition would cure the disease

was an entirely different matter.

Parliamentary Debates: The House of Lords (1937)

The partition idea was discussed in the House of Lords on July 20 and 21, 1937;(2) and a study of the debate affords numerous insights into the many facets of Palestinian life and the Palestinian problem.

The pro-Zionists dominated the discussions, being led by Lord Snell, head of the Labourite opposition. Lord Snell had had pro-Zionist leanings for a number of years. In 1929, as a member of the Shaw Commission, he wrote 'a reservation' criticising the majority's report. In the present debate he criticised members of the Peel Commission for 'giving up the patient before they had tried to cure him.' 'The commissioners,' he said, 'handed him over to a surgical operation which may possibly be more dangerous to the patient than the disease of which they sought to cure him'. He understood the Commission 'to have to come to the conclusion that Palestine will never be united until it is divided.'

Lord Snell believed the Mandate had not been altogether a bad experience. Economically, it was successful; and if it failed it was for administrative and 'spiritual' reasons. He blamed the Arabs for the trouble in Palestine, and the British government for being 'soft' on the Arabs. At the same time, he spoke highly of the Jews: 'They have redeemed the desolation of their land. They have made the desert blossom as the rose. They have transformed the deadly swamps, the national home of the hornet and the mosquito, into smiling valleys where a healthy population can live.'

Snell's language was contemptuous of the Arabs, who were very sensitive to a description of their country as 'swamps' and 'desert.' They had always resented such descriptions as being generalisations which, while accurate for parts of Palestine, were not true of the country as a whole. Lord Snell's view of the Arabs was also coloured by his socialistic ideas and inclinations. While sympathising with the Arab worker, he distrusted the Arab rich and warned against a Palestinian solution that would hand the Arab worker over 'to the permanent rule of the absentee Landlord.' For him, partition would be such a solution, because it would create an Arab state dominated by the landlords. Obviously, Lord Snell could not distinguish between Arab nationalism and class interests. Nor was he able to recognise Jewish class lines, and he seemed to assume that Jewish society was devoid of class conflict.

Earl Peel participated in the discussion and, of

course defended the idea of partition, urging it because he saw the Mandate as containing incompatible obligations. The Jewish National Home, he said, could not be established without injury to Arab rights. The land of Palestine was limited and Jewish purchases of Arab land would ultimately make it difficult for the Arab to find land to maintain his livelihood. Furthermore, Peel declared, the Jews were opposed to self-government in Palestine simply because the Arabs were the majority. Yet the Arabs had a right to press for the self-government promised by the Mandate Agreement. Both the Arabs and Jews, he said, were consistent in pursuing their interests; but these interests were not reconcilable. If the Jews became a majority in Palestine, their position and the position of the Arabs would simply be reversed.

The government was represented in the debate by the Marquess of Dufferin and Ava, who urged his colleagues to be realistic. He argued that the decision of the government to support partition showed strength not weakness: 'it is not weakness but strength to decide to end a situation which has becomne intolerable for ourselves and a menace to those whose interests we are trying to protect.'

The Marquess wished to dispel 'two illusions' prevailing in certain British quarters. The first was that there would have been no conflict had Palestine been blessed by a more efficient British administration. The problem was not in the way Palestine was administered, said the Marquess, but in the fact that the administration's hands were tied by the conflicting obligations of the Mandate. The second 'illusion' was that Arab nationalism was 'an artificial development fostered by a handful of irreconcilable politicians in Jerusalem.' The Marquess warned that this illusion was dangerous: ' ... the force and widespread nature of Arab national sentiment are genuine, spontaneous, and deepseated throughout all classes of the community.'

But the most constructive speech was that of Viscount Samuel, who had been the first High Commissioner of Palestine, from 1920 until 1925. At the time of his appointment, the Arabs understandably suspected that his selection was a hostile British act, because Samuel was Jewish. However, when Samuel left Palestine in 1925, many Arab leaders expressed admiration for him because he had done his best to be fair. If he failed, they believed, it was not because of any personal weaknesses, but because he was administering an impossible situation.

If the Arabs believed Samuel was a Zionist, they had reason for their belief. Churchill had said so in Parliament. Yet Samuel later maintained that he was not a Zionist, certainly he was not a member of any Zionist

organisation.

True, Samuel had worked for the issuance of the Balfour Declaration and was a strong believer in the Jewish National Home. But he did not see the Jewish National Home as the Zionists saw it. For him, the 'Home' was not a state, and in the 1930s, he opposed the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine. His speeches on the floor of the House of Lords attest to this fact.

In the debate over partition, Samuel said that the Arab's claim that they were being 'wiped out' by the Jewish National Home was untrue. Economically, the Arabs benefited from Jewish activity, and the Arab population had been increasing through natural growth at the same rate as the Jewish population through immigration.

However, Samuel agreed with the Peel Commission's conclusion that a deadlock had been reached in Palestine and that if matters continued as they were the British could not stay in Palestine without repressing the Arabs. He urged his colleagues not to underestimate the Arab nationalism of Palestine: 'It is a delusion to think all that is necessary is to remove the Mufti, and that then all will be well. We used to hear that kind of thing in the old days with regard to Ireland. It was said 'only let the priests ... and agitators be quiet and the Irish people will be entirely contented.' We used to hear it with regard to trade disputes and strikes 'only let the paid agitators be still and the working people will give no trouble.' We heard it in regard to India 'Arrest Gandhi'; and with regard to Egypt 'Deport Zaghlul.' But movements of this kind cannot be dealt with in that way ... The Arab national movement is the same in Palestine as it is in Syria, as it is in Egypt, and as it is in Iraq. It is analogous to the movement of Indian nationalism and similar movements in other countries in the world, and it is not to be disposed of easily and lightly simply by using the strong hand and applying methods of coercion.'

Samuel's defence of Arab nationalism had realism. He did not support partition because it was unfair to the Arabs and, in the long run, bad for the Jews. He had, in addition, practical reasons for rejecting the plan. Partition, he believed, could not solve the problem of minorities, since there would be many Arabs in the Jewish state no matter how one divided Palestine. In addition, the Arabs would never accept their forceful transfer from the Jewish state: 'there is nothing ... to induce 225,000 Arabs to leave the land in which they and their fathers have been settled for a thousand years, where they have mosques and where they have their graveyards.' True, transfers of population had been effective elsewhere, said Samuel, but the circumstances were different from those

of Palestine.

In declaring that the Peel Commission's partition plan was unworkable, he said: 'The Commission seem to have gone to the Versaille Treaty and picked out all the most difficult and awkward provisions it contained. They have put a Saar, a Polish Corridor and a half a dozen Danzigs and Memels into a country the size of Wales.'

According to Samuel, the solution to the conflict in Palestine required the Jews to accept certain facts. First, they must accept a limitation on immigration based on political criteria. Specifically, they should accept the principle that future immigration should not alter the present population ratio of Arabs and Jews in Palestine. He suggested a rough ratio of 40:100 in favour of the Arabs.

Secondly, the Jews must become realistic with regard to Arab nationalism. They must recognise Arab aspirations and give them the respect and cooperation they merited: 'The Arabs are intensely aware of their own history. They know that they began merely as a group of desert tribes, that there were centuries of expansion during which they acquired great territory, built up a remarkable culture and gave to the world one of its greatest civilisations.' He deplored Jewish lack of understanding of Arab aspirations, especially the aspirations of the Palestine Arabs. He pointed out that Palestinian Arabs considered themselves the trustees of one of the most sacred places of Islam the *Harem esh Sharif*, and they 'would rather die' than surrender this unique responsibility. 'The Jews,' he remarked, 'have never been sufficiently aware or sufficiently understanding of this underlying loyalty.'

Samuel believed Jewish understanding of the Arab was essential to the prosperity of both peoples: 'Now let them frankly recognise that there is this Arab movement, entitled to respect, and, indeed, to admiration. Let them cooperate with the Arabs as they did in the great days of Arab civilisation, when Jewish statesmen, philosophers and scientists helped the Arabs to keep alight the torch of knowledge.'

But how was this to be done? Samuel urged Britain, France, and the Zionists to help the Arabs form a great Arab 'confederation' to include Palestine and other Arab countries. In this confederation, he predicted, the Palestinians would be the wealthiest members because the union 'would bring to the industries of Palestine a hinterland and a market that would make them far more prosperous than they otherwise would be.'

The Arabs, in Samuel's view, had also to accept certain facts. They must consent to allow the Jews to settle in Transjordan, so that they could use their

financial resources and know-how to help in the task of developing the country. They also must accept the Jews 'as an equal community' in Palestine and share with them the responsibilities of government.

And how was *this* to be done? Samuel said the Jews already had a communal organisation and the Arabs should be allowed to organise one. The two would then have equal representation in a central council for Palestine.

Other than this communal representation, Samuel did not mention details. He was, of course, aware of the difficulties involving the application of his idea, but he thought that the Arabs could be persuaded to accept it because they had a tradition for tolerance and because the Jews had legitimate claims. He reminded the Arabs that ' ... the links of the Jews for four thousand years with this country cannot be broken; that because they are not economic they are all the stronger. They are intangible links and in the long run spiritual ideas are more potent than material things.'

Another important speaker on the floor of the House of Lords was the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, who agreed with Samuel that things were much worse in Palestine. The Archbishop believed that the Balfour Declaration had imposed upon Britain 'an insoluble problem and an impossible task.' He revealed a common British conception about Balfour's reasons for issuing his Declaration in 1917, saying that 'it was a stroke of war policy in order to secure at a critical time certain invaluable financial securities ...' He pointed to a recent biography of Balfour, which the Archbishop claimed revealed new interesting facts about the former foreign Secretary. The book, written by Balfour's niece, reported that Balfour had been inspired by the Zionist ideal twelve years before the Declaration, the inspiration coming from Dr Weizmann. It was, asserted the Archbishop, this Declaration that initiated the trouble in Palestine. Ever since 1917, British governments had tried in vain to find a suitable interpretation to that 'vague' document. 'When an interpretation was made which seemed to favour the Arabs it was followed by another interpretation which seemed to favour the Jews and *vice versa* ...'

The Archbishop also dealt with the 1930 'Black Letter' (mentioned earlier) which favoured the Zionists. The letter, he said, was followed by a sudden upsurge in Jewish immigration to Palestine until, by 1935, the Jewish population reached 400,000, almost one third the total population of the country. Could anybody, he asked, blame the Arabs for being alarmed at the prospect of becoming a minority in their own country. Arab fears, continued the Archbishop, were magnified by the ambiguities of governmental policies and by the statements

often made by important British people. He pointed to a 1925 statement of Churchill's which said that the creation of an independent state of Palestine at that time would preclude the fulfilment of British promises to the Jews. According to the Archbishop, this statement encouraged the Jews to continue hoping for a Jewish majority in Palestine and, ultimately, a Jewish state. The resulting conflict in the two peoples' aspirations made cooperation between them 'unobtainable.' The situation was described by the Archbishop as pathetic: ' 'Tis true 'tis pity; and pity 'tis 'tis true.'

The Archbishop summed up the Arab position very well: 'They have become conscious more than ever of great days of their race, and long to have a national position for a cause about which they were never even consulted.'

Yet he did not support Arab claims and criticised Viscount Samuel's plan for an Arab union as unrealistic, recommending acceptance of partition as the only way out of the deadlock in Palestine. Indeed, to him the only weakness in the Peel Commission's plan was that it did not give Jerusalem to the Jews. Without Jerusalem, he said, the ideal of Zionism would remain unfulfilled. He reminded his colleague of the age-long resolve of the Jews 'If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its cunning.'

The anti-partition speakers in the July 20 and 21 meetings (with the exception of Viscount Samuel) were all pro-Zionists. They presented the familiar Zionist official arguments often heard in the 1920s and the early 1930s. These same arguments would also be heard for a long time afterwards not only in Britain but in the United States as well. In fact, there is an amazing similarity between British Pro-Zionist arguments and those heard in the US in more recent years, from pro-Zionist Congressmen, political candidates, and even journalists of stature. One explanation for this resemblance is the power of Zionist propaganda.

In any case, the Zionist position was advocated by Lord Snell, Lord Melchett, the Earl of Lytton, the Marquess of Reading and Lord Strabolgi. Two men, Lord Melchett and the Marquess of Reading were both of the Jewish faith. The former held a high position in the Jewish Agency and often spoke on its behalf.

The argument that the Jews had been persecuted and therefore needed a country of refuge was probably the most frequently heard. There was a tendency on the part of speakers not to go beyond this point to ask questions about Arab rights and how the Jewish need for a home could be satisfied without jeopardising them. It seemed that speakers had assumed that Jews had a moral and legal right to Palestine, regardless of how Arabs were

affected by the fulfilment of this right. There was also an underlying assumption that Arabs would be better off within the Jewish National Home - based on the perception of Arabs as primitive and backward and needing the Jews to help them become modern. Some speakers, extending their views beyond Palestine, believed that the Arabs had too much land while the Jews not enough. Lord Melchett, for instance, said 'I do not think the little bit of country no larger than Wales that was offered as the National Home for the Jews was too great a strain on their (Arab) generosity.'

The pro-Zionists also advanced the old argument that Arab nationalism was not genuine and that the rank-and-file Arabs would have been peaceful were it not for a few influential families, agitators, and ruthless men like the Mufti of Jerusalem. This simplistic view persisted throughout the 1930s. The solution to agitation, according to the pro-Zionist speaker, was a forceful and determined British policy. Yet, Lord Melchett believed it was unfortunate that 'the only Arab to whom the Governmennt paid any attention was the Arab with a rifle.' Ironically, Lord Melchett seems to have confirmed a similar belief held by the Arabs themselves.

The partition plan, some believed, would create a Jewish state too small to fulfil the aspirations of Jews. This state would have a very long border that would be impossible to defend. Lord Strabolgi explained that such a small Jewish state 'will be *irredenta* to the Arabs; they will always be looking jealously at it, and it will encourage them in murder, violence and revolt.' He said that the partition plan was a peculiar arrangement because it gave the hills to the Arabs when they should have been given to the Jews: 'In the old days the Jews used to hold the hills, and the Philistines were on the plains.'

Some, like Lord Melchett, would have liked to see Haifa and the Negeb part of the Jewish state. The latter area would benefit from Jewish development and would not, as it was, be 'condemned to eternal wastefulness.' Reading the pro-Zionist speeches in the Lords, one gets the feeling that the pro-Zionists and anti-partitionists would really have liked to see all of Palestine become a Jewish state. And it might be that they realised that this goal could not have been reached without the British Mandate. Consequently, they advocated the continuation of British rule in Palestine and the postponement of the resolution of the Palestine conflict.

Of course, there were speakers who supported partition mainly because the government was behind it. In the course of the discussion they managed to say good things about the Arabs. This was necessitated by the

need to justify partition on the assumption that Arabs had rights in Palestine just as much as the Jews and that partition was the only way to satisfy both peoples' rights and needs.

But there was one pro-Arab speaker who was genuinely concerned about the rights of the Arabs and the interests of Britain. He was Lord Lamington who, like Crossley in the House of Commons, felt compelled to dispel any doubt about his compassion for Jews. He reminded his colleagues that in 1917 he spoke 'at a very big meeting' in support of the Balfour Declaration.

Lord Lamington believed that the Mandate was not executed properly. Article 22 of the Covenant required 'that the wishes of the people be ascertained' with regard to their destiny. Lord Lamington felt the article had been ignored – that the Arabs were never consulted in accordance with it. 'The Arabs', he said, 'never expressed their views about having a Mandate.' (The fact was that they preferred to be part of an independent Syria and in 1919 they were fully aware of what was happening to them.)

The problem, explained Lord Lamington, was that the British, in their desire to do good for the Jews, 'robbed Peter to pay Paul.' Another aspect of the problem was that since 'we never consulted the Arab ... they cannot be accused of having done anything disloyal or contrary to any undertaking into which they entered.'

Lord Lamington acknowledged that in Britain there had always been strong feelings of friendship and sympathy with the Jews. He said that this was evident in the fact that Lord Samuel, a Jew, was appointed first High Commissioner for Palestine 'an office he filled with great credit to himself and advantage to Palestine.' Still, Lord Lamington believed, Jewish influence in Britain was a factor in Arab bitterness. He observed that Arabs felt that they had no sympathy in the British Parliament and that they were being ignored in 'this country.' This was why, he said, they were compelled to use force and resort to 'terrorism.'

Lord Lamington called on his colleagues to examine the partition plan carefully, to make sure that it was the means by which Arabs and Jews could be brought together. He recommended that they should also explore other alternatives which might help the Jews whose problem could not be solved by the opening of Palestine because the country was too small.

Non-British Reaction to Partition

Lack of enthusiasm for partition was not limited to the House of Lords in Britain. Naturally, the Arabs were unitedly opposed to any partition scheme. Both the Mufti group and the anti-Mufti factions publicly denounced partition, arguing that partition would violate the Mandate Agreement as well as the Covenant of the League of Nations, which presupposed the eventual independence of an undivided Palestine. The creation of a Jewish state, they further argued, would jeopardise rights guaranteed to Arabs by the Balfour Declaration, and would alter the Arab 'position' in violation of the Mandate Agreement.

In a petition submitted to the League's Permanent Mandate Commission dated July 30, 1937, the Arab Higher Committee asserted the Arab right to independence in the whole of Palestine, but expressed willingness to guarantee British interests in Palestine through a formal treaty similar to the one between Egypt and Britain. The Committee also demanded an end to Jewish immigration and Jewish purchase of Arab land.(3)

The government of Iraq sent, on July 30, a letter to the Secretary-General of the League of Nations expressing 'the gravest moral responsibility towards the Arabs of Palestine' and declaring that partition would be 'an injustice' to the people of Palestins.(4) The Iraqi government stated that the only lasting solution to the problem of Palestine would have to be based 'upon the recognition of an integral independent Palestine, in which the Jews accept now once and for all the position of a minority.' It suggested, further, that the present population ratio of Jews and Arabs be continued and not be changed.

In the Bludan Conference of September 11, 1937, representatives from Palestine and other Arab countries denounced partition and promised to continue the struggle for the liberation of Palestine.(5) The Muslims of India also became involved. The All-India Muslim League condemned the Peel Commission's report and resolved to establish a Committee for the Defence of Palestine. In September, it organised a Palestine conference in Calcutta which also denounced partition and expressed solidarity with the Arabs of Palestine.(6)

Zionist reaction to partition was also negative, although for different reasons. And while the Arabs wanted independence for Palestine as an alternative to partition, the Zionists preferred the continuation of the Mandate and opposed independence before they became a majority in Palestine.

However, unlike the Arabs, the Zionists were not united in their opposition to partition. Many supported

it in principle, even though they opposed the particular plan proposed by the Peel Commission because it did not give the Jewish state sufficient territory. The disagreement among the Zionists was evident in the speeches delivered at the twentieth Zionist Congress held in Zurich in August 1937.(7) Some delegates wanted the creation of 'Eretz Israel,' a much larger state than the one proposed by the Peel Commission or than Palestine itself, on the grounds that Jewish rights in the area were much older than the Balfour Declaration. Others, like Dr Weizmann, believed that the idea of partition should not be rejected out of hand. It did recognise the principle that Jews had a right to a state of their own in Palestine, and this recognition was a new and significant development that should not be lightly overlooked. The Weizmann group reminded others in the Congress that there was, in addition, an immediate and very practical need for a solution to the problem of Jewish persecution outside Palestine. They believed partition offered an immediate solution to this problem and that Jews could not afford to wait. Consequently, they urged acceptance of the principle of partition provided they could negotiate with the British the possibility of modifying the plan of the Peel Commission so as to give the Jews more territory. The Congress passed a resolution rejecting the notion that the Mandate was unworkable and authorised the Zionist Executive to negotiate with the British to determine 'the precise terms of ... a Jewish state.' This meant that the Zionists preferred the continuation of the Mandate but left the doors open for a settlement on the basis of partition.

The Jewish Agency, meeting in Zurich right after the Congress, showed an even stronger inclination to maintain the status quo in Palestine. Not all opposition to partition, however, was based exclusively on Jewish needs. Dr. J.L. Magnes, President of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, spoke in opposition mainly because, in his view, partition was contrary to the wishes of the Arabs. (8). A strong advocate of a solution that would receive the cooperation of the Arabs, he always emphasised the significance of Arab good will to the destiny of Jews, arguing that without this good will Jewish political projects would not succeed in the long run.

Reaction of the Permanent Mandate Commission: Zionist ambivalence was not different from the reaction of the Permanent Commission. In its report to the League of Nations' Council, the Commission stated that it ' ... never imagined that the Mandatory power (Britain) might desire to withdraw from ... obligations' in Palestine. (9)

The Commission stated that at the beginning of the Mandate British obligations did not appear irreconcilable, but that the aspirations of Arabs and Jews were opposite.

These aspirations were understandable in themselves. Thus, it asked who could blame the Arabs for opposing the establishment of a National Home for another people in their own country, even if such a home was materially beneficial to them. It also asked if anyone could blame the Jews for welcoming the opportunity to build a home in the land of their forefathers. The conflict, stated the Commission, between the two peoples was inevitable: 'The very wording of the Balfour Declaration and of the Palestine Mandate clearly shows that this inevitable antagonism had been realised by the authors of those documents.'

Consequently, the Commission considered the idea of partition to be worth exploring. The 'territorial solution' reflected British 'natural and legitimate' desire to satisfy the aspirations of both Jews and Arabs since these desires could not be satisfied 'by the institution of a common administration for the whole territory.'

But the Commission could not hide its fear that partition 'will come in conflict with the same contending aspirations as those which the Mandatory power attributes the failure of its Mandatory regime.' The success of partition, said the Commission, would depend more on the attitudes of Arabs and Jews than on any territorial divisions in Palestine.

The conclusion of the Commission was that 'while declaring itself favourable in principle to an examination of a solution involving the partition of Palestine (it) is nevertheless opposed to the idea of the immediate creation of two new independent states.' The Commission suggested the institution of a transitional period of 'political apprenticeship' to precede the creation of the proposed states in Palestine.(10)

Reaction of particular states: On September 16, 1937, the Council of the League of Nations discussed the report of the Permanent Mandate Commission and resolved to authorise the British government to continue exploring the idea of partition provided the Mandate also continued until a final decision was made. The Council, in addition, recalled British 'assurances' regarding Jewish immigration to Palestine, implying that such immigration would be expected to continue.

Five days later, on September 21, the issue was discussed in the Sixth Committee (Political Questions) of the League's Assembly. Representatives of few member states made remarks worth mentioning.(11) Unfortunately for the Arabs most speakers were so concerned with the plight of the Jews that they could not discuss the problem of Palestine without discussing the Jewish problem. In the minds of the speakers the two problems seemed synonymous. In fact, the representative of Egypt was so

fearful of this fusión of the two problems that he felt compelled to remind the speakers that the issue was Palestine and not the Jewish people and their plight.

Indeed, one of the difficulties of finding a solution to the problem of Palestine had always been its entanglement with the Jewish question. What encouraged this confusion was the fact that the Zionists had long insisted that they were one and the same question. Of course, third parties did not question the Zionist position for they too were concerned about the plight of the Jews, especially in view of the fact that it was Europe that carried the burden of guilt for Jewish persecution. Since the Zionists were seeking a solution of the Jewish problem outside Europe, such a solution was not expected to cost the Europeans much, at least not in territorial terms. This was an underlying element encouraging European countries to go along with the Zionist position.

The underlying element was particularly obvious in the atitude of speakers from Central and Eastern European countries that had a record of Jewish persecution. An analysis of the speech of the Polish representative should illustrate the point, since his position on this occasion was not different from the strongly pro-Zionist position taken by other countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

In the meeting of the Sixth Committee, the Polish representative, M. Kormarnicki, admitted that Poland had a Jewish problem but that his country's enthusiasm for the Jewish National Home was motivated by the Polish Jews' own desire to immigrate to Palestine. The Polish Jewish problem was not a problem of persecution, according to Kormarnicki. Rather, it was a problem of demographic change. He said that Poland had more Jews than any other European country, almost 3.5 million or ten per cent of the total population of Poland. Many of these Jews came to Poland in the fourteenth century after they were expelled from countries like England, France, Germany, Spain and Portugal. At the time Poland was a hospitable place for Jews, and the only country that did not expel Jews. In the nineteenth century Poland once again provided refuge for Jews expelled by Tsarist Russia.

Unfortunately, explained the Polish representative, the situation began to change around the turn of this century. Jews had developed 'a special social and professional structure' and had become concentrated in the cities where 30 per cent lived and in some areas they constituted fifty per cent of the population. They also constituted 62 per cent of the commercial class and 23.5 per cent of the industrial and artisan classes. Only one per cent of the agricultural population was Jewish.

This demographic structure, said the Polish representative, would not have been a problem if it were

not for the massive migration of the non-Jewish rural population to the cities. This rural exodus created economic conditions unfavourable to the urban Jew and the pressure compelled him to seek economic opportunities in other countries. Consequently, between 1900 and 1914, 65,000 Jews left Poland each year. Since this number was twice the annual increase in the Jewish population of Poland, the result was a diminishing in the number of Polish Jews.

Of course, the Polish representative avoided a frank admission of the fact that Jews in Poland were subjected to all kinds of discriminatory policies and laws, the net result of which was a crude and deliberate system of persecution. Nor did he explain that the desire of Jews to leave Poland was prompted by the intolerable conditions forced upon them by an oppressive system.

Of course, other speakers who had no special interest in Palestine seemed more objective than the Polish representative. The representative of Haiti, for instance, reminded his colleagues of the 'fundamental rights of the native people' of Palestine, and of the fact that Palestine alone could not be a solution to the Jewish problem. The solution, he observed, was to be found in ending the persecution of Jews in every part of the world. He believed that the source of Jewish difficulties was the reluctance of states to obey the League of Nations' declaration on minorities. This declaration obligated all states who were members of the League; and states which were not members of the League were similarly obligated by a 1933 Assembly resolution which applied to them directly.

The Arabs, said the representative of Haiti, could 'not allow newcomers to rob them of their land,' nor could Palestine 'absorb all the Jews who were fleeing persecution.' Unless all countries participated in helping the Jews, the Arabs could not be expected to carry the whole burden.

Another interesting speaker was Mr Frasheri, the representative of Albania, who, in 1912, had been a governor of Palestine when the country was part of the Turkish empire. He recalled that Palestine always had a small Jewish minority which was 'completely Arabised, with oriental customs, speaking Arabic, and engaged exclusively in trade.' There was then no tension between Arab and Jew. But a member of the wealthy Rothschild family approached sultan Abdul Hamid on the idea of developing the marshy lands on the coast between Haifa and Jaffa in return for a certain sum of money. At the time he was governor, the Rothschild colonies were thirteen in number.

Frasheri claimed that Jewish success in colonisation

encouraged Zionist leaders to approach the Turkish government on still another daring idea. 'They ... suggested ... that they should pay all (Turkey's) debts, which amounted to 2½ milliard Turkish pounds, and also a sum of 5 millions as quit-rent, on condition that they were given lands in the valley of Jordan and in Mesopotamia (Iraq) which would be large enough to enable them to set up an autonomous state under Turkish suzerainty.'

Frasheri said that the Turkish government rejected the offer for a number of reasons. One reason pertained to the existing land system of communal ownership which made it almost impossible to sell land to Jews without the consent of the entire population of the community in which the sale was to be made. Nevertheless, here and there, the Jews were able to buy land from private persons. Another reason for the rejection, said Frasheri, was Turkish policy which prohibited 'the wholesale emigration of Jews of foreign nationality to Palestine ... ' However, Jews got around the policy by taking advantage of the prevailing capitulation system which allowed foreigners to reside in the Ottoman empire under the protection of a foreign power. Many of the Jewish newcomers became 'colonists.'

Frasheri suggested that there could be no solution to the Palestine problem that interfered 'with the national and historic rights of the native inhabitants, the Arabs, who were masters of the country.' He believed that, under the circumstances, the most hopeful solution was the cantonisation of Palestine after the Swiss model. Jerusalem, important to the three faiths, should be kept under international control.

The Death of Partition

Obviously, opposition to partition was too strong. The British government began losing enthusiasm for the idea even before the Woodhead Commission filed its report in 1938. However, the government did not officially withdraw its support for it until after the Woodhead report. As mentioned earlier, that report made two points very clear. It stated that Palestine could not be divided without leaving in the Jewish state a huge Arab population owning more land than the Jewish population. It also observed that any partition plan would have to cost the British government a great deal of money. Consequently, the government declared that partition was not a good idea after all. It also promised that it would hold a conference, in which Jews and Arabs would participate, to explore the possibility of a solution acceptable to the

two peoples concerned.(12)

The House of Commons (1938): The new government policy or lack of policy, evoked a great deal of resentment in British political circles. Critics forced the government into the uncomfortable position of 'damned if you do and damned if you don't.' On November 24, 1938, the Colonial Secretary, Malcolm McDonald, defended the government in the House of Commons, where a debate on the issue was taking place.(13)

The Secretary explained that partition was no longer possible because the Peel and the Woodhead Commissions 'were unable to recommend boundaries ... which would afford a reasonable prospect of the eventual establishment of self-supporting Arab and Jewish states.' He then proceeded to explain the various elements of the Palestinian problem. He said that the problem of Palestine was not a military problem but a political one: 'Our troops can restore order; they cannot restore peace.' He reminded members of Parliament that no one could justly accuse Britain of not having tried her best to fulfil her Mandate obligations towards Jews and Arabs. In the last twenty years, Britain had done its best to facilitate Jewish immigration to Palestine.

He also stated that the Jews had done their best in Palestine: 'Their achievement has been remarkable. They have turned sand dunes into orange groves.' There was no doubt, he said, that Jews had the admiration of the British people. Furthermore, Jewish bad experiences in other countries had created a great deal of sympathy for them in Britain, and there was a sincere desire among the British to do something for the Jews. However, he warned that the British should not allow their feelings for the Jews to 'warp' their sense of fairness on the question of Palestine. The British people, he said, must remember that when the Balfour Declaration was issued no one expected 'this fierce persecution' of the Jews to take place in Europe. Also, the British government had never promised that Palestine 'should be the home for everyone who is seeking to escape from such immense calamity.' After all, even if there were no Arabs in Palestine, the country could not possibly absorb all Jews.

