

# Introduction to Zionism and Israel

**From Ideology to History**

Dan Cohn-Sherbok



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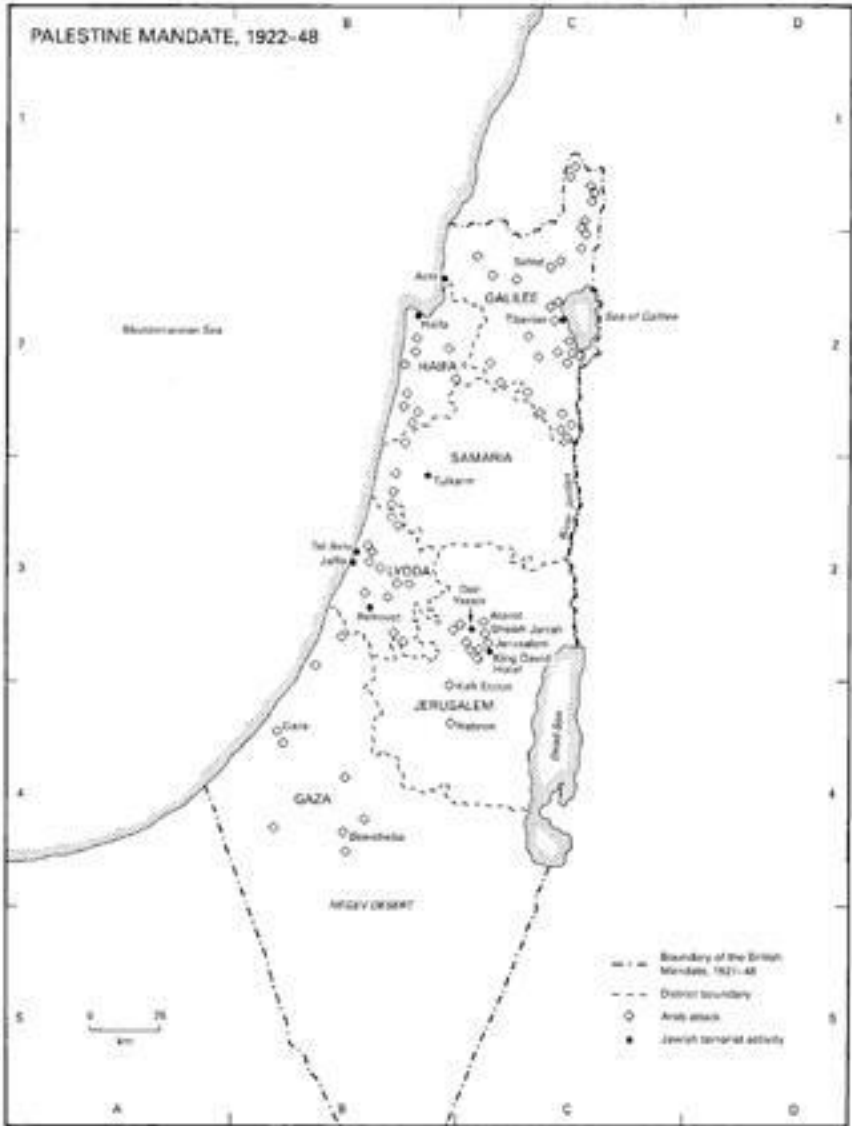
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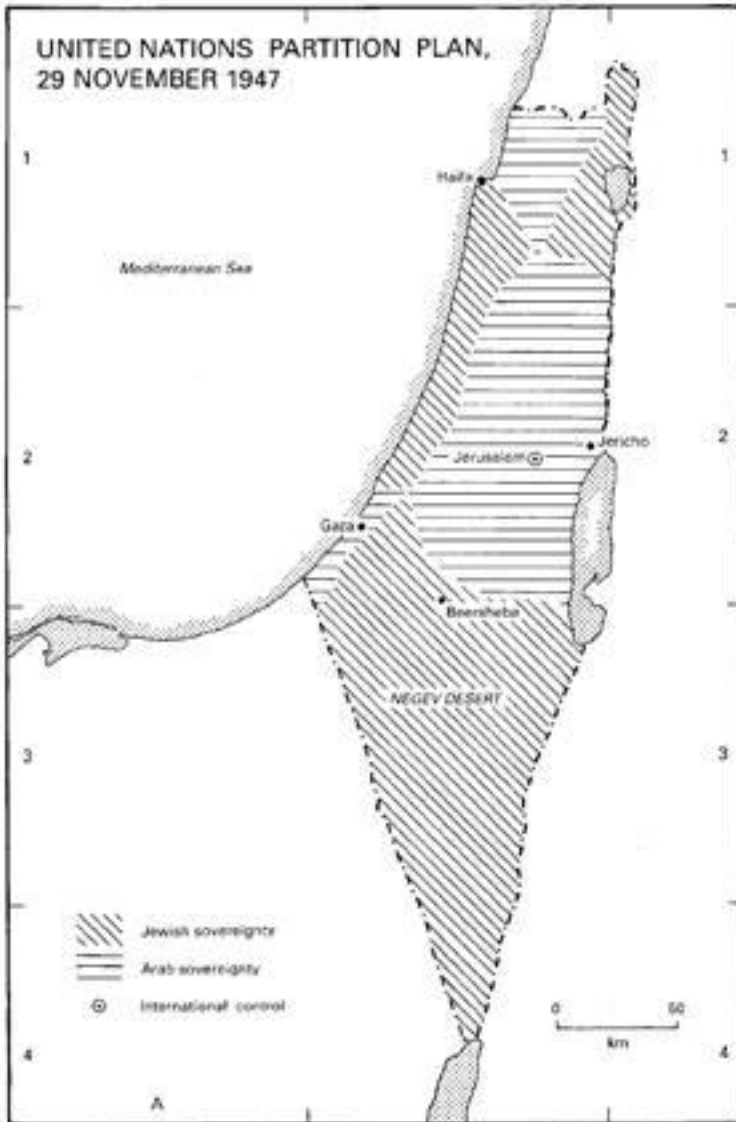
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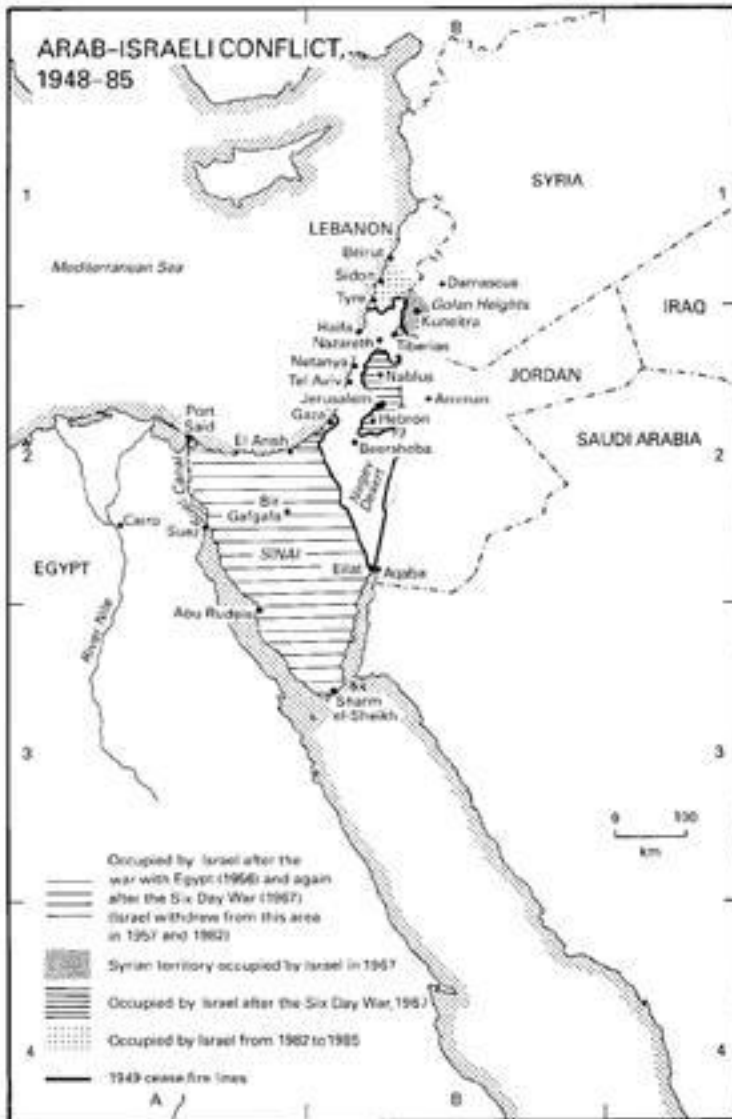
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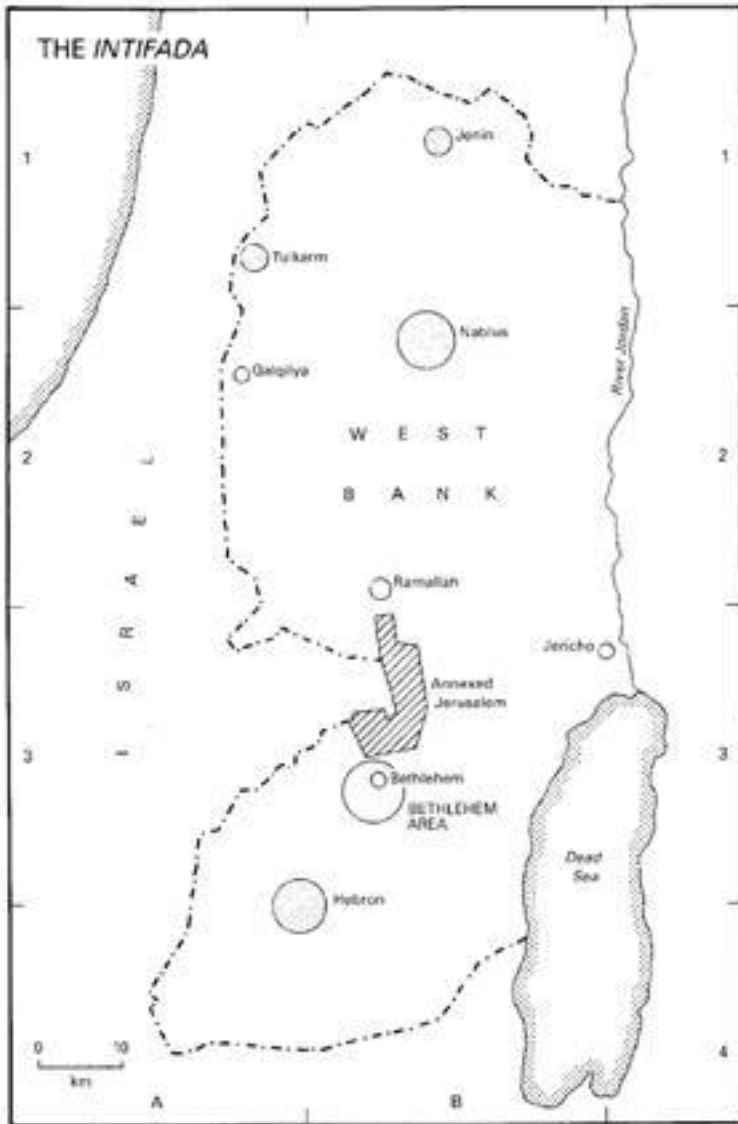
Map of Palestine Mandate 1922-1948



Map of United Nations Partition Plan 29 November 1947



Map of Arab-Israeli Conflict 1948–1985



Map of The Intifada

# The Emergence of Secular Zionism

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With the conversion of Shabbatai Zevi in the seventeenth century, Jewish preoccupation with messianic calculation diminished. Many Jews became disillusioned with centuries of messianic anticipation and disappointment: the longing for the Messiah who would lead the Jewish people to the Holy Land and bring about the end of history seemed a distant hope. Instead eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Jewry hailed the breaking down of the ghetto walls and the elimination of social barriers between Jews and Christians. In this milieu the belief in the Kingdom of God inaugurated by the Messiah-king receded in importance.

In this milieu there emerged a number of leading secularists who were preoccupied with the problem of antisemitism rather than messianic deliverance. Moses Hess, for example, argued that anti-Jewish sentiment is unavoidable. No reform of Judaism can eliminate Jew-hatred from Western society. According to Hess, the only solution to the Jewish problem is the creation of a Jewish state which will enable world Jewry to undergo a renaissance and serve as a spiritual centre for all of humanity. Similarly, Leo Pinsker contended that Judeophobia is an extricable part of Western society – the only remedy for antisemitism is for Jewry to reconstitute themselves as a separate people in their own land. Echoing such sentiments Theodor Herzl espoused



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the creation of a Jewish homeland and undertook political steps to bring about its realization. Among Jewish activists who joined this quest to deliver the Jewish nation from their wanderings was Ber Borochov who attempted to integrate Jewish nationalism with Marxist ideology. For Borochov, the national struggle will liberate Jewry from its dependence on non-Jewish economic structures and enable Jews to be integrated with the universal revolutionary movement. Another major thinker of this period was Vladimir Jabotinsky who stressed the importance of armed struggle in the quest for national autonomy. Although these various figures departed radically from traditional patterns of Jewish thought about Jewish redemption, like their religious and spiritual counterparts they foresaw the need for a Jewish state in contemporary society. Their desire for a return to Israel was a modern expression of a deep longing within the Jewish soul.

### The Forerunners

Zionism as a political movement was preceded by various developments in the post-Enlightenment period. The term itself only appeared in the 1890s, but the importance of Zion in the life and thought of the Jewish nation was present throughout its history. The blessing 'Next year in Jerusalem' was part of the Passover ritual, and when praying in the synagogue Jews faced towards the east. In the history of the nation, the appearances of numerous messianic figures, including Shabbatai Zevi in the seventeenth century, was connected with the aspiration to return from exile. Numerous small Jewish settlements existed in the Holy Land throughout the centuries, and individual migration was a constant feature of Jewish life.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries various pamphlets were circulated, encouraging the restoration of the Jews to Eretz Israel. Indeed, Napoleon during his Egyptian campaign published a proclamation calling on the Jews of Asia and Africa to join him in restoring Jerusalem. Beginning with the 1840s Jewish newspapers discussed the return to Palestine as a laudable aspiration. Jewish communities in Palestine sent emissaries on yearly tours to encourage Jews in Europe to support these settlements. During this period European powers and the United States established consulates in Jerusalem, and various newspapers published articles advocating the creation of an independent state in Syria and Palestine where Jews would be able to settle. Novels of the period were interested in Palestine as well. Disraeli's *Coningsby*

and *Tancred* tell the story of a duke who goes to Palestine to study the Asiatic problem. In George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*, Deronda decides to devote himself to creating a national Jewish centre in Palestine. Mordecai, Deronda's mentor, stresses that Judaism is a living faith, and that the Jews have a mission: to return to the land of their ancestors.

In Europe associations for the promotion of Jewish emigration to Palestine emerged between 1881-82 in a number of Russian cities. The first was established in Suwalki near the Polish-Lithuanian border, and another in Kremenchug while Rabbi Shmuel Mohilever of Radom spearheaded the establishing of such associations in Poland. Some of these bodies consisted mainly of Orthodox Jews; others of radical students. A number of these associations prepared themselves for immigration; others were primarily philanthropic. The most active group was founded by high-school and university students in Kharkov in 1881 calling itself Bilu (*Bet Yaakov lechu ve nelcha* – 'O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us go' (Isaiah 2:5). Some of its members left for Odessa on their way to Constantinople and Palestine. The first aliyah (wave of immigration) dates from their arrival. About sixteen arrived in Palestine and went to work at Miqve Israel, an agricultural school. Later they established their own agricultural settlement south of Jaffa (Gedera). Despite the enthusiasm of these pioneers, Orthodox Jews living in Jerusalem were critical of these newcomers.

In Russia attempts were being made to co-ordinate the activities of various local Lovers of Zion (Hovevei Zion) groups. At a conference in Kattowitz in Upper Silesia in 1884, an organization was created. Leo Pinsker became president and stressed in his address the importance of returning to the soil. The conference agreed to establish two main committees, one in Warsaw and the other in Odessa. Although the first soon ceased to exist, the latter remained until the outbreak of the First World War as the main centre of Zionist activity in Russia. Some of the members of this organization emigrated to Palestine, but the majority consisted of well-wishers.

## Moses Hess: National Consciousness and Universalism

Modern secular Zionism begins with the writings of Moses Hess. Born in Bonn, Germany, he published his first philosophical work, *The Holy History of Mankind*, by a young Spinozist, in 1837. By 1840 he had settled in Paris where he was active in socialist circles; from 1842 to 1843 he served as the

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Paris correspondent of the *Rheinische Zeitung*, edited by Karl Marx. In 1862 he published *Rome and Jerusalem*, a systematic defence of Jewish nationalism. In this work, he explains that after twenty years of estrangement from Judaism, he has returned to his people:

### ***Rome and Jerusalem***

Once again I am sharing in its festivals of joy and days of sorrow, in its hopes and memories. I am taking part in the spiritual and intellectual struggles of our day, both within the house of Israel and between our people and the gentile world. The Jews have lived and laboured among the nations for almost two thousand years, but nonetheless they cannot become rooted organically within them. A sentiment which I believed I had suppressed beyond recall is alive once again. It is the thought of my nationality, which is inseparably connected with my ancestral heritage, with the Holy Land and the eternal city, the birth-place of the belief in the divine unity of life and of the hope for the ultimate brotherhood of all men. (*Rome and Jerusalem*, in Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea*, p. 119)

Antisemitism, he continues, is unavoidable. Progressive Jews think they can escape from Judeophobia by recoiling from any Jewish national expression, yet the hatred of Jews is inescapable. No reform of the religion is radical enough to avoid such sentiments, and even conversion to Christianity cannot relieve the Jew of this disability. For Hess, Jews will always remain strangers among the nations. Nothing can alter this state of affairs. The only solution to the problem of Jew-hatred is for the Jewish people to come to terms with their national identity.

According to Hess, the restoration of Jewish nationalism will not deprive the world of the benefits promoted by Jewish reformers who wish to dissociate themselves from the particularistic dimensions of the Jewish heritage. On the contrary, the values of universalism will be championed by various aspects of Judaism's national character. Judaism, he contends, is the root of the modern universalist view of life. Until the French Revolution, the Jewish people were the only nation whose religion was both national and universalist. It is through Judaism that the history of humanity can become sacred, namely a unified development which has its origin in the love of the family. This process can be completed only when the members of the human race are united by the holy spirit.

Such a conception of history is grounded in the Jewish messianic vision of God's kingdom on earth. From the beginning of their history, Hess notes, the Jews have been bearers of the faith in a future messianic epoch. This

conviction is symbolically expressed through Sabbath observance. The biblical story of the creation, he writes, is told only for the sake of the Sabbath idea. It recounts in symbolic language that when the creation of the world of nature was completed, with the calling into life of the highest organic being of the earth-man – the Creator celebrated his natural Sabbath, after the completion of the task of world history, by ushering in the messianic epoch. Biblical Sabbath precepts thus inspire Jews with a feeling of certainty that a divine law governs both the world of nature and the world of history. This belief, rooted in the spiritual life of the nation, points to a universal salvation of the world.

What is required today, Hess asserts, is for Jewry to regenerate the Jewish nation and to keep alive the hope for the political rebirth of the Jewish people. In support of this enterprise, Hess cites the work of the contemporary French writer Ernst Laharanne, *The New Eastern Question*, which argues for the existence of a Jewish homeland:

### ***Jewish Nationalism***

No member of the Jewish race can renounce the incontestable and fundamental right of his people to its ancestral land without thereby denying his past and his ancestors. Such an act is especially unseemly at a time when political conditions in Europe will not only obstruct the restoration of a Jewish state but will rather facilitate its realization. What European power would today oppose the plan that the Jews, united through a Congress, should buy back their ancient fatherland? Who would object if the Jews flung a handful of gold to decrepit old Turkey and said to her: 'Give me back my home and use this money to consolidate the other parts of your tottering empire?'... You will come to the land of your fathers decorated with the crown of age-long martyrdom, and there, finally, you will be completely healed from all your ills. Your capital will again bring the wide stretches of barren land under cultivation; your labour and industry will once more turn the ancient soil into fruitful valleys, reclaiming it from the encroaching sands of the desert, and the world will again pay its homage to the oldest of peoples. (Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea*, pp. 133-34)

In the light of these observations, Hess asserts that a Jewish renaissance is possible once national life reasserts itself in the Holy Land. In the past the creative energies of the people deserted Israel when Jews became ashamed of their nationality. But the holy spirit, he argues, will again animate Jewry once the nation awakens to a new life. The only question remaining is how it might be possible to stimulate the patriotic sentiments of modern Jewry as well as liberate the Jewish masses by means of this revived national loyalty. This is a formidable challenge, yet Hess contends that it must be overcome. Although he recognizes that there could not be a total emigration of world Jewry to

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Palestine, the existence of a Jewish state will act as a spiritual centre for the Jewish people and for all of humanity. It is, he states, the duty of all Jews to carry the yoke of the Kingdom of heaven until the very end.

### Leo Pinsker: Autoemancipation

The Russian pogroms of 1881 had a profound impact on another early Zionist, Leo Pinsker, driving him from an espousal of the ideas of the Enlightenment to a determination to create a Jewish homeland. Born in Tomaszów in Russian Poland in 1821, Pinsker attended a Russian high school, studied law in Odessa, and later received a medical degree from the University of Moscow. Upon returning to Odessa, he was appointed to the staff of the local city hospital. After 1860, Pinsker contributed to Jewish weeklies in the Russian language and was active in the Society for the Spread of Culture among the Jews of Russia. However, when Jews were massacred in the pogroms of 1881 he left the Society, convinced that a more radical remedy was required to solve the plight of Russian Jewry. In 1882 he published *Autoemancipation*, a tract containing similar themes to those found in Hess's writings. He subsequently became the leader of the new Hibbat Zion movement, and in 1884 convened its founding conference.

In *Autoemancipation*, Pinsker asserts that the Jewish problem is as unresolved in the modern world as it was in former times. In essence, this dilemma concerns the unassimilable character of Jewish identity in countries where Jews are in the minority. In such cases there is no basis for mutual respect between Jews and non-Jews. This situation is aggravated by the fact that the Jewish people do not feel a need for an independent national existence. Yet, without such a longing, there is no hope for a solution to Jewish misery.

Among the nations of the world, Pinsker asserts, the Jews are like a nation long since dead: the dead walking among the living. Such an eerie, ghostly existence is unique in history. The fear of the Jewish ghost has been a typical reaction throughout the centuries, and has paved the way for current Judeophobia. This prejudice has throughout the years become rooted and naturalized among all peoples of the world. Such Jew-hatred has generated various charges against the Jewish people: throughout history Jews have been accused of crucifying Jesus, drinking the blood of Christians, poisoning wells, exacting usury, and exploiting peasants. Such accusations are invariably

groundless – they were trumped up to quiet the conscience of Jew- baiters. Thus Judaism and antisemitism have been inseparable companions through the centuries, and any struggle against this aberration of the human mind is fruitless.

Unlike other peoples, the Jew is inevitably a stranger. Having no home, he can never be anything other than an alien. He is not simply a guest in a foreign country; rather he is more like a beggar and a refugee. The Jews are aliens, Pinsker states, who can have no representatives because they have no fatherland. Because they have none, because their home has no boundaries behind which they can entrench themselves, their misery knows no bounds. It is a mistake, Pinsker continues, to think that the legal emancipation of Jewry will result in social emancipation. This, he believes, is impossible. The isolation of the Jew cannot be removed by any form of official emancipation since the Jew is eternally an alien. In summary, he asserts that for the living, the Jew is a dead man. For the natives, an alien and a vagrant. For property holders, a beggar. For the poor, an exploiter and a millionaire. For patriots, a man without a country. For all classes, a hated rival.

Such natural antagonism between Jew and non-Jew has resulted in a variety of reproaches levelled by both parties at one another. From the Jewish side, appeals to justice are frequently made to improve the condition of the Jewish community. In response, non-Jews attempt to justify their negative attitudes by groundless accusations. A more realistic approach, however, would involve the recognition that the Jewish people have no choice but to reconstitute themselves as a separate people. In recent times, Pinsker points out, there has been a growing awareness of the need for a Jewish homeland:

### ***Autoemancipation***

Nowadays, when in a small part of the earth our brethren have caught their breath, and can feel more deeply for the sufferings of their brothers; nowadays, when a number of other dependent and oppressed nationalities have been allowed to regain their independence, we, too, must not sit even one moment longer with folded hands; we must not admit that we are doomed to play on in the future the hopeless role of the 'wandering Jew'... it is our bounden duty to devote all our remaining moral force to re-establish ourselves as a living nation, so that we may finally assume a more fitting and dignified role. (Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea*, p. 191)

The Jewish struggle to attain the goal of nationhood has an inherent justification that belongs to the quest of every oppressed people. Although this

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endeavour may be opposed by various quarters, the battle must continue – the Jewish people have no other way out of their desperate position. There is a moral duty to ensure that persecuted Jews wherever they live will have a secure home. In this respect, it is a danger for Jews to attach themselves only to the Holy Land – what is required is simply a secure land for the Jewish nation.

For Pinsker the present moment is a decisive time for the revival of national aspirations. History appears to be on the side of world Jewry in its longing for a national homeland. Even in the absence of a leader like Moses, the recognition of what Jewish people need most should arouse a number of energetic individuals to take on positions of responsibility. Already, he notes, there are societies which are pressing for the creation of a Jewish nation. They must now invoke a national congress, and establish a national directorate to bring to fruition these plans.

In conclusion, Pinsker contends that the Jews are despised because they are not a living nation. It is an error to believe that civil and political emancipation will raise Jewry in the estimation of other peoples. Instead the only proper remedy for the Jewish problem is the creation of a Jewish nationality, of a people living on its own soil. Jews must reassert their national self-respect, and cease to wander from one exile to another. At present there are forces helping to bring about this vision, and the international Jewish community must work towards this end. No sacrifice, he declares, will be too great to reach the goal which will assure that the Jewish nation's future is secure.

## Theodor Herzl: The Jewish State

More than any other figure Theodor Herzl has become identified with modern secular Zionism. Born on 2 May 1860 in Budapest, Hungary, he was the only son of a rich merchant. After studying at a technical school and high school in Budapest, he went with his family to Vienna where he enrolled in the law faculty of the university. In 1884 he received a doctorate and worked for a year as a civil servant; subsequently he wrote plays, and in 1892 was appointed to the staff of the *Neue Freie Presse*. As its Paris correspondent, he witnessed the Dreyfus Affair and became convinced that the Jewish problem could only be solved by the creation of a homeland for the Jewish people. In May 1895 Herzl requested an interview with Baron Maurice de Hirsch to interest him in the establishment of a Jewish state. When the Baron expressed little sympathy for the project, Herzl hoped the Rothschilds would be more receptive and wrote a 65-page proposal outlining his views. This work was an outline of *The Jewish*

*State* which appeared in February 1896; this was followed by a utopian study, *Alteneuland* (Old-New Land, published in 1902).

Herzl's analysis of modern Jewish existence was not original – many of his ideas were preceded in the writings of Moses Hess and Leo Pinsker. Yet what was novel about Herzl's espousal of Zionism was his success in stimulating interest and debate about a Jewish state in the highest diplomatic and political circles. This was due both to the force of his personality and the passionate expression of his proposals. Convinced of the importance of his views, Herzl insisted that the building of a Jewish homeland would transform Jewish life. The first entry in his diary of 1895 reflects the intensity of this conviction:

### ***Herzl's Diary***

I have been occupied for some time past with a work which is of immeasurable greatness. I cannot tell today whether I shall bring it to a close. It has the appearance of a gigantic dream... What it will lead to it is impossible to surmise as yet. But my experience tells me that it is something marvellous even as a dream, and that I should write it down – if not as a memorial for mankind, then for my own delight or meditation in later years. And perhaps for something between these possibilities: for the enrichment of literature. If the romance does not become a fact, at least the fact can become a romance. Title: The Promised Land! ('First Entry in his Diary', in Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea*, p. 204)

In the preface to *The Jewish State* Herzl contends that his advocacy of a Jewish homeland is not simply a utopian scheme. On the contrary, he believes his plan is a realistic proposal arising out of the appalling conditions facing Jews living under oppression and persecution. The plan, he argues, would be impractical if only a single individual were to undertake it. But if many Jews were to agree on its importance, its implementation would be entirely reasonable. Like Pinsker, Herzl believes that the Jewish question can only be solved if the Jews constitute themselves as one people:

### ***The Jewish State***

We have sincerely tried everywhere to merge with the national communities in which we live, seeking only to preserve the faith of our fathers. It is not permitted us. In vain are we loyal patriots, sometimes superloyal; in vain do we make the same sacrifices of life and property as our fellow citizens; in vain do we strive to enhance the fame of our native lands in the arts and sciences, or her wealth by trade and commerce. In our native lands where we have lived for centuries we are still decried as aliens... The majority decide who the 'alien' is; this, and all else in the relations between peoples, is a matter of power. (Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea*, p. 209)



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Old prejudices against Jewry, he argues, are ingrained in Western Society – assimilation will not act as a cure for the ills that beset the Jewish people. There is only one remedy for the malady of antisemitism: the creation of a Jewish commonwealth. In *The Jewish State* Herzl outlines the nature of such a social and political entity. The plan, he contends, should be carried out by two agencies: the Society of Jews and the Jewish Company. The scientific programme and political policies which the Society of Jews will establish should be carried out by the Jewish Company. This body will be the liquidating agent for the business interests of departing Jews, and will organize trade and commerce in the new country. Given such a framework, immigration of Jews will be gradual. Initially the poorest will settle in this new land. Their tasks will be to construct roads, bridges, railways, and telegraph installations. In addition, they will regulate rivers and provide themselves with homesteads. Through their labour trade will be created, and in its wake markets. Such economic activity will attract new settlers, and thus the land will be populated.

Those Jews who agree with the concept of a Jewish state should rally round the Society of Jews and encourage its endeavours. In this way they give it authority in the eyes of governments, and in time ensure that the state is recognized through international law. If other nations are willing to grant Jews sovereignty over a neutral land, then the Society will be able to enter into negotiations for its possession. Where should this new state be located? Herzl proposes two alternatives: Palestine or Argentina. Argentina, Herzl notes, is one of the most fertile countries in the world, extending over a vast area with a sparse population. Palestine, on the other hand, is the Jews' historic homeland. If the sultan were persuaded to allow the Jews to repossess this land, the Jewish community could in return undertake the complete management of the finances of Turkey. In this way, the Jews could form a part of a wall of defence for Europe and Asia, and the holy places of Christendom could be placed under some form of international extraterritoriality. There are therefore advantages for both these options, and Herzl asserts that the Society should take whatever it is given and whatever Jewish opinion favours.

In his novel *Alteneuland* Herzl discusses the social and economic structure of such a state in Palestine. The foundation of the economy, he contends, should be co-operative. Here he sees the New Israel as realizing the social vision of nineteenth-century European utopian socialism. In addition, Herzl advocates universal suffrage as well as the full participation of women in the political life of the community. Further, Herzl maintains that schooling be free and universal from kindergarten to university. At the same time both men and women are to give two years' service to the community in such

institutions as hospitals, infirmaries, orphan asylums, vacation camps, and homes for the aged. Urban planning is also espoused in the novel: new towns are to be planned in advance so as to ensure that urban sprawl is eliminated. There would also be an electrified system of mass transport, and hydro-electric plants would ensure cheap electricity. Herzl moreover suggests that the Mosaic principle of the jubilee year should be institutionalized into the landowning patterns of society.

## Ber Borochov: Zionism and Marxism

In nineteenth-century Russia a number of activists in the revolutionary movement were Jewish. Prominent among these figures was Ber Borochov, who attempted to integrate Jewish nationalism with Marxist doctrine. Born in 1881 in a small town in the Ukraine, he was raised in Poltava. After graduating from the local high school, he worked for a year in the Social Democratic Party. During the next decades he was active in a number of Zionist groups. In December 1906 the Poale Zion (Workers of Zion) was established, and Borochov together with Israel Ben-Zvi wrote its manifesto. After 1907 he travelled throughout Europe as a party representative and also engaged in research in Yiddish philology. At the outbreak of World War I, Borochov settled in America where he was an editor, writer and party activist. After the Kerensky revolution in March 1917, he returned to Russia.

Borochov's advocacy of Socialist Zionism was expressed in his first major work, *The National Question and the Class Struggle*, published in 1903. In this study Borochov argues that Marx's own work on the national question was more complicated than usually understood. According to Borochov, both Marx and Engels were concerned with the national struggle. This reading of Marxism enabled Borochov to develop his conception of a horizontal division within society (in addition to the vertical division into classes). These groups are divided into socio-economic organisms (tribes, families, peoples, nations). The class struggle always occurs within these horizontal social-national groupings. Whenever class struggle is integrated into a national struggle, this generates important consequences. If an entire class is conquered by another, the conquering group tries to impose on the vanquished its own class structure. The conquered nation is thus oppressed as a class by the bourgeoisie of the victorious group and subjugated culturally. When this occurs, nationalism among the oppressed peoples appears in a peculiar form:

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### ***Ber Borochov***

These oppressed peoples constantly exist under abnormal conditions of production... Such abnormal conditions bring the varying interests of all individuals of the nation into harmonious agreement. It is due to external pressure, which hinders and disorganizes the influence of the conditions of production, that the relations of production and the class struggle itself are hindered in their development. For the proper course of the mode of production is thus hindered, class antagonisms become abnormally dulled, and national solidarity derives greater strength. (Borochov, *The National Question and the Class Struggle*, pp. 42-43)

Out of this situation the national struggle becomes a social struggle of the exploited classes against the exploiting classes of the oppressing national group:

### ***The National Question and the Class Struggle***

All feel and all comprehend that the pressure is a national one. It has its origin in a foreign nation and is directed against their own nationality as such...the national question of an oppressed people becomes sharply divided from the connection it normally has with its basis – with the material conditions of its productive life. Cultural needs then assume an independent importance and all members of the nation become concerned about the freedom of national self-determination. (Borochov, *The National Question and the Class Struggle*, p. 43)

In such contexts both the intelligentsia and the working class can prevent the national movement of the oppressed nation from becoming ethnocentric by emphasizing the people's struggle with universal and international ideals.

For Borochov, once an oppressed people is liberated from foreign oppression, it can begin the class struggle within its own society. In this way Borochov highlights the interconnection between national aspirations for liberation and the class struggle. Orthodox Marxists, he believes, have failed to recognize how national differences affect class structures. In this light, he distinguishes between various forms of nationalism and stresses that nationalism must be given the same consideration as other phenomena of bourgeois society. *The National Question and the Class Struggle* thus provides a general theory of the relationship between the nationalist and the class struggle.