McDonald urged members of Parliament to understand the Arab position because the Arabs had a strong case which deserved to be heard. He reiterated a point which others had mentioned before, that the Arabs 'were not consulted when the Balfour Declaration was made, nor when the Mandate was framed.' It should be easy, he stressed, to understand Arab resentment to the Jewish National Home: 'They have watched the buying up of their land, they have watched Jewish settlements spreading even further in their country. The Arabs got scared by the

swelling numbers of Jews and they wondered when Jewish immigration was going to stop.' If I were an Arab, I would be alarmed, said the Secretary, and he warned that 'if we are ever to have an understanding of this problem, if we are ever to play our part in finding a happy solution for it, we must be able to put ourselves in the shoes not only of the Jews, but of the Arabs.'

To continue arguing that Arab agitation was merely the protest of a gang of bandits was futile. Parliament must have recognised that the Arab movement was based on genuine patriotic feelings, and that many in the ranks 'felt compelled to take the risk of laying down their lives for their country.' The Secretary also made the point that it was useless to talk economics to someone involved in a national struggle. This was an important point since many Western critics of the Arabs could not understand why they did not appreciate the potential and real contributions of Jews to Arab development. The obvious explanation to this misunderstanding was that national struggles, by their nature, demand economic and human sacrifices for the attainment of independence and freedom. Economic benefits could be appreciated only in a context of peaceful cooperation. In a context of conflict and struggle they become irrelevant. Moreover, said McDonald, the Jewish National Home was never intended to be a development programme for the Arabs of Palestine or for the region as a whole. From the beginning, it had been a British enterprise designed to work *for* Jews and be worked *by* Jews. Therefore, the Arabs were 'deaf to the argument, they are blind to the spectacle of a gradually improving standard of life for the people, because they are thinking of their freedom.'

But the Secretary did not think that this Arab blindness was anything unusual: 'I say that we British people ought to be the last people in the world not to understand the feelings of the Arabs in this matter, because we too would sacrifice material advantages if we thought our freedom was at stake.'

The pro-Zionists in the House of Commons did not let the Colonial Secretary go unchallenged. In this November meeting, Herbert Morrison led the opposition speakers. He accused the government of having no policy on Palestine.(14) The government announcement to convene a conference on Palestine was equivalent to saying that discussion was itself policy. This reminded him of a British high official who once said 'foreign affairs would be splendid if there were no foreigners.' Sarcastically, he interpreted government position to mean that 'the Palestine problem would be easy if there were no Jews and no Arabs.'

Morrison defended the Jews, saying that they 'have

proved to be first-class colonisers, to have the real, good, old, Empire-building kind of qualities, to be really first-class colonial pioneers ...' However, he pointed to the problem that Palestine was not an ordinary backward colony inhabited by primitive people, like those in the equatorial parts of Africa: 'The Arabs have a relatively high state of civilisation.' This is why, he said, Britain should not treat Palestine as if it were a primitive colony.

In spite of the Colonial Secretary's warning against distorted views of Arab nationalism, Morrison repeated the old Zionist argument that the trouble in Palestine was caused by the agitation of a 'limited number of well-to-do Arab families and the Mufti ...' He suggested that the solution to the problem of Arab agitation was to arm the Jews. This would have the added advantage of limiting the risk which so far only British soldiers were willing to take.

But the most surprising speech delivered on this occasion was that of Winston Churchill.(15) In the 1920s, he had argued that if the Jews could become a majority in Palestine *without injury to the Arabs*, they would become the dominant political force when Palestine obtained its independence. Only in that sense would there be a Jewish state in Palestine. Thus he had always urged the facilitation of immigration and the continuation of the Mandate believing that the two would eventually produce a Jewish majority in Palestine without jeopardy to Arab rights. And as long as he took this position the Zionists considered him a strong ally. In fact, he had always considered himself a friend of the Zionists and had cooperated with them on every important occasion.

But on this occasion, he accepted a political limitation on Jewish immigration to take effect during a specified period of time. He suggested that during the next ten years 'Jewish immigration into Palestine shall not be less ... than the growth of the Arab population ...' Specifically, he would fix Jewish immigration 'at a certain figure which at the end of the ten year period will not have decisively altered the balance of the population as between Arab and Jew.'

What had happened to the phrase 'economic absorptive capacity' which Churchill himself coined in 1922 in the famous memorandum known by his name? One should recall that the phrase meant that immigration would be limited by economic criteria only. In his speech, Churchill denied the phrase ever meant to exclude political criteria when determining Jewish immigration: 'When I coined the phrase ... I cannot think ... that I meant to exclude other considerations. Obviously, economic absorptive capacity was to be interpreted in regard to the general political situation of the country.'

Churchill believed that his plan would have a calming effect upon the Arabs. He felt that ' ... it is our duty to make a fair offer to the Palestinian Arabs.' But he had a condescending attitude towards them. He warned that if the Arabs did not accept the offer, then they should 'consider our special obligation to them discharged.' In addition, the Arabs would be told that from now on Jewish immigration would not be limited.

Of course, Churchill was threatening the Arabs, and he knew that force would be necessary if the Arabs rejected his proposal. Consequently, he suggested that in case the Arabs did not cooperate Britain should arm the Jews. This way public security would be guaranteed 'in the strong armament of the Jewish population and the main reliance of the British administration in Palestine upon Jewish military strength.'

Churchill believed the Jews would be able to defend themselves: ' ... within a short period the Jewish population could not only hold their own in Palestine but could if they chose do very much more.' However, he believed that the Arabs should accept an offer such as the one he was proposing: 'I would give them an assurance that in ten years ... their position will be substantially what it is today; that they will be a large majority in the country.'

Why did Churchill propose limitations upon Jewish immigration? Had he changed his position? Churchill said nothing to help answer these questions except that he believed, like many others, that Palestine was too small to absorb 'the whole of the exodus of the Jews from other countries ...'

However, it might have been because he knew that the government had to do something to pacify the Arabs of Palestine who at the time were in their third year of revolution. Also, he could have been thinking of the international situation, which was steadily getting worse, and of the need to be on friendly terms with the Arabs. Or he might have suspected that the government was headed in the direction of a pro-Arab solution that would hurt Jewish interests even more than his proposal.

Whatever his reasons were, no one should come to the conclusion that Churchill in November 1938 was less enthusiastic about the Zionist political project than he had been earlier. His limitations upon Jewish immigration were for ten years only, during which time the Mandate would continue; and there is reason to believe the proposal was tactical, aiming at postponing, not curbing, the achievement of the Zionist goal of a Jewish majority. In 1939, he would give another speech on the floor of the House of Commons in which he would denounce a government promise to give Palestine independence in ten years.

Like other anti-government speakers, Churchill did not hesitate to deride government policy on Palestine, accusing the government of shifting aimlessly because it did not know what it was doing. The government sent a Commission to Palestine (the Peel Commission) and made a big thing of it. Its leader told members of Parliament Hush! Do not say a word, the Royal Commission are considering their report. Do not .. say anything to disturb them. Give them fair play.' A few months later, these leaders came back to Parliament to announce that the report was now out and that it was 'one of the finest documents of our times.' Everybody expressed joy, said Churchill. 'The great bulk of the newspapers acclaimed it. The government sucked it in at once, and rushed to applaud it ... The report was almost unanimously approved.'

Yet, said Churchill, the report did not make sense: 'It recommended that this small country should be divided into two separate sovereign states ... each of these sovereign states was to be entitled to raise an army, and between those two embattled states of Jew and Arab, there was to be sandwiched a thin line of British troops, British interests, and would-be British control.'

Obviously, Churchill did not like partition: 'when one looks back, with our short memories, upon those days, a long time ago, some 16 to 17 months, one is really astounded at the universal acceptance of this grotesque proposal.'

It was fortunate, Churchill remarked, that the Opposition and the independents were able to persuade the government not to insist on committing the House to this 'absurd and inflammatory' scheme. Partition, he said, was a dangerous solution because it 'amounted, in fact, to an almost perfect recipe for breeding an organised civil war ...'

He expressed amazement at government decision to send to Palestine 'another Royal Commission, (the Woodhead Commission) in order to report upon the first Royal Commission.' He said that the second commission came back to report that 'the plan of the first Royal Commission was rubbish.' To top it all, continued Chirchill, the government came back to parliament to say 'I have a new idea. Let us have a conference. Royal commissions are worn out. They have exhausted their virtue. It is sometime since we had a conference.'

However, in spite of Churchill's criticism of government policy, the pro-Zionists in the House of Commons were not happy with his proposal to limit Jewish immigration, especially with the details of his plan. (Churchill had estimated that Jewish immigration could go on at an annual rate of 30,000 to 35,000 without unbalancing the

existing population ratio of Arabs and Jews.)

Even Sir Ernest Bennett, a moderate, reminded Churchill that the 'Zionists' in the House would oppose his plan because in the past they had 'refused ... such a minority status ... in Palestine.'(16) Thus Bennett put his finger on Zionists' objectives in Palestine, the attainment of a Jewish majority. Bennett also reminded Churchill that the Zionists were powerful enough to obstruct any plan or proposal that interfered with their main objective. He said that the record showed their great influence. In 1930, for instance, they sabotaged the so-called Passfield White Paper (discussed earlier): 'we had a perfect tornado of opposition, propaganda, lobbying and literature and a series of speeches in this House and the other.' And what did the government do? 'The Government capitulated and abandoned the whole scheme.'

And in 1935, Bennett noted, the same thing happened with regard to the government proposal of a legislative council for Palestine. ' ...The Government, in the face of Zionist opposition, capitulated and abandoned once more the considered and mature decision of a British Cabinet.' According to Bennett, the result of this last capitulation was the Arab Revolution of 1936, which still raged hot while he spoke in the House of Commons. Sir Ernest wondered if the fate of any future policy would not be the same as previous ones.

Apparently everyone suspected that a new policy was in the making and there was fear among the pro-Zionists that it would be heavily pro-Arab. One of their diehards, Colonel J.C. Wedgwood, predicted that the new policy 'will sacrifice the Jews to the violence of the Arabs.'(17) The only solution, he said, was to throw open the doors of Palestine to the Jews. Such a solution would guarantee that ' ... it will not be the Jews who will be massacred but the (Arab) gangsters who will be exterminated.'

Wedgwood charged the government with bias. He claimed that the government was denying the Jews visas to come to Britain and quoted from a speech by tne Home Secretary in which the Secretary said, 'We must remember that if these people (the Jews) come in here (Britain), we risk the rousing of anti-Semitism in this country.'

Earl Winterton came to the defence of the Home Secretary and interrupted Wedgwood. He said that Wedgwood misconstrued the statement but he did not deny that the Home Secretary made it. He explained that visas were being issued to Jews but that the statement itself was meant 'to give warning that one must be careful and have regard to such matters as anti-Semitism.' Wedgwood replied that if there were fears of anti-Semitism in Britain

then why not send the Jews to Palestine. He could not understand why the government could not have left off all restrictions on Jewish immigration to Palestine.

One pro-Zionist, Sir W. Smiles, suggested that the Arabs of Palestine be moved to Iraq.(18) This, he said, would be better for the Iraqis than their incitement of rebellion in Palestine.

But John McGovern, another pro-Zionist speaker, apparently did not think that this was necessary.(19) He believed that Palestine could hold at least seven and a half million people. He said that in 1875 Sir Charles Warren estimated that Palestine had a capacity for fifteen million people. Sir Charles had suggested then the creation of a company, similar to the East India Company, to develop Palestine and allow Jews to gradually occupy the country and eventually govern it.

McGovern made remarks insulting to the Arabs as well as lacking in human compassion. He said that he had visited Palestine and saw 'Arab mud villages' where 'children were going about blind because of the filth.' He suggested 'blowing up such villages' for such an act 'would be a godsend to the Arabs ...'

McGovern was not the only speaker to voice such conceptions of the Arabs. Others used stronger and more insulting descriptions. T. Williams said that he too had seen Arab families living in huts which 'could not be called houses.'(20) These families lived 'more like beasts than human beings.' Sir R. Glyn recalled being bothered by 'the dung of the camel,' 'the stink of the flies' and 'the sense of smell' when he visited Palestine.(21)

Such remarks reflected the contempt some of these pro-Zionist speakers had for the Arabs. But they reflected very well the image of Arabs portrayed, for many years now, by Zionist propaganda. Indeed they raise the question of who guided these speakers on their tours of Palestine. No doubt the speakers did see what they said they saw, but was it characteristic of Arab life? The bedouin population of Palestine was less than seven per cent of the Arab population and it must have been in that section of the population where Glyn smelled the camel's excrement which bothered him. Also, filth and 'beast' life were no more Arab than the filth of the slums of London was British. Yet such notions about the Arabs were prevalent in Britain, even in its august parliament.

In the November debate of the House of Commons, it was not always possible to distinguish the pro-government speaker from the pro-Arab speaker. Viewing speeches of the 1920s and the first half of the 1930s, we find the pro-Arab speaker in parliament to be rare. When he appeared on the floor, he was interrupted frequently. However, more pro-Arab speakers began to come forward as the

government took a more definite position on Palestine, as on the Peel Commission's plan. But whenever the government hesitated the pro-Arabs were likely to stay in the background. It was clear that the Arab cause benefited from a stronger government stand and from the speeches of the pro-government members. It should be remembered, however, that the government took a more firm stand only when British national interests were affected by Palestine's problems and that pro-government speakers were often former pro-Zionists who took a pro-Arab view only to support government policy.

The record of the debates showed that both Houses of Parliament were more susceptible to Zionist-Jewish pressures than the cabinet, which reacted to the national interest before Parliament. When the government hesitated Parliament stayed pro-Zionist. When it showed determination, and that happened once in 1939, Parliament yielded. A strong and determined executive usually served as pressure on Parliament and on such rare occasions it won over Zionist pressure.

Still, there was a qualitative difference between the speeches in the House of Commons and those in the House of Lords. The latter were less political, more technical, and more limited to the subject, than the former. Generally, the Lords showed greater calm and dignity than members of the House of Commons who were taken more easily to emotions and demogoguery. Only when intense party politics entered the picture did we find the House of Lords slightly inclined towards the partial abandonment of its traditional balance.

In the November meeting of the House of Commons the Arab case was best argued by the representative of the universities, Kenneth Pickthorn.(22) He complained that the problem of Palestine was being approached on the assumption that Palestine had no Arabs. He claimed that in the present discussion there was 'no reference at all to Arabs except for two out of the last four minutes, and there were a great many references which took it for granted that Palestine already is completely Jewish country.'

Pickthorn read a letter which he had received from a British resident of Jerusalem in which the writer said: 'people are sorely misled in England ... that pro-Arab and anti-Jew are synonymous terms: a conviction that political Zionism is a profound mistake on the part of Jewry does not constitute an anti-Jewish attitude. Allied to this is the fact that Arabs as such have no hatred for the Jews as such even now: What they hate is the policy.' The writer also said ' ... there is nothing like the anti-Jew feeling I have remarked in (England's) Sheffield.'

To stress the moral implications of the Jewish

National Home, Pickthorn read from a book written by 'a graduate of my University': 'To place the brunt of the burden upon the Arab of Palestine is a miserable evasion of the duty that lies upon the whole of the civilised world. It is also morally outrageous. No code of morals can justify the persecution of one people in an attempt to relieve the persecution of another.'

Pickthorn believed this moral argument was valid even in the context of history: 'Surely there is no instance in history when the forces of a great state have been used to coerce a long-settled population in a small country to (accept) a vast immigration from a third part of the world.' He raised the question of self-determination: 'I never thought that self-determination was a very clear phrase or a very solid policy, but surely in the present case we have anti-self-determination carried visibly beyond the bounds of parody.'

He expressed disappointment at speakers constantly referring to Jewish contribution to Palestine and stated that 'the word 'burden' is nearer to fairness than is 'contribution.'' He believed that colonisation was appropriate only in relatively unpopulated areas: 'It is only in a comparatively empty country with a short history that immigration policy can be based primarily on those outside the country and not those inside it.'

Pickthorn pleaded with his colleagues to deal with the problem of Palestine objectively, which for him required separating the problem of Palestine from the problem of Jewry. This is why he wanted the forthcoming conference on Palestine to limit itself to 'the management of Palestine and not the relief of the Jews.' It seemed that the few who advocated separating the two problems were also urging two separate solutions. If the separation was not made and only one solution to the two problems was attempted neither problem would be solved, at least in the long run.

Pickthorn reminded his colleagues that the whole trouble in Palestine began with the Balfour Declaration. He urged them to be frank and honest and admit that 'there is, an arguable case for the view that the Balfour Declaration was invalid in its origin and essence because it was promising to an undefined and unindentifiable party something which the party doing the promising did not own and had no right to promise, and could not promise except at the expense of a third party.'

Of course, he was referring to the Zionists who in November 1917 did not have international legal status and to the fact that the British were not yet in possession of the whole of Palestine when the Declaration was issued. Even if the British had been in occupation of the whole of Palestine, international law prohibited the occupier from

affecting vast, or even limited, demographic changes upon the territory they occupied. The Declaration, it must be remembered, anticipated such extensive change when it promised to open the doors of Palestine to foreign Jews. In fact, the change was introduced while the international status of the country was not yet determined.

Finally, Pickthorn stated his belief that a Zionist solution to the problem of Jewry would ultimately prove harmful to Jews. He believed that Zionism was a factor in the anti-Semitism attitude of gentiles. He concluded that 'if political Zionism and Palestinian peace prove to be incompatible' then the British government should opt for 'Palestinian peace.'

The House of Lords (1938): In spite of the bitterness of some speakers in the House of Commons, there was in the discussion some humour, wit, and even wisdom and a little statesmanship. But on the whole speakers were primarily motivated by political considerations. Clearly, the speakers were aware of Zionist-Jewish influence in Britain.

When the House of Lords met on December 8, 1938, the atmosphere was calmer and the speakers displayed less emotion. The pro-Zionists in this House avoided making remarks insulting to the Arabs and some of them even managed to say kind words about them. In any case, the target of the speakers was the government itself which they accused of vacillating on the question of Palestine.

As usual, Lord Snell led the opposition to the government. He described the government policy on Palestine as a 'somersault policy,' one of 'dithering inconsistency, and of constructive futility.'(23)

Nevertheless, the opposition was pro-Zionist, sometimes unrestrained in its vision for a solution. Lord Snell, for instance, went so far as suggesting the compulsory transfer of the Arab population of Palestine to some other place to make room for Jews. He wondered why prople thought such a thing was wrong when it happened in other places without much protest. He said that compulsory transfer of population was being effected in Libya to allow for 'close settlement of land.' However, he did not observe that the two cases were different, one was limited and done within the same country, while the other was a wholesale transfer of population out of one country into another.

But, as in the July 1937 meeting, the most constructive speech was that of Lord Samuel, who, once more, tried in vain to persuade his colleagues that Arab nationalism was very genuine and should not be underestimated: ' ... the Arabs' national movement exists, ... it is a reality and not an artificial creation fostered by British timidity and foreign intervention.'(24) He repeated

his previous assertion that the Arab national movement was not different and should be treated like '... the Irish national movement or the Indian national movement or the Egyptian national movement or the Jewish revival itself.' Apparently Lord Samuel believed that the playing down of Arab nationalism and the lack of understanding of it was a real problem with the pro-Zionists of Britain. No positive British policy, he believed, could develop and no solution could be found to the conflict in Palestine, as long as this misunderstanding continued to characterise British attitudes towards the Arabs.

Samuel even defended the Mufti who had been the target of Zionist attack:'During my High Commissionership, for many years, I have never known him to refuse his cooperation in maintaining law and order.' What happened with the Mufti after 1925 Samuel did not know, but he was sure of one thing, 'that if the Mufti was not there to give his leadership, someone else would be there, for a movement always throws up its leader, and if it were not one individual, then it would be another.'

Although Samuel was Jewish and strongly believed in the Jewish National Home, he was not spared by his Zionist co-religionists. They attacked him for being 'soft' on the Arabs. Defending his position against such Zionist critics, he explained that as High Commissioner he felt an obligation towards the Arabs because they were a vast majority in Palestine. The obligation, he believed, was required by both the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate.

Lord Samuel proposed the same solution he had announced in 1937. This solution rejected the idea of creating a Jewish state or a Jewish majority in Palestine. Instead, it suggested communal representation in an undivided Palestine, with the ultimate aim of creating a great Arab confederation of which Palestine would be a part.

Samuel favoured the idea espoused by the government of holding a conference of Jews and Arabs, and hoped that the Jews would not be too 'intransigent' at the conference. He said of his co-religionists that they were 'known of old to be a 'stiff-necked people.'' He feared that their stubborness would alienate public opinion in Britain and and in Parliament and in addition the League of Nations. He also hoped that the Arabs would give up their opposition to the Jewish National Home and see the benefit that could come from it.

Lord Samuel observed that the British had a habit of seeking geographic solutions to political problems - a habit developed over centuries of history and reflected in the British system. Consequently, partition was a natural British solution to the Palestine problem. It fitted with the British mentality, which, when confronted with a

problem like Palestine, argued "well let us divide the parties.' 'In Ireland if there are Catholics and Protestants, Unionists and Nationalists, and if the majority of each is in particular areas it seems the natural and obvious course to say: 'let us set up one state for the one section and another state for the other.' In India that policy was adopted to some extent. We are proceeding on the lines of saying that if certain provinces are likely to have Hindu majorities let us form other provinces which are likely to have Moslem majorities, and so on.' Of course, Samuel was predicting the partition of India before it actually happened.

However, Samuel did not believe geographic divisions could provide solutions to national problems. Dividing a country could create new problems no less acute than the problems which existed before division. Geography could be a proper consideration in solving local problems and in creating local governments, but it would be a mistake if it were injected into 'the question of race and religion' as in the case of Palestine. In that country, the two 'are inextricably intermingled' and 'you are on wrong lines from the beginning if you try to draw areas on a map.' A better solution, according to Samuel, would be to recognise community interests and to devise a scheme of government to be based on community representation without dividing the country territorially.

There were other speakers with interesting ideas. Lord Harlech said that on the question of Palestine there were too many people shifting positions according to their political interests, so that British policy was shifting too. (25) Consequently, there was the feeling in Palestine " ... that you only had to put enough pressure on people in London to get the policy changed.'

Lord Harlech identified himself as 'a pre-Balfour Declaration Zionist.' His sympathy with the Zionists was 'partly the sympathy that I think anybody familiar with the Bible has with the people who wrote it.' However, he had hoped that the building of the Jewish National Home would be slow and gradual. He believed that the National Home could succeed only 'if you had really friendly cooperation with the people already natives in Palestine and if the growth was not too fast.' Unfortunately, observed Lord Harlech, the National Home had become the home of Jews 'flying from persecution,' and Jewish immigration had become unrestrained. This explained why the Arabs became frightened, and the fear affected not only the Arab 'effendis' (notables), as some had claimed, but the Arab cultivator and villager as well. However, Lord Harlech wanted the Arabs to recognise the fact that Palestine was a special kind of place, different from any other place. It was 'the fact of the Bible' that

made Palestine different, and the Arabs had always ignored this fact. Nevertheless, Harlech believed that the Arabs had a genuine case and that the Jewish National Home was impossible without their cooperation. What solution did Lord Harlech propose to the Palestinian problem? He believed that the British Mandate ought to be permanent and restrictions on Jewish immigration ought to be imposed.

As in the 1937 discussion, Lord Lamington was one of the few who rose to defend the Arabs.(26) He said that there could be no peace in Palestine unless the Zionists saw 'the wisdom of abandoning their claim to a state.' He added 'that the best course would be to take the bull by the horns and say at once that there cannot be a Zionist State.'

Lamington wondered how many more British soldiers were to be killed in order to force a majority of foreigners upon a people opposed to them? And he wondered if the state envisioned by the Zionists could be the state that the Jews really wanted. 'After all a Zionist state, founded on British bayonets and so maintained, is hardly a fulfilment of a Biblical prophecy, nor could it be a home worthy of the chosen people.'

Lord Lamington reminded his colleagues that not all Jews were in agreement with the Zionists. He quoted from a speech by Rabbi Dr Mattuck which he delivered on October 4, 1938: 'it could not be the first time in Jewish history that (Jews) had been forced to sacrifice nationalism for something higher - for spiritual ends. Whenever Jews had made a sacrifice they had triumphed. Whenever they had refused they were defeated. Only when working for spiritual ends did the Jews show the greatness of their lives. By such a sacrifice Palestine torn might become Palestine healed.'

A New Policy

The death of partition raised the question 'what then?' Until the end of 1938, the government had no clear notion beyond the 1917 Balfour Declaration, which had proved to be unworkable. In Parliament, the Zionists had a powerful influence. The Zionist Lobby could make government policy highly controversial and sometimes prevent its implementation.

But Parliament itself did not formulate policy (this was the responsibility of the cabinet). However, it served as a pressure group to make it difficult for the cabinet to formulate a firm and rational policy - particularly when the cabinet was divided. This was one reason why the pro-Zionist Balfour policy was not replaced until it

was too late. From 1917 until 1939, Parliament opposed any change that the Zionists did not approve of or like. Consequently, the Jewish National Home became a reality without a clear definition of what it was supposed to be. When it was started the Arabs were not consulted, and now that it was a fact the Arabs were expected to recognise it. The Arab rebellion which continued into 1939 manifested Arab desire to put a stop to it.

However, the British cabinet was usually at its best when British national interests were being threatened. Consequently, the cabinet was able to formulate policy that attempted to protect the national interest.

The Arabs usually benefited from a British sense of insecurity, and during an international crisis, British strategic and economic interests argued a friendly policy towards the Arabs. Such was the rationale for the Hussein-McMahon correspondence of 1915, which promised independence to the Arabs.

In 1939, the world was threatened by a major war. This was the moment of the international crisis that threatened British interests at home and abroad. Indeed, the war posed a threat to the very survival of Great Britain and its allies.

In addition, there was already a rebellion in Palestine that had been going on since 1936. This was a threat too, although limited and local, to British interests in the Middle East. The two threats, World War II and the rebellion, created such a strong British sense of insecurity, it was inevitable that the government wanted soon to embark upon a new policy in Palestine, one that would guarantee Arab cooperation during the war. Four months before World War II officially began, the British government issued the White Paper of 1939 embodying what was, until the end of the war, the new official policy governing Palestine. The next chapter will deal with this policy and with the problems it posed as well as with its implications in and outside Palestine.

Chapter Notes

1. Cmd. 5513 (1937)
2. Official Report, Fifth Series, *Parliamentary Debates, Lords,* 1936-37, Vol.106. For the debates of July 20 see cols. 599-674 and for the debates of July 21 see cols. 797-824.
3. League of Nations, *Mandates,* Petition No.24, 1937, p.217. See comments in the Royal Institute of International Affairs, *Great Britain and Palestine,* (London, 1937), p.104
4. League of Nations, *Official Journal,* August - September 1937, pp.660-1.
5. Royal Institute, *Great Britain,* p.104
6. *Ibid.,* p.105
7. Royal Institute, *op. cit.,* pp.105-106
8. For his views and the views of others see Zionist Organisation of America, *Discussion Material on Royal Commission Report* (New York, 1937)
9. League of Nations, *Official Journal,* July - December, 1937, pp.1089-1098. Also, see League of Nations, *Permanent Mandate Commission,* Minutes of the 32nd Session held from July 30th to August 18th, 1937, pp.227-230
10. League of Nations, *Permanent Mandate Commission,* Minutes of the 33rd Session held from the 8th to 19th November, p.11
11. Quotation from speeches in the Sixth Committee are found in the League of Nations, *Official Journal,* Special Supplements, Records of 18th and 19th Assembly, pp.21-29
12. Cmd. 5893 (1938)
13. Official Report, Fifth Series, *Parliamentary Debates, Commons,* 1938-39, Vol.341, cols. 1987-1996
14. *Parliamentary Debates, Commons,* Vol.341, cols.1996-201
15. *Parliamentary Debates, Commons,* Vol.341, cols.2029-204
16. *Parliamentary Debates, Commons,* Vol.341, cols.2040-204
17. *Parliamentary Debates, Commons,* Vol.341, cols.2044-205
18 *Parliamentary Debates, Commons,* Vol.341, cols.2054-205
19. *Parliamentary Debates, Commons,* Vol.341, cols.2058-206
20. *Parliamentary Debates, Commons,* Vol.341, cols.2091-210
21. *Parliamentary Debates, Commons,* Vol.341, cols.2086-209
22. *Parliamentary Debates, Commons,* Vol.341, cols.2010-201
23. Official Report, Fifth Series, *Parliamentary Debates, Lords,* 1938-39, Vol.111, Cols.412 - 420
24. *Parliamentary Debates, Lords,* Vol.111, cols.420-431
25. *Parliamentary Debates, Lords,* Vol.111, cols.435-443
26. *Parliamentary Debates, Lords,* Vol.111, cols.447-450

Chapter 6

THE BRITISH PROMISE INDEPENDENCE

The White Paper of May 1939 introduced a radical change in British policy towards Palestine.(1) More or less, it was a frank and straight forward document that successfully eliminated most of the ambiguous elements of all previous policy statements, including the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate Agreement. For example, it settled once and for all the question of what was meant by the term 'a National Home for the Jewish people.' The 'Churchill Memorandum' of 1922 had attempted to give a meaning to this term, but the controversy continued, and the 1939 White Paper confessed that the memorandum had failed to clarify the ambiguity. It stated that the National Home was not a Jewish state: 'His Majesty's Government believe that the framers of the Mandate in which the Balfour Declaration was embodied could not have intended that Palestine should be converted into a Jewish State against the will of the Arab population of the country.' More emphatically, the White Paper stated that 'His Majesty's Government ... now declare unequivocally that it is not part of their policy that Palestine should become a Jewish State.'