In the following year, Borochov elaborated this analysis in *Our Platform*, in which he applies these observations to the Jewish question. According to Borochov, there are three distinct social units within the Jewish community: the upper bourgeoisie; the middle class and the intelligentsia; and the working

class. The first group tends towards assimilation – this is most prevalent among Western Jews. In general the upper bourgeoisie attempts to solve its problems through social integration and economic success, and tries to integrate the Jewish masses into Western culture through philanthropic activity. Yet the persistence of antisemitism poses a serious threat to Jewish acceptance, even in the most elevated circles. It is therefore unrealistic to assume that assimilation will enable Jews successfully to find their place in society.

Antisemitism is also a serious problem for the Jewish middle class and the intelligentsia. As society becomes more democratic and capitalist, the Jewish middle classes are able to gain respected positions in the community as doctors, lawyers, engineers, journalists and businessmen. However, the more successful they become the more they are resented by non-Jews as interlopers. Such a situation gives rise to strong feelings of ethnic and nationalist identity. Nonetheless, as long as this group retains its middle-class position, its centre of gravity is still the diaspora – it does not feel the urgent need for a radical solution to the Jewish problem.

In Borochov's view, neither this middle-class group nor the upper bourgeoisie is able to serve as the bearer of the nationalist cause. Only the oppressed Jewish working class can do this together with the persecuted lower middle class. These two groups form one social entity capable of pressing for a revolutionary solution. For Borochov, emigration to a Jewish homeland will enable this group to create a new society with an entirely new infrastructure. The Jewish problem, Borochov declares, calls for a territorial solution.

Only Palestine, Borochov contends, will serve as a feasible choice for such a settlement – there Jewry will be able to reconstruct a Jewish society with Jews at the base. Borochov argues that the Jewish proletariat needs such a remedy more than any other class because of its great sufferings. To free Jews from their dependence on non-Jewish economic structures, the Jewish proletariat must struggle for national independence. Such liberation, he believes, is part of the universal struggle of the world proletariat. By advocating Jewish nationhood Borochov did not abandon a universal vision of a better world order. On the contrary, he maintained that only through the establishment of a Jewish state – with Jews controlling their destiny – could the Jewish people be integrated into the universal revolutionary process.

# Vladimir Jabotinsky: Jewish Self-Defense

Among the major figures of modern secular Zionism, Vladimir Jabotinsky was one of the most controversial. His writings and political activity inspired a large number of followers as well as detractors. Born in 1880 in Odessa, he went abroad in his last year of high school as a foreign correspondent. After studying for three years at the university in Rome he joined the staff of another Odessa daily, and in 1901 was recalled to join its editorial staff. In 1903 he helped organize a Jewish self-defence corps in Odessa, and subsequently became a Zionist propagandist.

In the following years he travelled throughout Russia and Europe; after the outbreak of World War I, he worked in northern and western Europe as a correspondent for a liberal Moscow daily. Once Turkey joined on the side of Germany, he became convinced that the future of Jewish interests in Palestine rested with the allies. Opposed to the Zionist leadership who advocated neutrality, Jabotinsky persuaded the British to form three Jewish battalions. Yet, after the war, Jabotinsky became sceptical of British support for Jewish interests, and during the Arab riots of 1920 he organized a self-defence corps in Jerusalem. Imprisoned by the British military administration and sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment for illegally possessing arms, he was eventually pardoned. In 1921 Jabotinsky was elected to the Zionist Executive, but quarrelled with Chaim Weizmann. In 1925 he organized the Revisionist Party; several years later this group left the Zionist movement and established the New Zionist Organization. Under his leadership illegal immigration to Palestine took place and the Irgun engaged in a struggle with the British.

In his autobiography, Jabotinsky notes that he first encountered Zionism as a young man in Berne when he attended a lecture by Nachman Syrkin. Later in Italy he was influenced by the national movement and became persuaded that liberalism is irrelevant to the modern world. In an essay written in 1910, 'Man is a Wolf to Man', he emphasizes that it is a mistake to rely on liberal ideas to bring about political reform:

### ***Man is a Wolf to Man***

It is a wise philosopher who said, 'Man is a wolf to man'; worse than the wolf is man to man, and this will not change for many days to come. Stupid is the person who believes

in his neighbour, good and loving as the neighbour may be; stupid is the person who relies on justice. Justice exists only for those whose fists and stubbornness make it possible for them to realize it... Do not believe anyone, be always on guard, carry your stick always with you – this is the only way of surviving in this wolfish battle of all against all. (Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism*, p. 164)

Such ideas were central to his insistence on Jewish self-defence and self-determination.

Jabotinsky's advocacy of Jewish nationalism was expressed in a wide range of articles dealing with national unity and discipline. For Jabotinsky the essential element of the nation consists in its racial component. It is not territory, religion or a common language that comprises the substance of nationhood; rather its essential character is determined by its racial composition.

In Jabotinsky's view the Jewish people as an emerging nation needs founders and builders who are able to animate its latent potential. Jewry needs, he writes, a generation ready for all kinds of adventures and experiences, a generation that can find its way in the most dense forest. They need young people who can ride horses and climb trees and swim in the water and use their fists and shoot a gun; Jews need a people with a healthy imagination and a strong will, striving to express themselves in the struggle for life. In addition, he asserts that it is vital that the Jewish community is disciplined in its commitment to nationhood. In an article describing the organizational structure around which he built Betar (the youth movement of the Revisionists), he writes:

### **Betar**

Betar is structured around the principle of discipline. Its aim is to turn Betar into such a world organism that would be able at a command from the centre, to carry out at the same moment, through the scores of its limbs, the same action in every city and every state. The opponents of Betar maintain that this does not accord with the dignity of free men and it entails becoming a machine. It suggests not to be ashamed and to respond with pride: Yes, a machine. (Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism*, p. 172)

In his works Jabotinsky advocates the reorganization of social and economic life along the lines of a corporate state. Alongside a Representative Assembly of the Jewish community in Palestine, he proposes another body: a Trades' Parliament. Every person, he maintains, should elect his representative to this Upper Chamber according to his corporation or guild. Regarding the Arab

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population, Jabotinsky emphasizes that the Jewish people in returning to its ancestral homeland is not returning to oriental culture. Rather, he writes that the spiritual atmosphere of Europe belongs to Jewry and in Palestine this creativity will continue. According to Jabotinsky, the Muslims are a backward people and Western powers have nothing to fear from the Arab nations if they support Zionist policies. In 1937 he gave evidence before the Peel Commission (the Royal Commission on Palestine), arguing for the establishment of a Jewish state covering all of the original Palestine Mandate, including Transjordan. Aware that this would turn the Arabs in such a state into a minority, he contends that this would not be detrimental to the Arab population. In his view it would not be hardship on the Arabs if this were to occur. The result will simply be that a fraction of the Arab people will have to live in someone else's state. Arguably Jabotinsky's legacy to modern Zionism was his recognition of the importance of power in determining the fate of the Jewish nation. For Jabotinsky it is not morality but power that is of supreme importance in political affairs. In the subsequent history of Israel, this principle became a central feature of the Jewish state's defence policy.

# Religious and Spiritual Zionism

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Despite the fact that the Enlightenment moulded the consciousness of most modern Jews, there were a number of religious figures who continued to subscribe to the traditional belief in the advent of the messianic age. Prominent among such figures was Yehuda hai Alkalai who argued that Jewish settlers should establish Jewish colonies in Palestine in anticipation of the coming of the Messiah. According to Alkalai, the advent of the Messiah is not simply a divine act – it requires human labour and dedication. A similar view was adopted by Zwi Hirsch Kalischer who maintained that the messianic era will not take place immediately. Rather, the redemption of the Jewish people will occur gradually through the ingathering of the Jewish nation in their ancestral home. Like these two figures, Ahad Ha-Am was also concerned with the spiritual redemption of the Jewish nation, but his thought is devoid of traditional ideas of messianic deliverance. Nonetheless, he emphasized that the Jewish state should embody the religious and spiritual ideas of the Jewish heritage. Another seminal early Zionist was Aaron David Gordon who advocated a mystical conception of the interaction between human beings and nature. For Gordon, manual labour is central to personal and national salvation. Finally, Abraham Isaac Kook attempted to harmonize messianic aspirations with the efforts of modern secular Zionists. According to Kook, the divine spark is evident in the work of secular pioneers who sacrifice themselves to the land of Israel. In their different ways these religious and spiritual champions of Zionism attempted to reconcile the Jewish tradition with the quest to rebuild modern Jewish life in the Holy Land.



## Yehuda hai Alkalai: The Messiah and Modern Zionism

In the middle of the seventeenth century, Jewry was electrified by the emergence of Shabbatai Zevi who claimed he was the long awaited Messiah. However, his conversion to Islam caused widespread despair. In time many Jews became increasingly disillusioned with the rabbinic conception of messianic redemption and the return of the nation to its ancient homeland. Nonetheless, at the end of the nineteenth century within Orthodoxy there emerged a new trend, the advocacy of an active approach to Jewish messianism. Rather than adopt a passive attitude towards the problem of redemption, these writers maintained that the Jewish nation must engage in the creation of a homeland in anticipation of the advent of the Messiah. Pre-eminent among such religious Zionists was Yehuda hai Alkalai, born in 1798 in Sarajevo to Rabbi Sholomo Alkalai, the spiritual leader of the local Jewish community. During his youth he lived in Palestine where he was influenced by kabbalistic thought. In 1825 he published a booklet entitled *Shema Yisrael* in which he advocated the establishment of Jewish colonies in Palestine, a view at variance with the traditional Jewish belief that the Messiah would come through an act of divine deliverance. When in 1840 the Jews of Damascus were faced with the blood libel accusation, Alkalai became convinced that the Jewish people could be secure only in its own land. Henceforth he published a series of books and pamphlets explaining his plan of self-redemption.

In his *Minhat Yehuda* he argues on the basis of Scripture that the Messiah will not miraculously materialize; rather he will be preceded by various preparatory events. In this light the Holy Land needs to be populated by Jewry in preparation for messianic deliverance:

### ***Minhat Yehuda***

This new redemption will be different; our land is waste and desolate, and we shall have to build houses, dig wells, and plant vines and olive trees. We are, therefore, commanded not to attempt to go at once and all together in the Holy Land...the Lord desires that we be redeemed in dignity; we cannot, therefore, migrate in a mass, for we should then have to live like Bedouins, scattered in tents all over the fields of the Holy Land. Redemption must come slowly. The land must, by degrees, be built up and prepared. ('The Third Redemption', in Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea*, p. 105 )

For Alakali, redemption is not simply a divine affair – it is also a human concern requiring labour and persistence.

This demystification of traditional messianic eschatology extends to Alkalai's advocacy of Hebrew as a language of communication. Traditionally Hebrew was viewed as a sacred language of communication. It was not to be profaned by daily use. Alkalai, however, recognized the practical importance of having a single language for ordinary life in Palestine. It would be a mistake, he continues, to think that God will send an angel to teach his people all seventy languages. Instead the Jewish people must ensure that Hebrew is studied so that it can be used for ordinary life: Jewry must redouble their efforts to maintain Hebrew and to strengthen its position. It must be the basis of all educational work.

How can this process of redemption be accomplished? Alkalai stresses the importance of convening an assembly of those dedicated to the realization of this goal. Thus he asserts that the redemption must begin with efforts by Jews themselves. They must organize and unite, choose leaders, and leave the lands of exile. Since no community can exist without a governing body, the very first new ordinance must be the appointment of the elders of each district, men of piety and wisdom, to oversee all the affairs of the community.

Reinterpreting the concept of the Messiah ben Joseph, he argues that this assembly of elders is in fact what is meant by the promise of the Messiah, the son of Joseph. For Alkalai, the process of deliverance follows a different sequence from what is depicted in traditional sources. The organization of an international Jewish body is, he believes, the first step to the redemption because out of this organization will emerge a fully authorized assembly of elders, and from the elders, the Messiah, the son of Joseph will appear. The vision of this first messianic figure should thus be understood as a process involving the emergence of a political leadership among the Jewish nation that will prepare the way for divine deliverance.

According to Alkalai, it is not impossible for Jews to carry out this project. The sultan, he maintains, would not object to such an aim since he knows that his Jewish subjects are loyal. What is required is that the Jewish people create a company along the lines of fire insurance or railroad companies. This body should then appeal to the sultan to give back the ancestral home to the Jewish people for an annual rent. Once the name 'Israel' is again applied to the Holy Land, he declares, all Jews will be inspired to help this company with the means at their disposal. Inevitably this venture will begin modestly, but its future will be very great.

## Zwi Hirsch Kalischer: Divine Redemption and Resettlement

Another early pioneer of religious Zionism was Zwi Hirsch Kalischer, the rabbi of Toun in the province of Posen. An early defender of Orthodox against the advances made by Reform Judaism, he championed the commandments prescribing faith in the Messiah and devotion to the Holy Land. In 1836 he expressed his commitment to Jewish settlement in Palestine in a letter to the head of the Berlin branch of the Rothschild family arguing that redemption will come through natural causes and by human effort.

Such a conviction did not actively engage Kalischer until 1860 when a society was organized in Frankfurt on the Oder to encourage Jewish settlement in Palestine. After joining this group, he published a Zionist work, *Derishat Zion*, which appeared in 1862. In this treatise he advocates the return of Jews to their native soil. The redemption of Israel, he argues, will not take place miraculously: The Almighty, blessed be his Name, will not suddenly descend from on high and command his people to go forth. Neither will he send the Messiah from heaven in a tinkling of an eye, to sound the great trumpet for the scattered of Israel and gather them into Jerusalem. He will not surround the holy city with a wall of fire, nor cause the holy Temple to descend from heaven. Instead it will take place slowly, through awakening support from philanthropists and gain the consent of other nations to the gathering of the Jewish people into the Holy Land.

This view, Kalischer maintained, is inherent in Scripture. Thus the prophet Isaiah declared:

In the days to come, Jacob shall take root, Israel shall blossom and put forth shoots, and fill the whole world with fruit... In that day from the river Euphrates to the Brook of Egypt the Lord will thresh out the grain, and you will be gathered one by one, O people of Israel. And in that day, a great trumpet will be blown, and those who were lost in the land of Assyria and those who were driven out to the land of Egypt will come and worship the Lord on the holy mountain at Jerusalem. (Isaiah 27:6, 12-13)

According to Kalischer, not all of Israel will return from exile at once, but will be gathered by degrees. This concept of redemption is based on a passage from Isaiah: 'In that day the root of Jesse shall stand as an ensign to the peoples; him shall the nations seek, and his dwellings shall be glorious' (Isaiah 11:10).

Here, he asserts, both a first and a second gathering are intended. The first ingathering will be to work the land, after which the nation will blossom forth to a glorious extent.

The coming of the Messiah must therefore be preceded by the creation of a Jewish homeland. It is not enough to wait for miracles; instead Jews must act to bring about this event. Quoting from a medieval devotional book, he asserts that in time the faithful will return:

### ***Seeking Zion***

When many Jews, pious and learned in the Torah, will volunteer to go to the Land of Israel and settle in Jerusalem, motivated by a desire to serve, by purity of spirit, and by love of holiness; when they will come, by ones and twos, from all four corners of the world; and when many will settle there and their prayers will increase at the holy mountain in Jerusalem, the Creator will then heed them and hasten the day of redemption. ('Seeking Zion', in Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea*, pp. 112-13)

Kalischer was aware that there were many Jews who would refuse to support those who are poor in the Holy Land. Such an attitude, he believes, is an argument put forward by Satan since the people of Palestine have risked their lives to become pioneers. In this country, he writes, which is strange to them, how could they go about finding a business or occupation, when they had never in their lives done anything of this kind? Their eyes can only turn to their philanthropic brethren, of whom they ask only enough to keep body and soul together, so that they can dwell in that land which is God's portion on earth.

For Kalischer practical steps must be taken to fulfil this dream of resettlement. What is required is that an organization be created to encourage emigration, and to purchase and cultivate farms and vineyards. Such a programme would be a ray of deliverance to those who are now languishing in Palestine due to poverty and famine. This situation will be utterly changed if those able to contribute to this effort are inspired by a vision of a Jewish homeland. An advantage of this scheme would be to bring to fruition those religious commandments that attach to working the soil of the Holy Land. Even those Jews who supervise the labourers will be aiding in working the land and will therefore have the same status as if they had personally fulfilled these commandments. But beyond all this, Kalischer was convinced that Jewish farming will be a spur to messianic redemption. The policy of active participation in the cultivation of the soil will not divert the people from the task of

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divine service. Rather such labour will add dignity to God's Torah. By working the land, Jews will be dedicating themselves to bringing about the advent of the messianic age.

In addition, such a policy will raise the dignity of the Jewish people among the nations, for then the foreign peoples would say of the children of Israel that they have the will to redeem the land of their ancestors:

### ***A Nation***

Let us take to heart the examples of the Italians, Poles, and Hungarians, who laid down their lives and possessions in the struggle for national independence, while we, the children of Israel, who have the most glorious and the holiest of lands as our inheritance, are spiritless and silent. We should be ashamed of ourselves! All the other peoples have striven only for the sake of their own national honour; how much more should we exert ourselves, for our duty is to labour not only for the glory of our ancestors but for the glory of God who chose Zion. (Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea*, p. 114)

Because Kalischer was financially independent, he was able to engage in a variety of activities to bring about the fulfilment of this vision. In 1866 he was instrumental in persuading a group to purchase land for colonization on the outskirts of Jaffa. Eventually he influenced the Alliance Israélite Universelle – the organization founded in France in 1860 to protect Jewish rights throughout the world – to establish an agricultural school in Jaffa in 1870. Nonetheless Orthodox critics of his views denounced what they believed was a departure from tradition. Even in Jerusalem pietists who benefited from collections of alms for the poor in the Holy Land attacked his plans. According to these zealous upholders of tradition, the creation of agricultural settlements where Jews would engage in tilling the soil would lead the people away from the study of the Torah and provoke heretical attitudes contrary to the Jewish faith.