The White Paper also accepted the principle that Palestine should become independent, stating that the government 'would regard it as contrary to the whole spirit of the Mandate system that the population of Palestine should remain for ever under Mandatory tutelage.' Consequently, 'the objective' of the government was to establish, within ten years, an independent Palestinian State to be tied to Britain by a treaty which would guarantee British interests in the area. During the ten year period, the country would continue to be governed by Britain but the people of Palestine would be given increasing responsibilities in the government. Palestinians would be gradually placed in charge of departments, with British officials advising them, until the entire structure had become Palestinian. Headships of departments would

be distributed among Arabs and Jews in accordance with their population ratios. After five years, the British government would consider the drafting of a constitution for the country, and would involve representatives of the people of Palestine in the process. The principle upon which the constitutional system would rest would be to enable Arabs and Jews to share the government 'in such a way as to ensure that the essential interests of each community are safeguarded.'

However, independence was to be conditional on whether during the transitional period of ten years, Arab-Jewish relations would have improved to such a point 'as would make good government possible.' If cooperation between the two people was not possible then the British government would consider postponing independence. Before a final decision was made, it would consult the League of Nations, the Arab states, and the representatives of the Jews and the Arabs of Palestine.

In addition, the White Paper contained provisions dealing with immigration and Jewish purchase of Arab land. It stated that an immigration policy based purely on economic criteria would require 'rule by force' for its application in Palestine. Such a policy would in addition 'be contrary to the whole spirit of Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, as well as to their (the Government's) specific obligations to the Arabs in the Palestine Mandate.' Consequently, the consent of the Arabs was to be required for immigration to continue. However, the government would allow a total of 75,000 Jewish immigrants during the next five years, beginning April, 1939. This figure was fixed to maintain a population ratio of one Jew for every two Arabs. The total number would be reached by allowing an annual immigration quota of 10,000 Jews for the five year period, plus 25,000 Jews to be admitted as Palestine's contribution to the solution of the Jewish refugee problem in Europe. After the five-year period 'no further Jewish immigration would be permitted unless the Arabs of Palestine are prepared to acquiesce to it.' Illegal Jewish immigration would not be tolerated during the interim period, and if it did take place, a proportionate deduction in the annual quotas would be made.

The White Paper stated that after the five-year period, the government would consider its obligations to the Jews to have been fulfilled: 'His Majesty's Government are satisfied that, when the immigration over five years which is now contemplated has taken place, they will not be justified in facilitating, nor will they be under any obligation to facilitate, the further development of the Jewish National Home by immigration regardless of the wishes of the Arab population.'

As to the problem of Jewish purchase of Arab land, the White Paper noted that several previous Commissions had indicated that there were basically two different land situations in Palestine. In some sections of the country 'there is ... no room for future transfers of Arab land.' In these sections, Jewish purchase of land would not be permitted. In other sections, the situation was more flexible and Jewish purchase of land would be allowed but under government control and restrictions. But in a third area, where Jews had already settled, purchase of land would be unrestricted.

Reaction to the New Policy

Obviously, the new policy was expected to meet opposition from different sources, especially since it was the first official policy toward Palestine to be approved by Parliament. The House of Commons voted for it by a large majority, 268 to 179, while the House of Lords approved it 'without division.' Neither the Balfour Declaration nor the Mandate Agreement had been approved by the British Parliament. They were all formulated and enforced by the executive branch of the government. (The Mandate Agreement was actually rejected by the House of Lords.)

Arab-Jewish Reaction: Perhaps at the urging of the Mufti, the Arab Higher Committee rejected the White Paper policy. It was clear also that Arab public opinion had little enthusiasm for it. The Arabs felt they could no longer trust the British, for they had made too many promises they did not keep. By now, the image of the British politician among Palestinian Arabs was that of a tricky person whose moral standards were low.

In addition, the Arabs had specific objections to the White Paper. For instance, they were disturbed by its stipulation that before independence was to be granted the British government must be satisfied that 'adequate provision has been made for ... the special position in Palestine of the Jewish National Home.' They wondered if this stipulation would constitute a restriction upon the right of the majority to govern the country. Were the Jews to be a state within a state? Also, the Arabs were apprehensive about the policy's stipulation that independence was to be conditional on the prospect of good Arab-Jewish relations. Even if the Arabs were willing to cooperate, they believed, the Jews would not be because they would not accept living in a sovereign state in which the Arabs constituted a majority. The Jews would accept nothing less than a Jewish state, the Arabs felt, and consequently, they could be expected to sabotage the White Paper policy by refusing cooperation - thereby

making independence impossible. Finally, the Arabs were painfully aware of Zionist influence in London, and believed that this influence would succeed in changing the policy before the transitional period was over. They recalled 1935, when the Zionists were able to persuade Parliament to disrupt the Legislative Council proposal, which the government wished to introduce in Palestine. Later, the Colonial Secretary admitted that 'the incident was one of the causes that precipitated the general strike and disorders which broke out ... in the spring of 1936.'(2)

Nevertheless, there were Arabs who favoured the White Paper policy. The Defence Party publicly declared its support, and another hopeful sign was the conciliatory attitude of the Arab states, who attempted to close the gap between the British government and the Palestinian Arabs. In a conference in Cairo, their representatives met with representatives from Palestine and India to work out a compromise proposal which they later communicated to the British government. The compromise was similar to the White Paper policy except that it suggested the immediate creation of a Palestinian national government, under British advisers, and after three years the convening of a National Assembly to draw up a constitution for the future independent state of Palestine.(3)

There was hope the anti-Mufti groups could, with British support, give the White Paper policy a chance, but later events confirmed the pro-Muftis' suspicions. The Zionists were able to force the British to abandon responsibility for Palestine and submit the whole issue to the United Nations. The White Paper policy became a dead letter, and the Arabs were to lose the last political battle for independence.

The Zionists, of course, were not expected to approve the White Paper which promised independence for a Palestine with an Arab majority. They believed the document was a flagrant violation of both the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate. However, although united in their rejection of the new policy, they were divided in what to do about it. Like the Arabs, they had their moderates and their extremists. The moderates, headed by Weizmann, believed it was possible to change the policy through pressure on British politics. The extremists did not have much confidence in the British either, and they were to advocate the use of force to attain their political goal.

In fact, violence broke out immediately after the issuance of the White Paper. According to an official British source 'on the 17th May the PBS (Palestine Broadcasting Service) transmission lines were cut and the official announcement of the new policy delayed thereby;

the headquarters offices of the Department of Migration were set fire to; and the Government offices at Tel Aviv were sacked.' Jewish violence continued, though sporadically, until the outbreak of World War 11, four months later.(4)

The League of Nations: The White Paper was also disliked by the Permanent Mandate Commission, which doubted its wisdom as well as its legality. In its report to the League's Council, the Commission stated that four of its members 'did not feel able to state that the policy of the White Paper was in conformity with the Mandate.' The other three members felt 'that existing circumstances would justify the policy of the White Paper, provided the Council did not oppose it.'(5) Of course, the Commission had only advisory functions, a point stressed by the Colonial Secretary in the House of Commons.(6) Unfortunately, World War 11 prevented the League's Council, which had the real authority in such matters as Palestine, from acting on the Commission's report.

However, during the Commission's discussion of the White Paper, Colonial Secretary Malcolm McDonald made a historic statement that clarified ambiguities associated with Britain's official position on Palestine.(7) His interpretation of past British policy was, moreover, quite revealing and surprisingly frank. For instance, in interpreting the controversial Balfour Declaration and Mandate Agreement, he stated that the term 'Jewish National Home' in the two documents was deliberately intended to be vague. In using the term, the framers of the documents had been fully aware of the 'uncertainties hidden in the future' and the difficulties resulting from such uncertainties. By not using the more precise term 'Jewish State' or 'Jewish Commonwealth' and by using instead a term that 'lacked clear definition,' a term 'without precedent in constitutional characters,' the framers were trying to avoid precise commitments in Palestine to allow flexibility in the future. Secondly, the promise for the Jews embodied in the two documents neither included nor excluded the creation of a Jewish State. Thirdly, the Balfour Declaration recognised the civil and religious rights of the non-Jews in Palestine. These non-Jews were Arabs 'whose forefathers had been in occupation of the land for many centuries,' and who were a very large majority of the population of Palestine. Fourthly, the Mandate Agreement, which contained the Balfour Declaration itself, had an important 'operative clause' to safeguard 'the rights and position' of the Arabs.

According to the Secretary, the safeguards themselves were subject to a great deal of controversy. Some believed that 'civil rights' were no more than 'civic rights,' containing no guarantee of political rights. Such an

interpretation, said the Secretary, was 'untenable' because it violated the spirit of Article 22 of the Covenant, which considered the Arabs 'as a people whose well-being and development was to form a sacred trust of civilisation.' 'There can be no doubt that the rights of the Arabs which were to be safeguarded included all those political and social rights which a free people in such circumstances were entitled to retain.' Evidence that this was an appropriate deduction from the total fact was contained in Commander Hogarth's message to King Hussein of the Hejaz. According to the Secretary, the Commander was instructed by the same government that issued the Balfour Declaration, with Lloyd George as Prime Minister and Balfour as Foreign Minister, to state 'categorically' to Hussein that Jewish aspirations could be met only 'in so far as is compatible with the freedom of the existing population, both economic and political.' The Commander was also instructed to assure Hussein that in Palestine 'no people shall be subject to another.'

The Colonial Secretary believed that Hogarth's assurances to Hussein 'must surely mean that Palestine could not one day become a Jewish state against the will of the Arabs in the country.' He said that although 'the Hogarth message does not add anything to the substance of the Balfour Declaration, it is an authoritative explanation of its content.'

As to Jewish immigration, which was part of the facilitations associated with the promised Jewish home, the Secretary stressed that political considerations were as important as economic criteria for fixing the annual flow of Jews into Palestine. Consequently, he believed Arab reaction to Jewish immigration was such a political consideration because it was possible that 'immigrants who could be economically absorbed cannot be politically absorbed.' 'Who will say,' he asked, 'that if an immigrant cannot be economically absorbed that is a relevant consideration, and he should be kept out; but that if he cannot be politically absorbed that is a matter of no importance and he should be let in - in the former case, some other individual may lose his employment; in the latter, some other individual may lose his life.'

Parliament Debates the White Paper

The White Paper was discussed in both houses, and the debates covered the main issues of the Palestine question, historical, moral and legal. The discussion was an excellent dialogue on the rights and wrongs of British policy, Jewish claims, and Arab rights.

The House of Commons: The lower house discussed the White

Paper on the twenty-second and twenty-third of May, 1939. The position of the government was explained by the Colonial Secretary, Malcolm MacDonald, who further elaborated on the intricate issues of the problem. Without repeating his earlier revelations, we will summarise the important points in his statement.(8)

First, the Secretary stated that at the time that the Balfour Declaration was made, many people were under the impression that Palestine was a relatively empty country - that the British government was promising to a people without a country a country without a people. MacDonald expressed the wish that his belief were 'as true as it was picturesque,' pointing out that Palestine had a sizable population of Arabs.

There was also current, said the Secretary, the notion that because Britain had helped free the Arabs in much of 'Arabia,' she should be able 'to over-ride the wishes of the Arab population in that tiny fragment of land between the River Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea.' However, although Britain could physically force its will upon the Arabs, MacDonald asserted that such a policy would be morally untenable, because Britain was bound by assurances contained in the Hogarth message to Hussein.

The Secretary revealed that 'when the Balfour Declaration was published ... it was a shock to the Arabs,' and that the Hogarth message was intended to allay Arab fears. This was contrary to the idea, held by many, that the Arabs were either apathetic towards the Declaration or did not oppose it for lack of interest in Palestine.

Finally, the Secretary said that some people believed that the British promise to the Jews required Britain to place no restrictions upon Jewish immigration, except those which were purely economic. Such people, he continued, were wrong in their belief. Neither the Mandate Agreement nor the Balfour Declaration made any reference to economic or non-economic criteria for immigration. In fact, the Mandate Agreement required Britain to facilitate Jewish immigration only 'under suitable conditions.' This meant that the economic criteria embodied in the old term 'economic absorptive capacity' was only a transitory criterion in the long range policy of immigration. Political criteria were no more excluded than economic criteria were included. Either could be deemed necessary if the British government decided they had become part of the meaning of the term 'under suitable conditions.' 'The high priests of the principle of economic absorptive capacity,' the Secretary declared, 'say ... that as long as an immigrant can be economically absorbed in Palestine it does not matter whether he can be politically absorbed. We say that it does matter.'

According to the Secretary, the consequences of ignoring political criteria would undoubtedly be to 'destroy the welfare of Jews and Arabs in Palestine.' More serious still would be ignoring Arab feelings on this matter: ' ... if the soldiers remove every rifle, every bomb, every land mine that is stored by Arab villagers, they cannot remove the distrust and fear and hostility which are lodged in these people's hearts.'

And if Britain were to try to use its military to force the Arabs to acquiesce to its Jewish policy 'then we are only sowing dragon's teeth which one day will spring again as armed men.' The Secretary predicted that the 'armed men' would not be only Palestinian Arabs but Arabs from Iraq, Egypt, and even Yemen. He urged that 'This House ... have a sober sense of responsibility towards a situation which is pregnant with tragic possibilities in more countries than one.'

Important questions were raised by the Secretary: 'What are the rights of the Arab population? They have lived in Palestine for centuries. Do their rights give them any title to say that beyond a certain point they should not have imposed upon them a population which may dominate them, even though we do recognise that the people coming in have a historic connection with and rights in the land?' To help find the answer to these questions, he employed 'a simple test,' which would require the supposition 'that instead of 1,000,000 Arabs in Palestine there were 1,000,000 Americans, or Englishmen or Frenchmen whose ancestors had lived in the country for generations past ... would we say that they had no rights in this respect?' Assuming that the answer to the question would naturally be no, the Secretary concluded 'If the principle applies to Americans and others, it should apply to the Arabs.' Obviously, the test revealed the Secretary's awareness that the real problem of the Arabs in British politics was their image: they were Arabs and not Westerners.

Other speakers rose to defend either the Arab or Zionist causes. In the first group was A.C. Crossley, who felt the Arab side of the controversy was not adequately represented by members of Parliament.(9) (MacDonald only represented the government position, not himself.) 'There are no Arab members in Parliament. There are no Arab constituents to bring influence upon their members in Parliament. There is no Arab control of newspapers in this country. It is impossible almost to get a pro-Arab letter in the 'Times,' There are in the city no Arab financial houses (that) control large amounts of finance. There is no Arab control of newspaper advertisements in this country. There are no Arab ex-colonial secretaries, who one by one can get up and thunder, as they will,

at the Government, during this debate, because of the mistakes they themselves have made in the past.' To illustrate the bias of the mass media on the question of Palestine, Crossley said: ' ... tomorrow night there is to be a broadcast. There is to be himself (the Colonial Secretary) giving the Government point of view. There is to be the honourable member for Don Valley (Mr T. Williams) to advance what is undoubtedly the Zionist point of view ... there is to be the right honourable member for Carnarvon Boroughs (Mr Lloyd George) supporting the Zionist point of view. There will not be a supporter of the Arabs who can advance his point of view.'

Crossley underscored a problem that often troubles the best of men. Can the plight of a people attract the attention of others without the use of violence? 'There is this to be said about violence in Palestine, that in face of (the) absolute misrepresentation, or lack of representation, the Arabs have had in this House for 20 years, it is a lamentable fact that only violence brought their claims to our attention.' He complained about members' lack of interest in hearing a pro-Arab point of view, and described his own difficulties with the House: 'I have been consistently and steadily an adviser of moderate methods. The more I advised moderate methods in the past the less I got a hearing. It is a fact that in the first speech I ever made in this House I was interrupted over and over again. I could not put the Arab case across the Floor of the House at the time, when I was practically the only Arab supporter called.'

Many would argue that Crossley's statements about Arab difficulties in Britain in the 1920s and 1930s could very well apply to the United States in more recent years. The American mass media and the politicians are not very different from their counterparts in Britain, at least as far as the Palestine question is concerned.

At any rate, Crossley wanted to correct certain 'fallacies' in common vogue in Britain. One concerned the notion that Jews were returning to their biblical and ancestral home in Palestine. Out of 400,000 Jews living in Palestine, Crossley said, 'only 40,000 have gone to any part of the territory ruled over by the Kings of Judah and Israel.' The rest went to reside in that part of Palestine which was controlled by the Philistines or to the Valley of Esdraelon which usually followed Tyre. ' ... with the exception of King David for 10 years and with the exception of Judas Maccabeus, no King of Judah ruled any portion of the coast.'

Crossley also believed that 'not only are these people not going back to the same land, but they are not the same people.' Of the 'four different kinds of Jews' the Ashkenazi was the Zionist who flocked into Palestine in

large numbers, and he was 'descended from Tartar and Hittite tribes in Asia Minor and was converted to the Jewish faith in the eighth or ninth century.' The implication was that the Zionists who were responsible for building the Jewish National Home in Palestine were not descendants of the biblical and historical Jews and therefore had no historic connection with Palestine. Crossley claimed that famous Jews like Disraeli, 'one of the finest Prime Ministers this country ever had,' and Edwin Montagu, a member of the British cabinet that issued the Balfour Declaration, were not Zionists. Consequently, the trouble in Palestine was the making of convert Jews not the Jews whose ancestors had lived in the country. These had assimilated into the life of the countries in which they were born.

Another fallacy Crossley wished to correct was one mentioned earlier by other speakers: the notion that the Arabs had plenty of territory and could afford giving tiny 'little' Palestine to the 'poor' Jews. He offered the following analogy to demonstrate the absurdity of this notion: 'Suppose that after a war the whole of Scandinavia were liberated from a tolerant but corrupt rule, let us say, Russia. Suppose we liberated the Norwegians and said that they should live in Norway, that the Swedish Scandinavians should live in Sweden, that the Finnish Scandinavians should live in Finland, but as for the Denmark Scandinavians, surely they should afford their little corner. Therefore we will put Jews there in large numbers.'

Crossley wondered why it was difficult to impose Jews upon a Scandinavian people when it was easy to impose them on the Arabs. He found the answer only in British prejudices against the Arabs. He had often heard derogatory remarks about the Arabs in the House of Commons: 'The honourable member of Gower ... compared the Arabs with the Australian aborigines and the honourable member for the Don Valley made deprecatory remarks about them by referring to terrorism and mosquitoes. Certainly he used strong language about the Arabs.'

Crossley thought the Arabs did not deserve the insults. During World War 1, they had fought with the British and paid a high price for their friendship to them; 'Has this House ever realised that we brought the war to Palestine and that 300,000 Arabs in Palestine died of starvation during the war which we brought to that country?' He warned his colleagues that if the government procrastinated in the enforcement of the White Paper policy, the damage to Palestine would become irreparable. He reminded members of the House that 'you do not ever right one wrong - the wrong that has been inflicted on

the Jews in other countries - by inflicting another, the wrong inflicted on the Arabs.' Crossley concluded that in any case the Arabs would eventually win: 'Sooner or later, the Arabs will get their way in Palestine ... I know the Arabs; I have heard them abused, but they are courtly, fine, considerate gentlemen ...'

Another pro-Arab member, E.T. Wickham, was also painfully aware of the bad image the Arabs had in Britain.(10) He said he had 28 years of experience in Islamic countries and believed Muslims had a strong preference to independence, even under bad governments: 'In every stratum of society ... a very definite preference to be badly governed by their own folk to the prospect of being well governed by anyone else.' Wickham said that the desire of the Palestinian Arabs for independence increased as a result of the independence obtained by neighbouring Arab countries, especially those who were not as advanced as they were.

He too condemned the idea, prevalent in British political circles, that the Arabs could afford giving little Palestine to the Jews and likened the idea to saying, 'If Tony, Jimmy and Nancy get a stick of toffee, does little Tommy feel that there is no need for him to have any?'

Wickham believed the White Paper's provision of admitting 75,000 Jews into Palestine in the next five years was unfair to the Arabs. The figure, he said, was comparable to 3,000,000 immigrants coming to Britain in the same period. What implications, he asked, would the admission of such a large number have upon the British? 'If we were called upon to accept 3,000,000 alien refugees within the next five years and keep them in work I wonder what the trade union leaders (who were supporting the Zionists) would have to say about that.'

A few speakers sympathetic to the Arab point of view raised questions about British government's sincerity when during World War I it made promises to the Arabs. A. Maclaren, for instance, said that even today 'there is a tendency to hide, to blanket, or shadow the promises this country made to the Arabs,' He believed the Arabs had been deceived because the British wanted 'to get the enthusiasm of the Jewish influence.' In Palestine, he said, the British government had 'sold the same horse to two men.' However, in the minds of the Arabs, MacLaren believed, the situation was even worse ' ... the British sold the Arab horse to the Jews.' Evidence that the British government of World War I cheated the Arabs was illustrated by the so-called Allenby proclamation, which was 'broadcast throughout the length and breadth of Palestine.' The proclamation, according to Maclaren, promised the Arabs independence without mentioning the Balfour Declaration, which had been issued a year earlier.

To Maclaren, this was 'evidence of deceit.' But the worse example of deception, according to Maclaren, was Winston Churchill. In 1921, Churchill, as Colonial Secretary, made a statement in a cabinet meeting to the effect that if Jews became a majority in Palestine they would be expected 'to take it over.' Churchill qualified his statement by saying that 'we would not turn the Arab off his land or invade his political rights.' Maclaren said Churchill encouraged the Zionists to thank in terms of a future Jewish state but he, Churchill, seemed to confuse everybody because he was jumping 'from one trapeze to the other and the government was never sure whether in Palestine the Jews were to have 'a home' or 'a state.'

Like other pro-Arab speakers, Maclaren was troubled by derogatory remarks about the Arabs made on the Floor of the House.(11) He was particularly disturbed by the portrayal of the Mufti as 'the leader of a crowd of gangsters and murderers.' The Mufti, he said, was held in high esteem by every Arab no matter what his position. When, upon hearing this statement, members broke out laughing, Maclaren reminded them that the Mufti was more than a political leader. In the eyes of the Arabs, he was a religious leader as well.

The pro-Zionist view was represented by such well-known leaders as L.C. Amery, Sir Stafford Cripps, de Rothschild, T. Williams, Colonel Wedgwood, Noel-Baker, Herbert Morrison, Sir Archibald Sinclair, and Winston Churchill. All opposed the White Paper policy, primarily on the grounds that it 'destroyed the very basis of the Balfour Declaration.'(12)

Many of the speakers believed the Declaration envisaged the creation of a Jewish *state* in Palestine. T. Williams explained that the document came in response to Zionist desire not to be a minority in the land of their forefathers and that the Declaration would have been meaningless if the Jews were to be a minority in Palestine, for they were already a minority in many other countries. He said that many of the leaders of Great Britain in the post-war period were aware of the Zionist intention to become a majority and create a Jewish state in Palestine. He cited the names of Churchill, Lord Milner, Lloyd George, Jan Christian Smuts, Lord Baldwin, and Neville Chamberlain, the present Prime Minister. He expressed astonishment that some who had been ardent supporters of the Balfour Declaration were not supporting the White Paper. Sir John Simon, the current Chancellor of the Exchequer, said Williams, was a pro-Zionist who had become a White Paper advocate. Early in the 1930s Simon had signed, along with Lord Hailsham, an indignant letter to the *Times* protesting the Passfield White Paper, which

the Zionists considered to be in violation of the Balfour Delaration. That paper, he said, was nothing compared with the White Paper of 1939, which was a more clear violation of the Declaration.

Churchill agreed with Williams on this point, and he quoted from the record to prove it.(13) He said that the present Prime Minister had endorsed the Balfour Declaration on October 13, 1918 and had continued to support it until very recently. And there were many others mentioned who were, like the Prime Minister, only lately opposed to the Balfour Declaration. Churchill implied a betrayal of the Zionist cause by these leaders.

Although Churchill as a member of the Conservative Party was expected to vote the party line (for the White Paper), he did not. In British party traditions, this was a serious matter. But, of course, Churchill was no ordinary man to be concerned about the danger to his position. In this instance, his Zionism was stronger than his party loyalty.

One of the interesting points Churchill raised in the House of Commons was that the 'dual obligation' contained in the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate Agreement did not imply equal commitments to the Arabs and the Jews. In his opinion, 'the establishment of self-governing institutions in Palestine was to be subordinate to the paramount pledge and obligation of establishing a Jewish National Home in Palestine.' This meant that the 1939 White Paper, which would allow the Arabs to stop Jewish immigration after five years, was 'a plain breach of a solemn obligation.' Churchill warned the conservatives 'that by committing themselves to this lamentable act of default, they will cast our country, and all that it stands for one more step downward in its fortunes ...' He feared the new policy would encourage Arab 'agitators' to say 'they are on the run again. This is another Munich.'

Like others, Churchill attested to the achievements of the Jews in Palestine. He might have been the first to coin the phrase, which often appears in pro-Zionist literature, 'they have made the desert bloom.' While praising the Jews, he denied he was unfair to the Arabs. He said that in 1922, when he wrote the policy known by his name (ie. 'The Churchill Memorandum') 'I was advised by ... Colonel Lawrence, the truest champion of Arabs whom modern times have known.' However, Churchill neglected to mention that the speech he was delivering on the floor of the House had been read to Dr Weizmann over lunch. Later, Weizmann wrote that Churchill asked him 'if I had any changes to suggest.'(14)

Nevertheless, Churchill's speech was probably the most skillful of those delivered in the White Paper debate. The future Prime Minister mobilised the English language

in defence of the Zionist cause, and ended his speech with a rhetoric that must have pleased the Zionists' most ardent supporters. Referring to Prime Minister Chamberlain's changing attitude towards the Jews, he said: 'Well, they have answered his call. They have fulfilled his hope. How can he find it in his heart to strike them this mortal blow?

The House of Lords: In the House of Lords, the White Paper policy was discussed on May 23, 1939.(15) The Marquess of Dufferin and Ava, as the parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, introduced a motion approving the White Paper policy. Lord Snell, as leader of the opposition, counteracted by introducing a motion declaring the policy inconsistent with the Mandate. Later in the debate, however, Lord Snell withdrew his motion and the House of Lords approved the government motion 'without division.'

The debate that preceded the vote introduced no new or dramatic ideas and was little different from the debate of 1938. Even the speakers were about the same: Lord Snell, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Earl of Lytton, Lord Lamington, and the Marquess of Reading. But one speaker deserves to be reported in detail because of his experiences and because, as a Jew, he was misunderstood by both Jews and Arabs. This was Lord Samuel.

In his speech, Lord Samuel rejected the White Paper policy and revealed some interesting ideas in the meantime.(16) He said he was an ardent supporter of the Balfour Declaration, which in 1917 he helped bring about. He confessed that in the first few years after the issuance of the document he, with Churchill and Chamberlain, 'did contemplate that someday or other there might be a Jewish state' in Palestine. He said he had even used language to that effect. However, he changed his mind later because ' ... fuller knowledge convinced ... everyone that the establishment of a Jewish state covering the whole of Palestine was not possible.' Consequently, 'in the Mandate of 1922 the words were used of the Balfour Declaration 'Jewish National Home' and that was accepted by the Zionist Organisation.'

The implication of Samuel's statement was that in 1922 the Zionists knew that the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine was not promised by the British, although the more extreme Zionists, specifically the New Zionists, had always claimed, and would continue to claim, the right to a Jewish state. Thus, in the view of Samuel, the Zionists had acquiesced to the idea of a Jewish home that did not mean a Jewish state.

Lord Samuel remained committed to the Balfour Declaration but opposed the idea of creating a Jewish state. Paramount in his thinking was ' ... the fact that

there are a million Arabs' in Palestine who made the creation of a Jewish state impossible as well as unfair.

However, he opposed the White Paper because it went against the Balfour Declaration. He believed the new policy would make the development of the Jewish National Home impossible, and therefore it was unfair to the Jews. He stated, for example, that he was not opposed to restrictions, economic or political, on Jewish immigration. However, he believed that the White Paper went beyond restrictions 'to slam the door in their (the Jews) faces.'

He also did not like the linking of immigration to the question of constitutional development. By doing so, the White Paper gave the Arabs the right to veto immigration and the Jews the right to veto Palestinian independence. Samuel was sure that after the five year interim period the Arabs would exercise their option to stop Jewish immigration, and the Jews would also exercise their option, at the end of the ten year period, to reject independence for a Palestine which did not have a Jewish majority.

Lord Samuel seemed pessimistic about the possibility of a satisfactory resolution of the Palestine conflict in 1939. 'Feelings are so embittered, passions have risen so high, and the situation there is so grave and difficult that the wit of man could not devise any acceptable and lasting solution now ...' He was sure the solution offered by the White Paper was impractical. More important, it ignored the moral issues: 'It would not be right to shut down the development of the Jewish National Home during the intervening period ... nor, on the other hand, should the Arabs be kept in a state of apprehension that they might be in the meanwhile outnumbered, swamped and dominated.'

Samuel had in mind a solution of his own - the same solution he had proposed a year earlier and which we have already analysed and seen. In summary, he proposed to allow Jewish immigration into Palestine and Transjordan but only to the extent of 40 per cent of the total population, and would encourage the creation of an Arab confederation of as many Arab countries as possible. Such a solution, he believed, would assure the Arabs that they would not be outnumbered and at the same time assure the Jews that their national home could fulfil their cultural and religious aspirations.

Lord Samuel was aware that his position was extremely difficult because he was Jewish. His ideas were not acceptable to many of his co-religionists: 'My last speech in the House of Lords on this subject brought upon my head most vehement protests from the Jewish people of Palestine, who were exceedingly indignant with me ...' He could have added that the Arabs were always

suspicious of him, and his solution was no more acceptable to them than it was to Jews. Yet, the gentleman had a firm conviction that sacrifice was required from the two warring peoples and that without such sacrifice there could be no peace for the tormented land.

The Politics of Implementing the White Paper

As mentioned earlier, the White Paper policy was the only cabinet policy on Palestine that had so far been voted on by Parliament. Neither the Balfour Declaration nor the Mandate Agreement had been submitted to a vote. This was also true of previous White Papers such as the Passfield White Paper of 1930, and of official statements such as the Churchill Memorandum. Because of this uniqueness, the 1939 White Paper greatly alarmed the Zionists, who feared that their usual ability to weaken the implementation of negative British policies would diminish as a result. The Zionists were justified in their fears, for the British government took the White Paper policy very seriously and had begun to introduce regulations to implement it.

The Land Transfers Regulations: On February 28, 1940, the British government published regulations for the transfer of land in Palestine.(17) The object of these regulations was to control Jewish purchases of Arab land or, as the government put it, to prevent the alienation of Arab Land. Two 'Zones' were delineated and certain restrictions on land transactions were established. In Zone A, the transfer of land except to a Palestinian Arab was prohibited. A few exceptions were made, but only to allow adjustments in older transactions and to deal with land owned by non-Arabs. In Zone B, the transfer of land by an Arab to a non-Arab was also prohibited except with the specific approval of the High Commissioner, who could allow such transfer in specific cases such as the consolidation of existing holdings and the promotion of development projects in the interest of both Arabs and Jews.

Zone A contained 'the hill country as a whole together with certain areas in Gaza and Beersheba sub-districts where the land available is already insufficient for the support of existing population.' Zone B included 'the plains of Esdraelon and Jezreel, Eastern Galilee, the maritime plain between Haifa and Tantura and between the southern portion of the Beersheba sub-district (the Negev).' The remaining parts of Palestine were to be a 'free' zone in which land transfers were unrestricted. These included 'the Haifa Bay area; the greater part of the coastal plain; an area north of Jaffa, the Jerusalem

town planning area, and all municipal areas.'

According to government statistics, Zone A had 16,680 square kilometres (1 km^2 = about 2/5 mi^2 (0.386)), Zone B, 8,348, and the free Zone 1,292.(18) Between February 1940 and the first half of 1945-46, the High Commissioner approved the transfer, from Arabs to non-Arabs, of 2,514 Dunums (1 Dunum = about $\frac{1}{4}$ acre) in Zone A and 10,877 Dunums in Zone B. However, by court processes the transferred land in Zone A increased to 23,670 Dunums. (Under regulations, lands affected by court judgements were exempt from restrictions.) In Zone B, the transferred land was actually less than the land permitted by the High Commissioner, 2,657 Dunums. The reason was that the transfers approved were not all completed in the Land Registries.(19)

The figures showed that Jews wanted to buy in the two zones more than was available under the regulations. During the same period, the High Commissioner rejected Jewish requests for transfers involving 12,694 Dunums in Zone A and 28,044 Dunums in Zone B. Of course, Jewish purchases of land were unhindered in the 'free' zone and these totalled 45,021 Dunums at the end of the period.(20)

Parts of Palestine were in the State Domain (public land). They were always a controversial issue with the Zionists, who argued the government was not making enough of that kind of land available to Jews. The British administration argued that with State Domain ' ... there is little that is not already put to some useful purpose.' (21) Government statistics compiled at the end of 1943 showed that the administration had leased more state land to Jews than to Arabs: 125,088 Dunums for Jews and only 1,222 Dunums for Arabs.(22) From these statistics, the government concluded 'that the Jews have a substantial advantage over the Arabs in the matter of lease of State Domain ... ' (23)

However, some land in the State Domain was not 'at the free disposal of government' because it was ' ... occupied under tenures deriving from the Ottoman regime.' This was land already tied up when the British government took over the area now known as Palestine. The British administration had, under international law, to assume the contractual obligations of the predecessor state including the right of occupancy. This right, the government emphasised, 'has never been seriously in dispute.' (24)

In this category of occupied State Domain were 181,691 Dunums, all of which were in Arab hands. Thus Arabs had a clear advantage over Jews in this field. However, if we consider both types of State Domain, the 'occupied' and the 'leased', and use as basis of evaluation the proportion of each community to the total

population, the Jews would still have the advantage. This fact was the gist of the administration's own conclusions with regard to State land.(25)

There was a question whether the regulations of 1940 applied to State Domain. The Jewish Agency argued that these lands were excluded from the operation of the regulations and were free of restrictions. It further argued that 'state Domain in Zone A and B should be made available for 'close settlement by Jews on the land.''

The British Administration rejected these arguments saying the exception made in the regulation was specific and not general, to give the High Commissioner discretion to dispense with state land for vital developmental projects such as the (Jewish) Palestine Potash Company. This company was expected to need for its work additional land in the Jordan Valley. Aside from such particulars, ' ... it was never intended that the general principles to be observed in the disposal of State Domain should be different from the one governing the alienation of Arab land.'(26)

Allegations that the regulations were being evaded were made by Arabs, especially with regard to transactions of the Gaza district. A committee under the chairmanship of Sir Douglas Harris investigated these allegations and filed a report with the government in May, 1943. The Harris Committee found 'that in general, the extent to which evasions had taken palce had been exaggerated.'(27)

But in March 1945, Arab demand for the tightening of the regulations became organised and involved the press. And in April, an Arab delegation headed by Ahmed Hilmi Pasha, Chairman of the Umma Fund, the Arab counterpart of the Jewish National Fund, met with Field Marshal Lord Gort, the High Commissioner, to discuss the problem. The latter promised investigations. Another committee was organised on June 2, 1945, and it recommended the plugging of the loopholes in the regulations. (28) It also recommended that the administration of the regulations be centralised to avoid local manipulation.

Acording to the 1945 committee, the worst kind of evasion was practised with the cooperation of Arabs. Jews bought land in prohibited areas in the name of Arabs who, in return for a fee, agreed to let the Jews occupy and use the land. The Arabs usually signed certificates of indebtedness to the Jews to guarantee that the money they received for the land would be returned in case the Arab owners decided to take possession of the land and exercise their ownership rights. The Committee decided this practice was in violation of the spirit of the regulations but that the Arabs should blame no one but themselves for its consequences.

As expected, the regulations were seen by the Zionists as inconsistent with both the Mandate Agreement and the Balfour Declaration but more importantly as having the potential to destroy their hope for a Jewish state in Palestine. Their opposition to the regulations reached the halls of Parliament in London, where Zionist lobbyists fought one of their fiercest battles and the pro-Zionist members were mobilised to put an end to the policy. A motion of censorship was introduced by Noel-Baker, the representative from Derby, and although the government came out victorious it was clear that Zionist influence in the British Parliament was very strong. The motion was defeated by 292 to 129 votes.(29)

The language used in the debate on the motion was unusually harsh. Noel-Baker, for instance, accused Colonial Secretary MacDonald of adopting a Nazi-like policy 'to keep the greater part of Palestine clear of Jews.'(30) He said the Secretary was in essence borrowing the famous Nazi minister's (Dr Goebbels) 'Watchword' *Judenrein*. The representative from Chippenham, Major Gazalet, described the policy as a 'crime against Jewry,' one that was 'presumably supported by Germany.'(31) And Colonel Wedgwood of Newcastle-Under-Lyme said the policy proposed ' ... the same anti-Jewish legislation that Hitler has forced not only upon Germany but upon Italy as well.' Wedgwood went as far as saying that the well-known British Nazi 'Lord Haw-Haw,' would have welcomed the policy and 'will discover that at last there is one Member of the British Cabinet (MacDonald) who understands the Hitler point of view and knows how to deal with the Jewish problem.'(32)

The central point of the pro-Zionists was that the White Paper, upon which the regulations were based, was not approved by the League of Nations and therefore lacked legal substance. A few speakers implied that the government, when it had sought Parliament's approval of the White Paper, lied about its intentions. The government had promised that the White Paper would be approved by the League Council before its enforcement. The pro-Zionists pointed out that the Mandate Commission of the League had actually rejected the policy. They further argued that even in the Parliament support for the policy was weak. The government's majority was 89 votes and this was not a substantial majority for a policy that was submitted as 'a Three-line Whip,' meaning that members of the government's party were obligated to vote with the government.

The Mandate Agreement, it was also argued, was a treaty, and as such it could not be altered by the British Parliament alone. Again, the consent of the League was necessary.

As in the past, this discussion of the Palestine

problem was laden with rhetoric and emotion. The old Zionist theme about the blossoming of the desert under Jewish pioneering was brought back. Some members argued that the Jews were building a home with compassion for the Arabs. One, for instance, stated that 'the Jews take great precautions to protect improvident Arab peasant proprietors from selling themselves out completely. They seek to buy only what they judge to be genuinely surplus land.'(33)

There was no doubt that the plight of the Jews was on the minds of both pro-Zionist and pro-government speakers. However, the pro-Zionists believed the government was insensitive to the question of Jewish persecution and they tied the issue of the regulations to that question. Noel-Baker reminded the government that 'Today, the Jews are a weak and hunted race.'(34)

Secretary MacDonald defended the regulations on the grounds that they were not inconsistent with British obligations to the Jews, whether these obligations derived from the Mandate Agreement or the Balfour Declaration or any other official references. The League's Council, he stated, was to have discussed the White Paper policy, but the exigencies of war prevented such discussion. He believed the Council would not have opposed the policy had it had the opportunity to express its will. In any case, he reminded members that Britain had the responsibility to maintain law and order in Palestine and that she had to act to protect Arab rights guaranteed under the Mandate Agreement. The main purpose of the regulations, he said, was to prevent the permanent alienation of Arab land, implying that this land was threatened by uncontrolled Jewish demands for it. MacDonald mentioned the practice of the Jewish National Fund of disallowing the transfer of its real estate to anyone who was not Jewish, and wondered about the implication of such a practice: 'If the Jewish authorities consider that condition necessary in order to protect the interests of their own people, I do not know why they quarrel with us when we say a similar condition - and, perhaps, a far less permanent condition - is required to protect the interests of the Arab population. I find it difficult to understand the people who say that the provision regarding the land held by the Jewish National Fund is in accordance with the spirit of the Mandate, and then turn around and say that this much milder condition regarding the hilly country is contrary to the spirit of the Mandate.'(35)

The Jewish Rebellion

Zionist resentment and opposition to the White Paper of 1939 developed into open confrontation with the British authorities in Palestine. As mentioned earlier, World War II had compelled Jews to postpone a full-scale rebellion until the German enemy was destroyed by the Allied powers. However, the extremists among the Zionists found it difficult to restrain themselves, and they resorted to violence even before the fortunes of war had tilted to the side of the Allies. In 1944, the moderates were drawn into the confrontation and by the end of 1945 it became obvious that the Jewish National Home was in rebellion against the British. This rebellion was successful in that the restrictions on Jewish immigration were lifted, and that the British were forced to announce a target date for their complete withdrawal from Palestine.

Jewish Military Organisation: The main organisations involved in the violence were three: the Hagana, the Irgun and the Stern Group.(36) The first was an offshoot of an older group known as *Hashomer,* or The Watchman, which had derived its inspiration from the secret societies of Tsarist Russia. However, while *Hashomer* was, under the Turks, a legitimate organisation for the protection of Jewish property, the Hagana was never recognised by the government and remained 'secret' and illegal until the British withdrew from Palestine.

The Hagana was under the political control of the Jewish Agency. Since the latter body was recognised by the Mandate but the former was not, Zionist leaders always denied the connection between the two. In 1946, however, an official British document was published to provide the evidence that the two were indeed connected. (37) The evidence was partly based upon eight telegrams intercepted by British authorities. These communications between Zionist officials in Palestine and London dealt with Jewish military activities during the rebellion. The document also provided evidence that, from the Autumn of 1945, the Hagana had cooperated with the extremist Irgun and the Stern group in some operations against the British.

The British knew the Hagana existed and they tolerated it without officially recognising it. In the 1930s, especially during the Arab rebellion of 1936-39, they had realised the vulnerability of Jews to Arab attacks and the need of Jews to defend themselves. Perhaps because they did not have sufficient military resources in Palestine, and because of their desire to keep costs down, they largely ignored Jewish underground organisations. Jewish influence in London might have been an additional factor. British officials in Palestine were painfully aware of the

Jewish tendency to make an issue of every detail of British policy that affected them. They probably desired to avoid being seen as unable to protect the Jewish National Home against violent Arab opposition. Furthermore, during World War II when the British needed manpower for the security of the Middle East they indirectly used the Jews. They asked the Jewish Agency to provide Jewish recruits to assist British troops, and the Agency saw the benefit from such an assistance since it provided the Jews with combat experience and training in modern war and modern weaponry. The Jewish recruits were trained by the British, and the training proved valuable in the 1948 war with the Arabs. An official British source stated that 'selected (Jewish) units were provided (by the Jewish Agency) and trained by British officers ...' The best known of these units were the so called 'Wingate's special night squads.'(38)

Since the Hagana was a 'secret' organisation, no one knew the number of people serving in it. Estimates range from 40 to 80 thousand with the average of 60 thousand as the most likely figure. Nor were there any definite figures on the number and types of weapons used by the Hagana, but it was generally known that the number was substantial and the quality was adequate for defence purposes. During World War II, however, the Hagana developed to something more than a defence force. It became a secret army capable of attaining military objectives beyond defence.

British authorities believed that on the whole the Hagana maintained a policy of *havlaga* or self-restraint. However, towards the end of World War II and after, it was involved in terrorism; its involvement in illegal arms traffic and illegal Jewish immigration go back even further, to its beginning.

The second Jewish underground organisation involved in violence was the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* or the National Military Organisation, popularly known simply as the Irgun. This group was organised in 1935 by some dissident members of the Hagana. Its first chief was Vladimir Jabotinsky, the leader of the Revisionist party mentioned earlier. Although the Irgun was independent of the party, most of its recruits came from the *Beitar*, the party's youth movement. And in military affairs it was as radical as the Revisionists were in political affairs. The insignia of the Irgun says much about its extremism: 'an outline of Palestine and Transjordan, superimposed by a rifle grasped by a forearm and surmounted by the Hebrew words *Rak Kach* (Only Thus!).' (39)

From the beginning, the Irgun was anti-Arab and anti-British, entertaining no possibility of compromise.

According to a British source 'During the (Arab) rebellion of 1936-39 it indulged in acts of retaliation against Arabs, perpetuating with explosives some of the worst outrages of that period, including the planting of land mines in Arab market places and cinemas.' The Irgun was even involved in the intimidation, abduction, and assassination of Jews whom it considered 'traitors.' Nevertheless, it attracted 'a steady flow of young recruits from the *Betar*.'(40)

The aim of the Irgun was ' ... the liberation of Palestine and Transjordan by armed struggle and the fight for a Jewish state regardless of Mandates and declarations.' The organisation had no confidence in the British, whose Palestinian administration, it believed, was 'purely anti-Zionist and anti-Jewish.'(41) Thus the Irgun planned to fight both the Arabs and the British.

Although at the beginning of World War II, the Irgun announced an 'armistice' with the British, it soon found itself running out of funds. Consequently, it 'embarked on a campaign of systematic extortion from wealthy members of the Jewish community.'(42) Early in 1943, it launched a massive campaign against the 1939 White Paper while continuing the practice of obtaining funds by robbing and extortion. In 1944 and 1945, its violence became more widespread and more vicious.

But the most extreme of the three Jewish underground organisations was the *Lochamei Herut Israel,* commonly known as the Stern Group. It consisted of a small number of 'extremely dangerous fanatics' who split from the Irgun in 1940 over the issue of continuing the armed struggle against the British even during the war. While the Irgun wanted to suspend the struggle, the Stern Group wanted its continuation. In fact, the British believed the Stern Group did not mind 'collaborating with foreign powers' to achieve its aims.(43)

The group's notoriety was reported by an official British source as follows: 'The ruthless methods adopted by the group to eliminate serious obstruction to their activities are characteristic of the sort of Nietzschean principles they lay down in dissertations prepared for recruits, which have been found to contain such phrases as 'the superman must be callous in achieving his aims.' There is no doubt that 'the end justifies the means' is their maxim.''(44)

When in 1942 their leader, Abraham Stern, was shot by British soldiers, the group's activities subsided for a while. But a new wave of terror began in 1944 and continued into 1945 and 1946. The death of the leader made the followers more extreme in their methods. Political assassination became common, and an unsuccessful attempt to kill the High Commissioner was made in 1945.

Other high officials of the British government became targets of assassination, and on November 6, 1944, the Stern Group succeeded in killing Lord Moyne, the Minister of State, in Cairo.

The assassination of Lord Moyne shocked the British to the point where some leaders feared the rise of anti-Semitic feelings in the country. The incident was discussed in the House of Commons on November 9, 1944, where Anthony Eden, the Foreign Minister, revealed that the two assassins had made a confession in Cairo: 'We are members of the Fighters for Freedom of Israel Organisation (the Stern Group) and what we have done was done on the instruction of this organisation.'(45) Eden also stated that the assassins had admitted that they came to Cairo for the express purpose of killing Lord Moyne and that their reasons for the killing was that Lord Moyne 'was carrying out a policy which was against that of the Jewish Nationalists.'

The incident exasperated Prime Minister Churchill who on November 17, 1944, expressed his anger in the House of Commons in the following words: 'This shameful crime has shocked the world. It has affected none more strongly than those, like myself, who, in the past, have been consistent friends of the Jews and constant architects of their future. If our dreams of Zionism are to end in the smoke of assassins' pistols and our labours for its future to produce only a new set of gangsters worthy of Nazi Germany, many like myself will have to reconsider the position we have maintained so consistently and so long in the past.'(46)

In the eyes of the British, the Jewish terrorists were different from their Arab counterparts of the 1920s and the 1930s: 'They represent, not the embodiment of lawlessness, but societies which purport to substitute for constitutional authority ... the authority of secret cabals.'(47) Yet, when it came to the use of terror for achieving political goals, there was no fundamental difference between Arab and Jewish extremism. The Irgunites and the Sternists of the Jews were not much different from the Qassemites of the Arabs. However, Arab extremism's 'lack of technical resources and inferior organisation... limited the scope of its activities.'(48)

The Jewish Agency condemned such extreme terrorism and called upon Jews to help the authorities 'in the prevention of terrorist acts and in the eradication of the terrorist organisation.' Churchill, however, said he wanted real cooperation and not just words: " ... we must wait for these words to be translated into deeds.'(49)

Since the Hagana was under the Agency's control and it became involved directly in the violence of 1945-46, the Agency's promise was probably intended to apply only to

instances of extreme violence. However, even here there is some evidence that the Hagana was involved. For example, the Irgun plan to blow up the King David Hotel was known to the Hagana, which did not object to it although it thought the timing of its execution was wrong. The King David Hotel housed the central offices of the Palestine government and the Irgun operation was intended to destroy these offices as a protest against British policy. The Hagana wanted the destruction of the building to take place after office hours to save the lives of innocent people. However, on July 22, the Irgun, acting alone, executed the plan causing the death of 91 persons and the injury of 45 others. Consequently, the Hagana command called upon Jews to demonstrate their opposition to such outrageous acts. And so did the Jewish Agency. (50) However, according to the Leader of the Irgun, M. Begin, cooperation between Hagana and Irgun increased after the King David operation.(51)

Even before the King David incident, Jewish-British relations were already heavily strained, so that the commanding officer of British troops and the chief administrator of the government of Palestine would be compelled to announce that Jewish terrorism was 'directly impeding the war effort of Great Britain.'(52) After the incident, these relations reached the point of no return, causing General Sir Evelyn Barker, the commander, to issue orders to his troops prohibiting social contacts with Jews.(53)

The commander's statement triggered intense controversy in Britain and Palestine because it accused the whole Jewish community of Palestine of collaboration with the terrorists: ' ... the Jews in the country are accomplices and bear a share of the guilt.' Barker was even more explicit, threatening to punish 'the Jews in a way the race dislikes as much as any - by striking at their pockets and showing our contempt for them.'

The Zionists saw the Barker statement as evidence of anti-Semitism in the highest levels of British authority in Palestine. The issue was discussed in the House of Commons on July 31, 1946, where the government dissociated itself from the commander's manner of expression at the same time that it justified his instructions on the basis of 'provocations to which our forces are exposed.' (54) However, the pro-Zionists in Parliament were forceful in their denunciation of government and many demanded that Barker be relieved of his command. The pressure was so great that Barker's order was rescinded a few days after it was issued, and later he was promoted to a post in Britain.

How the Zionists knew about Barker's instructions remains a mystery. They were supposed to have limited circulation and were not intended to become public

knowledge. In any case, the Barker issue had, for the Zionists, the advantage of side-tracking the King David outrage. It also demonstrated Zionist influence on British politics even in the midst of anti-British Zionist violence.

Illegal Arms Traffic: The arms which Jewish groups used in their fight against the British came through a number of channels. Some were smuggled by sea to the unguarded coast of Palestine. Oddly enough, the British had no coast-guard stations in Palestine until 1940. For almost twenty years, Jews had ample opportunities to bring arms from Europe into Palestine. (Arabs smuggled arms in much smaller quantities from neighbouring Arab countries, and the smuggling was not on a regular basis as in the case of the Jews, nor was it well organised except during their rebellion of 1936-39.)(55)

In 1940, the British established four coast-guard stations and three launches to patrol the coast, but in 1945 'Jewish saboteurs' destroyed two of the stations and seriously damaged the three launches. This took place at a time when illegal Jewish immigration was a problem, and the Jewish underground wanted an open British policy on immigration.

Although the British believed Jewish arms smuggling was on a much larger scale than that of the Arabs, their statistics show larger quantities of arms and ammunition seized from Arabs than from Jews between 1937 and 1945. The reason given by them was Jewish 'ingenuity' in hiding the smuggled arms. The official record mentions examples of arms concealed in compartments fitted into the bodies of safes and in drums of imported cement.

Jews also smuggled arms from neighbouring countries by land. There was, however, no evidence of cooperation between them and the governments or the people of these countries. But the most dangerous method of obtaining weapons was from the British themselves 'by theft, by corruption ... and by armed raids.'(56)

Obtaining weapons from the British was possible because Jews received the cooperation of some British soldiers. In 1943, the so-called Arms Trials provided the evidence, and two British soldiers were convicted of complicity. In the trials, the court said 'that there is in existence in Palestine a dangerous and widespread conspiracy for obtaining arms and ammunition from His Majesty's Forces.' It also said that the organisation behind the illegal arms traffic seemed 'to have had considerable funds at its disposal and to possess wide knowledge of military matters, including military organisation.'(57)

Illegal Jewish Immigration: Illegal Jewish immigration was not a serious problem until the 1930s. The number of illegal immigrants was always unknown to British Palestine

authorities, especially in the early years. In 1936, however, they began compiling statistics on illegal immigration for the first time. And although government estimates could not be considered accurate because of the nature of the problem itself, they at least give us some idea of minimum figures.

Illegal Jewish immigrants entered Palestine in at least four different ways: by evasion of controls; openly by ships landing on beaches; as travellers who overstayed the legal period of visits; and by fictional marriages of foreign women to Palestinian citizens or permanent residents. Obviously, only the second and third methods could lend themselves to any quantification. This is why government statistics on this subject have always been minimal and therefore very conservative.

From 1920 until 1939, between 30 and 40 thousand illegal immigrants entered Palestine, according to official sources. Twenty to 25 thousand more came between 1939 and 1945. Of course, these figures could not include undetected illegal Jewish immigration which the Arabs always believed was substantial.

World War II intensified the problem. There was a Jewish refugee problem resulting from Hitler's brutal policies, and many of these refugees attempted to enter Palestine without the prior consent of the authorities. Because of its intense moral implications, the refugee problem took a central position in Western concern about post-war European development. The guilt feelings of Western societies resulting from the tragic experiences of the Jews created political advantages for the Zionists, and the idea of a Jewish state gained important support in Western countries. Public opinion in these countries became intensely pro-Zionist. National leaders no longer considered discrepancies between their countries' interests and Zionist goals. Domestic pressures on behalf of Zionism were too great to resist, and in addition, supporting the Zionists offered political advantages to the leaders themselves, who were eager to use them.

In the Western World, the Palestine problem became synonymous with the Jewish problem. A solution to the latter required the opening of Palestine to Jewish immigration and the creation of a Jewish state in that country. With the exception of the British government, there was a tendency to forget that the Arab was at least a contender in the Palestine conflict and the British government found itself almost completely isolated from the rest of the Western World. Even in Britain it became exceedingly difficult for the government not to heed Zionist demands for an open immigration policy. Arab rights in Palestine had to assume secondary importance to the more urgent demand for a solution to the Jewish

problem. The Arabs of Palestine never forgot what they believed was a form of Western hypocrisy, the wronging of the Arabs to right Western wrongs to the Jews. For them, the Western World attempted to correct one immoral act by committing another.

Concern about the Jewish refugee problem made the 1939 White Paper an issue. The pro-Zionists in the House of Lords pressed for a repeal of its immigration policy.(58) During the war, the pro-Zionists used the Lords rather than the Commons as their platform for their criticism and denunciation of British policy in Palestine. Perhaps it was because the war placed greater demands on the time of the House of Commons that Zionist strategists had to fight the issue in the House of Lords. Perhaps, also, they knew there was no chance of changing the policy until after the war when such a change would require the involvement of the lower house, where government was more vulnerable.

Even before the 1939 White Paper, shiploads of illegal immigrants had been reaching the shores of Palestine. In the few weeks after the arrival of the ship SS *Artemisia*, on February 5, 1939, 1,700 more illegal immigrants came to Palestine on ships. The large numbers forced the authorities to suspend the immigration quotas from October to March 1940, with the result that Jews in Palestine staged a twenty-four hour strike in protest.

But it was during the war that streams of immigrants began pouring into Palestinian ports. Among the ships carrying the immigrants were the *Patria*, *Tiger Hill*, *Pacific* and *Milos*. The last two arrived in November 1940 carrying 1,771 illegal immigrants. These passengers were transferred to the *SS Patria* in the port of Haifa to be sent to refugee camps in Mauritius.

While the *Patria* was still in port, another ship, the *Atlantic*, arrived with 1,783 illegal immigrants on board. The pressure of this drama on both British and Jews became excessive, causing the Jewish extremists to seek a way to awaken world public opinion to the need for an open British policy of immigration. These extremists sank the *Patria* by explosives, killing 252 Jewish passengers. A British commission of inquiry was created to investigate the incident and in its report it stated that ' ... the damage to *Patria* had been committed by Jewish sympathisers ashore, with the cooperation of at least one person on board the ship.' No one denied the charge. neither the pro-Zionists in Parliament nor the Zionist leaders of the Jewish community.(59)

In December the tragic incident was discussed in the House of Commons, where the pro-Zionists demanded an immediate change in policy to allow admission of Jewish refugees into Palestine.(60) British policy with regard to

such passengers (on ships arriving in Palestine to force the government to admit them into the country) was to deport them to other places within the empire. The policy was justified on many grounds other than the legal restrictions of the White Paper. British authorities often argued that they feared infiltration of these ships by the enemy. They also cited employment conditions in Palestine, saying that Palestine could not absorb the newcomers. The Zionists, on the other hand, pointed to the fact that during the war Palestine needed labour and Arabs from neighbouring countries had come to the country to obtain employment. Perhaps the real reasons for the British policy were the legal restrictions and the fear of Arab reaction to massive Jewish immigration.

In any case, the uproar over the shocking *Patria* incident produced one result that the extremists did not dislike. The British government announced that the survivors of the *Patria* would not be deported. However, the policy was not changed for the passengers of the *Atlantic*, who were deported. (They returned to Palestine in 1945.)

In 1942, the plight of the refugees was dramatised by another incident, the sinking by explosion of the *SS Struma*. This ship had arrived in Istanbul with 750 Jewish refugees aboard. It was on its way from Rumania to Palestine. The British authorities informed the Turkish authorities that the passengers could not come to Palestine. Later, because of pressure from the Jewish Agency, the British agreed to allow children between 11 and 16 to proceed to Palestine. However, for unknown reasons the Turks ordered the ship out of port before the children were evacuated. In the Black Sea, the ship sank 'as a result of an explosion' and all the passengers on board perished. The circumstances surrounding the tragic incident remain unknown up until this day. However, it was a known fact that the *Struma* was weak and overloaded.

The *Struma* tragedy, like that of the *Patria*, stirred further interest in the plight of Jews. The House of Lords discussed it a number of times in 1942 and 1945;(61) and in 1945, the discussion became emotional. Even Lord Samuel, a critic of the Zionists, was so profoundly affected by the Jewish plight he expressed deep disappointment in the attitude of states: 'There was unanimity everywhere on two points: first, that the Jews should be given a place of refuge somewhere; and, secondly, that it should be somewhere else.' He reminded his colleagues of Sidney Smith's words: 'Man is by nature benevolent. A never sees B in distress without realising that C ought to relieve him immediately.'(62)

The discussion and Zionist pressure paid off. After the White Paper's five year quota of 75,000 Jewish

immigrants was filled (December, 1945), the government changed its policy. A new quota was instituted in January 1946 to allow 1,500 Jews into the country every month. In the following year 21,000 Jews were admitted. This was about 1.1 per cent of the total population of Palestine, a ratio that was rarely exceeded by other countries, particularly the US.(63)

The change confirmed fears expressed by Arabs in 1939, when the pro-Arab White Paper was issued. At the time, the pro-Mufti Arabs felt Zionist influence would eventually succeed in destroying the British promise for independence and in opening the gates of Palestine for Jews. Although the gates were not yet wide open, there was no doubt the White Paper was a dead letter in 1946. In addition, within two years there was to be a Jewish state in Palestine thereby confirming the worst of the expectations of the Arabs.