## Ahad Ha-Am: The Jewish State and Spiritual Values

Like Alkalai and Kalischer, Asher Zevi Ginsberg (later known as Ahad Ha-Am) was concerned with the spiritual redemption of the Jewish people, although his thought is devoid of traditional Jewish ideas of messianic deliverance. Born in Skvira in the Russian Ukraine on 18 August 1856, he

initially received a traditional Jewish education. In 1868 his family moved to an estate which his wealthy father leased; there he studied the works of medieval Jewish philosophers and writers of the Enlightenment. At the age of twenty he pursued French and German literature and philosophy, and later unsuccessfully attempted to continue his study in various European capitals. In 1886 he moved to Odessa where he began to publish articles dealing with contemporary Jewish life.

His first essay, *Wrong Way*, which appeared in 1889, set the stage for his role within the Hovevei Zion movement. In this work he advocated the return to Zion, but remained critical of a number of aspects of the movement's platform. In a later essay, *The Jewish State and the Jewish Problem*, written after his return from the First Zionist Congress, he discussed Max Nordeau's opening statement to the Congress. According to Nordeau, the major problem facing East European Jewry is economic misery, whereas Western Jewry is confronted by the failure of the Emancipation to provide a firm base for Jewish identity in modern society. According to Nordeau, these dilemmas point to the need for the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine.

For Ahad Ha-Am, however, the matter is more complicated. Assuming that the Zionist movement attains this goal, what would occur when the Jewish state absorbs the first wave of immigrants? Will the Jewish problem be solved? Clearly not all Jews throughout the world (numbering 10,000,000) will be able to settle in Palestine. What would be the result if only a small section of the world Jewish population emigrated? Ahad Ha-Am argues that the economic problems facing East European Jewry would not be solved for those who remained behind. The Jewish state could only contribute to cultural and spiritual regeneration. Thus the central dilemma faced by Zionism is how the spiritual perplexities of Jews in the diaspora could be resolved by the creation of a Jewish homeland.

According to Ahad Ha-Am, Zionism is able to solve the problems of Western Jewry more readily than to ameliorate the condition of Jews in Eastern Europe. The Jew in the West is separated from Jewish culture and simultaneously alienated from the society in which he resides. The existence of a Jewish state would enable him to solve the problems of national identity, compensating him for his lack of integration into the culture of the country in which he lives:

### ***Ahad Ha-Am***

If a Jewish state were re-established [in Palestine], a state arranged and organized exactly after the pattern of other states, then he [the Western Jew] could live a full, complete life among his own people, and find at home all that he now sees outside, dangled before his eyes, but out of reach. Of course, not all the Jews will be able to take wing and go to their state; but the very existence of the Jewish state will raise the prestige of those who remain in exile, and their fellow citizens will no more despise them and keep them at arm's length as though they were ignoble slaves, dependent entirely on the hospitality of others. (Ha-Am, *Nationalism and the Jewish Ethic*, pp. 74-75)

It is this ideal which is able to cure the Jew in the West of his social unease, the consciousness of his inferiority in lands where he is an alien.

In Eastern Europe, however, such a solution is inadequate. With the disappearance of ghetto life, Judaism has lost its hold on the Jewish population. In the past, Jews were able to sustain their traditions through common experience. The passing of this closed society led to the disintegration of the Jewish heritage. For Ahad Ha-Am, it is impossible for Eastern European Jews to return to the traditional religious symbolism of the ghetto. What is required is the establishment of a new Jewish social identity in Israel:

### ***A New Social Identity***

Judaism needs at present but little. It needs not an independent state, but only the creation in its native land of conditions favourable to its development: a good-sized settlement of Jews working without hindrance in every branch of culture, from agriculture and handicrafts to science and literature. This Jewish settlement, which will be a gradual growth, will become in course of time the centre of the nation, wherein its spirit will find pure expression and develop in all its aspects up to the highest degree of perfection of which it is capable. Then from the centre the spirit of Judaism will go forth to the great circumference, to all the communities of the diaspora, and will breathe new life into them and preserve their unity; and when our national culture in Palestine has attained that level, we may be confident that it will produce men in the country who will be able, on a favourable opportunity, to establish a state which will be truly a Jewish state, and not merely a state of Jews. (Ha-Am, *Nationalism and the Jewish Ethic*, pp. 78-79)

Israel is thus to be a state infused with Jewish values, and not simply a homeland for the Jewish people. It must embody the religious and cultural ideals of the Jewish past. According to Ahad Ha-Am, the strength of Judaism resided in the prophetic emphasis on spiritual values; a Jewish state devoid of such an orientation will lose the support of diaspora Jewry. A secular state is not viable, he argues, because a political ideal which does not rest on the national culture is apt to seduce Jews from

their loyalty to spiritual greatness and to beget a tendency to find the path of glory in the attainment of material power and political domination. Without spiritual ideals, he argues, political power may become an end in itself. To clarify this point, he used the example of Judaea under Herod the Great:

### ***Jewish History***

History teaches us that in the days of the Herodian house Palestine was indeed a Jewish state, but the national culture was despised and persecuted, and the ruling house did everything in its power to implant Roman culture in the country, and frittered away the national resources in the building of heathen temples and amphitheatres, and so forth. Such a Jewish state would spell death and utter degradation for our people. Such a Jewish state...would not be able to give us a feeling of national glory; and the national culture, in which we might have sought and found our glory would not be implanted in our state and would not be the principle of its life. (Ha-Am, *Nationalism and the Jewish Ethic*, pp. 80-81)

After visiting Jewish settlements in Palestine, Ahad Ha-Am wrote an essay, *Truth from the Land of Israel*, filled with his impression of the country. Deploring land speculation, he called on the Hovevei Zion movement to intervene in this odious practice. In addition, he focused on the dilemmas faced by Zionism because of the existence of the sizeable Arab population. This people, he maintains, must be confronted by those wishing to settle in the land. As early as 1891 he recognized that the Arab Palestinians might press for the creation of a national movement. It would be a mistake to believe that Palestine is devoid of a native population, he writes. Jews abroad tend to believe that Palestine is almost completely deserted, a non-cultivated wilderness, and that anyone can come there and buy as much land as he desires. But in reality this is not the case. It is difficult to find anywhere in the country Arab land that lies fallow.

What is required then is a sense of realism. Jews should not regard themselves as superior to their Arab neighbours. Instead they should perceive that the Arabs are fiercely proud and determined:

### ***The Arabs***

We tend to believe abroad that all Arabs are desert barbarians, an asinine people who do not see or understand what is going on around them. This is a cardinal mistake... The Arabs, and especially the city dwellers, understand very well what we want and what we do in the country; but they behave as if they do not notice it because at present they do not see any danger for themselves or their future in what we are doing and are therefore





trying to turn to their benefit these new guests... But when the day will come in which the life of our people in the land of Israel will develop to such a degree that they will push aside the local population by little or much, then it will not easily give up its place. (Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism*, p. 123)

In order to flourish in the land of their ancestors, Ahad Ha-Am insists that the Jewish people act with love and respect to those Arabs in their midst.

Although Ahad Ha-Am's vision of the return to the Holy Land was not filled with messianic longing, his idealization of the spiritual, religious and cultural dimensions of Judaism and their embodiment in a Jewish state was rooted in Jewish messianism. For Ahad Ha-Am, it will not be a divinely appointed Messiah who will bring about the realization of God's Kingdom on earth. Rather this will be the task of the Jewish people themselves. Through the creation of a Jewish state, the spiritual values of the faith are to materialize in the Holy Land.

## Aharon David Gordon: Man and Nature

Like other modern religious and spiritual writers, Aharon David Gordon was anxious to confront the problem of Jewish regeneration in the Holy Land. In formulating his conception of Jewish life in Palestine, he grounded his outlook in a mystical conception of the interaction of human beings and nature. Born in a village in the province of Podolia, Gordon spent his youth in a farming village on an estate which his father managed for the family of Baron Horace Günzburg. After his marriage, he served as an official from 1880 to 1923 on a large tract of land the Günzburgs leased for farming. At the age of forty-seven, he emigrated to Palestine where he worked as a labourer in the vineyards and wineries of Petah Tikva. Later he worked in Galilee; his final days were spent in Degania, one of the earliest kibbutzim.

According to Gordon, manual labour is central to both personal and national salvation. In an essay, *Some Observations*, published in 1910, he outlines two alternatives facing the Jewish community in Palestine. The first is what he refers to as the practical way of the worldly wise, the continuation of exile life, with all its short-sighted practical wisdom. For Gordon, exile is not simply geographical dislocation: it involves psychological and existential

alienation, combining dependence on others and estrangement from creative life. The second alternative calls for a renaissance of Jewish life: the way of manual labour. This latter option, he believes, will renew the national energies of the Jewish people:

### ***Jews and Land***

We have as yet no national assets because our people have not paid the price for them. A people can acquire a land only by its own effort, by realizing the potentialities of its body and soul, by unfolding and revealing its inner self. This is a two-sided transaction, but the people comes first – the people comes before the land. But a parasitical people is not a living people. Our people can be brought to life only if each one of us recreates himself through labour and a life close to nature. ('Some Questions', in Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea*, p. 376)

Gordon's understanding of Jewish life in the diaspora was related to his theories of anthropology and psychology. To Gordon a person can become fully human only through contact with nature. Physical labour is thus essential for personal growth and fulfilment. In this light Jewish existence in the diaspora is a distorted mode of living, not only because the Jewish nation lost its homeland, but also because it lacked the land in which Jews could realize their full human potential through physical work. In Gordon's view, a Jewish national renaissance will not take place simply through migration: it must involve a return to the self through the cultivation of the land. A fundamental distinction must hence be drawn between a transference of exiles to the Holy Land, and a radical reconstruction of Jewish life through agricultural employment.

Such a radical analysis calls for the total transformation of Jewish life:

### ***National Rebirth***

The way of national rebirth embraces every detail of our individual lives. Every one of us is required to refashion himself so that the Galut (diaspora) Jew within him becomes a truly emancipated Jew; so that the unnatural, defective, splintered person within him may be changed into a natural, wholesome human being who is true to himself; so that his Galut life, which has been fashioned by alien and extraneous influences, hampering his natural growth and self-realization, may give way to one that allows him to develop freely, to his fullest stature in all dimensions. (Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea*, p. 376)

Such a process of rehabilitation must take place if Jewish exile is to cease, even if Palestine becomes populated with Jewish emigrants.

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According to Gordon, traditional Jewish life in the diaspora was richer than modern existence in the post-Emancipation world. Prior to the Emancipation Jews sought to ameliorate their position without abandoning Torah Judaism. Yet today material prosperity has overshadowed all other values. To counteract this corrosive attitude, the religion of nature must become the dominant ideology in Palestine. In an essay entitled *Labour* Gordon insists that the Jewish people is linked to its homeland; if it is divorced from agricultural labour, it becomes disfigured and emasculated. In their advocacy of a Jewish state, modern Zionist writers have overlooked the fundamental requirements for a vibrant national life:

### ***Divorced from Nature***

A people that was completely divorced from nature, that during two thousand years was imprisoned within walls, that became inured to all forms of life except to a life of labour, cannot become once again a living, natural, working people without bending all its willpower toward that end. We lack the fundamental element: we lack labour (not labour done because of necessity, but labour to which man is organically and naturally linked), labour by which a people becomes rooted in its soil and its culture. (Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism*, p. 155)

The absence of physical work, he believes, is an essential defect in the Jewish character. Such a condition was created by the exile and its perpetuation has contributed to the continuation of exile. Paradoxically the denigration of labour enabled Jews to accommodate to a diaspora existence. If, however, the Jewish people had been more concerned with land, they would have sought to return to their former landed existence. Now that the Jews have a country of their own, Gordon was fearful of the resurgence of this contempt for natural work.

What is required is a cultural revolution. The Holy Land must be cultivated; buildings constructed; and roads built:

### ***Work and the Future***

Each piece of work, each deed, each act is an element of culture. Herein is the foundation of culture, the stuff of which it is made. Arrangement, method, shape, the way in which a thing is done – these are forms of culture. What a man does, what he feels, thinks, lives, while he is at work, and while he is not working, the conditions arising from these relations – these mould themselves into the spirit of culture. From these, higher culture draws nourishment – science, art, beliefs and opinions, poetry, ethics, religion. (Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism*, p. 156)

Authentic Zionism must bring to Palestine the foundations of manual labour from which such a higher culture can emerge. The task of modern Zionism is thus to foster a sense of dedication to ordinary toil. Jews must work with their own hands at all things which make up life in Palestine, he writes, to labour with their own hands at all kinds of work, at all kinds of crafts and trades from the most skilled, the cleanliest and the easiest to the coarsest. They must feel all that the worker feels, think what he thinks, live the life he lives, in ways that become Jewish ways. Only then can Jews consider that they have their own culture.

What is lacking in contemporary Zionism, Gordon argues, is a recognition of the essential link between man and nature. This is the cosmic element of national identity. Jews who have been uprooted must learn to know the soil and prepare it for the transplantation of the Jewish nation. It is necessary to study climatic conditions and everything required to grow agricultural produce. This quest to bring about a radical transformation in Jewish consciousness was motivated by Gordon's utopian vision of Jewish life in Palestine. Although his thinking lacked the religious framework of Orthodox Jewish Zionists, it had quasi-religious connotations reminiscent of previous writers who longed for the redemption of the Jewish nation.

## Abraham Isaac Kook: Jewish Pioneers and Divine Deliverance

Following in the footsteps of such religious Zionists as Alkalai and Kalischer, Abraham Isaac Kook – the first Ashkenzi chief rabbi of Palestine after the British Mandate – formulated a vision of messianic redemption integrating the creation of a Jewish state. Such a conception was influenced by stirrings within the religious wing of the Hovevei Zion movement. Leaders like Shmuel Mohiliver, Yitzhak Yaakov Reines and Yehiel Michal Pines paved the way for Kook's religious espousal of Jewish nationalism. In Kook's writings there is the first attempt systematically to combine the centrality of the Holy Land within the religious traditions with the Zionist attempt to resettle the Jewish people in their homeland.

Born in Greiva, Latvia in 1865, Kook received a traditional Jewish education and in 1895 became rabbi of Bausk. In 1904 he emigrated to Palestine where he served as rabbi of Jaffa. During this period he wrote prolifically and became an important communal leader. In 1914 Kook visited Europe, but was

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stranded in Switzerland at the outbreak of World War I. From 1916 to 1919 he served as a rabbi in London, and eventually returned to Palestine to serve as chief rabbi of the Ashkenazi Jews in Jerusalem. Two years later he was elected Ashkenazi head of the new rabbinic court of appeals (in effect the Ashkenazi chief rabbi of Palestine), and served in this post until his death in 1935.

Unlike secularists who advocated practical efforts to secure a Jewish state, Kook embarked on the task of reinterpreting the Jewish religious tradition to transform religious messianic anticipation into the basis for collaboration with the aspirations of modern Zionism. According to Kook, the centrality of Israel is a fundamental dimension of Jewish life and a crucial element of Jewish religious consciousness. Yet the fervent belief in messianic deliverance has not been accompanied by an active policy of resettlement. This disjunction between religious aspirations for the return from exile and the desire of most Jews to live in the diaspora highlights the confusion in Jewish thinking about the role of Israel in Jewish life. There is thus a contradiction between the messianic belief in a return to Zion and the accommodating attitude to exile of most Jews throughout history.

For Kook, this contradiction at the heart of Jewish existence must be confronted and resolved. The land of Israel, he argues, is not something apart from the soul of the Jewish people. The fact that Jews have been cut off from their homeland is a major difficulty. Kook maintains that a Jewish person in the diaspora is able to observe all commandments of the Law and live as a devout Jew. Yet because he lives outside the Jewish homeland, an essential dimension of Jewishness is missing from his life. Existence in the diaspora involves one in unholiness whereas by settling in Palestine it is possible to live a spiritually unsullied life. Return to Zion is thus imperative for an authentic Jewish existence:

### ***The Holy Land***

A Jew cannot be devoted and true to his own ideas, sentiments, and imagination in the diaspora as he can in Eretz Israel. Revelations of the Holy, of whatever degree, are relatively pure in Eretz Israel; outside it, they are mixed with dross and much impurity... In the Holy Land man's imagination is lucid and clear, clean and pure, capable of receiving the revelations of divine truth and of expressing in life the sublime meaning of the ideal of prophecy and to be illuminated by the radiance of the Holy Spirit. In gentile lands the imagination is dim, clouded with darkness and shadowed with unholiness, and it cannot serve as the vessel for the outpouring of the divine light. (Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea*, pp. 420-21)

If such a conviction had animated religious consciousness in the diaspora, the history of the Jewish people would have been utterly different: accommodation to exile would have been seen as a betrayal of religious principles. But now that Zionism has emerged as an active force in Jewish life, it is possible to reconsider the nature of Jewish identity. According to Kook, peoplehood, the Torah and the land of Israel are inseparably linked. It is a profound error to maintain, as did nineteenth-century reformers, that Judaism can be separated from the land of its birth. On the contrary, the return to Zion is a vital dimension of the Jewish faith. What is of consequence is not an idealized concept of a heavenly Jerusalem, but the actual manifestation of Jewish existence on earth. For this reason Kook argues that a valid strengthening of Judaism in the diaspora can come only from a deepened attachment to Eretz Israel.