Chapter Notes

1. For quotation from the White Paper see *Cmd.* 6019 (1939).
2. League of Nations, Permanent Mandate Commission, *Minutes of The Thirty-Sixth Session Held at Geneva from June 8th to 29th, 1939,* p.95
3. *The Times,* (London, May 2, 1929)
4. Palestine Government, *A Survey of Palestine, 1945-46,* Vol.1, p.54
5. League of Nations, Permanent Mandate Commission, *Minutes of The Thirty-Sixth Session,* p.275
6. 'We recognise fully that the Permanent Mandates Commission have a certain function to perform in this matter. It is a purely advisory function.' Statement made by Mr MacDonald in the Supply Committee of the House of Commons, *Parliamentary Debates, Commons,* 1938-39, Vol.350, Col.806
7. Quotations are from his speech in League of Nations, Permanent Mandate Commission, *Minutes of the Thirty-Sixth Session,* pp.95-102
8. Quotations from his speech in the meeting of May 22, 1939, *Parliamentary Debates, Commons,* Vol.347, Cols.1966-1976
9. *Parliamentary Debates, Commons,* Vol.347, Cols.1966-1976
10. *Parliamentary Debates, Commons,* Vol.347, Cols.1987-1991
11. *Parliamentary Debates, Commons,* Vol.347, Cols.2016-2028
12. *Parliamentary Debates, Commons,* Vol.347, Cols.1954-1966
13. *Parliamentary Debates, Commons,* Vol.347, Cols.2167-2179
14. Chaim Weizmann, *Trial and Error,* (New York, Harper & Brothers, 1949), p.411
15. *Parliamentary Debates, Lords,* Vol.113, Cols.81-145
16. *Parliamentary Debates, Lords,* Vol.113, Cols.97-110
17. Palestine Land Transfers Regulations, *Cmd.* 6180 (1940)
18. *A Survey of Palestine,* Vol.1, p.261
19. See the two tables in *Ibid.,* p.263
20. See table in *Ibid.,* p.265
21. *Ibid.,* p.267
22. The Jewish figure is the sum of item (iii) and item (iv) in the table provided on page 267 of *A Survey of Palestine.* Included land leased for 'long periods' and land leased for 'less than 3 years.' They also included land whose title was settled and land whose title was not yet settled but was in the possession of the government. The Arab figure derived from similar classifications adding figures in item (v) and item (vi) in the same table. Jewish

'long period' leases were considerably higher than those of the Arabs.

23. *Ibid.*, p.268
24. *Ibid.*, p.268
25. *Ibid.*, p.268
26. *Ibid.*, p.266
27. *Ibid.*, p.269
28. *Ibid.*, p.271
29. *Parliamentary Debates*, Vol.358, Cols.526-30
30. *Ibid.*, Col.415
31. *Ibid.*, Col.455
32. *Ibid.*, Col.469
33. *Ibid.*, Col.413
34. *Ibid.*, Col.416
35. *Ibid.*, Col.439
36. See Cmd. 6873 (1946); and *Report of the Anglo-American Committee*, Cmd. 6873 (1946)
37. Cmd. 6873 (1946)
38. *A Survey of Palestine*, Vol.11, p.600
39. *Ibid.*, p.601
40. *Ibid.*, p.601
41. From a communique by the Irgun issued to the European press in August 1939. Quoted in *Ibid.*, p.602
42. *Ibid.*, p.602
43. *Ibid.*, p.604
44. *Ibid.*, p.604
45. *Parliamentary Debates, Commons*, November 9, 1944, Vol.404, Cols.1538-9
46. *Parliamentary Debates, Commons*, November 17, 1949, Vol.404, Col.2242
47. *A Survey of Palestine*, Vol.11, p.599
48. *Ibid.*, p.598
49. *Parliamentary Debates, Commons*, Vol.404, Col.2243
50. T. Kollek claimed that the Agency had warned the government that the Hotel was a target for extremists. T. Kollek, *New Statesman and Nation*, August 10, 1946, p.99. On other details of the incident see Harry Sacher, *Israel, The Establishment of a State* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1952), p.191. Also, see George Kirk, Royal Institute of International Affairs, *The Middle East 1945-1950* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), pp.221-2
51. Menachem Begin, *The Revolt* (London: W.H. Allen, 1951), p.226. Also, Kirk, *op. cit.*, p.222
52. *A Survey of Palestine*, Vol.1, p.73
53. Kirk, *op. cit.*, p.223
54. See statement by Herbert Morrison, *Parliamentary Debates, Commons*, July 31, 1946, Vol.426, Col.959
55. *A Survey of Palestine*, Vol.11, p.593-4
56. *Ibid.*, p.595
57. *A Survey of Palestine*, Vol.1, p.68

58. *Parliamentary Debates, Lords*, July 28, 1943, Vol.128, Col.842

59. *A Survey of Palestine*, Vol.1, p.61

60. *Parliamentary Debates, Commons*, December 4, 1940, Vol.367, Cols.631-36; also December 18, 1940, Cols. 1238-9

61. *Parliamentary Debates, Lords*, March 10, 1942, Vol.122, 200-204, 211-213, 220-221. Also, March 10, 1945, Vol.138, and March 24, 1945, Vol.135, Cols. 394-903

62. See Lord Samuel's speech in *Parliamentary Debates, Lords*, December 10, 1945, Vol.138, Cols.492-506. The Jewish refugee problem was also discussed by the House of Lords earlier on July 28, 1943, Vol.128, Cols. 841-42, 848, 552, 1865-70, 870

63. Kirk, *op. cit.*, p.210

Chapter 7

THE JEWISH STATE

The Palestine conflict ended with the creation of the Jewish state of Israel. And with the creation of Israel began the Arab-Israeli conflict and the wars that followed.

Two factors helped the Zionists establish their state - their military victory in Palestine and their diplomatic victory abroad. The first was the more important because international diplomacy alone could not have created the Jewish state against the determined opposition of the Arabs. In a sense, Israel was a military fact before it became a political reality. And it was primarily the military fact that gained political recognition for the Jewish state.

This is why the Arabs used force in an attempt to prevent the political reality of Israel. Having failed, they are today inclined to use politics; but if politics fail, the Arabs will have no choice but to strengthen their military power and challenge Israel once again on the battlefield.

In the previous Chapter, we saw how the Jewish rebellion made it difficult for the British to stay in Palestine. The failure of the Arabs to balance the Jewish rebellion by one of their own was an important factor in Zionist victories in international diplomacy. These victories produced the UN General Assembly resolution of November 29, 1947, which recommended the creation of a Jewish State, (but one forty per cent smaller than that established in 1948).

In this Chapter, we will discuss Zionist international activities leading up to the UN resolution and the subsequent creation of Israel.

Zionist Extremism

The demand for a Jewish state in Palestine did not become an official and open Zionist policy until May 1942, when

a conference of American Zionists adopted the co-called Biltmore programme, which in November was approved by the Inner-Zionist Council and the Jewish Agency.(1)

The programme called for the immediate creation of a Jewish commonwealth in Palestine, to be an integral part of the democratic world. It also called for unrestricted Jewish immigration into, and settlement in, Palestine; complete control of immigration and settlement by the Jewish Agency; and the creation of a Jewish military force to operate under its own flag.

The programme reflected the rising influence of the extremists in the Zionist movement. By 1943, it had become difficult for the moderates to maintain a gradual strategy in diplomatic international circles. Their ability to keep their real objectives (the Jewish State) in low profile while vigorously pursuing a gradual policy at the diplomatic international level was severely limited by the military exploits of the extremists in Palestine. Furthermore, the Jewish community in Palestine was in no mood to follow the traditional diplomacy of Weizmann and the moderates in the Jewish Agency. The readicalisation of that community forced the moderates to move to the right in Zionist politics, a point which the pro-Zionists in Parliament stressed when they were pressing the government to abandon the 1939 White Paper. They argued that if the government continued to refuse concessions to the moderates, the extremists among Jews would gain control and the situation in Palestine would get worse.(2)

This dialogue took place at a time when Arab radicals were having difficulty getting an anti-Zionist revolution started.(3) Thus while the Arab moderates were gaining influence in the Arab community of Palestine the Zionist extremists were gaining influence in the Jewish community.(4) The gap allowed the Zionists to upstage the Arabs in international activities and in mass media coverage.

In the Jewish Agency, the extremists were led by David Ben-Gurion, who often insisted on policies of which Weizmann could not approve. When Ben-Gurion could not get his way, he threatened to resign; and once, in October 1943, he did resign from the Agency's Executive. Usually he forced the moderates to make concessions favourable to his position. On this occasion he was back to head the Executive four months after his resignation, after winning the concessions he had demanded for his return. After 1943, the Zionist movement as a whole became radicalised; and in 1945 the Zionist conference, meeting in London, approved a radical programme of policy.

Arab-American Relations

Both the Arabs and the Zionists attempted to influence American policy during the war. The Arabs feared that Zionist influence might succeed in getting the American government to pressure Britain into changing the White Paper policy.

Helpful to the Arab cause were the American representatives to Arab capitals, who tried hard to communicate Arab feelings to their government. A typical communique was one sent by the American representative in Cairo to the Secretary of State: ' ... leaders in the Arab world have lately been disturbed by the utterances from the United States which have placed emphasis on the Jewish aspect of the Palestinian problem to the exclusion of the Arab viewpoint ... that there was no intention to deny or ignore Jewish rights or aspirations but ... hoped that equal consideration was being given to the Arab angle of this problem.'(5)

This American 'emphasis' on the Zionist viewpoint continued to be a real difficulty for the Arabs long after the success of the Zionists in establishing their Jewish state in Palestine. Even today this emphasis threatens their interests.

In communicating with the American government, Arab leaders always stressed their intention to be fair to the Jews and that they were anti-Zionists and not anti-Jewish. The only exception was the founder of the state of Saudi Arabia. King Abdul Aziz was clearly anti-Jewish and of all the Arab leaders he had the best of relations with President Roosevelt. The American President admired him as a man of courage and was somehow fascinated by his Arab character and his traditional Arab style of life.

Abdul Aziz wrote, on April 30, 1943, a letter to President Roosevelt in which he frankly stated that he did not trust the Jews. He referred to 'the religious animosity between Moslems and Jews, which dates back to the time when Islam appeared and which is due to the treacherous behaviour of the Jews towards Moslems and their prophet ...'(6)

Otherwise, the King's communiques with both President Roosevelt and President Truman were in line with the views of other Arab leaders. In fact, he was the strongest Arab advocate of Arab rights in Palestine. He understood Zionist objectives in Palestine to be detrimental to Arab rights and interests: ' ... The Zionist Jews have used this humanitarian appeal (regarding the Jewish refugees) as an excuse for attaining their own ends of aggression against Palestine ... their aims being to conquer Palestine and ... to establish a state in it, to expel its original inhabitants ... to use Palestine for aggression against

the neighbouring Arab states ... '(7) Explaining the Arab dilemma in terms of Zionist and Western rejection of a universal principle, King Abdul Aziz wrote President Truman that ' ... no people on earth would willingly admit into their country a foreign group desiring to become a majority and to establish its rule over the country.'(8)

Somehow, Arab populaces had always believed the Zionists were planning to displace them in Palestine by eviction. We have seen the Palestinian Arabs predicting this almost from the time of the Balfour Declaration. They relied on common sense to support their conclusion, arguing that their displacement was an inevitable result of unrestrained and continued Jewish immigration into Palestine, a country too small to sustain heavy immigration of an 'alien' group. Of course, here and there a Zionist leader or a Zionist publication made statements that confirmed Arab fears or aroused Arab suspicion.

Leaders of the Arab states usually agreed with the Palestinians, and some of them frankly told the US government that the Zionists had actually formulated plans for the eviction of the Palestinian Arabs. Abdul Aziz told President Roosevelt that 'The Jews seek to compel the Allies to help them to exterminate the peaceful Arabs settled in Palestine for thousands of years. They hope to evict this noble nation from its home and to install Jews from every horizon ... what a calamitous and infamous miscarriage of justice would ... result from this world struggle if the Allies should, at the end of their struggle, crown their victory by evicting the Arabs from their home in Palestine.' Abdul Aziz described Jewish claims to Palestine as 'an act of injustice unprecedented in the history of the human race.'(9)

Abdul Aziz claimed that President Roosevelt knew of Zionist plans to evict the Arabs, but Harold B. Hoskins, Roosevelt's emissary, denied the charge, as did the President. Hoskins claimed that 'The only suggestion that the President had ever made that even bordered on this subject was ... in a talk that he had had with Dr (Stephen. S.) Wise several years ago in which he had suggested that if the Jews wished to get more land in Palestine they might well think of buying arable land outside Palestine and assisting Arabs financially to move from Palestine to such areas.'(10)

In addition to his dislike of the Zionists and his suspicion of Jews, Abdul Aziz personally hated Dr Weizmann, whom he refused to meet. He claimed 'That during the first year of the present war, Dr Weizmann had impugned his (The King's) character and motives by an attempted bribe of £20 million sterling.' Weizmann, according to Ibn Saud, advised him that the amount

'would be guaranteed by President Roosevelt.' The King revealed that the bribe was attempted through a British intermediary, H.. St. John Philby.(11)

However, the King's son, Amir Faisal, who later became King, distinguished between Zionists and Jews in all of his communications with the American government. (12) But Faisal, as Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia, seemed willing to take action against the US in retaliation for its pro-Zionist policy. Long before the oil embargo of 1973, Faisal thought of using economic policy as a political weapon in his relations with the United States. In 1946, he told the American Minister in Saudi Arabia that 'you will understand that no action can possibly be taken by (the) Saudi government on projects of cooperation (such) as TWA proposals or (a) Treaty of Commerce and Friendship as long as we are in doubt about the intentions of your government towards us.' Faisal specifically had in mind America's position on the Palestine question, and frankly warned that that position was inconsistent with America's interests in the Middle East, including Saudi Arabia.(13) He and his father always deplored the strain on Arab-American relations caused by the issue of Zionism. (14)

Generally, the Arab leaders could not understand why the United States was demanding that the British admit more Jews into Palestine. They knew the Zionists had influence in America, but expected the United States to have respect for principles of justice and equity and not jeopardise American interests in the Arab world. In their dialogue with the American government, they often stressed their willingness to share in the solution of the Jewish refugee problem provided other nations were willing to do the same. In 1946, the Secretary-General of the Arab League told J. Rives Childs, the American Minister to Saudi Arabia, that the Arab states were fully prepared to accept their share of burden in solving the Jewish refugee problem, but only as a humanitarian act. The Secretary-General saw no reason why Palestine should alone take the whole responsibility.

But the Arab League was weary of American 'intervention' in the affairs of Palestine, and warned in a formal declaration of its Council that this intervention was making difficult the possibility of 'an honourable and just settlement' of the Palestine conflict.(16) In fact, the Secretary-General of the League, Azzam Pasha, had given up on the United States before the League Council made its declaration. He had told the American ambassador to Egypt 'That Britain had long been recognised as enemy of the Arabs' and that 'America ... had shown that it was now an enemy.'(17)

Zionist-American Relations

The Zionists were far more influential in the United States during the 1940s than the Arabs, whose influence was really limited to a few departments in the American government. Zionist political influence was largely based on the energy and strength of the American Jewish community, while Arab influence was based on the ability of independent states to affect US national interests in the area. Consequently, Zionist influence was strong among elected officials, who, in the final analysis, determined the foreign policy of the United States. This influence was exerted through self-interest of American politicians and thus was more effective than Arab influence, which had no popular constituency in the country.

There were, of course, other factors that favoured the Zionists - religious and cultural factors as well as the sympathy and the guilt feelings resulting from the persecution of Jews, especially during World War 11. But in pragmatic terms, the lively and dynamic Jewish constituency was the most important.

ln the 1940s Zionist leaders had access to the government of the United States. Their biggest problem was the State Department, where career officers were concerned that Zionist aims in Palestine might hurt American interests in the Arab world. At one point, Zionist leaders tried to argue that Palestine was essential for the preservation of the Jewish race. They tried to impress upon State Department officials that they represented the sentiment 'of the Jews of all the world.'

When pressed for an explanation of what might happen to the Arabs as a result of Zionist activities, Zionist lobbyists usually argued that Zionist activities were good for the Arabs because it benefited them economically. However, in a meeting with State Department officials on March 3, 1943 Moshe Shertok, later the Foreign Minister of lsrael, argued that 'There is less injustice to the Arabs involved in awarding Palestine to the Jews than there would be injustice to the Jews in not allowing them to have Palestine.' Zionist leaders also argued that 'what the Jews are doing in Palestine is not an accident, it is the result of a conscious effort.'(18)

ln talking to State Department officials Zionist leaders were usually firm and confident. Dr Weizmann was once quoted saying in a meeting with high-ranking State Department officials, 'l affirm again before you that Palestine will never again be an Arab country.' Weizmann argued that the United States had a moral responsibility for the Jews in Palestine and warned these officials that 'We will not let you disclaim that responsibility.'(19) In the meeting mentioned above, Shertok confidently

answered an official of the Department who asked how long he intended to stay in the United States by saying he expected 'to remain here for the kill.'(20) This Zionist confidence usually annoyed State Department officials. Thus, when Ben-Gurion advocated the use of 'Jewish might' and 'physical power' to defend the Jewish position in Palestine, Secretary of State Cordell Hull wrote the Consul General in Jerusalem to find out if Ben-Gurion's attitude was 'symptomatic of a developing attitude' in the whole Jewish community of Palestine.(21) The Consul General replied that the majority of Jews in Palestine shared Ben-Gurion's views. He reported that Jews were getting ready to use force after the war: 'I have been informed in strict confidence by (the Palestine administration's) Secretariat that of late thefts by Jews of military arms and explosives have reached alarming proportions.'(22)

At one point in 1943, Weizmann demanded that the President of the United States should tell the Arabs very clearly 'that the Jews have a right to Palestine.'(23) Although Roosevelt and Truman considered Weizmann a moderate, his approach and style were much more direct and forceful than the manner of the Arabs who dealt with American officials.

But Zionist zeal paid off. In 1944 they were instrumental in persuading Democrats and Republicans to espouse the Zionist cause during the elections that year. On October 15, New York Senator Robert Wagner released the text of a letter by President Roosevelt stating that he was in 'favour of the opening of Palestine to unrestricted Jewish immigration and colonisation and such a policy as to result in the establishment there of a free and democratic Jewish commonwealth,'(24) Larer on, March 10, 1945, President Roosevelt reassured Rabbis Stephen Wise and Abba H. Silver that he still favoured the creation of a Jewish commonwealth in Palestine.

In the Congress of the United States, Zionist influence was even greater. Congress had a pro-Zionist record going back to 1922, when it passed a resolution favouring the Balfour Declaration.(25) In 1944 a joint resolution was introduced in the Congress favouring unrestricted Jewish immigration into Palestine and the establishment of a Jewish state. About a year later, a resolution was again introduced in each of the two houses of Congress favouring the establishment of a Jewish State in *all* of Palestine. Although the passage of the resolution was again postponed, a modified version of it was passed in December, 1945. This last one stated that the Jewish Commonwealth was to be *in* Palestine not in *all* of Palestine.(26)

So far the benefits to the Zionists were promises and

moral support. But in 1945, the American government began to show its pro-Zionism in concrete terms. President Truman wrote Prime Minister Attlee of Britain urging him to allow the immediate admission of 100,000 Jews into Palestine.(27) Subsequently, strong pressure was exerted on the British government on behalf of the Zionists, creating a very difficult and embarrassing situation for Britain. Later, the British government saw the benefit in American 'intervention' in Palestinian affairs and tried to include the United States in the effort to find a solution to the conflict.

Thus, in November 1945, the British government invited the United States to participate in an Anglo-American Committee to examine the Palestine problem with a view to finding a solution to the problem of Jewish refugees. The American government accepted the invitation, and the committee was organised. However, when the committee finally made its recommendations, the United States was not willing to go along. Although President Truman explained that he could not support a plan that did not have the backing of the Congress and public opinion,(28) there was no doubt that Zionist influence was a factor. A few days before the President's explanation was communicated to the American Ambassador in Britain, the Acting Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, was told by Dr Nahum Goldmann, the American Zionist leader, that the Jewish Agency had rejected the Anglo-American Committee's report.(29)

The Zionists rejected the report primarily because it did not propose the creation of a Jewish state. However, the Agency was willing, if a Jewish state was created, to allow British military bases on its territory, to become an ally of Britain, and even to join a 'confederation' of Near Eastern States. The Agency also hoped that American financial aid would be used to allow the 'voluntary' departure of Arabs from Jewish territory but stressed that such departure would not be forced by Jews.(30)

Later, when the British government was preparing to convene a London conference of Jews and Arabs to explore the possibility of a solution to the Palestine problem, the Zionists refused to participate and a group of Zionists went to the State Department to explain their position. In that meeting they warned that if a solution were not found soon - one that would be acceptable to Jews - the extremists 'would take over in Palestine as well as in the American Zionist organisation.'(31) Rabbi Wise and a group of Zionists later urged that the President of the United States 'should issue at once a statement in favour of Partition in Palestine.'(32)

On the issue of extremists' takeover, the Zionist warning to the State Department was justified. When the

World Zionist Congress opened on December 9, 1946, in Basel, Switzerland, it was obvious that the moderates were on the defensive. Dr Weizmann, whose platform supported participation in the London Conference, was defeated in his bid for reelection as President of the Executive by a group, led by Rabbi Silver, who demanded a Jewish State in the whole of Palestine.(33)

However, on the issue of the Presidential Statement in favour of partition, the Zionists met with opposition from the State Department, which recommended against such action. In advising the President not to issue the statement, the Department explained that 'If we yield to the pressure of highly organised Zionist groups ... we shall merely be encouraging them to make fresh demands ...' It warned that 'The attitude of the Arab World toward the United States has become progressively hostile ... ' and that the national interest of the United States would be threatened by a pro-Zionist policy.(34)

The State Department was not the only section of the American government opposing Zionist plans. The Joint Chiefs of Staff was also opposed to them. In a memorandum released on June 11, 1946, the Chiefs of Staff warned against actions that would cause the Middle East to fall 'into anarchy and become a breeding ground for world war.' They reminded the government that such actions could allow the Soviet Union to ' ... replace the United States and Britain in influence and power through the Middle East.' The control of Middle Eastern oil, they said, had military significance for the United States, and would in the future be threatened by the Soviet Union if the Middle East were allowed to become unstable. In a prophetic statement, the Chiefs of Staff explained the importance of the Middle East region: 'This is probably the one large undeveloped reserve in a world which may come to the limits of its oil resources within this generation without having developed any substitute.'(35)

In addition, warnings against a pro-Zionist American policy came from the special envoys sent by President Roosevelt to the Middle East. In October 1942, the President insisted, apparently against a reluctant State Department, that a special envoy be sent to the Middle East on a 'survey trip' to ascertain certain facts about the region that might be helpful to the United States. Harold B. Hoskins spent three and a half months in the region, visiting all of the Near East and North Africa.(36) He reported that if the Palestine situation continued to deteriorate, the conflict would have repercussions in the neighbouring countries and might even 'influence ... all of the Moslem world from Casablanca to Calcutta.' The conflict, he predicted, 'is almost certain to lead to the massacre of Jews living in the neighbouring states of

Iraq and Syria as well as in other places in the Near East.'(37) Jews, he said, knew that Arab intervention was certain but they were counting on British and American military assistance if such intervention took place. However, Hoskins emphasised, the Jews were confident they could hold their own if the conflict was limited to the Arabs of Palestine. This confidence came from an assessment of Jewish military might: 'It is no secret that the Hagana ... has plans fully made and is well equipped not only with small arms, but also with Tommy-guns and machine guns, many of them purchased from Vichy French forces in Syria and smuggled into Palestine during the past two years.'(38)

Hoskins also reported that the found 'Zionist officials of the Jewish Agency uncompromisingly outspoken in their determination that Palestine at end of this war shall become not merely a national home for the Jews, but a Jewish state despite any opposition from the 1,000,000 Arabs living there.'(39)

Hoskins recommended an evenhanded American policy in the Middle East and that the American people be told the facts 'so that American public opinion may realise more fully that there are two sides to the case and that Palestine is not an uninhabited area into which several million Jews from Europe can at end of war be dropped and immediately find land and livelihood ...' He warned: 'It should be very clear to the American people ... that only by military force can a Zionist state in Palestine be imposed upon the Arabs.'(40)

Hoskins recommended that the Jewish refugee problem be separated from the Palestine problem. He implied that the first problem should receive a great effort for a compassionate solution. His solution to the problem of Palestine was 'to form a bi-national state within a proposed Levant Federation. This independent Levant Federation would be formed by the re-uniting of Lebanon, Syria, Palestine and Transjordan that, prior to their dismemberment after the last war, had for years been one natural economic and political unit. The Holy Places ... are to be an enclave under United Nations' control.' To alleviate the plight of Jews, he suggested the creation of a Jewish State in northern Cyrenaica 'which is now virtually uninhabited.'(41)

Another emissary sent by President Roosevelt to the Middle East was General Patrick J. Hurley, who, after touring the region, submitted his report on May 5, 1943.(42) His findings were not very different from those of Hoskins; but the following elements were new: First, the Zionist organisation in Palestine was committed to a sovereign Jewish state in all of Palestine and possibly Transjordan. Part of its programme envisaged 'an

eventual transfer of the Arab population from Palestine to Iraq.' The programme also envisaged 'Jewish leadership for the whole Middle East in the fields of economic devlopment and control.'

Secondly, there were Jews who opposed this Zionist programme and there were many who desired to return to Europe after the war. Jews living in the Middle East outside Palestine opposed the Zionist programme. They were 'long established and important socially and economically.'

Thirdly, among the Arabs there was little or no anti-Jewish sentiment. However, there was profound resentment of any large-scale Jewish immigration that threatened the Arab majority position. In addition, some Arabs were hostile to the Jewish claim that they were the 'chosen people.' 'One leading Arab spokesman described this 'chosen people' concept as kindred to Nazi doctrine.' Arabs feared that a Jewish state in Palestine would become the means by which imperialism could maintain its hold on the region. They were convinced that it was the United States not Britain that was insisting on creating a Jewish state in Palestine.

Fourthly, Ben-Gurion believed that the United States was 'committed and obligated ... to establish a Jewish political state in Palestine.' This obligation, Ben-Gurion explained, was based upon 'scriptural promises and historical logic,' upon Jewish-American investments in Palestine, these investments being dependent on the protection of the US government, upon the American government's support of the Mandate and, finally, upon the 1922 joint resolution of Congress.

Fifthly, British officials and leaders interviewed in the Middle East all were opposed to the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine and favoured a solution on the basis of the 1939 White Paper.

British-American Relations

During World War 11, American involvement in the Palestine question was an outgrowth of electoral politics. lt was clear at least to the State Department that American concern with the Palestine question was, according to the Secretary of State, 'based primarily on the residence and citizenship of some five million Jews in this country.'(43)

The British government, while showing frustration with the political motives of US Zionist policies, attempted to use American influence with the Zionists. In 1943, for instance, Anthony Eden, Britain's Foreign Minister, tried to persuade his American counterpart, Cordell Hull, to use his influence 'to warn the Zionist leaders of the

danger of their present policy.' Eden was concerned that Zionist political programme was moving toward the extreme. He wanted the President of the United States to urge Congress and the American people 'to look at the Middle East area as a whole,' implying that the separation of Palestine from the region was dangerous: 'The mistake extreme pro-Zionists make is in treating Palestine in isolation, not as a part of the Arab world as a whole.' (44)

Soon the British began to realise that it was the Zionists who had the greater influence over the American government, not the other way around. It was then that the British began to manifest annoyance with American Palestinian policies. Consequently, they tried to persuade the United States to share in the responsibility for Palestine; but the United States refused, causing Britain to give up its own responsibility by submitting the whole issue to the UN and announcing its intention to withdraw its civil and military staff from Palestine.