For Kook this attachment to the land must serve as a foundation of Jewish life in the modern world. Although the secular pioneers who came to Palestine were motivated by ideological convictions alien to traditional Judaism, their actions are paradoxically part of God's plan of redemption. In the cosmic scheme of the divine will, seemingly atheistic and secular actions are absorbed into the unfolding of God's plan for his chosen people. Therefore, these pioneers unintentionally contributed to the advent of the Messiah. Without consciously recognizing the significance of their work, they served God's purpose.

### ***Vessels of the Spirit***

Many of the adherents of the present national revival maintain that they are secularists. If a Jewish secular nationalism were really imaginable, then we would, indeed, be in danger of falling so low as to be beyond redemption. But Jewish nationalism is a form of self-delusion: the spirit of Israel is so closely linked to the spirit of God that a Jewish nationalist, no matter how secularist his intention may be, must, despite himself, affirm the divine. An individual can sever the tie that binds him to life eternal, but the house of Israel as a whole cannot. All of its most cherished national possessions – its land, language, history and customs – are vessels of the spirit of the Lord. ('Lights for Rebirth', in Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea*, p. 430)

Such observations led Kook to insist that the divine spark is evident in the work of secular Zionists who sacrificed themselves for the land of Israel. Such pioneers were not godless blasphemers, but servants of the Lord. Unaware of their divine mission, they actively engaged in bringing about God's kingdom on earth. Religious Zionism must grasp the underlying meaning of these

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efforts to redeem the land and attempt to educate secularists about the true nature of their work.

In Kook's view, the redemption of Israel is part of a universal process involving all humanity. The salvation of the Jewish nation is not simply an event of particular importance – it provides the basis for the restoration of the entire world (*tikun olam*). Through the rebirth of the Jewish nation in this previous homeland, all humanity will be redeemed. This is the universal meaning of the return to Zion. This redemptive vision of a global transformation of human life is directly related to the aspiration of earlier writers who awaited the return of the Messiah to bring about the end of history. For Kook, however, the rebuilding of a Jewish state – even by secular, atheistic pioneers – is an essential ingredient for this process of universal salvation and divine deliverance.

# Christian Zionism

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According to Christianity, the Jewish people were expelled from the Holy Land and destined to wander the earth because of their rejection of Christ. This was to be their eternal destiny. With the Reformation, however, there was a renewed interest in the Hebrew Bible and the fate of the Jewish people. Among the Puritans in particular, various writers called for the return of Jewry to its ancestral home prior to the Second Coming. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Christian scholars and theologians published essays and tracts concerning the future of the Jewish nation. Influenced by previous millenarian convictions, these figures were convinced that the Holy Land was given by God to the Israélites for a perpetual inheritance. Alongside these writers who proposed practical schemes for the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine, other thinkers emphasized the eschatological aspects of this plan. Alongside the development of Christian eschatology, travellers to the Holy Land recorded their experiences, and such figures as Lord Shaftesbury provided practical schemes for the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. In Palestine itself Jewish missionaries sought to bring Jews back to the Christian faith.

## Early Christian Zionism

With the Reformation, the rediscovery of the Bible as the inspired Word of God led to an increased interest in the Holy Land. Among Puritan theologians in



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particular the Jewish nation was viewed as having a central place in God's providential plan. In a petition of 1649 to Cromwell's Parliament, for example, two English Puritans, Joanna and her son Ebenezer Cartwright called for the repeal of the act of Parliament that banished Jews from England. By reading the Bible in English, they learned that Palestine was the ancestral home of the Jews and the goal of the divinely promised return. The Kingdom of God on earth was for all nations, they believed, and this would occur when the people of Israel were restored to Jerusalem. It was their intention that England along with the Netherlands should be the first to transport Jews back to the land of their ancestors.

In Holland the pietist Holger Paulli maintained that the Jewish return to the Holy Land was a precondition for the Second Coming, and worked for the establishment of a Jewish monarchy in Palestine. To advance this aim, he published books and pamphlets which he sent to the kings of England and France, encouraging them to conquer Palestine so that the Jews could establish a homeland there. In 1695 he went to England to interest William III in this scheme. Referring to Scripture he addressed the King as a Cyrus of his age who (like Cyrus in the sixth century BCE) should allow the Jews to return to Jerusalem).

In the following century a number of Christian scholars and theologians published essays and tracts which dealt with the Jewish nation. Joseph Eyre, for example, published *Observations upon the Prophecies relating to the Restoration of the Jews*. What was sworn to Abraham, he states, was that the land upon which he stood should be given to him and his seed forever. Quoting from Ezekiel 36-37, he rejects any allegorical interpretation of these prophecies. The evangelist Edward Witaker also argued along similar lines. In 1784 he published a dissertation on the final restoration of the Jews. In this work he emphasizes the necessity to adhere to the literal meaning of Scripture.

The evangelist Edward Witaker also argued along similar lines. In 1784 he published a dissertation on the final restoration of the Jews. In this work he emphasizes the necessity to adhere to the literal meaning of Scripture. All the prophets, he argues, when speaking of a future restoration refer to God's covenant with a people, not of individuals. Paul's statement 'all Israel shall be saved' was consonant with these promises. Hence, he maintains that it was expressly declared that the restoration will be national.

In the light of such conviction about the future return of the Jewish people to the land of their ancestors, a number of Christian organizations were established which fostered this scheme. The Christadelphians were founded by John Thomas in the first half of the nineteenth century. Born in London,

he settled in Brooklyn, New York in 1830. There he created his group as an independent ecclesia and preached on the application of biblical prophecies to current and future events. In *Elpis Israel*, Thomas argues that the restoration of the Jewish nation to its ancestral land could be realized with the political assistance of Great Britain. From the outset, Christadelphians were ardent supporters of the idea of the return of the Jews to the Holy Land. Long before the emergence of Jewish Zionism as a political movement, Christadelphians gave practical assistance to Jews, such as the Hibbat Zion movement in Russia.

Pre-eminent among Christian thinkers who stressed the eschatological aspects of the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine was Charles Haddon Spurgeon, one of England's foremost preachers of the nineteenth century. In numerous sermons he expressed his millennial views. In his view Christ's reign would be on earth. According to Spurgeon, God did not separate the Jewish people from the Church. Rather, he argues that the Church and Israel will be united spiritually and face tribulation together. The millennial kingdom on earth would thus be made up of both Jews and gentiles. Nonetheless, he believed that there would eventually be a restoration of Israel, and thus supported the activities of the British Society for the Propagation of the Gospel Amongst the Jews.

This body was a nonconformist equivalent of the Anglican London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews. In an address delivered to the Society in 1864 Spurgeon maintains that the Jews will constitute a body politic in the Holy Land over whom a king shall reign. God's promise of restoration will be fulfilled. Then the fullness of the gentiles shall be gathered in and Jesus will come upon Mount Zion. This shall begin the halcyon days of the millennium and Christ shall rule over all:

### ***Charles Hadden Spurgeon***

There will be a native government again; there will again be the form of a body politic; a state shall be incorporated, and a king shall reign. Israel has now become alienated from her own land. Her sons, though they can never forget the sacred dust of Palestine, yet die at a hopeless distance from her consecrated shores. But it shall not be so forever... 'I will place you in your own land' is God's promise to them... They are to have a national prosperity which shall make them famous... If there be anything clear and plain, the literal sense and meaning of this passage – a meaning not to be spirited or spiritualised away – must be evident that both the two and the ten tribes of Israel are to be restored to their own land, and that a king is to rule over them. (Charles Hadden Spurgeon, 'The Restoration and Conversion of the Jews', in Sizer, *Christian Zionism*, p. 38)

Like Spurgeon, other thinkers advocated the restoration of the Jews. In 1826 Henry Drummond, a city banker, politician and High Sheriff of Surrey, opened his home at Albury Park in London to a group of Christian theologians to discuss the nature of biblical prophecy regarding the Second Coming. In the same year Edward Irving, Lewis Way and James Hatley Frere founded a society to investigate prophecy. At Drummond's suggestion their meetings were subsumed within those which were taking place at Albury. These gatherings were convened to examine biblical texts to ascertain the degree to which biblical prophecies had been fulfilled in the life of Christ and the history of the Church. After Drummond's death, these conferences continued to be held near Dublin under the sponsorship of Lady Powerscourt, focusing on a pessimistic interpretation of world events and the Second Coming.

### Premillennial Dispensationalism

In 1826 Edward Irving translated a work by Manuel Lacunza, a Spanish Jesuit, who wrote a book under the pseudonym of Juan Josafat Ben-Ezra, allegedly a converted Jew: *The Coming of the Messiah in Glory and Majesty*. Lacunza interpreted the Book of Revelation as describing apocalyptic events which were imminent. Irving added a 203-page preface in which he gave his own prophetic speculations about the end of the world, predicting the apostasy of Christendom, the eventual restoration of the Jews, and the imminent return of Christ. Irving's premillennial and prophetic views had a profound influence on those who attended the Albury and Powerscourt Conferences including John Nelson Darby.

Previously Irving had used the term 'dispensation' to contrast God's dealings with Israel and the Church. Darby similarly employed the term to designate a series of failed attempts by humanity to find acceptance with God. Paralleling Lacunza's conviction concerning the apostasy of Christendom and the eventual restoration of the Jews and finally the imminent return of Christ, Darby taught that Israel would soon replace the Church, rather than the Church having replaced Israel. In his view, the Church was merely one more dispensation that had failed, and only a small remnant would be saved.

Adopting a literalist interpretation of Scripture, Darby perceived the covenantal relationship between God and Abraham as binding forever. The promises made to the Jewish people were unfulfilled and would find their eventual consummation in the reign of Jesus Christ on earth during the

millennium. For Darby the Jews will serve as the primary instrumental of God's rule on earth during the millennium. The Lord will empty the land of its inhabitants, he writes, and give it all to Israel. Then, he believes, the Jews will rule on earth in league with Satan. Like Irving, Darby formulates two stages to Christ's imminent return. First, Christians will meet Christ in the air and be raptured from the earth. Then the Anti-Christ will arise. The tribulation will end seven years after rapture when Jesus will return to Jerusalem and set up his kingdom over which he will rule for 1000 years.

From 1862 onwards, Darby's influence over Brethrenism in Britain waned, and he began to focus his ministry on North America, making a number of journeys in the ensuing years. Owing to these tours to the United States, his conception of premillennial dispensation gained a wide audience among evangelicals. Those mostly influenced by Darby included James Brookes, Arno Gaebelein, D. L. Moody and William Blackstone. Among Darby's followers, Brookes became the most important lobbyist for dispensationalism. Through his Bible classes, he nurtured a number of Christian leaders, including Cyrus Scofield.

Following Darby's dispensational distinction between Israel and the Church, Brookes wrote *Israel and the Church* in which he rejects the notion that God's purpose was for Jews to be converted and drawn into the Church. Instead, he maintains, the biblical promises concerning Israel should not be spiritualized, nor should they be understood as fulfilled in the Church. In *Till He Come*, he depicts a premillennial scheme in which the Jews will be restored to the ancient land.

Another evangelist who was influenced by Darby was D. L. Moody who similarly shared a passion for the Jewish people. In a sermon preached in 1877, he explains the meaning of God's promise to Abraham:

### **D. L. Moody**

Now let me ask you hasn't that prophecy been fulfilled? Hasn't God made that a great and mighty nation? Where is there any nation that has ever produced such men as have come from the seed of Abraham? There is no nation that has or can produce such men... That promise was made 4000 years ago, and even now you can see that the Jews are a separate and distinct nation, in their language, in their habits and in every respect. You can bring almost every nation here and in fifty years they will become extinct, merged into another, but bring a Jew here, and fifty years, a hundred years, or a thousand years, he is still a Jew. ('To All Peoples: Comprising Sermons, Bible Readings, Temperance Addresses and Prayer-Meeting Talks', in Sizer, *Christian Zionism*, p. 73)

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For Moody, the Jews remained God's chosen people who will be converted at the return to Christ, a nation separate from the Church. Moody's greatest service to Darby, however, was through the establishment of the Bible Institute for Home and Foreign Missions of the Chicago Evangelization Society founded in 1886. This organization, later referred to as the Moody Institute, trained numerous future leaders and became a model for other institutions.

Another disciple of Darby was William E. Blackstone who settled in Chicago after the Civil War. In 1887 he wrote *Jesus is Coming* which adopted a premillennial dispensationalist stance, stressing that the Jews have a biblical right to Palestine and will be restored there. In his view, the Zionist movement is a sign of the imminent return of Christ. Advancing the Zionist cause, he lobbied the US President, Benjamin Harrison and his Secretary of State with a petition signed by 413 Jewish and Christian leaders, calling for an international conference concerning the Jewish return to Palestine. Known as the Blackstone Memorial, the petition asked why Palestine could not be returned to the Jewish people.

### ***The Blackstone Memorial***

Why not give Palestine back to them [the Jews] again? According to God's distribution of nations it is their home, an inalienable possession from which they were expelled by force. Under their cultivation, it was a remarkably fruitful land, sustaining millions of Israélites, who industriously tilled its hillsides and valleys. They were agriculturalists and producers as well as a nation of great commercial importance – the centre of civilization and religion. Why should not the powers which under the treaty of Berlin, in 1878, gave Bulgaria to the Bulgarians and Servia to the Servians now give Palestine back to the Jews? (Sizer, *Christian Zionism*, p. 76)

Cyrus Ingerson Scofield was influenced by both James Brookes and J. N. Darby. Initially he served as Brookes' assistant, and popularized Darby's dispensationalist views. In 1888 he published *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth* in which he presents the principles of dispensationalism he had been teaching in his Bible classes; Scofield's views later became the religious presuppositions behind the notes of his *Scofield Reference Bible*. In 1909 the *Scofield Bible* was published, containing illustrative notes and cross references. Explaining the nature of premillennial dispensations, he argues that dispensations should be understood as periods of time during which human beings are tested in relation to their obedience to a specific revelation of the will of God. These dispensations exhibit the progressive order of God's dealings with humanity from the beginning of the life of humanity to the end of time.

Historically Christianity viewed national Israel as a precursor of the Church. Scofield, however, attempts to demonstrate that such a perception is mistaken. Rather, he insists that the Church has not replaced or succeeded Israel as God's people. Influenced by Darby, he argues that the Church age will end in failure and apostasy, and be replaced by a revived national Israel who will experience the blessings of the final kingdom of dispensation. During the great Tribulation on earth a remnant of Israel will turn to Jesus as the Messiah and become his witnesses after the removal of the Church. Like Darby, Scofield teaches that it was God's intention to bring the Jewish nation back to Palestine, reconstitute the priesthood, and rebuild the ancient Temple. There will thus be a glorious future for Israel.

## Steps to Restoration in Palestine

The Puritan interest in the restoration of the Jews in the ancestral home and the eventual acceptance of Jesus as Messiah led to the creation of the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst Jews (LJS). Throughout the nineteenth century this group had a profound impact on the growth of Christian Zionism. This body was largely the initiative of Joseph Frey. Born in Franconia in 1771, he was the son of a rabbi and came to faith in Jesus in 1798. Afterwards he went to train with the London Missionary Society (LMS) who supported him in his missionary activities in London.

In the beginning Frey preached the gospel at the Calvinist Methodist Chapel in Jewry Lane, Aldgate. Soon, however, he proposed the creation of a meeting house where Hebrew Christians could be taught a trade as well as a boarding school for Jewish children. Although the LMS directors were unwilling to fund such efforts, Frey and a small group of others formed a society for the purpose of visiting and relieving the sick and distressed, and instructing the ignorant. Eventually Frey and his companions formed the London Jewish Society (LJS) which received considerable support from distinguished figures including William Wilberforce and Charles Simeon.

Early in the history of the LJS, it was recognized that Jewish believers needed a place of their own to worship, and the Society leased the old French Protestant Church in Spitalfields which they renamed 'The Jews Chapel'. These believers formed an association, the 'Benei Avraham', which met on Friday evenings and Sunday mornings. When Sir Thomas Baring became president of the LJS, he found that the Society was deeply in debt. To meet this crisis, Lewis

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Way, a barrister and Fellow of Merton College, donated £10,000 and further sources of funding were later raised to clear the Society's debts. For Way, civil emancipation in Europe and the restoration of a homeland in Palestine were central goals. Appealing to prophetic passages in Scripture, he maintained that exiled Israel would return to their ancient homeland. Influenced by Edward Irving, Way wrote a series of articles concerning the restoration of the Jews and the imminent return of Christ for the LJS journal, *The Jewish Expositor*.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the LJS supported mission stations in forty-six places outside Britain. Such outreach was accompanied by the growth of the LJS in Britain, where LJS workers travelled throughout the country, taught in churches about the Jewish roots of Christianity, and attracted followers such as Rabbi Michael Solomon Alexander, who eventually became an Anglican priest and in 1841 was appointed the first Anglican bishop in Jerusalem. The development of Christian Zionism within Anglican circles at this time was also shaped by Charles Simeon, who was dedicated to the work of the LJS. He, too, looked for a full and imminent restoration of God's chosen people. In pursuit of this aim he went on preaching tours on behalf of the LJS, speaking on Jewish evangelism and the restoration of the Jewish people. Another figure, Joseph Wolff, set out to explore Palestine. A German Jew, who had converted to Roman Catholicism and then to Anglicanism, Wolff was preoccupied with the discovery of the Ten Lost Tribes. In March 1822 he went to Jerusalem where he distributed New Testaments and other Christian literature and spoke to those Jews who were prepared to listen.