To understand these developments, one should be familiar with the great Anglo-American dialogue of 1944-46 over the issue of Jewish refugees. The American position on the Palestine question was highly coloured by the Zionist view that the problem of Palestine and the problem of Jewish refugees were inseparable. (We should recall the Zionist view that a solution to the Palestine problem was 'essential to the preservation of the (Jewish) race.') (45) Also, in his memoirs, President Truman admitted that the issue of Jewish refugees was 'embroiled in politics,' and that he was under tremendous pressure from the Zionists.(46)

The refugee issue was important in America's 1944 electoral politics, and Roosevelt (and later Truman) pressured the British government to admit 100,000 Jews into Palestine. Thus, when in 1945 the British government learned that President Truman was about to issue a public statement on Palestine, it expressed fear that American intervention was politically motivated and therefore harmful to efforts for a solution to the problem. Clement Attlee, then Prime Minister of Britain, warned the President that such a statement 'could not fail to do grievous harm to relations between our two countries.'(47) In another communique to the President, Attlee objected to American insistence that Jews should be treated in a special way, differently from other refugees. All refugees, he said, should be treated alike, compassionately and with an awareness of their interests as human beings. Giving Jews a special consideration, Attlee warned, would be 'disastrous to the Jews.'(48) In explaining the British position, the Prime Minister said: 'In the case of Palestine we have the Arabs to consider as well as the Jews.' He

reminded Truman that there were American commitments to the Arabs, that they should be consulted before decisions on Palestine were taken,(49) and that 'it would be very unwise to break these solemn pledges and so set aflame the whole Middle East.'(50)

The political battle over the refugee problem worsened in 1946. Ernest Bevin, the British Foreign Secretary, tried to explain to the American State Department the difficulties involved in the admission of such a large number of Jews into Palestine. He worried that 'Jews are acquiring large supplies of arms, most of them with money furnished by American Jews,' and 'that most of the immigrants were carefully selected for their military qualities by the Jewish Agency ...' He thought that Jews (Zionists) were 'in a very aggressive frame of mind'; and he warned that this aggressiveness was 'poisoning relations between our two people.'(51)

Prime Minister Attlee had two conditions for the admission of the 100,000 Jews: The disarmament of the Jewish underground in Palestine and an American guarantee of military and financial assistance.(52) Apparently, some high officials of the State Department were sympathetic to the British position, and they recommended a modification of the President's policy. In particular, they wanted the issue of the 100,000 Jewish refugees *not* to be viewed separately from the ten recommendations made by the Anglo-American Committee, which provided principles for a general solution to the Palestine problem. The State Department argued that the refugee issue might alienate the Arabs if mishandled, and that American interests in the Middle East were too vital to be ignored: 'We have many political, economic and educational interests in these (Arab) countries. Our educational interests, for example, have taken more than a century to build up, and they constitute a sheet anchor in the Middle East when we were militarily weak. These American schools and colleges require Arab goodwill for their continuance and effectiveness. Our Near Eastern trade and petroleum interests cannot be neglected ...' The State Department also understood the strong British reaction to the President's espousal of the Jewish refugee recommendation since that recommendation was not accompanied by a commitment to share responsibility for the consequences of carrying it out.(53)

However, Truman decided to reject a version of the Anglo-American Committee's plan before it was made public. Apparently, 'premature leaks' of the proposal of the so-called expert group gave pro-Zionist groups a head start in mobilising public opinion against it.(54)

In a letter to Attlee, President Truman explained his reasons for rejecting the plan: ' ... opposition to this

plan developed among members of the major political parties in the United States - both in the Congress and throughout the country. In accordance with the principle which I have consistently tried to follow, of having a maximum degree of unity within the country or between the parties on major elements of American foreign policy, I could not give my support to this plan.'(55)

The British Prime Minister was furious: 'I have received with great regret your letter refusing even a few hours grace to the Prime Minister of the country which has the actual responsibility for the government of Palestine in order that he might acquaint you with the actual situation and the probable results of your action.' (56)

Some of the British effort to persuade the United States to abandon its pro-Zionist policy came from Lord Halifax, the British Ambassador to Washington. He showed insight into the future when he called Palestine 'a terrible legacy.' He told the Secretary of State that America's approach to the problem of Palestine was 'most embarrassing' to Britain and was 'embittering relations between the two countries at a moment when we ought to be getting closer together in our common interests.' He showed extreme irritation with the Zionists, who he charged with 'using every possible form of intimidation to stop Jews leaving Palestine in order to go back to Europe and to play their part in its reconstruction.'(57)

Apparently, American pro-Zionist pressure on the British government was so great as to worry many of the career officials of the State Department. The Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs expressed this concern by observing that 'the present handling of our Palestine policy at the highest levels ... threatens to have ... far reaching effects upon our relations with the Near Eastern countries.'(58)

But British resistance to American pressure had limits, because in 1946 Britain desperately needed American financial assistance to reconstruct its economy which had suffered from the war. Consequently, Bevin informed the Secretary of State that Britain was prepared to admit the 100,000 refugees to Palestine. However, he had one condition: would the United States share with Britain the responsibility for Palestine?

The United States refused to accept the responsibility, and the British, as mentioned earlier, gave up their own responsibility, leaving the entire Palestine problem in the hands of the young United Nations. No doubt, the battle over the Jewish refugee problem was a very bitter one. According to Acheson, the British thought the American policy makers were motivated by 'domestic political opportunism.'(59) Bevin went as far as saying that the

American politicians 'did not want too many of them (the Jews) in New York.'(60)

Report of the Anglo-American Committee

The Anglo-American Committee was appointed by the British and American governments 'to examine political, economic and social conditions in Palestine as they bear upon the problem of Jewish immigration and settlement.'(61) It consisted of six British and six American members, with Joseph C. Hutcheson (British) and John E. Singleton (American) as co-chairmen. It began its investigation in Washington on January 6, 1946, and submitted its report on April 20. In addition to Washington, the Committee visited London, Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Italy, Greece, Cairo, Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Transjordan. Its report was prepared in Switzerland.

The Committee made ten recommendations and its report contained additional sections giving information about many aspects of the Palestine problem. Among the recommendations was one urging the immediate admission into Palestine of 100,000 Jews. In explanation to this recommendation the Committee observed that it knew of no country to which most of the Jewish refugees in Europe could go. It also recommended that priority should be given to Jews in Germany and Austria. Another recommendation provided 'principles of government' for the future Palestine, 'that Jews shall not dominate Arabs and Arabs shall not dominate Jews.' Palestine was to be 'neither a Jewish state nor an Arab state.' Because it was holy to Christian, Muslim and Jew, Palestine could not be 'a land which any race or religion can justly claim as its very own.'

Still another recommendation suggested that until hostilities in Palestine disappeared, the country should be administered 'under mandate pending the execution of a Trusteeship Agreement under the United Nations.' The trustees should accept the principle 'that Arab economic, educational, and political advancement in Palestine is of equal importance with that of the Jews, and should at once prepare measures designed to bridge the gap which now exists and raise the Arab standard of living to that of the Jews.' The Committee anticipated that the Arabs would have to rely on government financial assistance and the Jews must accept the proposition that general taxes would have to be spent mostly on the Arabs until the gap in the standard of living between the two peoples was bridged.

For an immigration policy after the admission of the

100,000 Jews, the Committee recommended a return to the policy of the original mandate, which stated that 'the administration of Palestine, while ensuring that the rights and position of other sections of the population are not prejudiced, shall facilitate Jewish immigration under suitable conditions.' While stating this position, the Committee desired that Jewish immigration 'must not become a policy of discrimination against other immigrants. Any person ... who desires and is qualified ... to enter Palestine must not be refused admission ... on the ground that he is not a Jew.' Also, the Committee 'expressly disapproved of the position taken in some Jewish quarters that Palestine has in some way been ceded or granted as their state to the Jews of the world and (they) therefore can enter Palestine as of right without regard to conditions imposed by the government upon entry ...' On the other hand, the Committee rejected the view 'that there shall be no further Jewish immigration into Palestine without Arab acquiescence.'

The Committee also recommended the end of the Land Transfer Regulations of 1940 and the introduction of a land system unrestricted by considerations of race or creed. Employment discrimination against races or religious groups were to end. While the system of land, lease, and employment should be free, Arab small owners and tenants should have protection against landlessness. In explaining the problem of racial discrimination, the Committee specifically mentioned the Jewish National Fund: 'The leases granted by the Jewish National Fund contain a provision that no labour other than Jewish shall be employed by the Lessee on or about or in connection with the land subject to the lease, and a further provision that Sub-Lease shall contain similar terms.'

Other recommendations dealt with Palestinian economic development and education. The Committee observed that large-scale development projects should not be left to private Jewish organisations for fear that Arabs might be at a disadvantage under this kind of policy. It recommended that the government should be in control of development projects. The ideal, if noted, would be to combine Jewish finance with government responsibility and control.

In education, the Committee pointed to the 'great disparity between the money spent on Arab and Jewish education,' and to the fact that both educational systems were 'imbued with a fiery spirit of nationalism.' It urged that government be given adequate control of education 'in order to do away with the present excited emphasis on racialism and the perversion of education for propaganda purposes.' To bridge the gap between Jews and Arabs, the Committee saw the necessity of spending more

money on Arab education.

Obviously, the Committee recommended no concrete solution but only basic principles that should govern any solution. The dominant principle was 'that Jews shall not dominate Arabs and Arabs shall not dominate Jews in Palestine,' and its stated corollary was 'that Palestine shall be neither a Jewish state nor an Arab state.'

Consequently, there was need for details to make the recommendations of the Committee operational. To provide them, experts from the US and Britain were called upon. The British government called this authority 'the expert delegations,' while others referred to it as the Morrison plan, the Morrison-Grady plan, or the Provisional Autonomy Plan.(62)

The 'Expert Delegations' dealt with the Anglo-American recommendations regarding the Jewish refugee problem and proposed the creation of conditions in Europe itself for the resettlement of a substantial number of refugees. Both the Experts and the Committee had proceeded from the assumption that Palestine alone could not solve the problem of Jewish refugees and that other countries share the responsibility.

In Parliament, the principal member of the Expert group, Herbert Morrison, revealed some important information regarding this sharing of responsibility. He said that during 'the period of Nazi persecution,' the British government had allowed 70,000 Jews to 'remain' in Britain. He was not clear as to whether these Jews would be allowed to stay permanently (ie. resettle) or not. With regard to the United States, '180,000 Jews have permanently resettled in the same period.' Morrison estimated that in subsequent years the United States 'expect to receive some 53,000 immigrants each year from the European countries from which the displaced persons are drawn.' How much of this number were to be Jews was not known from his statement. Nor did he specify the number of years in 'the period of Nazi persecution.' Nevertheless, the figures he gave were too small to warrant a conclusion that Britain and the United States were really as enthusiastic about welcoming Jews as they were to have others welcome them. This point was later raised in Parliament, where some members showed concern about British and American lack of enthusiasm for the admission of Jews into the two countries.(63)

As to the Committee's recommendation regarding the 100,000 Jewish refugees, the Experts approved the recommendation but only as part of the whole plan which they were proposing. To the British, this point was important, since the United States was pressuring them to admit the 100,000 into Palestine without giving approval to the plan as a whole. The British were reluctant to

admit that many refugees without a solution to the Palestine problem and American help.

The solution the Experts recommended was 'the establishment of Arab and Jewish provinces, which will enjoy a large measure of autonomy under a central government.' In addition, there was to be a District of Jerusalem and a District of Negeb. The Jewish province would have 'the great bulk of land on which Jews have already settled and a considerable area between and around the settlement.' The Jerusalem district would include the holy cities of Jerusalem and Bethlehem as well as their 'immediate environs.' The Negeb District would include 'the uninhabited triangle of waste land in the South of Palestine beyond the present limits of cultivation.' The remainder of Palestine would become the Arab province.

The Experts suggested that the provincial boundaries were to be 'purely administrative boundaries.' Each province would have its own legislature and executive but the central government would have exclusive powers over such matters as defence, customs, communications, and foreign relations. The provincial boundaries, once fixed, would not be subject to change unless the two provincial governments agreed to the change.

Palestine as a whole would be governed by a trusteeship instrument. The High Commissioner would appoint the executive of each province from among the members of the legislature, which would be elected by the people of the province. Provincial laws would require the approval of the High Commissioner, who would not reject them unless they were inconsistent with the constitution, which would safeguard the peace of the country and the rights of minorities. The High Commissioner would also have emergency power 'to intervene if a provincial government fails to perform, or exceeds, its proper functions.'

Jurisdiction over the admission of new immigrants would primarily be the responsibility of the provincial government, although the central government would have the power to make sure the number of immigrants did not exceed the economic absorptive capacity of the province. Consequently, while 'the Arab province would have full powers to exclude Jewish immigrants from its province, the Jewish province would, normally, be able to admit as many immigrants as its government desires.'

The Experts realised that their plan would cost large amounts of money, especially with regard to transporting and settling 100,000 Jewish refugees within the short period of twelve months, and with regard to the economic development of Palestine. Consequently, their plan had provisions for American financial contributions. Morrison

made it clear that 'the full implementation of the Experts' plan as a whole depends on United States cooperation.' As we have already mentioned, that full cooperation never materialised.

However, the plan of the Experts was expected to be only a step in the long range development of Palestine. Morrison stated that it 'leaves the way open for peaceful progress and constitutional development either towards partition, or towards federal unity.' Which way Palestine would go depended on Arab-Jewish relations while the plan was in effect.

As mentioned earlier, American opposition to the plan presented the British with difficulties. Their next step was to call for a conference of Arabs and Jews and submit the plan to them as a basis for further negotiation. The Conference met in September 1946, but neither the Palestinian Arabs nor the Jews attended. Only representatives of the Arab states were at hand. In January 1947, the conference was resumed. This time the Palestinian Arabs attended but the Jews remained away. Early in January, the United States contemplated joining the conference as an observer on condition that Arabs and Jews agreed to attend. Since the Jews refused to attend, the United States did not attend either.(64) However, informal talks were conducted simultaneously with representatives of the Jewish Agency.

As an alternative to the British plan (ie., the Morrison Plan), the Arabs, on September 30, 1946, had proposed their own plan for a unitary state with an elected legislature in which Jews would be represented on the basis of their proportion to the whole polulation, but in no case more than one-third the total number of members. The plan would stop Jewish immigration unless the Arabs consented to it, and would continue the existing regulations on the transfers of land. Finally, the plan stipulated that constitutional guarantees dealing with Jewish rights could not be amended without the consent of a majority of the Jewish representatives, and that British interests would be guaranteed in a Treaty of Alliance between Britain and the independent state of Palestine.(65)

In February, 1947, the British made still another proposal, known as the Bevin Plan, which would give the right to administer 'a five-year Trusteeship over Palestine, with the declared object of preparing the country for independence.' The new plan was only a variation of the Morrison Plan, but it did guarantee the admission into Palestine of 4,000 Jews each month for the next two years. After two years, admission of Jews would be subject to economic criteria and in case of disagreement to arbitration by the UN.(66)

The Conference failed because the Arabs wanted nothing less than a unitary state and the Jews nothing less than a Jewish state. Consequently, on April 2, 1947, Britain officially requested the Secretary-General of the UN to summon a special session of the General Assembly to deal with the question of Palestine and to place the same question on the agenda of the next regular session.(67) About three weeks later, five Arab states requested the Secretary-General to place on the agenda of the special session 'the termination of the Mandate over Palestine and the declaration of its independence.'(68) The special session was summoned to begin on April 28, 1947.

The UN Solution

The General Committee of the Assembly decided by a vote of eight to one, with three abstentions, not to recommend the inclusion of the Arab item on the Assembly's agenda.(69) However, it did accept the British request and referred it to the First Committee;(70) and the General Assembly accepted the recommendation of the General Committee.(71) Consequently, the British item was the sole item on the agenda of the special session.

Hearings were granted to the Jewish Agency and the Arab Higher Committee,(72) but requests from other organisations were rejected on the grounds that they did not 'represent a considerable element of the population of Palestine.'

In the First Committee, the British representative, Sir Alexander Cadogan, stated the position of his country: ' ... that we should not have the sole responsibility for enforcing a solution which is not accepted by both parties and which we cannot reconcile with our conscience.'(73)

In accordance with the British request, the First Committee discussed the question of organising and instructing a special Committee on Palestine. It decided to create the special committee, to be known as UNSCOP (United Nations Special Committee on Palestine), and to give it the broadest possible competence.(74) It also decided not to include the five permanent members of the Security Council in the Committee. It provided that UNSCOP would have eleven members: Australia, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Guatemala, India, Iran, the Netherlands, Peru, Sweden, Uruguay, and Yugoslavia.(75)

On May 15, 1947, the General Assembly voted, forty five to seven, with one abstention, to approve the First Committee's recommendation. Resolution 106 (S-1) also required UNSCOP to report to the Secretary-General no later than September 1 of that year.(76) In another resolution, 107 (S-1), the Assembly called upon all governments and

peoples, particularly the people of Palestine 'to refrain ... from the threat or use of force or any other action which might create an atmosphere prejudicial to an early settlement of the question of Palestine.'(77)

UNSCOP had a Secretariat of fifty-seven members with Alphonso Garcia Robles as Principal Secretary and Victor Hoo as personal representative of the UN Secretary-General. It elected as its chairman Emil Sandstrom of Sweden. Meetings began on May 26, 1947, in Lake Success, and ended on August 31, in Geneva.

The government of Palestine and the Jewish Agency appointed liaison officers to deal with UNSCOP, but the Arab Higher Committee refused to follow suit. The UN Secretary-General cabled UNSCOP to inform them of the decision of the Arab Higher Committee and the reason for it. These reasons were: the refusal of the General Committee to place the item regarding the termination of the Mandate and the declaration of Palestinian independence on the agenda of the General Assembly and UN's failure to separate the question of Jewish refugees from the question of Palestine.(78) However, five Arab states agreed to meet UNSCOP in Beirut to represent the Arab case.(79)

Towards the end of its deliberations, UNSCOP produced two plans, one based upon the principle of partition and another favouring a federal solution. Seven members voted for the principle of partition. These were the representatives of Canada, Czechoslovakia, Guatemala, the Netherlands, Peru, Sweden, and Uruguay. Three members (India, Iran, and Yugoslavia) voted for the federal plan while Australia abstained.

Apart from the two plans, UNSCOP was able to agree on eleven general recommendations. A twelfth recommendation was adopted with two dissenting votes. We shall discuss UNSCOP's report in the following sections in order to understand its work as well as its contribution.

General Information: Before making the recommendations, the Committee studied 'the elements of the conflict' which it incorporated as Chapter 11 of its report. Some data should be mentioned here because they update earlier information on Palestine and because they are necessary for an understanding of the Committee's recommendations.(80)

According to the Committee, at the end of 1946 Palestine had an estimated Arab population of 1,203,000 and an estimated Jewish population of 608,000. If other peoples were included, the total 'settled' population of Palestine was estimated at 1,846,000. However, in 1946 there were also an estimated 90,000 bedouins in the country. Of course, the bedouins were all Arabs and if we add them to the settled population, the Arabs would

count 1,293,000.

The Committee was impressed by the remarkably rapid increase in the population of Palestine, which was almost three times what it had been in 1922. The increase in the Jewish population was primarily due to immigration, from 12.91 per cent of the total in 1922 to 32.96 per cent in 1946. From 1920 to 1946, the total number of recorded Jewish immigrants into Palestine was 376,000, about 8,000 per year. However, most of Jewish immigration occurred between 1931 and 1936, during the period of Nazi persecution, when the number of Jews rose from 18 per cent to nearly 30 per cent of the total population.

According to UNSCOP, 'The Arab population has increased almost entirely as a result of an excess of births over deaths.' However, the relative position of the Muslim Arabs had declined from 75 per cent of the total in 1922 to 60 per cent in 1946, and that of the Christians (mostly Arab) declined from 11 per cent to 8 per cent of the total population. Nevertheless, the Arab population had experienced an impressive increase. According to UNSCOP, the Muslim population in particular had the highest natural rate of increase 'in recorded statistics.'

The Committee was also impressed by the figures on population density. In 1944, Palestine had a population density of 174 to the square mile. However, if the semi-desert area of Beersheba were excluded, the density would increase to 324 per square mile. The latter figure made Palestine more densely populated than Switzerland, but slightly less so than Italy. There were in fact only a few countries in the world with higher densities than Palestine, but they were either agricultural countries with a very low standard of living, like in parts of India or highly industrialised countries.

The Committee considered the regional distribution of population to be significant for the problem of Palestine. The central fact was that Jews and Arabs were not separated territorially. In 1946, Jews were more than 40 per cent of the total population of the districts of Jaffa (including Tel-Aviv), Haifa and Jerusalem, between 25 and 34 per cent in the northern inland areas of Tiberias and Beisan, between 10 and 25 per cent in the districts of Safad, Nazareth, Tulkarm and Ramla, and not more than five per cent in the central districts and in districts south of Jerusalem.

Certain economic facts were also relevant. Palestine, the Committee stated, had in 1946 two separate and distinct economies, one Jewish and one Arab, and the two economies did not correspond to any clear territorial divisions. Economic relations, between Arabs and Jews had 'something of the character of trade between two different nations.'

Of the two economies, the Jewish was obviously the most modern. Jewish agriculture was devoted to mixed farming and was mostly cash farming, seventy-five per cent being sold in the local market. It was scientific, progressive, and experimental, making true the Jewish claim that they made 'the desert bloom as a rose.' On the other hand, Arab agriculture was traditional, although 'it must not be considered that Arab agriculture in Palestine is on a very low level.' Arab cultivators produced over 80 per cent of the country's cereal crops and over 98 per cent of its olives. In citrus production, the Arabs had an equal share with the Jews. Average industrial earnings increased during the war (1939-1945) by 200 per cent among Arabs and 258 per cent among Jews.

Some criticism of the Mandate was voiced by the Committee. There were not enough Arabs and Jews in the higher levels of government. (However, in 1945, the government had 45,000 employees, 68 per cent of whom were Arabs and 21 per cent were Jewish.) Also, the government was not meeting its responsibilities in some areas. The most obvious was education. During 1944-1946, the government's annual expenditure on education was less than four per cent of its total expenditures, and expenditure on public health was only three per cent. (Of course, the Jews had their own schools which were partially subsidised by the British administration.) Only 57 per cent of Arab boys of school age had access to public schools, in spite of the Arab demand and urgent need for more schools. UNSCOP said the situation had not changed since the 1937 Peel Commission's criticism of the government's lack of responsibility in education.

But the most important statistical data given by UNSCOP was that 'the Arab population, despite the strenuous efforts of Jews to acquire land in Palestine, at present remains in possession of approximately 85 per cent of the land.' Zionists always contested these statistics, arguing that Jews owned more land than had been acknowledged by various authorities. However, propaganda notwithstanding, the Jewish Agency, or at least its representatives, did not contest UNSCOP's figures. In fact, testifying before UNSCOP, David Ben-Gurion and M. Shertock were quite specific. The former said 'The Arabs own 94 per cent of the land, the Jews only 6 per cent.'(81) The latter said 'Today the Jews (possess) just over 6 per cent of the land area of Palestine. About 40 to 45 per cent of this (is) nationally owned land of the Jewish National Fund.'(82) David Horowitz, the Agency's financial expert, was even more revealing during his testimony before the Committee. While presenting well-prepared charts and diagrams on the distribution of land and population, he stated that the land area 'occupied'

by Jews was 6.9 per cent of the total area of Palestine, and the area occupied by Arabs about 93 per cent.(83) (He also estimated the Jewish population to be 32 per cent and the Arabs 68 per cent of the total population of the country.)

The Jewish Case: UNSCOP conducted hearings in Jerusalem and Beirut to allow Jewish, Arab and British witnesses to present their views. Although there were others, the most important Jewish witnesses before the Committee were the three mentioned above (Ben-Gurion, Shertok and Horowitz) and Dr Weizmann, all representing the Jewish Agency. In addition, there was Dr Judah Magnes, the well-known President of the Hebrew University, who represented the Ihud (Union) Association, which for many years had been advocating an Arab-Jewish union.

The representatives of the Agency all were for a Jewish state. They were noncommittal with regard to the boundaries of this state, preferring to leave the details for negotiation. Although they would have liked to have all Palestine reconstituted as a Jewish state, they expressed willingness to accept less than the whole provided the Jewish state was large enough to fulfil Zionist aspirations.

In defending the Zionist cause, these men were diplomatic as well as forceful. They came to the Committee well-prepared and there was no doubt they were impressive. Although they appealed to emotions, their defence seemed realistic. Charts, maps and statistics were presented. Legal and historical arguments were developed. And a Westernised scientific posture was maintained.

M. Shertok argued that Palestine had never been as small as it was today (1947).(84) According to him, before World War I, the country included both sides of the Jordan and extended a little further in the north beyond its present northern boundaries. Still, the country, said Shertok, had economic potential. For instance, the Negeb area of the south, which comprised forty per cent of Palestine and which was populated mostly by Arabs, was in reality arable. With scientific methods, the area could sustain extensive agriculture.

Shertok also stressed the point that Jews were in desperate need for a country of their own. He implied that a Jewish state was essential for the preservation of Jewish identity. The Jewish Agency, he said, was against Jewish assimilation into the cultures of other non-Jewish societies. In Palestine, however, the Agency encouraged assimilation because in this country Jews assimilate with themselves. Shertok said that of the 640,000 Jews in Palestine, 230,000 Jews were born in the country, largely of immigrant parents.

Shertok stated that the assimilation of Jews with

others was contrary to the purpose of the Jewish Agency: 'We believe ... that we cannot make good by uniting as individuals with the mass of the Arab population in the economic and territorial sense, as we do, perforce in all other countries, with the population of those countries. Such a process, if applied in Palestine, would have defeated our purpose. It is our purpose to build up a self-contained national system resting on its own foundations. It is the only way in which we can hope to settle in large numbers and to feel economically secure and nationally independent.'

Shertok pointed to one advantage to having a Jewish state: Jewish pioneering on the land. He said that this goal had become the highest ideal of Jewish youth, and only in Palestine could this ideal be attained, because 'today only nineteen per cent of Jews actually lived on the land - the same percentage as in the United States of America.' But, of course, industry occupied an important place in the life of Palestinian Jews: eighty per cent of the industry of Palestine was in their hands.

When Shertok was asked by the representative of the Netherlands 'Who is considered by the Jewish Agency as legally a Jew?' He gave some indication that the answer was indeed problematic. Although he said that in terms of Palestine's legislation the Jewish religion was the basis of Jewish identity, he also said that conversion to Judaism was discouraged by religious authorities. Consequently, ' ... when a person comes and says 'I want to become a Jew,' he is first of all preached a very discouraging sermon to warn him against that step, and only those who insist and show great seriousness of purpose are accepted into the fold.'

Another witness, David Ben-Gurion stressed the historical arguments including Jewish experience with persecution.(85) He spoke of the Balfour Declaration and said that Jewish rights in Palestine predated that document: 'The Balfour Declaration was not the first of its kind, just as this is not our first return. After the destruction of our first commonwealth by the Assyrians and Babylonians, the Persian King Cyrus the Great in the year 538 BC made the first 'Balfour Declaration', as we are told in the Book of Ezra.'

Early in the twentieth century, said Ben-Gurion, Joseph Chamberlain, then Secretary of State for the Colonies, offered Uganda to the Jews. But the Jews rejected the offer because Uganda was not the Jewish historic homeland. On another occasion, Ben-Gurion continued, the British government offered El Arish area, south of Palestine, to the Jews, and this offer was rejected too because 'of lack of water' in the region.

Ben-Gurion said British leaders had contemplated the

creation of a Jewish state in all of Palestine. He cited evidence derived from statements made by such British statesmen as Lloyd George and Winston Churchill. He also argued that Prince Faisal, the leader of the 1916 Arab revolt, had agreed to the Balfour Declaration and cited Faisal's agreement with Weizmann of January 3, 1919, to prove that the Arabs were not opposed to 'large-scale' Jewish immigration to Palestine.

Like Sherto·k Ben-Gurion pointed to the advantage to Palestinian Arabs of Jewish pioneering on the land. But he presented this advantage as a response to the Arab accusation that the Zionists had intended to make them 'hewers of wood and drawers of water.' Ben-Gurion said it is the Jews who wanted to be, and would be proud to be, 'hewers of wood and drawers of water.' He called this a privilege not a disadvantage, as the Arabs thought. lt was a privilege, said Ben-Gurion, which the gentile societies of the diaspora had denied to Jews. Consequently, it had become a Jewish ideal, particularly among Jewish youth. ln Palestine, unlike in the diaspora, the majority of Jews do hard manual work in the fields. He cited statistics to prove it: of the 600,000 Jews in Palestine, 170,000 were organised workers.

Ben-Gurion attempted to answer a British complaint that the very purpose of the Jewish National Home had prevented the Jews of Palestine from assimilating with the Arabs. Ben-Gurion saw nothing peculiar about Jewish desire to remain Jewish: 'We plead guilty. We are Jewish and we are determined to remain so. We refuse to assimilate even with highly civilised European people. Jews in Germany, speaking better German than Hitler, were not saved by assimilation. We shall be as Jewish as an Englishman is English. We do not need any justification.' Ben-Gurion said Jewish determination not to assimilate 'will not hinder - on the contrary, it will stimulate - our seeing in the Arab a fellowman; a neighbour whose fate is bound up with ours and whose advancement is as vital for us as it is for him.'

Ben-Gurion tried to dispel doubt about Jewish intentions towards the Arabs, arguing that the Arabs would benefit from Jewish development. He said that rank-and-file Arabs were not really opposed to the Jews, but blamed the Mufti and the British for the troubles of the 1920s and 1930s.

During UNSCOP's hearing, Weizmann was also a witness, and he made several interesting remarks that should be recorded here.(86) There were, he said, two important motives behind the Balfour Declaration. The religious motive was one. (This motive has not been given sufficient importance by scholars and writers on the subject and the research done for this book impressed the

author with the truth of Weizmann's statement. Although there were other motives, the religious one was undoubtedly the most important, and the least discussed, motive behind Christian and Western support of Zionism.)

Weizmann said: 'Mr Lloyd George and Mr Balfour were deeply religious men and knew the Bible, knew the value of the Bible and the effect the Bible had on the character and on the life of the British nation, and they could not help and were only too glad to connect this influence with the others of the Bible or with the nation in the midst of whom the Bible was born.'

Weizmann related the first conversation he had with Lloyd George 'long before there was any talk of a Declaration or similar action.' Lloyd George said to Weizmann: 'You talk to me about Palestine. That is the only geography which I know, and I am acquainted with the geography of Palestine almost better than the geography of the present front.'

The second motive, Weizmann stated, was utilitarian. It involved British desire to 'swing the opinion of a powerful group of American Jewry.' According to Weizmann, the British believed 'A great deal depended upon America' where there was 'a powerful Jewish Community' which was either 'very neutral' or, as in the case of 'the powerful German Jews,' inclined to be pro-German. On this point, Weizmann seems to agree with George Antonius, the Arab writer mentioned earlier. They both argued that the British wanted to use the Jewish community in America to help bring the United States into the first World War. The policy, or strategy, said Weizmann 'had some effect ... it has fulfilled the purpose which was intended at that time.'

Weizmann also explained the 'abnormal position of the Jews in the world,' which was the result of their 'homelessness.' He said the abnormality did not apply to other groups, because they had a country with which they identified. But a Jew had no country and therefore was abnormal: 'If you ask what a Jew is, well, he is a man who has to offer a long explanation for his existence.'

For Weizmann, Biblical history was as important as it was to many Christian statesmen. In asking why the Jews wanted Palestine and not any other place, and there were many empty places in the world, Weizmann said 'it is the responsibility of Moses, who acted from divine aspirations. He might have brought us to the United States, and instead of the Jordan we might have had the Mississippi. It would have been an easier task. But, he had chosen to stop here.'

Palestine, said Weizmann, was 'a derelict, barren country' when he toured it with General Allenby in 1918.

At the time, Allenby expressed surprise that anyone would want to settle in Palestine. Weizmann responded saying that in twenty years it would be different. Later, he discussed the matter again with Allenby, and the latter changed his mind and publicly supported the Jewish effort. The reason for the change, Weizmann said, was that Jewish colonisation of Palestine was not bad: 'as compared with the result of the colonising activities of other peoples, our impact on the Arabs has not produced very much worse results than what has been produced by others in other countries.' The Arabs, he said, had benefited from the work of the Jews.