In Palestine itself evangelists actively missionized to the Jewish populace. When the Dutch missionary John Nicolayson arrived in Jerusalem, he sought to establish a mission station in the country. In February 1835 the LJS declared that it was ready to construct a church in Jerusalem. With the help of Lord Ashley (later Lord Shaftesbury) who had pressed for the return of the Jewish people to their ancient homeland, Sir Thomas Baring, the LJS President, contacted Lord Palmerston, who instructed the British consul-general in Egypt and the ambassador in Constantinople to obtain permission for the building of the church.

By the end of 1839 it appeared that the construction of the church could begin, and on 17 December Nicolayson laid the foundations for a temporary chapel and mission house. By July 1840 the structure began to take shape. These plans were interrupted, however, when war broke out in the region. In early 1841 Nicolayson went to England to meet with the LJS committee which resolved to send more staff to the Holy Land to expand its activities. The same year Michael Solomon Alexander was consecrated at Lambeth Palace as

the first Protestant Bishop in Jerusalem. The next year he arrived in the Holy Land and began his ministry. From the beginning he set about consolidating the Church. During these early years the LJS established a range of institutions to care for the Hebrew-Christian community including a School for Industry, and a Hebrew College for training missionaries.

With the death of Bishop Alexander, Samuel Gobat, a Swiss-born German-speaking Anglican minister working with the Church Missionary Society, was consecrated as his successor. Under his leadership, missionary activity was understood more broadly. Initially Gobat sought to establish schools for Jewish children; he later desired to draw Gentiles to Christ as well. In 1849 Sir Moses Montefiore made a trip to Jerusalem and took steps to improve Jewish living conditions to protect Jewish settlers from the LJS. However, this initiative did not deter the consecration of Christ Church, Jerusalem, which took place on 21 January 1849. By 1852 there were over eighty adults and forty children who attended the Church, of whom thirty-seven adults and twenty-five children were Jewish in origin. After 1850 the major British concern in Palestine was the Christian Missionary Society. In May 1851 a CMS missionary conference was held in Jerusalem under Bishop Gobat's direction. During this period the British Consul in Jerusalem, James Finn and his wife Elizabeth purchased property on which they employed Jews to clear the land and build workhouses. Their intention was to illustrate through such an endeavour how Jewish restoration was possible in Palestine. To further such an aim, the Finns founded the Society for the Promotion of Jewish Agricultural Labour in the Holy Land.

### ***James Finn***

The commonest impulse of humanity would have led us to try some means of succouring a people so lamentably devoid of resources among themselves ... the best idea that suggested itself was that of providing employment, however light, in field work, both as a means of earning daily food for the family, and also for the advantage of health, in preparation for future usefulness; above all for promoting the character of independence among the sufferers. (Finn, *Stirring Times*, London, 1978 in Crombie, *For the Love of Zion*, p. 93)

The existence of the LJS, Christ Church in Jerusalem and the British consulate and the Protestant bishopric provided a basis for British Christian life in the Holy Land. These institutions served as a framework for all British as well as Protestant activities. Alongside these institutions the publications of the LJS provided information about life in Palestine. With the changed political



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climate in the Middle East, the Holy Land increasingly came under British control. In 1875 Benjamin Disraeli, the Prime Minister, bought controlling interests in the Suez Canal. Two years later a Russo/Turkish conflict erupted over the Balkans, and Britain gained control of Cyprus from Turkey. This gave rise to expectations that Britain would seek to rebuild the Holy Land.

### Travellers and Palestine

During the second half of the nineteenth century, a number of Christian writers and travellers expressed their belief in the feasibility of a Jewish return to the Holy Land. In 1845 the Polish Catholic poet Adam Mickiewicz, for example, delivered a sermon in a Paris synagogue in which he expressed sympathy for Jewish suffering and the deep Jewish yearning for a return to Zion. In 1851 Benedetto Musolino, a Catholic soldier, wrote *Gerusalemme ed il Popolo Ebreo*, in which he analysed the situation of the Jews in the diaspora, and concluded that there should be a Jewish principality in the Holy Land under the Turkish Crown but supported by Britain. The religion of the country, he believes, should be Judaism, and Hebrew should be the language of the land. In Musolino's view, the Jews should be granted the right to become citizens of this principality and allowed to settle there permanently. Another Catholic supporter of the Jewish return to their ancient homeland was Ernest Laharanne, who belonged to the Secretariat of Napoleon III and composed a treatise about Jewish nationalism.

In a similar spirit the Finns took active steps to encourage Jewish life in the Holy Land. For the Finns, support for the Jews was motivated by religious aspirations. It was their hope that the Holy Land would again be peopled by its lawful owners and would again blossom as the rose. When the Finn's tour of duty in Jerusalem ended, they continued to support the idea of the Jewish return to their ancient homeland. Sharing similar aspirations, Sir Charles Wilson, a British army officer and topographer, was an early explorer. Between 1864 and 1866 he surveyed Jerusalem and produced a map of the city.

In the light of such interest in Palestine, the Palestine Exploration Fund was established in 1865 and launched by the Finns to support archaeological digs and research on the Bible. After Sir Charles had completed his work, the Palestine Exploration Fund sent out Charles Warren, who surveyed the land and recorded his discoveries in the Land of Promise. It was his view that the country could be developed with the intention of gradually introducing Jews who could

eventually govern the country. According to Wilson, the Jewish people were tied to the land as by an umbilical cord, and just as the umbilical cord sustains the foetus, so the Jewish nation's bond to their ancient homeland nourishes them.

Another figure who worked in Palestine was Claude Regnier Conder who arrived in 1872. Together with H. H. Kitchner, he wrote several memoirs and the first three parts of a survey of Western Palestine. Subsequently Conder published a number of books based on his work in Palestine including *The City of Jerusalem*. Conder believed that the country could be revived through the establishment of Jewish agricultural settlements. What was necessary, he emphasizes, is the regeneration of the land, swamp drainage, irrigation, the restoration of cisterns and aqueducts, sanitation of populated areas and seeding of grass. In 1892 Conder addressed the London branch of Hovevei Zion, and emphasized the suitability of the Bashan district for agricultural development.

When the Palestine Exploration Fund began its work, Palestine was desolate and barren. Yet, through the work of Wilson, Warren and Conder, a new vision of the Holy Land emerged. In his opening address to the Palestine Exploration Fund, Lord Shaftesbury expressed hope for the future:

### **Lord Shaftesbury**

Let us not delay to send out the best agents...to search the length and breadth of Palestine, to survey the land, and if possible to go over every corner of it, drain it, measure it, and, if you will, prepare it for the return of its ancient possessors, for I must believe that the time cannot be far off before the great event will come to pass. (Kelvin Crombie, *For the Love of Zion*, p. 73)

During this period the LJS was actively involved in helping Jewish immigrants to the Holy Land. Following the Russian pogroms of 1881 a meeting was held at the Mansion House in London to call for assistance for Russian Jewry. As President of the LJS, Lord Shaftesbury opened the meeting; subsequently William Hechler and Laurence Oliphant were involved. Concerned about the welfare of members of Hovevei Zion who had emigrated to Palestine, the Revd H. Friedlander, an LJS missionary, met about fifty Russian refugees and explained that there were Jews in Palestine who believed in Christ and had sympathy for their aspiration to create a Jewish homeland. When Jewish agencies failed to provide financial help for these refugees, over thirty camped in the garden of the mission house in Jaffa. Given the extra workload entailed by helping these refugees, two new missionaries were sent to Palestine by the LJS: Leo Oczeret and Ben Zion Friedman.

### **Leo Oczeret**

Some 70 to 75 Jews are daily employed on the large plot of ground belonging to our Society... To watch some of these refugees, who are bowed down by age, suffering and infirmities, digging, planting and watering in the land once given to their fathers, would cheer the heart of many a Christian well-wisher of Israel. Those who lift up holy hands, praying for the peace of Jerusalem, and the restoration of the Jews to the promised land, would be encouraged to pray more fervently, seeing that God's own time to favour Zion is fast approaching. (*Jewish Record* (July 1883), pp. 26-27)

Eventually a small church and mission school were established which LJS missionaries from Jerusalem or Jaffa visited. As a frequent visitor reported, some of these refugees were drawn to the Christian faith:

### **Christian Evangelism**

Many of the refugees, though thoroughly imbued with a sceptical spirit, have nevertheless felt an attraction of the Gospel, simply because they had been strongly impressed with the national misery of the Jews all over the world. On hearing that the New Testament throws light upon the national fate of the Jews, in that it shows that the national restoration must be connected with national conversion to Christ, they could not help admitting that this gives a reasonable explanation of the unfortunate history of the Jews... How important it is not to lose sight, whilst working and praying for the conversion of individual hearts, of the glorious national promises given to Israel. (*First Report of the JRAS* (1884), p. 11)

## Christian Zionism and a Jewish Commonwealth

At the end of the nineteenth century, Theodor Herzl emerged as the leading proponent of Zionism. One of the most important Christian supporters of Jewish aspirations was William H. Hechler, a British clergyman of German origin. Born in South Africa, he studied theology and became a Protestant pastor. With the recommendation of the British court, he became private tutor to Prince Ludwig, son of Frederick, the Grand Duke of Baden and met the Grand Duke's nephew, the future Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany. After the Prince's early death, he served in the ministry in Germany.

Following the pogroms that took place in Russia in 1881, he participated in a meeting of Christian leaders in London which discussed the possibility of settling refugees from Russia, Romania and Palestine. He then visited Russia to help victims of the attack on Jewry, and in 1883 he wrote *The Restoration of*

*the Jews to Palestine*. In this work he argues on the basis of biblical prophecy that the Jews will be restored to the Holy Land between 1897 and 1898. Two years later Herzl published *The Jewish State*, and in March 1896 Herzl and Hechler met. In his diary, he records his impressions of Hechler:

### ***Herzl and Hechler***

The Reverend William Hechler, Chaplain to the English Embassy here, came to see me. A sympathetic, gentle fellow, with the long grey beard of a prophet. He is enthusiastic about my solution to the Jewish Question. He also considers my movement a 'prophetic turning point' – which he had foretold two years before. From a prophecy in the time of Omar (637 CE), he reckoned that at the end of 42 prophetic months (total 1260 years) the Jews would get Palestine back. This figure he arrived at was 1897-1898. (Theodor Herzl, 'The Jewish State', in Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea*, p. 209)

The same month Hechler conveyed his pro-Zionist views in a letter to the Duke of Baden in which he included a description of biblical prophecy and a chronological calculation determining the date of Jewish restoration in the Holy Land. In April of the same year, Hechler wrote another letter to the Grand Duke in which he argued that the Jewish State is a serious question as it may be fulfilled in 1897, or 1898. This was foreseen by the prophets, he declared, and it will be a blessing for the whole world. In Hechler's view, the matter deserved the support of political leaders.

On 13 April 1896 Herzl had an interview with the Grand Duke of Baden. During the meeting the Duke was sympathetic and interested. Yet, his response to Herzl's request for an intercession with the Kaiser did not produce any concrete result. The Duke asked to be kept informed and Herzl concluded that the interview had been a success. In a letter to Max Nordeau, a leading Zionist, he stated that the greatest strides had been taken towards the realization of his plans. In March 1897 Herzl recorded a second meeting at Hechler's apartment. Herzl was astonished to discover books from floor to ceiling as well as a military map of Palestine made up of four sheets covering the entire floor of the study:

### ***Herzl and Hechler's Library***

He showed me where, according to his calculations, our new Temple must be located; in Bethel! Because that is the centre of the country. He also showed me models of the ancient Temple. 'We have prepared the ground for you!' Hechler said triumphantly. (22 April Diaries', in David Vital, *The Origins of Zionism*, p. 285)

Hechler's efforts to persuade the German Emperor to embrace Zionist aspirations had positive results.

### ***The Kaiser and the Jews***

I have been able to notice that the emigration to the land of Palestine of those Jews who are ready for it is being prepared extremely well and is even financially sound in every respect. Therefore I have replied to an inquiry from the Zionists as to whether I am to receive a delegation of them in audience that I would be glad to receive a deputation in Jerusalem on the occasion of our presence there. I am convinced that the settlement of the Holy Land by the financially strong and diligent people of Israel will soon bring undreamt of prosperity and blessing to the land. (Sizer, *A Promised Land*, p. 63)

For Hechler, the role of the Christian community was to help the Jews to restore their ancient homeland. Unlike earlier Christian Zionists who saw the restoration of the land as a consequence of Jewish conversion to Christianity, he envisaged the return of the Jews as an element of God's providential plan. In a letter to a Christian missionary in Jerusalem written in 1898, he declares that it is his hope that in time the Jews would be drawn to Christ:

### ***Hechler and Jewish Conversion***

Of course, dear colleague, you look for the conversion of the Jews, but the times are changing rapidly, and it is important for us to look further and higher. We are now entering, thanks to the Zionist movement, into Israel's Messianic age. Thus, it is not a matter these days of opening the gates of their homeland, and of sustaining them in their work of clearing the land, and irrigating it and bringing water to it. All of this, dear colleague, is messianic work; all of this the breath of the Holy Spirit announces. But first the dry bones must come to life, and draw together. (Pragai, *Faith and Fulfilment*, p. 60)

Later Christian Zionists continued to press for Jewish settlement of Palestine. In August 1917, just three months before the Balfour Declaration, Lieutenant Colonel John Henry Patterson, a Protestant Irishman and associate of Vladimir Jabotinsky, became the commander of the Jewish Legion. In his *With the Judaeans in the Palestine Campaign*, he states that the formation of a battalion of Jews for service in the British army is an event without precedent, and the part played by such a unique unit is assured of a niche in history owing to the fact that it fought in Palestine, not only for the British cause, but also for the restoration of the Jewish people to the Promised Land.

# Early Political Steps

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The pogroms of 1881–82 in Eastern Europe forced many Jews to emigrate; most went to the United States, but a sizeable number were drawn to Palestine. A decade later the idea of Jewish nationalism had spread to various countries in Europe. Foremost among the proponents was Theodor Herzl, profoundly affected by the Dreyfus affair – who made contact with the Lovers of Zion. In 1897 the First Zionist Congress took place in Basle which called for a national home for Jews based on international law. At this congress Herzl stated that emancipation of Jews had been an illusion: Jews were everywhere objects of contempt and hatred. The only solution to the Jewish problem, he stated, was the re-establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. In the same year the Zionist Organization was created with branches in Europe and elsewhere.

## The Origin of an Idea

Theodor Herzl was the father of political Zionism. Yet, paradoxically, he had little acquaintance with the Jewish heritage. Although Herzl went to a Jewish school during his childhood, he had only the most superficial knowledge of Judaism and hardly knew any Hebrew. Born and bred in Budapest, he belonged to those Hungarian Jews who retained a loyalty for the German language and culture. By vocation he was a man of German letters. Initially he was a playwright, and eventually became a successful journalist. As a member

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of the multinational, multilingual Austro-Hungarian Empire, he was never an outsider. A first-hand account of his striking appearance was given by Stefan Zweig when as a youth he went to offer him a short story for publication in the *Neue Freie Presse* of which he was the literary editor:

### **Zweig and Herzl**

He took (the story) from me, counted the pages of the manuscript, regarded the first page with great interest, leaned back in his chair. It was with a certain feeling of terror that I watched him begin to read in my presence. The minutes seemed to pass slowly; but this first view of his face, seen from one side, made a deep impression on me. It was a faultlessly handsome face. The soft, well-kept black beard gave it a clear, almost rectangular outline, into which the clean-cut nose, set exactly in the middle, fitted well, as did the high, slightly rounded forehead. But this beauty – perhaps almost too regular, too much like a work of art – was deepened by the gentle, almond-shaped eyes with their heavy black, melancholy lashes (in Meyer Weisgal, *Theodor Herzl*, p. 56)

Born in 1860, Herzl's father was in the clothing business. In the local high school, Herzl received a conventional education. In 1878 he enrolled at the University of Vienna in the faculty of law, specializing in Roman Law. In 1884 he received a doctorate and was admitted to the Vienna Bar. During this period he wrote several short plays and a number of essays. Witnessing the emergence of the antisemitic movement in Vienna, he resigned in 1883 from Albia, the student fraternity to which he belonged, because he believed it had embraced anti-Jewish attitudes. At this stage he sought to become a German writer and playwright.

Initially Herzl submitted pieces to a leading Berlin newspaper; from 1887 he contributed articles on a more permanent basis to Viennese journals. In addition he wrote plays in the tradition and style of a bygone period. In 1891 Herzl became the Paris correspondent of the *Neue Freie Presse*. Previously Herzl had encountered antisemitism in Hungary, Austria and Germany. Yet it was in Paris that he began to consider its universal implications. In his first essay *On the Jewish Question* published in 1893, he suggested that he himself would go to the Pope to enlist his aid for a mass conversion of the Jews to Christianity. This was to take place at St Stephen's Cathedral at noon on a Sunday, accompanied by the ringing of bells. Adult leaders of the community would be at the head of the procession and would remain outside as their co-religionists embraced Christianity.

Although he abandoned this scheme, the Jewish problem continued to occupy him. Within a few months, he came up with a new solution: the

creation of a Jewish State. Herzl's practical programme was conceived in the course of nine months between the spring of 1895 and the winter of that year. In the first passage in his diary begun in May 1895 he explains that he had been occupied for some time with a work of immeasurable greatness. Unsure whether it was nothing more than a gigantic dream, he was overwhelmed by its significance. It was, he pronounces, the only solution to the Jewish Question.