Jewish colonisation, explained Weizmann, was not too different from colonisation by other people: 'In older times ... backward countries were built up by charter companies. All of you will remember the East Indian Charter Company. But charter companies were hard to fashion in 1918, the first quarter of the twentieth century. The Wilsonian conception of the world certainly would not have allowed a charter company. Therefore, we had to create a substitute. This substitute was the Jewish Agency which had the function of a charter company, which had the function of a body which would conduct the colonisation, immigration, improvements of the land, and do all the work which a government usually does, without really being a government.'

There were other witnesses on the Jewish side in addition to the seven witnesses representing the Jewish Agency. There were individuals representing groups like the Communist Party, Jewish women's organisations, the Histadrut (Labour union), the Vaad Leumi (Jewish Community), the Chief Rabbinate and the religious party, Agudath Israel. But the most impressive witness was Dr Judah Magnes of the Ihud (Union) Party.(87)

Magnes stated that no solution to the Palestine conflict was possible which was not based upon Arab-Jewish cooperation or did not proceed from an assumption that Arab-Jewish cooperation had never been 'the chief objective of major policy, either by the Mandatory Government, by the Jewish Agency, or by those representing the Arabs.' He regarded this as 'the great sin of omission which has been committed throughout these years.'

Magnes saw the conflict as one involving two rights, not one right and one wrong, or two wrongs. On the one hand, 'The Arabs have great natural rights in Palestine. They have been here for centuries. The graves of their fathers are here. There are remains of Arab culture at every turn. The Mosque of Aksa is the Third Holy Mosque in Islam. The Mosque of Omar is one of the great architectural monuments in the world of Islam. The Arabs

have tilled the soil throughout all these centuries; they have, as we say great natural rights in Palestine.'

On the other hand, the Jews 'have historical rights in Palestine. We have never forgotten this country. If I forget Thee, O Jerusalem, may my right hand wither! That has been upon the lips of our children from generation to generation. The Book of Books was produced here in this city by our ancestors. From that time until the present day, there have been hymns, prayers, voyages, great stirring among the Jewish people, indicating that this Holy Land has been engraved in their hearts all these years.' In addition, said Magnes, Jews had made great investments in the National Home and 'this labour also has given them a kind of right which is not to be despised.' Consequently, 'the question ... is how can an honourable and reasonable compromise be found.'

Magnes proposed a solution: ' ... that Palestine become a bi-national country composed of two equal nationalities, the Jews and the Arabs, a country where each nationality is to have equal political powers, regardless of who is the majority or the minority.'

Magnes called this system of equal powers 'political parity.' In addition, he proposed a 'numerical parity,' that Jewish immigration should not allow the number of Jews to exceed the number of Arabs in the country. Thus, Jewish immigration should be subject to the economic absorptive capacity of the country and be controlled by a standing committee of Arabs, Jews, and representatives of the United Nations. In case of disagreement on immigration the UN would have the decisive vote. In addition, Magnes wanted a development plan for Palestine to increase its absorptive capacity, but such a plan would have to be for the benefit of all the people of Palestine, Jews and Arabs.

Furthermore, Magnes suggested that Palestine should become perpetually neutral. Ultimately, the country could join 'a wider federation of neighbouring countries within the framework of the United Nations.' He believed that a bi-national Palestine based on parity would have a mission, 'to help revive this Semitic world materially and spiritually.'

Obviously, many elements of the Magnes plan are similar to Herbert Samuel's plan, discussed earlier. But there are important differences, the most important of which is that while the Magnes plan is based on the territorial principle the Samuel plan is based on the community principle, ie., the equal representation of Arabs and Jews without regard to the territorial divisions of the country.

Magnes proposed that Palestine be divided into cantons or counties. Naturally, there would be purely

Jewish or Arab counties and mixed counties with either Arab or Jewish majorities. However, 'voting would be by counties and be regulated in such a way as in the final analysis to produce in the Constituent Assembly ... an equal number of Jews and Arabs.' This would also be the formula for representation in the Legislative Assembly, which would succeed the Constituent Assembly after the latter had produced a constitutional document. In addition, Magnes proposed that the two communities have two separate National Councils, primarily for cultural functions, and two separate systems of religious courts.

When Magnes was asked by a member of UNSCOP whether his plan was really practical, he said he realised the difficulties involved in his proposal. For instance, he appreciated Arab feelings, especially with regard to Jewish immigration: 'when they (the Arabs) use the term 'invasion' it may be right. People are coming from the outside who were not born here, and that might perhaps conceivably be called an invasion. We have great sympathy with the Arabs fear of Jewish domination.' On the other hand, the Arabs, Magnes continued, should understand that the Jews did not come to Palestine for wealth because Palestine was not wealthy. They came 'because this is Palestine. It is because this is Eretz Israel.' Magnes suggested a plan for 'bridge-building' to bring Arabs and Jews together.

The Arab Case: Arab participation in UNSCOP's hearing was minimal. As mentioned earlier, the Arab Higher Committee of Palestine boycotted the Committee. Representatives of the Arab states appeared before the Committee in private meetings, in Lebanon, except for the Lebanese representative, who spoke in public as well as in the private Committee meetings.

There is no doubt the Jewish case was better represented than the Arab. First, there were many more Jewish witnesses than Arab witnesses, thirty-four Jews and only eight Arabs. Secondly, more Jewish opinion was represented than Arab opinion. While the Arab representatives were, more or less, of the same mind, the Jewish representatives were not united. In fact, there were anti-Zionist views and views suggesting solutions ranging from partition and the creation of a Jewish state to the creation of a unitary democratic state of Palestine. In between, there were the federalists and the bi-nationalists. Of course, the seven spokesmen of the Jewish Agency, like the Arab representatives, were united in their views.

Thirdly, the Jewish views and arguments occupied more space in UN records than the Arab views and arguments, 237 pages to 29 pages. This meant that the Jews had greater opportunity to represent their views than the Arabs. Finally, the Jews had experts to deal with

various technical matters, while the Arabs had only government officials to represent their case. Furthermore, the Jewish spokesmen had fewer difficulties representing their case than the Arabs. For instance, the representative of Lebanon spoke in French, and had to apologise for not having enough time to have his statement translated to English. As it turned out, there were discrepancies between the French text of his statement and the English translation, which had to be done orally, on the spot. The language difficulty presented still other problems. The representative of Yemen was not able to follow the languages used during the hearings, and while the Lebanese and Syrian representatives used French, the other Arabs used English.

Apparently, the Arab representatives had agreed on what they were to say to UNSCOP before they appeared before the Committee. In fact, the Committee had submitted the main questions to the Arab representatives, and had received their answers in writing, before the hearings took place. During the hearings, members of UNSCOP pursued the questioning orally on the basis of documents already submitted by the Arabs. All these hearings were conducted in private meetings, except for the first, which was very brief involving only a welcome statement by the Prime Minister of Lebanon and a substantive statement by the Lebanese Foreign Minister.

UNSCOP had very little time for the Arabs. When the representative of Iraq requested additional meetings to be held in public, the Chairman of UNSCOP replied 'would it not be sufficient if your declaration were given to the press?' The representative of Iraq said he wanted a public hearing so he could say what he wanted to say *before* the Committee. At this point, the chairman proceeded with the private meeting without responding to the Arab representative's request. Also, the representative of Egypt said that the Secretary-General of the Rabbinate of Egypt had arrived in Beirut and that the latter would like to make a statement before the Committee. The Egyptian representative wanted to know if the Committee would hear the Egyptian Jew. Since the Committee was asking questions about the status and conditions of Jews in Arab countries, it would seem appropriate for the Committee to hear a Jewish official from Egypt. The representative of Czechoslovakia on UNSCOP said that there was no urgency to hear the Egyptian Jew and no useful purpose served by doing so. The Chairman allowed the meeting to proceed without giving satisfaction to the Egyptian representative. The Egyptian Rabbi never appeared before the Committee.

But the Arab representatives were cooperative and did not object to UNSCOP's procedure. Realising the Committee was obviously pressed for time the representative

of Yemen decided to forgo his oral presentation and submitted it in writing instead.

At any rate the Arab representatives, made it clear to UNSCOP that they would not allow the creation of a Jewish State in Palestine.(88) Fadel Jamali of Iraq said that 'no partition in any form or guise will be acceptable to the Arabs. They will fight it and resist sooner or later, for no Jewish State in any size or form will ever be tolerated by the Arab world.' He also said that ' ... until today the Arabs have never been united on anything as they are in their unity to oppose Zionism.' He predicted that a Jewish state 'can never survive with hostile people surrounding it and will always be a cause of war and struggle.' In addition, such a state could 'never stand on its own feet economically.'

Jamali, who seemed the most knowledgeable of the Arab representatives on the question of Palestine, had the advantage of having been educated in the United States. Consequently, he also understood the Western mentality and the Zionist advantages in the Western World. He stated that the Zionists had good propaganda machinery: 'To achieve their ends, the Zionists have means which are not available to the Arabs, and hence Arab rights are not adequately heard in the Western World.'

Jamali said the Zionists use specific propaganda techniques to make their wrong seem right. For instance, they use the economic weapon: 'We know of some well-known non-Jewish men who have been employed by Zionists and paid large sums of money to promote their cause. We also know of anti-Zionist people who cannot raise their voices, fearing Zionist economic threats and boycotts ... with money goes political influence. In some countries Zionists have direct access to influential public men. With pressure of influence, with business partnership the Zionists gain supporters in many countries. Such support cannot make what is wrong right and what is unjust just.'

One purpose of Zionist propaganda, said Jamali, was to convince others that 'there is nothing in the way of their achieving their own aims except the Nazi effendis (notables) and feudal lords; the masses of the Arabs do not mind Zionist domination and flourish under it.' To prove this Zionist argument wrong, he said, the Committee had only to travel in the Arab world and talk to ordinary people.

The Zionists, continued Jamali, used the Jewish refugee problem, which was a humanitarian problem, to achieve political ends. The refugee problem, he stressed, should be settled at the international level, and the Arabs would be ready to cooperate and share in the responsibility. 'To assist Zionist political domination in Palestine is to create trouble in the Arab world. This

in an anti-humanitarian act. One should not attempt to remove an injustice by committing a greater injustice.'

Finally, Zionist propaganda boasted of Jewish achievements in Palestine by arguing that they had turned sandy deserts into paradise. To this argument, Jamali responded by pointing to the vast amounts of moneys and technology the Jews received from the West, especially the United States. He observed that anyone could have done what the Zionists did in Palestine if the same foreign assistance were available to them. Furthermore, while the Zionists boasted about their achievements, they kept secret their failures. In Palestine, the economy of the Jewish community was at the verge of collapse, and only foreign help could keep it going: 'It is now a known fact that (the) Zionist economy in Palestine is not self-supplied. It is running on a deficit of something like 40 per cent paid from donations.'

Jamali asked himself why the Zionists invested such huge amounts of money in a country that was mainly rocky, sandy and barren. And he gave the answer: 'Palestine is just a (stepping stone) to the economic exploitation of the whole of the Middle East. In the long run, the Zionists dream of big economic returns which will make up for the temporary losses.'

Jamali also asked himself 'what is involved in the Palestine issue?' Predicting the future of the Palestine conflict, he saw five important developments. First, there would be implications for the principles of justice and peace: 'whether domination by the force of money, distorted propaganda, political pressure and terrorism will succeed.' Secondly, there would be effects upon Jews living outside Palestine: 'What is involved is the loyalty of the Jews in every city of the world - are they to be uprooted or helped to live in a free democratic world?' Thirdly, the future of the United Nations was at stake. Fourthly, the issue would have repercussions on East-West relations because 'the East looks at Zionism as a Western design inspired by old imperialistic methods, which showed no respect for the rights and wishes of the people of the exploited country.'

Finally, Jamali predicted the conflict would affect the spiritual serenity of Palestine: 'Whether it is to be a cradle of peace and holiness where the spirit of man can find a refuge, or a place where struggle and blood-shed between peoples of different religions and races prevail.'

Do the Jews have historical or religious rights in Palestine? As to religious rights, Jamali said, these do not confer rights of a political nature, and he gave this analogy. The Moslems, he said, have spiritual connection with the Hijaz (where the two holiest cities of Islam are

located) but no political rights to it. The Hijaz, he stressed, politically belongs to its inhabitants. However, Jamali said, the Arabs had a tradition for tolerance and would not interfere in the exercise of religious rights.

As to the historical rights of Jews, Jamali thought these rights were inconsistent with contemporary standards: 'This argument is not valid because historical connections with lands today inhabited by other peoples cannot justify movements in the world's population. If this were to be permitted, most of the countries of the earth should exchange populations.'

Did the British have a right to issue the Balfour Declaration and to promise the Jews a national home in Palestine? Arabs had always said no, but the representative of Syria, Adel Arslan, presented a novel legal argument supporting this negative. He suggested that this right to promise could be valid if it were associated with the right of conquest. But, during World War I the Allies did not 'conquer' the Arab territories of the Ottoman Empire. They came to 'liberate' it, because the Arabs of the Ottoman Empire were their partners in the war and were themselves recognised as 'Allies.' The following passage of his statement deserves attention: 'I would like to add further proof that the Arabs signed the Armistice with the Allies. The representative of the Arab states signed on the same footing, as France and the United Kingdom ... the Treaty with the Turks. Therefore, we were really allies of the Allies. Therefore, it is impossible to say that Palestine had been conquered, there is no question of conquest here.'

The Syrian representative said that the Treaty of Sevres was never implemented, but the Treaty of Lausanne was, and the latter recognised the Arabs' rights to decide their own fate. The representative of Saudi Arabia also argued that the Arabs were not 'conquered' people: ' ... at the time when the country (Palestine) was occupied, the Arabs had already become associated with the Allies. In fact, they were called 'the Allied and Associated Powers.' The Arabs were considered an Associated Power of the Allies. Therefore, the disposition by right of conquest does not apply.'

The Syrian representative had been an adviser to Prince Faisal, and he recalled conversations with the Prince on the subject of the Faisal-Weizmann agreement. Arslan said the agreement was presented to Faisal by T.E. Lawrence, and Faisal signed it only after he had handwritten into it a condition for its fulfilment, 'that all the Arab nations be united under one same regime.' Since this condition was never fulfilled, the agreement was not valid. Furthermore, Jamali added, the Jews had already come to Palestine in numbers which were 'beyond

the promise of ... Faisal, and much beyond his expectations.' In fact, the Syrian representative observed, the British had officially stated that the Balfour promise had already been executed, and therefore the Declaration should no longer be relevant.

There were other Arab arguments during the hearings but most of them have been mentioned earlier in this book. The limited time allotted to the Arab case, and the refusal of the Arab Higher Committee to participate, must have hurt the Arab cause, but to what extent is not clear. Aware of this problem, the representative of Czechoslovakia asked the Arab representative if they could send to Switzerland someone who would be available for further consultation with UNSCOP. He said he believed in the French saying that 'Absentees are always wrong.' The Arab delegates agreed to send someone.

The Federal Plan: As mentioned earlier, UNSCOP agreed unanimously on eleven of its recommendations, with a twelfth being adopted with only two dissenting votes. The main gist of the recommendations was: The Mandate for Palestine should come to an end as early as possible; Independence should follow at the earliest practical time; The Holy Places should be protected and their sacred character be recognised; after the Mandate, the legal instruments of governmental institutions should specifically guarantee human rights, fundamental freedoms, and rights of minorities; finally, the economic unity of Palestine should be preserved and developments which would benefit all its inhabitants should be introduced.

Three members, Pakistan, Iran, and Yugoslavia, proposed a solution to the conflict based on the federal principle.(89) This is often called the Minority Plan.

In explaining its solution, the minority made important observations about the conflict itself. First, they argued that no solution was possible without Arab-Jewish cooperation. And although this cooperation was difficult, it must be assumed and an opportunity must be provided for it. Jewish demands for sovereignty and independence must not be recognised, 'at all costs.' The well-being of the country and its people, and the interest of peace, outweighed the aspirations of Jews in this regard.

Secondly, Partition could not be an alternative to a federal union: ' ... The proposal of other members of the Committee for a union under artificial arrangements designed to achieve economic and social unity after first creating political and geographical disunity by partition, is impracticable, unworkable, and could not possibly provide for two reasonably viable states.'

Thirdly, partition could be viewed as an anti-Arab solution but a federal solution could not be viewed as

anti-Jewish. On the contrary, the federal solution would best serve the interests of the two peoples.

Fourthly, the federal solution would provide a practical approach to the social and economic unity of Palestine, which the partition plan also aimed at achieving. However, the minority group thought the political, geographic divisions it would create would be contrary to its purpose of maintaining economic unity.

Finally, the minority group argued, since Arab-Jewish cooperation was needed for *any* plan to work, if it were not assumed, then no plan was worth considering. But if cooperation were assumed, however, then the federal solution would be better equipped to develop it. Partition, the group suggested, could not do this and would be more divisive.

The minority recommended that Palestine be granted independence and that a federal state of Palestine be created after a transitional period not exceeding three years. The General Assembly would designate the authority to administer the country during the transitional period. That authority would have the obligation to prepare the country for independence.

During the transitional period, a constituent assembly would be elected by the people to formulate a constitution for the federal state. Voting rights would be granted to all Palestinian adult citizens and all non-citizens residing in Palestine provided they applied for citizenship at least three months before an election. Obviously, this was to give Jews in Palestine who were not citizens an opportunity to declare their intention to become participants in the new independent state.

The group also recommended that certain constitutional guarantees and stipulations should be made before, and as a precondition to, independence. The system should be federal, comprising a Jewish state and an Arab state. The federal legislature should be composed of two houses. Election to one house should be on the basis of proportional representation of the population as a whole. Election to the second house should be on the basis of equal representation of Jews and Arabs. Legislation would require the approval of a majority in both houses. If the two houses disagreed, the issue would first be mediated by an arbitral body, and if mediation failed, that body would have the power to resolve the issue. The arbitral body would be composed of representatives of each house, the head of State, and two members designated by the federal court in such a way as to ensure that neither Arabs nor Jews would have less than two members on it.

According to the federal plan, the head of State was to be elected by a majority of the two houses sitting in a joint session. A deputy head of state would be similarly

elected, and must be from the community of which the head of State was not a member. Thus if the head of State were Arab the deputy would be Jewish.

The plan envisioned a federal court consisting of at least four Arabs and three Jews. The court would have the power to resolve conflicts between federal and state laws and regulations, between the laws and regulations of both governments and the constitution, and all questions involving constitutional interpretation.

The federal government would have control of national defence, foreign relations, immigration, currency, taxation for federal purposes, foreign and interstate waterways, transport and communication, copyrights and patents. Within its borders, the state government would have control of education, taxation for local purposes, the right of residence, comercial licences, land permits, grazing rights, interstate immigration, settlement, police, punishment of crime, social institutions and services, public housing, public health, local roads, agriculture and local industries, and other functions authorised by the constitution.

Religious freedom, rights of minorities, and other specific rights and freedoms were to be guaranteed. The Holy Places were to be placed under the supervision and protection of a permanent international body. Jerusalem was recommended as the capital of the federal state, but would have two separate municipalities, one Arab and one Jewish.

The problem of Jewish refugees was to be recognised as an international responsibility, and an international solution for it was urged. Finally, Arabs and Jews were to be equally represented on international bodies.

The Partition Plan: Seven members of UNSCOP approved the principle of partition as the basis of a solution. The plan recommended that Palestine be divided into separate Jewish and Arab states.(90) The primary objective of the plan was to create a political division while establishing economic unity. Thus in spite of the fact that the plan would create two independent states in Palestine, a single integrated economy was required.

As to the boundaries of the two states: 'The proposed Arab State will include Western Galilee, the hill country of Samaria and Judea, with the exclusion of the city of Jerusalem, and the coastal plain from Isdud to the Egyptian frontier. The proposed Jewish State will include Eastern Galilee, the Esdraelon plain, most of the coastal plain, and the whole of Beersheba subdistrict, which includes the Negeb.'

On the map, the plan clearly shows that each of the two states has three geographic sections. To connect these sections together, the plan provided for 'points of

intersections.' Without these points the six sections would be completely separate from one another creating an enormous communications problem for both states.

The city of Jaffa was a further problem. lt was entirely Arab except for two Jewish quarters and had a population of about 70,000. The plan included it in the Jewish state because otherwise it would be an isolated Arab enclave. Later, the American delegate proposed to the Ad Hoc Committee On the Palestinian Question to include Jaffa in the Arab state.(91)

Another problem was the Beersheba area, which included the Negeb and the eastern part of the Gaza sub-district. The plan included it in the Jewish State to provide that state with more land for development. However, although its population was sparse, not many Jews had settled in it, and the vast majority of the people were Arab. Later, the Jewish Agency offered the transfer to the Arab State part of the Beersheba and Negeb areas. According to the UN record, the offer was made 'to satisfy certain delegations which were in favour of partition but had suggested an extension of territory for the Arab State in the South of Palestine.(92) Obviously, the Jewish Agency made the concession to get enough votes for the partition plan, which they favoured. The Agency's offer became the substance of an amendment to the partition plan proposed by the United States.(93)

UNSCOP's report contained population figures on the two proposed states, based on official British estimates for December 1946. The Jewish State would have a total of 905,000 (498,000 Jews and 407,000 'Arabs and others') and the Arab State would have 735,000 (10,000 Jews and 725,000 'Arabs and others'). As to the city of Jerusalem, which was to be international, there would be a total of 205,000 (100,000 Jews and 105,000 'Arabs and others').

UNSCOP's report also mentioned the existence in the Jewish State of some 90,000 Arab bedouins. Consequently, if the bedouin population were to be added, Arabs would almost equal Jews in the Jewish State. lf they were not addded, the Arabs would still be a sizeable minority, about 91,000 fewer than the Jews. Later, the representative of Pakistan decried the partition solution for this reason: 'The Arab State will be an Arab State in the sense that there will be only 10,000 Jews in it and almost 1,000,000 Arabs. Very well, but what of the Jewish State? ln the Jewish State there will be 498,000 Jews and 435,000 Arabs. Have you solved the problem? Jews are not to live as a minority under the Arabs, but the Arabs are to live as a minority under the Jews. lf one of these is not fair neither is the other; and if one is not a solution, the other is not.'(94)

However, UNSCOP's statistics on the bedouins, which

were derived from official British sources, were later revised by the British government. In an official UN document, the British maintained that a more accurate estimate of the bedouin population of Palestine would be 127,300.(95) Of this number, the document stated, 22,000 would reside in the Arab State while the remaining 105,300 would be in the Jewish State. If this last figure is used in computing the population of the Jewish State, the Arabs would come out the majority in the Jewish State.

UNSCOP's report did not have statistics on property ownership, whereas the Peel and Woodhead commissions, which had earlier proposed partition, had included them in their reports. However, the pro-Arab Sub-Committee provided property ownership figures on the basis of official British records for the year 1945.(96) Excluding public (state) lands, the Arabs owned more land than the Jews in every district in Palestine. 47 per cent in Jaffa (including Tel-Aviv), 84 per cent in Jerusalem, 75 per cent in Gaza, 99 per cent in Ramallah, 68 per cent in Safad, 42 per cent in Haifa, 87 per cent in Acre and 96 per cent in Hebron. In the same districts, Jewish ownership amounted to 39 per cent in Jaffa, 2 per cent in Jerusalem, 4 per cent in Gaza, less than 1 per cent in Ramallah, 18 per cent in Safad, 35 per cent in Haifa, 3 per cent in Acre, and less than 1 per cent in Hebron. The remaining portions of land in these districts were owned by the state: 14 per cent in Jaffa, 14 per cent in Jerusalem, 21 per cent in Gaza, less than 1 per cent in Ramallah, 14 per cent in Safad, 23 per cent in Haifa, 10 per cent in Acre, 4 per cent in Hebron. Although most land in the Jewish State was owned by Arabs, the partition plan of UNSCOP would give the Jewish State more territory than the Arab State, even though the Arab population of Palestine was twice the Jewish population.

At any rate, UNSCOP's second major recommendation was the creation of an economic union of the two states. The Committee stated that ' ... it shall be accepted as a cardinal principle that the preservation of the economic unity of Palestine as a whole is indispensable to the life and development of the country and its people.' The union would be based on treaty between the two states and would include a customs union, a common currency, operation of railways, interstate highways, postal, telephone and telegraph services, and the ports of Haifa and Jaffa, as well as economic development including land reclamation and irrigation. It would be organised and administered by a Joint Economic Board consisting of three representatives of each state and three foreign members chosen by the UN Social and Economic Council.

The General Assembly Adopts the Partition Plan: The majority of UNSCOP voted for partition, with the representative of Australia abstaining because he believed UNSCOP should not support any specific plan. lnstead, he wanted UNSCOP to report all plans to the General Assembly and to allow the latter to choose from the available alternatives.

In September 1947, the Assembly set up the Ad Hoc Committee on the Palestinian Question to act upon UNSCOP's report and upon the proposal of Saudi Arabia and lraq for the termination of the Palestine mandate and the declaration of the country's independence.(97) The Ad Hoc Committee created three sub-committees. The first was to work out the details of UNSCOP's partition plan. lt was composed of nine members, including the United States and the Soviet Union, who were known to favour partition. The second sub-committee was to work out the details of a plan based upon the proposal of Saudi Arabia and lraq. It consisted of eight members (five Arab states, two lslamic states and Columbia). The third sub-committee, consisting of Australia, Siam and lceland was to conciliate the two views. This last sub-committee became irrelevant and did little work.

There was some complaining, mainly in sub-committee 11, that this arrangement was unsatisfactory because it did not allow the possibility of a middle-ground solution and did not include enough uncommitted states to balance the two views. The Australian chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee ignored these arguments, causing the representative of Columbia to resign from sub-committee 11. That sub-committee became entirely pro-Arab. From the beginning, its recommendations had no chance of adoption.(98)

Sub-committee 1 introduced minor changes in UNSCOP's plan.(99) The city of Jaffa was added to the Arab State and the southern boundaries in Beersheba and near the Egyptian border were slightly adjusted in favour of the Arab State. Provisions were introduced to strengthen the economic union, primarily by increasing the powers of the joint economic board. Finally, the Security Council was given a greater role in the implementation of partition.

The Ad Hoc Committee accepted the recommendations of sub-committee 1 by a vote of twenty-five to thirteen, with seventeen abstentions.

On November 26, the General Assembly began the discussion of the Ad Hoc Committee's report.(100) The Arab delegates were optimistic that the plan would not receive the required two-third majority in the Assembly. They expected to lose the vote of anti-partition partly because Siam, with a new revolutionary regime, withdrew the credentials of its delegation, and Haiti and the Philippines indicated that they would vote against

partition. These two states had been neutral up to that point. And the Arabs had reason to hope for the votes of Greece, Liberia and Columbia, who had also been neutral on previous occasions. They believed the partition plan would have lost had the vote been taken on the twenty-sixth of November. Consequently, they tried to force a show-down on that day and offered to forgo their scheduled speeches.

However, the president of the Assembly, Dr Oswald Aranha, caused the scheduled evening session to be cancelled when he proposed, and the Assembly approved, adjournment until November 28. The Arabs considered this step as a tactic to delay action in order to enable the pro-Zionists to pressure doubtful and neutral states to vote for partition. When the Assembly reconvened on November 28, it became clear that the pressure tactics of the United States and the Zionists were working. The next day, November 29, the Assembly adopted partition resolution 181 (II) by the required two-third majority. Haiti, Liberia, and the Philippines were among those who voted for partition.

Thus, the Arabs lost the battle against partition. Even before it was over they openly charged that the pro-Zionists, and by implication the United States, were putting excessive pressure on certain states to get the required majority for partition. On the other hand, they themselves were successful in getting the vote of Greece, a country that was neutral during the Ad Hoc Committee's deliberation. Both sides pressured members, but the painful fact for the Arabs was that the influence of the United States proved to be a crucial factor in the outcome.

The Final Plan

The Zionists were pleased with the partition resolution. Even though they were not satisfied with the size of their state, they were happy that a Jewish state would exist. They believed, and later argued, that the Jewish state now had a new, strong basis in international law. They no longer needed to limit their arguments to Jewish historic and religious rights, which the Arabs could argue against with some effectiveness. Also, the UN partition resolution was a stronger legal argument than the Balfour Declaration. The partition resolution sanctioned a Jewish State, while the Balfour Declaration sanctioned only a Jewish National Home, a euphemism that had provoked more controversy than it resolved.

But not all Jews were happy with the resolution. The extremists, especially the Irgun, wanted a much larger Jewish State, and some of them actually denounced

the resolution and threatened to use force to attain their objective.(101)

The Arabs, of course, were unanimous in their denunciation of the resolution. They charged that its passage would have been impossible without US pressure on other states. The legality of the resolution, they said, was dubious. Prior to the adoption of the resolution, they had tried to get the UN to request the International Court of Justice to pass judgement on a number of issues including its competence to partition Palestine. Their proposal was rejected and this, they argued, left the Zionist argument on legality unsubstantiated. Furthermore, the Arabs argued, both then and later, that the General Assembly had only the power to recommend, which was different from the power to decide that resided with the Security Council.

The implementation of the resolution became a problem. The Assembly had specifically assigned primary responsibility of implementation to the Security Council. It also called for the creation of a Commission to take steps preparatory to independence. However, the Council did not act, and the Commission failed to function. Indeed it never left New York

Even the United States had second thoughts about partition. She had been reluctant to force a solution to the problem of Palestine, and now she remained unwilling to implement partition through military means. Since Arabs and Jews were already fighting in Palestine, American apprehension about the chances of partition became very strong. Consequently, on February 24, 1948, the American delegate stated in the Security Council that the main concern should not be the enforcement of partition but rather the maintenance of peace. Later, the United States was to argue that General Assembly resolutions were merely recommendations, implying that no one haad the obligation of enforcing partition. More important was the American proposal to institute a 'temporary trusteeship for Palestine' to give Arabs and Jews further opportunity to agree on a solution. On April 1, the Security Council evaded the issue by adopting an American resolution calling for a special session of the General Assembly to consider further the future of Palestine.

This new American initiative away from partition naturally displeased the Zionists, who immediately intensified their propaganda and pressure politics within the United States. The American State Department and military, having been opposed to partition on the grounds it would anger the Arabs and ultimately damage American relations with the Arabs, continued to urge other alternatives. However, Zionist pressure was too great for President Truman to ignore.

Zionist strategy aimed at gaining time by delaying action on the proposed trusteeship until May 15, 1948, when they could declare their state after the last British soldier had left Palestine. What helped the Zionists was the unwavering support of the Soviet Union. However, many of their former supporters were losing interest in partition. Among them was France and Belgium.

The Arabs showed determination to fight implementation. In December 1947, the Arab League authorised the despatch of volunteers from the Arab countries to Palestine and made clear its intention to prevent partition. And on the diplomatic front, the Arabs showed tactical flexibility in their effort to discourate the implementation of partition by the UN. They expressed willingness to accept trusteeship. (A day before the General Assembly passed the partition resolution, they had accepted and proposed a federal solution.)

Nevertheless, Zionist pressure on the United States was very effective. Before May 15, the day when British troops were to withdraw completely, the United States abandoned the trusteeship idea. The last act in this drama was the sudden and swift recognition by the United States of the State of Israel which was declared on May 14, 1948.

The declaration was made while the war between Arabs and Jews was still going on. Until this time, the fighting in Palestine did not directly involve the Arab states, except for some volunteers, arms and money. The Arab states had hoped that this aid would be sufficient to enable the Palestine Arabs to deal with the situation, but the fighting indicated that the Jews were much stronger. The pouring of Arab refugees into neighbouring areas and the reaction of Arab public opinion compelled the intervention of the Arab states. On May 15, the regular armies of five Arab states entered Palestine.

This was the beginning of the first Arab-Israeli war. The story of this war, and subsequent wars, falls beyond the scope of this book, which was written to deal with the Palestinian origins of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The creation of the State of Israel in May 1948 marked the disappearance of Palestine, and the Jewish State at the end of the first Arab-Israeli war was much larger than proposed under the UN partition plan. Most of the Arab people of Palestine became displaced, and many of these became refugees living in camps furnished and cared for by the UN.

The Jewish tragedy found a respite in the establishment of Israel; but a new tragedy, a Palestinian-Arab one, had begun. This last remains unresolved. It seems that unless Arabs and Jews can begin to realise that neither 'can have their cake and eat it,' the future of

the Arab-Israeli conflict will bring tragedy for all. Neither the Arabs nor the Jews will fulfil their aspirations; and the long, painful suffering of both will be meaningless. The world can benefit nothing from the present disastrous warfare between these two great peoples.

Chapter Notes

1. *A Survey of Palestine*, Vol.1, p.64. Also, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1946, Vol.VII, p.692n.
2. This concern was also expressed by moderates in the Jewish Agency. See *Foreign Relations*, 1946, Vol.VII, p.693
3. *A Survey of Palestine*, Vol.1, p.66
4. *Ibid.*, p.66
5. 'The Minister In Egypt (Kirk) to the Secretary of State,' *Foreign Relations*, 1943, Vol.IV, p.747
6. 'King Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud to President Roosevelt,' *Foreign Relations*, Vol.IV, p.747. However, in 1938 the King wrote the American President a letter in which he distinguished between Zionists and Jews. 'The King of Saudi Arabia to President Roosevelt,' *Foreign Relations*, Vol.II, pp.994-998
7. 'The King of Saudi Arabia ... to President Truman,' *Foreign Relations*, 1946, Vol.VII, p.718
8. *Ibid.*, p.718
9. *Foreign Relations*, 1943, p.773
10. 'Memorandum of Conversation, by Lieutenant Colonel Harold B. Hoskins,' *Foreign Relations*, Vol.IV, p.812
11. 'Memorandum by Lieutenant Colonel Harold B. Hoskins,' *Foreign Relations*, Vol.IV, p.809
12. See, for instance, his communication to the US Secretary of State through the American Minister Resident in Saudi Arabia, *Foreign Relations*, Vol.IV, p.789
13. 'The Minister in Saudi Arabia (Eddy) to the Secretary of State,' *Foreign Relations*, Vol.VII, p.615
14. See, for instance, 'The King of Saudi Arabia (Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud) to President Truman, *Foreign Relations*, Vol.VII, p.708
15. 'The Charge in Saudi Arabia (Clark) to the Secretary of State,' *Foreign Relations*, Vol.VII, p.636
16. 'The Ambassador in Egypt to the Secretary of State,' *Foreign Relations*, Vol.VII, pp.731-2
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43. 'Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State,' *Foreign Relations,* Vol.IV, p.823

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49. This American commitment goes back to 1943 when

it was made by Roosevelt to King Ibn Saud. See 'President Truman to King Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud,' *Foreign Relations*, Vol.IV, p.790

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62 The British government never published the full content of the report. However, Herbert Morrison explained the main features of the plan in the House of Commons and his statement was also published as Command paper. See *Parliamentary Debates, Commons*, Vol.426, 31 July 1946, Cols.962-971. Also, Cmd. 7044 (1947). The quotations in this section come from the Morrison statement.

63. See Lord Lloyd's Statement, *Parliamentary Debates, Lords*, Vol.147, Col.99; Major Legge-Bourke's statement, *Parliamentary Debates, Commons*, Vol.426, Col.1006

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p.999. Also, 'Memorandum by the Under Secretary of Near Eastern and African Affairs (Henderson), *Foreign Relations*, Vol.V, p.1000

65. Cmd. 7044 (1947)

66. Cmd. 7044 (1947)

67. See *Letter dated 2 April 1947 from the United Kingdom delegation to the Acting Secretary-General requesting a special session of the General Assembly on Palestine*, UN Document A/286

68. See the five letters in UN Document A/287

69. See *Official Records of the first special session of the General Assembly*, Vol.11, p.81

70. *Ibid.*, p.12

71. *Ibid.*, Vol.1, 70th meeting, p.23; 71st meeting, pp.59-60

72. The hearing for the Jewish Agency was recommended by the General Committee and approved by the General Assembly. See *Resolutions adopted by the General Assembly during its first special session*, resolution 104 (S-1), p.6. The hearing for the Arab Higher Committee was decided by the First Committee, see *Official Records of the first special session of the General Assembly*, Vol.111, p.103; this was approved by the General Assembly, see *Resolutions adopted by the General Assembly during its first special session*, resolution 105 (S-1), p.6

73. Regarding the British position see *Official Records of the first special session of the General Assembly*, Vol.111, pp.183 ff; also *Ibid.*, p.4

74. *Ibid.*, p.265 ff.

75. *Ibid.*, Vol.111, p.361 ff.

76. Voting against the resolution were Afghanistan, Egypt, lraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey; Siam abstained: *Ibid.*, Vol.1, p.77

77. *Ibid.*, p.77

78. UN Document A/AC.13/NC/16

79. Text of letters in document A/AC.13/49 and 56 (Egypt), A/AC.13/50 (lraq), A/AC.13/51 (Lebanon), A/AC.13/58 (Syria), and A/AC.13/62 (Saudi Arabia)

80. The information and quotations in this section are drawn from the *Oficial Records of the Second Session of the General Assembly*, Supplement No.11, United Nations Special Committee on Palestine, Report to the General Assembly, Vol.1, 1947, pp.1-64

81. *Ibid.*, UN Document A/364, Add. 2, p.17

82. *Ibid.*, p.2

83 *Ibid.*, p.28

84. See Shertok's statement in UN Document A/364/Add. 2, pp.1-3. See also his answers to questions put to him by members of UNSCOP in *Ibid.*, pp.3-8, Quotations are derived from these pages.

85. See Ben-Gurion's statement and answers to

questions put to him by members of UNSCOP in *Ibid.*, pp.8-23 and 48-71. Quotations in this section come from these pages.

86. See Weizmann's statement in *Ibid.*, pp.72-82; and his answers pp.82-86. Quotations are derived from these pages.

87. See statements and answers by Dr Magnes in *Ibid.*, pp.164-180; and pp.183-187

88. Quotations in this section are derived from UN Document A/364, Add.3, pp.32-56

89. UN Document A/364 (September 3, 1947), pp.59-64

90. *Ibid.*, pp.47-58

91. *Official Records of the Second Session of the General Assembly, Ad Hoc Committee On the Palestinian Question*, 25 September - 25 November 1947, p.63

92. UN Document A/516 (25 November 1947)

93. UN Document A/AC.14/38

94. Official Records of the Plenary Meetings of the General Assembly, Part 2, 1947, p.1374

95. Official Records of the Second Session of the General Assembly, Ad Hoc Committee On the Palestinian Question, Annex III, September 25 - November 25, 1947, pp.306-7

96. See map and statistics in *Ibid.*, Annex V, Sub-Committee I was created by the Ad Hoc Committee on the Palestinian Question. This sub-committee was created to work out the details of the plan for a unitary state of Palestine. It was composed of the representatives of six Arab states, two Muslim states, and the State of Columbia. See *The Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Palestinian Question, Official Records of the Second Session of the General Assembly*, Annex 33, pp.1630-1631

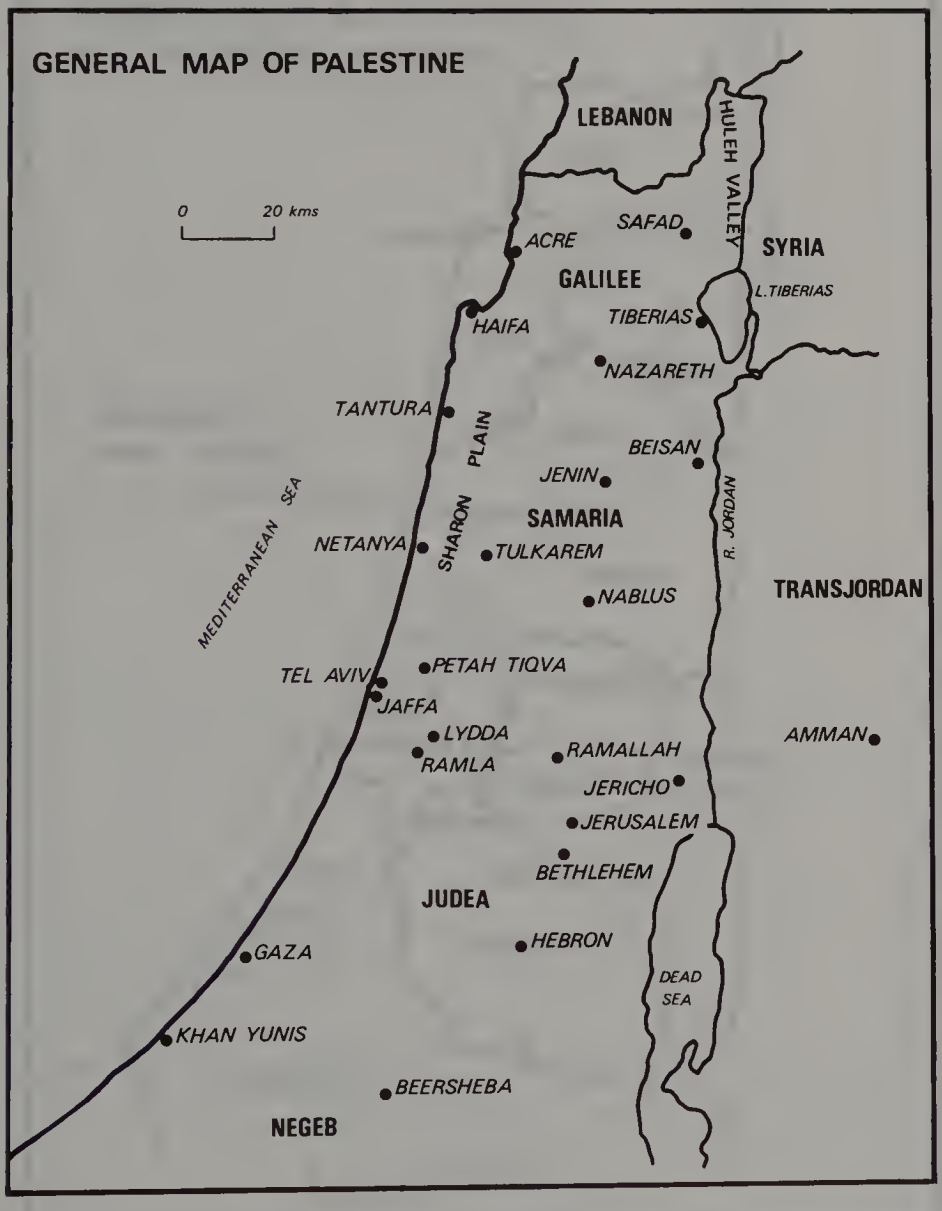
97. For the work of the Ad Hoc Committee see *The Official Records of the Second Session of the General Assembly, Ad Hoc Committee On the Palestinian Question*, September 25 - November 25, 1947

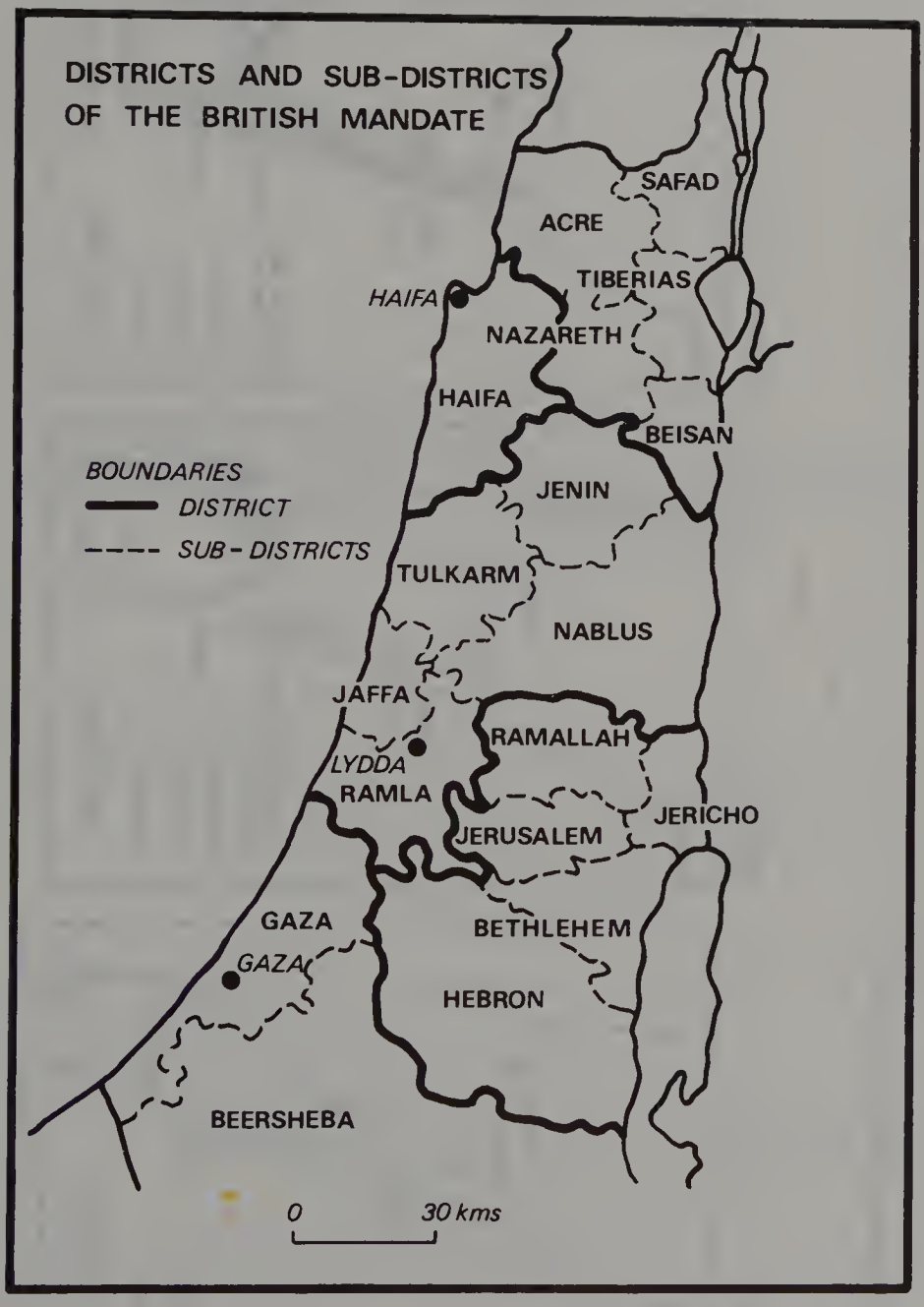
98. See *Report of Sub-Committee 2 to the Ad Hoc Committee on the Palestinian Question*, in *Ibid.*, pp.270-303

99. See *Report of Sub-Committee 1 to the Ad Hoc Committee on the Palestinian Question* in *Ibid.*, pp.242-263

100. For the discussion in the General Assembly of the Ad Hoc Committee's report see *Official Records of the Second Session of the General Assembly, Plenary Meetings*, Vol.II, November 13 - November 29, pp.1310-1428

101. Menachem Begin, *The Revolt: Story of the Irgun* (New York, 1951), p.335


GENERAL MAP OF PALESTINE
LEBANON
HULEH VALLEY
0
20 kms
SAFAD
ACRE
SYRIA
GALILEE
L.TIBERIAS
HAIFA
TIBERIAS
NAZARETH
TANTURA
SHARON PLAIN
BEISAN
JENIN
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
SAMARIA
R. JORDAN
NETANYA
TULKAREM
TRANSJORDAN
NABLUS
PETAH TIQVA
TEL AVIV
JAFFA
LYDDA
AMMAN
RAMLA
RAMALLAH
JERICHO
JERUSALEM
BETHLEHEM
JUDEA
HEBRON
GAZA
DEAD SEA
KHAN YUNIS
BEERSHEBA
NEGEB


DISTRICTS AND SUB-DISTRICTS
OF THE BRITISH MANDATE
SAFAD
ACRE
TIBERIAS
HAIFA
NAZARETH
HAIFA
BEISAN
BOUNDARIES
DISTRICT
SUB-DISTRICTS
JENIN
TULKARM
NABLUS
JAFFA
RAMALLAH
LYDDA
RAMLA
JERICHO
JERUSALEM
GAZA
BETHLEHEM
GAZA
HEBRON
BEERSHEBA
0
30 kms

PHASES OF JEWISH SETTLEMENT

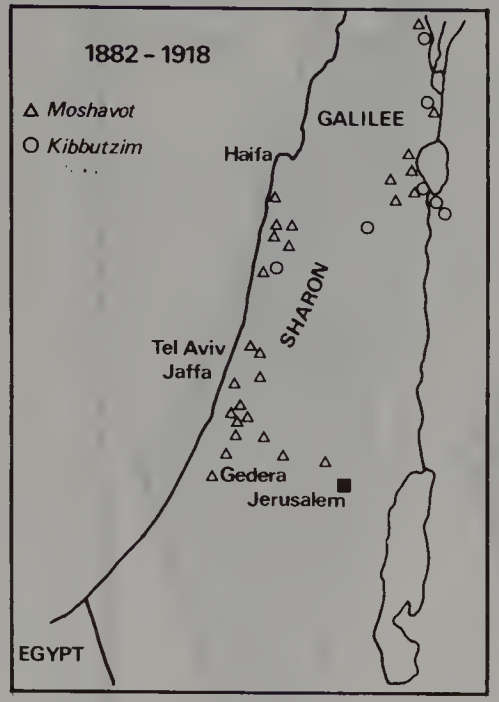


FIGURE 1

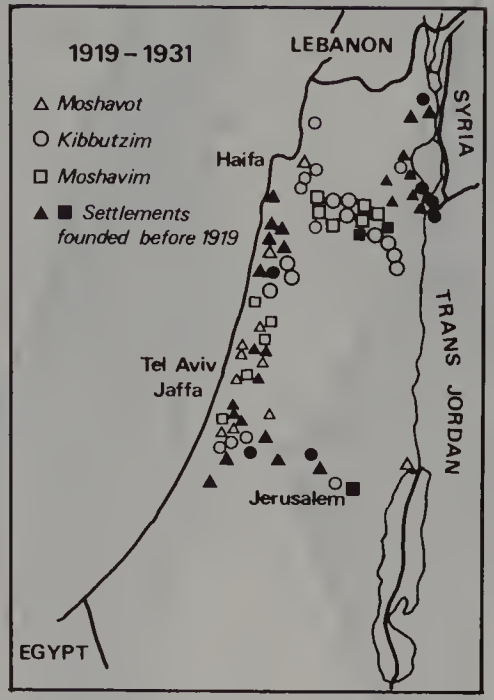


FIGURE 2

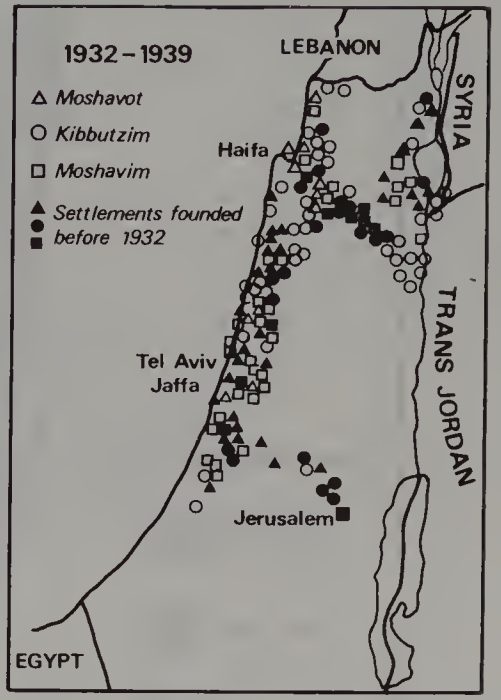


FIGURE 3

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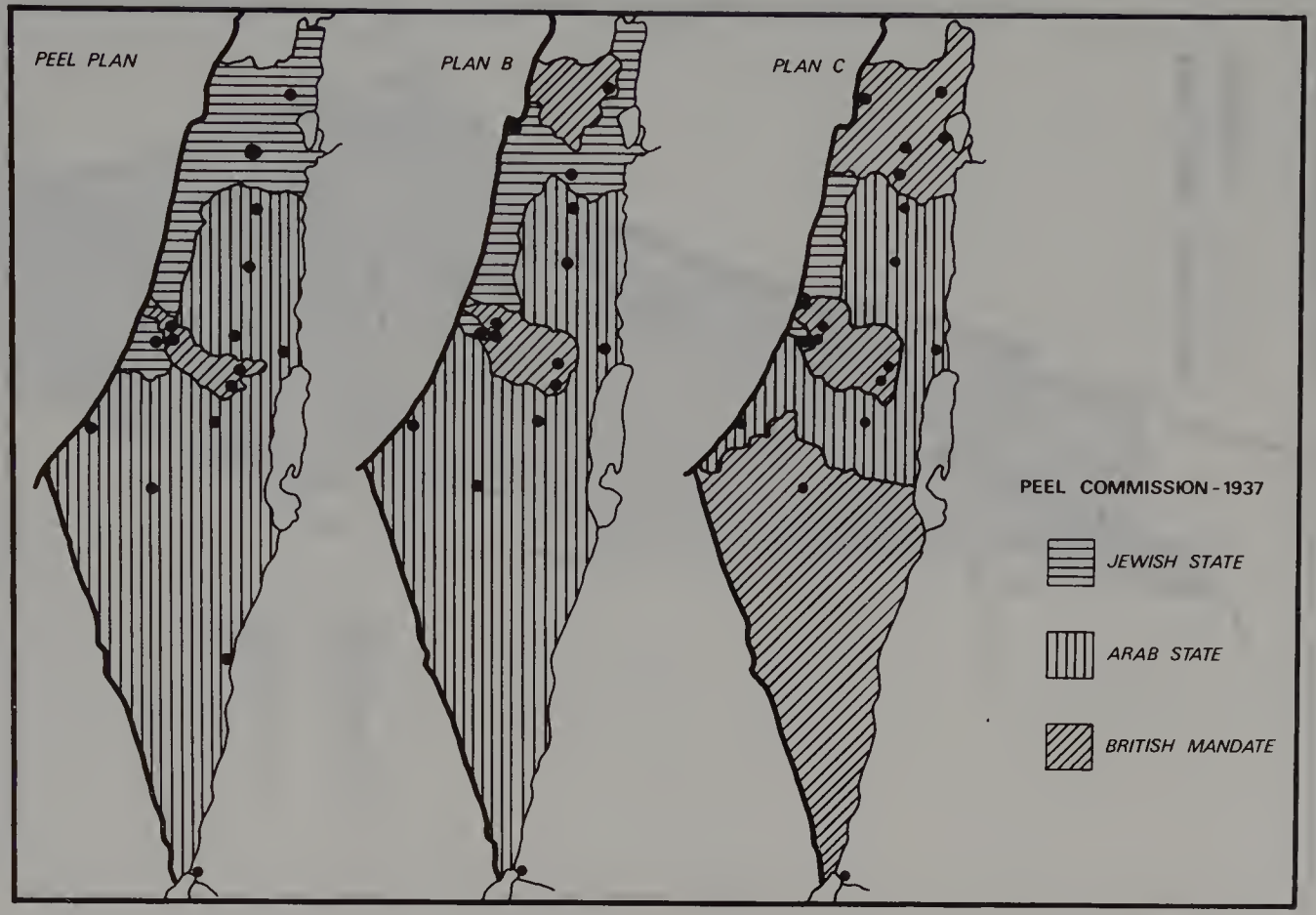
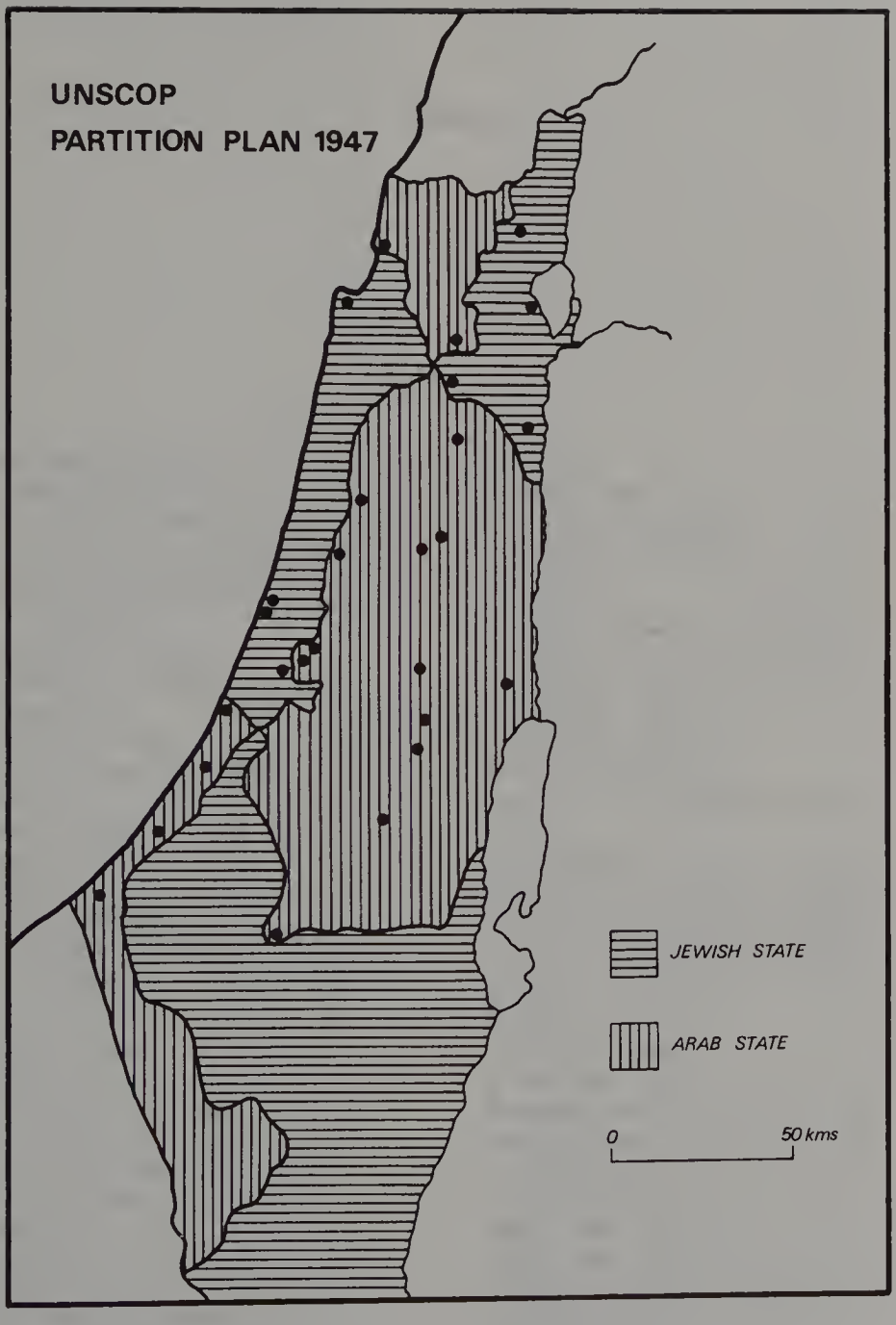

PEEL PLAN
PLAN B
PLAN C
PEEL COMMISSION - 1937
JEWISH STATE
ARAB STATE
BRITISH MANDATE


UNSCOP
PARTITION PLAN 1947
JEWISH STATE
ARAB STATE
0
50 kms

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Professor Wasif Abboushi is on the faculty of the University of Cinncinnati. He has published a number of works on the region the best known of which is The Angry Arabs, Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1974. His research and teaching is in the field of comparative government, and especially Middle Eastern politics and international relations.

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