At this time Herzl was unaware that others had propounded similar schemes. Yet later he discovered the work of Leo Pinsker. In September 1895 Narcisse Leven of the Alliance Israélite Universelle told him that he would find many adherents in Russia, and that in Odessa there lived a man named Pinsker who had fought for the same cause. Herzl noted in his diary that, unfortunately, Pinsker was already dead and added that he would read his writings when he could. Several months passed before he did; it was in February 1896, a few days before *Der Judenstaat* was published, that he read *Autoemancipation*, noting that there was an astounding correspondence between Pinsker's and his views.

What was essential to Herzl's plan was the mobilization of vast sums of money. This led him to seek interviews with Baron de Hirsch, one of the richest Jews of the period. Their meeting took place on 2 June 1895 during which he lectured Hirsch on the Jews' lack of political leadership. In his view Hirsch's programme for Jewish migration settlements to Argentina were futile. What was needed was for Jewish plutocrats to finance the creation of a Jewish homeland. Although Hirsch listened politely to Herzl's plans, he made it clear that he was not persuaded. Arriving home, Herzl wrote to Hirsch at length in an effort to explain more clearly what he had tried to convey in person.

At the end of the month, Herzl wrote to Baron Albert, the head of the Vienna branch of the Rothschild family. In his letter he stated that he had composed a memorandum about the Jewish question for the German Kaiser. This was to be delivered at the end of July or the beginning of August. Explaining that he planned to be in Vienna in July, Herzl offered to read him the document. It is not clear whether at this stage Herzl was actually serious about presenting such a memorandum to the Kaiser; the critical point was to interest the Rothschild family in his scheme. What he had in mind was a meeting with the Family Council to whom he would read a detailed description of his ideas. Between 13-17 June he drafted notes of about 25,000 words. Herzl's aim was to inspire the Rothschilds, appealing to their sense of noblesse oblige. Herzl waited for an answer to his request for an audience. By 4 July no reply had come.



## First Steps

After two months of increasing tension, Herzl left Paris at the end of July. Only a small number of individuals showed sympathy for his ideas. Preeminent among these supporters was Max Nordau. Like Herzl he was a German-speaking Hungarian Jew, also a journalist and a playwright. Like Moses Hess, Nordau despaired of the plight of the emancipated Jew. Antisemitism, he believed, was endemic, particularly in Germany. Returning to Vienna, Herzl modified his approach. No longer did he seek out rich Jewish philanthropists. What he needed instead were supporters. With this in mind, he read out the address he had prepared for the Rothschilds to the Chief Rabbi of Vienna, Moritz Gudemann. The Chief Rabbi's response was ambiguous, yet through his influence he met Narcisse Leven of the Alliance Israélite Universelle who informed him about Pinsker's writings and the existence of Hibbat Zion in Eastern Europe. In addition, Leven encouraged him to make contact with the Grand Rabbi of France, Zadoc Kahn and Colonel Goldsmid.

By October Herzl came to the realization that he needed to use the press to communicate his views. In the middle of the month he contacted his chief on the *Neue Freie Presse*, Moritz Benedikt, for support. What he had in mind was a Sunday edition containing Herzl's solution to the Jewish question to be followed by a regular column for public discussion. Despite Benedikt's refusal, Herzl believed he had discovered a new approach. To humour him, the chiefs of the *Neue Freie Presse* advised Herzl to take leave of absence to go to Paris or London and form a study group. Herzl's father informed his son that he felt it was undignified to appeal to Jewish magnates. The Rothschilds, he said, would not listen to the ideas of others. It was to the Jewish masses that Herzl should appeal for support. Banded together, he said, they would be a mighty river. What his son needed to do was to publish a pamphlet or a book to convey the notion of a Jewish state.

In November Herzl travelled to London and Paris where he met various notables, appeared for the first time on a semi-public platform and began to publish his views. In Paris he met Zadoc Kahn on several occasions and read to him and others his original address to the Rothschilds with all references to the Rothschild family removed. During this period he met with Nordau who promised support. In Nordau's opinion, Herzl's pamphlet should be translated into Yiddish and Hebrew for Russian Jewry. Nordau also wrote a letter of introduction to Israel Zangwill in which he explained that Herzl had worked out a scheme for resolving the antisemitic question.

Within English Jewry, Zangwill was a person of considerable significance. Four years younger than Herzl, he was the author of *Children of the Ghetto* published in 1892. After meeting Herzl, he arranged a number of meetings with leading British Jews including Asher Myers, the editor of the *Jewish Chronicle*, the Chief Rabbi Hermann Adler, and Sir Samuel Montagu, a banker and Member of Parliament. In addition, Zangwill took him to the Maccabeans, a society of authors, artists and professionals. In response to the suggestion that he approach Lord Rothschild and other prominent Jews about setting up a study group, Herzl insisted it would be better to appeal to poor Jews since his plans concerned their plight. While he welcomed notable Jews, he would not be dependent on them. British Jews whom he met were generally enthusiastic. Rabbi Simeon Singer, the rabbi of the New West End Synagogue, expressed his support. The editor of the *Jewish Chronicle* asked for a pre-publication summary of his pamphlet.

Returning to Vienna, Herzl revised his pamphlet during the first few weeks of December; the following month he found a publisher. During this period a resumé of his pamphlet, *A Solution to the Jewish Problem*, appeared in the *Jewish Chronicle* accompanied by editorial comment which asserted that Herzl's plan was one of the most astounding statements which ever appeared on the Jewish problem. The *Jewish Chronicle* was not persuaded by his arguments, but did not dismiss them. The following week two letters to the editor were published, and then a third the next week. But nothing further was said subsequently. When the chiefs of the *Neue Freie Presse* heard about Herzl's article, they pressurized him to desist and threatened dismissal if he continued. The only encouragement came from Jewish students who read Herzl's pronouncements in German translation and invited him to a meeting of their society. In answer to the question whether he intended that a Jewish state become a reality, he replied that it should be a real state with its own territory and its own laws inhabited, governed and administered by Jews. Although Herzl feared he might lose his job, he pressed on with his plans. When 500 copies of the *Jewish Chronicle* article arrived in Vienna, he realized that he had committed himself. Three days later he sent a copy to the Prime Minister, Count Badeni. In an accompanying letter he stated that his pamphlet would in all likelihood cause a commotion. But he insisted that he would face this with composure.

Unlike Pinsker whose *Autoemancipation* was intended simply to diagnose the Jewish problem and provide a solution, Herzl was intent on beginning a campaign in which he would play a leading role. In addition, his pamphlet

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offered a programme of action. When it appeared, *Der Judenstaat* was some 30,000 words in length written in a clear style. Throughout Herzl stresses that his plan is not utopian in character; rather, his scheme is a realistic solution to the problem of Jewish suffering and misery. The conclusion he offers is, he believes, inevitable: Jews cannot wait for the ultimate perfection of humanity to be free. They must free themselves. Jews must leave the countries in which they live in great numbers. They must not enter another people's country, but their own.

Herzl's plan is divided into two parts: The first outlines the assumption of responsibility for Jewish national affairs by a political body, the Society of Jews. The second part concerns the management of the exodus of the Jews and their resettlement by a body called the Jewish Company. The task of the Society of Jews is to deal with governments and then administer the territory as a provisional government. The Jewish Company is to take the form of a Chartered Company under English law and assume responsibility for the liquidation of the settlers' assets in their countries of origin and then provide land, housing and employment in the new country. In the longest section of *Der Judenstaat*, the function of the Jewish Company is explained in detail. Concerning the location of the Jewish state, Herzl is anxious to stress the historical links with the Holy Land. Palestine, he writes, is the ever-memorable historic home of the Jewish people. The very name of Palestine will attract Jews with a force of marvellous potency.

### The Reaction to *Der Judenstaat*

Despite Herzl's hopes that *Der Judenstaat* would cause a stir in the Jewish and non-Jewish world, his work was largely ignored. This was due to the fact that the topic raised minimal interest in the press. Even his own newspaper abstained from any mention of the pamphlet or Herzl's activities. Those newspapers that did take notice of his views were generally unsupportive. One exception to the lack of interest was the Rev. William Hechler, chaplain to the British Embassy in Vienna. As we have noted, he had described the re-establishment of a Jewish kingdom in the Holy Land and had predicted that this would occur in 1897. As a result, he viewed the publication of Herzl's plan as a confirmation of his prophecy.

Within the Jewish world, the reaction proved disappointing. Prominent Jews in France, England, Austria, Germany and Hungary were either hostile

or only moderately supportive. The Chief Rabbi of Paris, for example, declared that he had read *Der Judenstaat* and was impressed by the urgency of the issues he raised. But the future, he stated, will prove whether it is practical. Some critics argued that the lack of a religious dimension to Herzl's conception of a Jewish state was a major omission. The *Jewish Chronicle* stated that it did not agree with Herzl's contention that wherever there were Jews there was antisemitism. Neither Baron de Hirsch nor the Rothschilds made any comment.

There were, however, some enthusiastic supporters who viewed *Der Judenstaat* as a landmark. Max Nordau, for example, was enthusiastic:

### **Max Nordau**

[I have read your *Judenstaat* twice... This is only my impression very briefly: from an objective point of view the pamphlet can be discussed from several aspects. From a subjective point of view it is, simply – great. If you had never written a line previously and were never to write again, this single pamphlet would assure you a permanent place among the heroes of all times. (Schwartz, *Max Nordau be-igrotav*, p. 295)

In Vienna leading members of the Zionist circle as well as students of Kadimah and other societies of Jewish students expressed their support. In Berlin members of the Russian-Jewish study circle as well as a German-Jewish group of Hovevei Zion were similarly enthusiastic. The reaction in Cologne was even more positive. There Max Bodenheimer and David Wolffsohn had formed an independent society of Hovevei Zion in 1893. When *Der Judenstaat* appeared, Bodenheimer was enthralled. This work, he declared, had opened up a new epoch. Herzl, he went on, had expressed all that was beating in their hearts. Wolffsohn noted that Herzl's work had made him a new man.

In May Wolffsohn travelled to Vienna to meet Herzl. Later Bodenheimer invited Herzl to address the conference of German settlement societies. Herzl, however, decided against attending. Writing to Bodenheimer, he pointed out that he was opposed to the settling of migrants on a small scale to Palestine. In his view, such infiltration would increase the cost of the land so that it would become increasingly expensive. Herzl had different plans. His programme was to concentrate all efforts on the acquisition of Palestine under international law. This approach would require diplomatic negotiations and a publicity campaign.

Members of Hovevei Zion were alarmed by Herzl's approach and his lack of admiration for their achievements. Some questioned whether he was the

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right person to champion their cause. As a consequence, his links with Eastern European Jewry were put at risk. Nonetheless, news of *Der Judenstaat* spread among Eastern European Jews. At last there was a spokesman for the national cause who was not simply an ignorant Polish Jew. Some European Jewish journals, however, were critical of his plans. *Ha-Zefira*, for example, was opposed to the preparation of a Yiddish edition of *Der Judenstaat*; it was feared that readers would be confused by its contents. Most hostile of all was the Russian-language *Voskhod* declaring that Herzl's scheme was completely naïve.

Leading Eastern European Jewish writers were largely silent. An exception was David Zevi Farbstein who published a critical review of *Der Judenstaat* in Ahad Ha-Am's new journal *Ha-Shiloah*. In Farbstein's view, Herzl's analysis of the Jewish problem was only half true. By focusing solely on the national question, Herzl had disregarded the socio-economic basis of antisemitism. It was the economic role of the Jew in society which caused Jew-hatred. According to Farbstein, what is needed is a radical change in the social and economic life of Jews. A Jewish state could alter such conditions. But it was also necessary for Jews to cultivate the land.

In May 1896 Menahem Ussishkin, a prominent Russian Zionist, had been sent a copy of *Der Judenstaat* with a request that it be distributed by the Hovevei Zion in Vienna. He refused, arguing that there was nothing new in this work which had not already been said by Pinsker, and he regarded the practical aspects of the work as superficial. When Herzl travelled through Vienna in June, Ussishkin initially declined to meet him. Only later was he somewhat reluctantly drawn to Herzl's cause. In Odessa, leading figures of Hovevei Zion were gratified that a person of Herzl's stature had joined the movement, but they were concerned that he did not adopt their more moderate position.

Herzl's followers in Eastern Europe were drawn from less influential members of Hovevei Zion. A few were eccentrics such as Aaron Marcus, a German Jew who had moved to Galicia and become a Hasid. He wrote to Herzl that his pamphlet was like a lightning bolt. Writing to his supporters, Herzl offered thanks and advice on how to proceed. At this stage he wished to have letters of encouragement to show to the Society of Jews which he hoped to establish in London a visit to which was planned in July. One of those who provided such support was Zevi Belkowsky, Professor of Roman Law at Sofia University. He and other members of Hovevei Zion in Odessa pledged the Sofia society's support.

## Diplomatic Initiatives

Herzl's initial relationship with Eastern Europe Jewry was mixed. Despite criticism from influential quarters of Hovevei Zion, some members of the movement were deeply impressed by his efforts. Undeterred, Herzl pressed on with plans to persuade Jewish leaders in Western Europe. In his view, what was now needed were concrete steps to implement his plans. Specifically, Herzl sought the support of the German Kaiser, the Marquess of Salisbury (who served as Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary) and the Sultan. In addition, he hoped to induce the Russian government to endorse his schemes. Unaware of the complexities of the Ottoman Empire, Herzl simply assumed that if western Jews were to use its resources to help the Ottoman government with its financial difficulties, the Sultan would approve of his nationalistic schemes. Further, he believed that European countries might be persuaded to participate in this venture since they would thereby increase their prestige. If European powers supported the creation of a Jewish state, the project would thereby become internationalized.

Jewish plutocrats, however, remained unimpressed by Herzl's plans. As we have seen, he had not persuaded the Rothchilds or Baron de Hirsch. At this point he turned to the Rev. William Hechler, Chaplain to the British Embassy, for assistance. Hechler recommended that he bring Herzl's plan and Herzl himself before some of the German princes as well as the Kaiser. Previously Hechler had served as tutor to the son of Friedrich, the Grand Duke of Baden, and was on good terms with the family. The Grand Duke was the son-in-law of the late Wilhelm I, the first Kaiser of Germany, and thus the uncle through marriage of the Kaiser, Wilhelm II. In his conversation with Hechler, Herzl stressed that he needed to establish direct contact with the German Kaiser – then the Jews would support him.

Herzl promised Hechler that he would provide him with travelling expenses to complete this task. Hechler followed the Kaiser from Vienna to Karlsruhe, the Grand Duke's capital and organized a meeting for Herzl with the Grand Duke of Baden on 23 April 1896. In his diary, he wrote that he would be cool, calm, firm and modest, but at the same time determined. After the interview Herzl recorded these events in his diary:

### *Herzl and the Grand Duke*

We were led into the first waiting-room. It was the Adjutants' Hall. And this did take my breath away. For here the regimental flags stand in magnificent rank and file. Encased in leather, they rest solemn and silent; they are the flags of 1870-1. On the wall between the flag-stands is a painting of a military review: the Grand Duke parading the troops before Kaiser Wilhelm I. One might say that only now did I realize where I was. (Patai, *Diaries*, 23 April vol I, pp. 331–32)

During the meeting the Grand Duke listened carefully. However, he did not give a commitment that he would intercede with the Kaiser. In his responses to Herzl's and Hechler's probing, he discoursed generally on the contemporary diplomatic scene, the Russian Emperor's attitude to the Jews, the decline of parliamentary government, and his own view of the Jews of Baden. He concluded by shaking Herzl's hand, and it was agreed that Herzl would keep him informed of developments. The only concrete outcome was that the Grand Duke agreed that he would inform several influential men in England that he took an interest in Herzl's plans. Writing to Nordau about his meeting, Herzl conveyed that he now believed that the project had taken a serious step forward.

Herzl's plan was to travel to Constantinople in June for a meeting with the Sultan. His intention was to purchase Erez-Israel in exchange for a restructuring of Turkish finances. This called for a second meeting – this time with Nordau representing the Zionist cause – with the Rothschilds which was arranged by Chief Rabbi Zadoc Kahn for mid May. Nordau recorded afterwards that Edmond de Rothschild spoke for fifty-three minutes, whereas he had only had ten minutes to present his case. Rothschild, he noted, was completely uninterested and would not offer any financial support. In Rothschild's view, the plan was impractical since the Sultan feared Russia, and Russia would never permit Palestine to be under Jewish control. Further, although the Sultan needed money and made some kind of promise, his word could not be relied on. In addition, Rothschild feared Herzl's initiative since it might appear that Jews were not patriotic supporters of the countries in which they lived. Finally, Rothschild believed that Herzl's approach might interfere with his own settlement work in the Holy Land. In his diary, Herzl resolved in future to ignore the Rothschilds.

Despite his lack of knowledge of Ottoman politics and the religion of Islam, Herzl pressed on. To gain access, Herzl approached Philipp Michael de Newlinski, a Polish aristocrat who had been a lawyer in Russia and served

as an official of the Austrian Embassy in Constantinople. Newlinkski enabled Herzl to gain access to various Ottoman officials. In his diary, Herzl recorded that Newlinkski said that he had read his pamphlet and discussed it with the Sultan. Yet the Sultan declared that he could never part with Jerusalem since the Mosque of Omar must always remain in the possession of Islam. In Herzl's opinion, this was not an insurmountable problem; Jerusalem could belong to everyone, and the holy place could become a possession of all believers.

Herzl believed that Newlinkski could arrange an interview. En route to Constantinople, Herzl stopped off in Sofia. When the train arrived, a rapturous crowd awaited him, hailing him as their leader and the Heart of Israel. As he left they cried: 'Next year in Jerusalem'. On 17 June Herzl arrived in Constantinople, leaving eleven days later. During his stay he saw the Grand Vizier, Halil Rifat Pasha, and the Sultan's Second Secretary, Izzet Bey. The Grand Vizier listened patiently and asked questions. Yet it was clear that the Grand Vizier was not sympathetic. According to Newlinkski, the Second Secretary advised that the Jews should first acquire some other territory, then offer it with additional payment in exchange for Erez-Israel. During his visit, Herzl also called on the Chief Dragoman of the Russian Embassy. The Sultan, however, declined to see him and cautioned Newlinkski that Herzl should not take any further steps in this matter. It would be impossible, he stated, to sell even a foot of land since it did not belong to him. It belonged instead to his people who fought for it with their blood. He would not agree to vivisection. However, before Herzl left, the Sultan was challenged to show what he could do for the Turks in terms of obtaining a substantial loan. Although disappointed that he had not achieved his nationalistic objectives, Herzl believed that he had at least demonstrated that it might be possible to provide Jewish financial support in exchange for political concessions.

## Further Negotiations

Herzl had so far failed to convince rich and influential Jews to support him. At this stage Herzl turned to Sir Samuel Montagu. Yet, as Rabbi Simeon Singer (one of Herzl's strongest British supporters) explained, Sir Samuel did not think that the intervention of a British subject would help the cause given the poor relations between Britain and Turkey. Thus, despite the reports he had sent from Constantinople, Herzl did not have an enthusiastic welcome in London. Lucien Wolf did interview him for the *Daily Graphic*, but Montagu



and Colonel Goldsmid were not free for talks. There was an attempt to get the local correspondent of the *Neue Freie Presse* to use his connections to raise the loan requested by the Turks, but this came to nothing. Other leading Jews offered little assistance.

In London Herzl gave a talk to the Maccabeans which was reported at length in the *Jewish Chronicle*. He stressed that his efforts would not endanger the settlements in Eretz-Israel, pointing out that the efforts of Hovevei Zion were less than satisfactory. He emphasized that he was not simply a writer; he was embarked on a political enterprise of historic significance. Among the leaders of British Jewry, there were serious reservations. Sir Samuel Montagu, for example, questioned whether Jews should act internationally on political matters. In his view, Jews could only be established in Palestine by the voluntary combination of the great powers. Yet, there were others who were attracted by his project. At a meeting on 12 July at the Jewish Workingmen's Club in Whitechapel in the East End of London, Herzl was greeted with the same response he encountered in Sofia. With passion, he declared that the solution to the Jewish problem could only be found with the creation of a Jewish state. All efforts, he said, must be made on achieving national recognition. Following a rapturous response, Herzl concluded that he must lead a mass movement.

Enthused by this reception, he travelled to Paris to address the Rothschilds at the Baron's office on 18 July. However, unlike the meeting in Whitechapel, the interview went badly. Baron Edmond de Rothschild feared that Herzl would inflame the masses and overturn the status quo. This, he believed, would do harm to Jewry everywhere. Who, he wondered, would provide for an influx of Jewish settlers in the Holy Land if the Zionist cause were successful? Undeterred, Herzl told Rothschild that if he refused to help, then the entire programme was jeopardized.

In Eastern Europe reports of Herzl's travels to Constantinople, London and Paris in the summer of 1896 were recorded in the Jewish press. Although a significant number of Jews supported the efforts of Hibbat Zion, there was a suspicion of this newcomer. Nahum Sokolov, for example, commented that it was hard to know what to make of Herzl. Herzl, he thought, was like a little boy playing with fire near a barn. Our people, he wrote, want neither states nor kingdoms. This is what the Turkish government must be told. The journal *Ha-Maggid* complained that Herzl presumed to meet with the Sultan and the wealthy Jews of England without consulting with the people themselves to hear their views and ask about their needs. Herzl, the journal concluded, was a great writer, but a poor statesman.

In Paris a very negative estimation of Herzl's activities was given by the writer Abraham Ludvipol:

### ***Ludvipol and Herzl***

Herzl has accomplished nothing real, either in Constantinople, or in London, or, of course in Paris. The rumour that he spoke to the Sultan is false. It is not certain that he spoke to the Grand Vizier. His talk is of great affairs, but it seems to me that in the end only one of two things will come of them. He is either a true Hovev Zion, in which case when he sees that he has accomplished nothing ... he will turn to the Hovevei Zion and co-operate with them. Or else, he is a Hovev Zion only in words, in which he has learnt that he is not much believed and that what he has done thus far runs contrary to the idea of Hibbat Zion, he will leave the camp. (Ludvipol to Ussishkin, 19 July 1896, CZA, A24/4/455 in Vital, *The Origins of Zionism*, p. 320)

In Vienna Herzl agreed to his own election as head of the local Zionist movement and made a speech to this group in November 1896. During this period he corresponded with supporters in various countries and sought unsuccessfully to meet with the Kaiser and leading political figures. By autumn Herzl was demoralized by the lack of progress and he feared that his movement had come to an end. He had not gained the support of rich Jews, nor was he able to launch a newspaper dealing with Jewish policy. Nonetheless, Herzl had not lost faith in the Zionist enterprise. Gradually he came to the view that what was needed was a gathering together of Zionists at a general assembly. By January 1897 he was convinced that such an assembly should take place in Switzerland in the summer. A month later he informed friends that it would take place in the latter half of August.

This plan was confirmed at a meeting on 7 March 1897 at a conference in Vienna with a group of Hovevei Zion from Berlin. It was decided that it would be held on 25 August in Munich, or if that were not possible, in Breslau or Zurich. The invitations to the Congress would carry Herzl's signature and he would determine its nature. An organizing committee would be established to assist him and suggestions for the agenda were made including discussions on the psychology and pathology of the Jews and the theory and practice of Zionism. At last practical steps were being made to bring about Herzl's ambitions. The Congress, Herzl believed, would be a glorious demonstration to the world of what Zionism means and what it desires. The *Jewish Chronicle* was given a preliminary agenda and by the beginning of April the first formal announcement accompanied by registration instructions, agenda and the explanation of the aims of the Congress had been drafted and sent to leading figures throughout the Jewish world.

## Plans for the Congress

Despite Herzl's enthusiasm for the Congress, he met opposition from a variety of quarters. In early June the leadership of Hovevei Zion in Great Britain declared that it would not associate itself with Herzl's Congress. Sir Samuel Montagu told him that he was opposed to Jews acting internationally in political affairs. Chief Rabbi Zadoc Kahn stated that he would follow the events closely but that since rabbis in France were to some degree officials of the state this made his position difficult. The Chief Rabbi of Vienna published an anti-Zionist tract. As far as the *Neue Freie Presse* was concerned, his employers pressed him to abandon his plans. Most significantly, Willy Bambus and his colleague Hirsch Hildesheimer, members of the Hovevei Zion who had earlier supported the convening of the Congress, were concerned by the hostile attitude of other members of Hibbat Zion. Bambus declared that he had never intended to attend a Zionist Congress, but indicated that he would participate in an event that designed to discuss the tasks of the Palestine aid project. In June, the Munich Jewish community expressed its opposition to Herzl's scheme. The next month the executive of the German rabbinate condemned the efforts of the Zionists to create a Jewish national state in Palestine. This, they argued, was opposed to Scripture and distinguished between legitimate Jewish settlement in Erez Israel, and the Zionist project.

Such criticism undermined Herzl's plan for an international Congress of distinguished Western Jews who would highlight the plight of their co-religionists in Eastern Europe. Nonetheless, Max Nordau remained faithful to the cause as did young supporters in Vienna, students in France and Berlin, followers from the East End in London and the provinces and a number of other loyalists including Max Bodenheimer and David Wolffsohn. During the summer the *Jewish Chronicle* reported on the progress of the Congress. Chief Rabbi Zadoc Kahn wrote supportively to Herzl and Willy Bambus declaring that he would attend after all. As news of the Congress spread, an increasing interest in the Zionist cause took place. Opponents were vociferous in opposition; supporters valiantly defended the Zionist cause.

During the summer Herzl decided to move the Congress to Basle due to the opposition of the Munich Jewish community. By the end of June he became concerned about the lack of enthusiasm for the Congress in the East, and he asked Mordechai Ehrenpreis to print a Hebrew language version of the invitation to the Congress and send it to prominent members of Hibbat

Zion. In Russia news spread that Herzl had called a Congress of Zionists. Press reactions were generally supportive. *Ha-Zefira* reported that the Zionist movement had not yet initiated such a scheme. Privately there was some support for Herzl's scheme, but the group headed by the Odessa Committee was largely opposed. *Ahad Ha-Am*, however, was less critical. The Congress, he believed, might raise the prestige of Zionism within the Jewish world. Yet he was not convinced that it could have any diplomatic impact. In general the members of *Hibbat Zion* in Russia could not reach a consensus about the need for a Congress. From many quarters there were suspicions about the impact such a Congress might have on the attitude of state officials as well as reservations about Herzl himself and his methods.

Despite such opposition, when it became clear that the Congress would be held, the question was no longer whether members of *Hibbat Zion* should attend but rather whether they should go as a group and what their aims should be. Writing to the Vilna association at the end of June, Menahem Ussishkin declared that the Congress could be of importance if it concerned itself with matters which the western Zionists regarded as of little consequence but which were issues of great significance to Eastern European Jews. It would be best, he continued, if those coming from Russia arrived in Basle several days before the Congress to consult together and draw up a Russian programme of action. Some members of *Hibbat Zion* were concerned that the Basle Congress might cause harm to the Zionist cause and insisted that nothing be said at the Congress which might offend the Turks or the Tsar government.

Arrangements for the Congress were well organized: a Congress bureau was manned with secretaries fluent in the various languages of the delegates; the agenda had been printed beforehand, and delegates were given a badge bearing a blue shield with a red border and the inscription: 'The establishment of a Jewish state is the only possible solution to the Jewish question.' In the centre was the Lion of Judah surrounded by a Shield of David and twelve stars. Two days before the Congress a meeting was held to establish rules of procedure. Its most important task was to appoint a seven-man committee headed by Max Nordau to draft a programme of the movement to put before the Congress. In his diary Herzl noted that he had gathered an army of schnorrers. Yet he was convinced that such an army would be sufficient if only success were in sight.

# Congress and Aftermath

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On 29 August the First Zionist Congress took place in Basle. Though only about half of the participants came from Eastern Europe, a large proportion of those from Western countries were of Eastern European origin. Half of those from Germany, for example, were originally from Russia. Herzl took special care not to dominate the Congress, and the most moving speech was given by Max Nordau, who spoke eloquently about the dismal conditions of European Jewry at the end of the nineteenth century. Antisemitism, he explained, dominated their lives. Believing that the world hates them, they are unable to find a place where they can feel secure. In his speech to the Congress, Herzl emphasized that the creation of a Jewish homeland is an abiding feature of the Jewish tradition. In its programme the Congress adopted by acclamation the quest to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Yet, after Basle there were two approaches to Zionism: political Zionism as espoused by Herzl, and practical Zionism, the official policy of Hovevei Zion. Dedicated to settling the land, Hovevei Zion continued with their small-scale settlements in Palestine, committed to the view that the development of a Jewish presence should be a gradual process. Herzl, however, believed that there must be a massive in-gathering in the Holy Land. Determined to save those Jews who were compelled to live in adverse conditions, he sought to negotiate at the highest levels a grant of land sufficient for Jewish statehood.

## The Congress

On 29 August 1897 the Congress opened in the concert hall of the Basle Municipal Casino. Herzl gave instructions that the delegates should attend the opening session in formal dress, tails and white tie. Between 200–250 men and women from 24 states and territories were in attendance. The official list included 199 names, but was incomplete since a number of Russian delegates wished their names not to appear since they were concerned about being arrested on their return home. Others simply failed to register. No distinctions were made between the various types of delegates: about a third were full delegates who had been elected to represent their local communities or Hibbat Zion societies; others had been invited in their own right; some came in a dual capacity as both a representative and as a result of a personal invitation; some were non-Jewish guests such as William Hechler. In addition, there were hundreds of spectators seated in the public gallery. In general there were only two major distinctions: one was between the Jews and non-Jews; the other between men and women.

Taken as a whole the participants were generally educated, middle-class Jews. About a quarter were drawn from business, industry and finance; the next largest categories consisted of literary figures, men of the professions and students. There were also eleven rabbis, a cantor, a farmer, a sculptor, two stenographers and a printer. The majority were liberal in religious orientation, but the delegates also included several agnostics as well as socialists. Overwhelmingly the delegates were preoccupied by the plight of Jews. With few exceptions, Orthodox Jewry was not represented. Very few individuals had a reputation outside of Jewish circles, excluding Max Nordau, Israel Zangwell and Herzl himself. There was one untenured professor of mathematics at Heidelberg, Hermann Schapira.

The Congress thus was not an assembly of illustrious Jewish figures; rather it was a gathering in which Eastern European Jewry was predominant. About half of the delegates had come from Russia, Romania, Serbia, Bulgaria, Austrian Poland and Bukovina. The largest group was from Russia, Russian Poland, Lithuania and Latvia. In addition, a large segment of those named from other countries were from the East. At least half of those from Germany were students in Russia, or individuals who had settled in Germany as adults but whose origins were from the East – the same was true of groups from Austria, Bohemia, England, France, Switzerland and the United States. The main

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characteristic of the delegates was membership in the Hibbat Zion movement. The largest representation of Hovevei Zion was from the East. Outstanding among these figures was Ahad Ha-Am, Emmanuel Mandelstamm, Nahum Sokolov and Menahem Ussishkin.

As planned, the Russian delegates met in caucus to approve the set speech by Ya'akov Bernstein-Cohen. At several points in the debate they got a suspension of the sitting so that they could organize a common approach. Yet it was evident that they were divided among themselves. Some subscribed to the peaceful settlement approach; others endorsed a political model. This split was echoed among Western delegates as well. During the Congress, for example, a Western Hovev Zion called for a vote of thanks to Baron Edmond de Rothschild for his contribution to the Zionist cause. Herzl and Nordau, representing the new political direction of the movement, gave the two key speeches, one restating the rationale of political Zionism, the other an assessment of the social condition of the Jewish community.

Herzl declared to the Congress that it was no longer the spiritual and intellectual life of the Jews that was at issue. What was of central importance were their material needs. Zionism, he continued, was a great popular movement. It must work openly and loyally with the confidence and agreement of the states concerned. Hibbat Zion was limited in what it could achieve. If Jewish settlement continued at the present rate, it would take nine centuries to solve the Jewish problem. Hence, the Jewish question must be approached in an entirely new fashion. The hopes and fears of thousands of the Jewish nation rested on the outcome of the Congress:

### ***Herzl and the Zionist Congress***

In this Congress we are creating an organ for the Jewish people which it has not had before, but which it has urgently needed. Our cause is too great (to be subordinate to) the ambition and wilfulness of individuals. It must be lifted to the plane of the impersonal if it is to succeed... However long it will take to complete our work, let our Congress be serious and lofty, a blessing for the unfortunate, a threat to nobody, a source of honour to all Jews and worthy of the past, the glory of which is far off, but everlasting. (*Protokoll des I. Zionistenkongresses in Basle*, 29-31 August 1897, pp. 15-20)

Nordau spoke about the contemporary condition of Jewry. Wherever they lived in large numbers, he stated, they were subject to misery. Proponents of Jewish emancipation have argued that if legal restrictions against Jews were lifted, this would result in the amelioration of Jewish deprivation. This has

happened in the West, yet human beings do not live by bread alone. The old forms of misery have been replaced by new ones: antisemitism exists even in the most enlightened countries. In such a situation the Jew has become an inner cripple.

The Congress took place over three days from 29-31 August. In addition to the opening addresses, delegates heard reports on the conditions in various countries as well as the revival of the Hebrew language. Rabbi Mohilever's message to the Congress was read out, and there were announcements of other letters, telegrams and petitions. Proposals were made to establish a Jewish National Fund, a committee for Hebrew literature, and an accurate statistical record of Jewry. In addition, discussions took place concerning the creation of various permanent institutions. It was agreed that Congress would be the chief organ of the movement. Delegates were to be elected by their local Zionist societies. Ordinary business between Congresses was to be carried on by an Actions Committee consisting of eighteen members elected on a country basis and a sub-group from Vienna elected by the Congress as a whole. The Vienna members were expected to serve as the executive committee. Local Zionist organizations in each country were granted a degree of autonomy.

After considerable debate, the full Basle Programme was accepted by the delegates.

### ***The Basle Programme***

Zionism aims at the creation of a home for the Jewish people in Palestine to be secured by public law.

To that end, the Congress envisages the following:

1. The purposeful advancement of the settlement of Palestine with Jewish farmers, artisans, and tradesmen.
2. The organizing and unifying of all Jewry by means of appropriate local and general arrangements subject to the laws of each country.
3. The strengthening of Jewish national feeling and consciousness.
4. Preparatory moves towards obtaining such governmental consent as will be necessary to the achievements of the aims of Zionism. (*Vital, Zionism: The Formative Years*, p. 4)

After the Congress, Herzl concluded in his diary: 'Were I to sum up the Basle Congress in a word – which I shall guard against pronouncing publicly – it would be this. At Basle I founded the Jewish State.'



## Zionism after Basle

Despite the success of the Congress, the Zionists did not constitute a coherent party. Instead they were a small, minority group in the Jewish world. Yet they sought to bring about a complete transformation of the condition of Jewry. Reporting on the Congress, the *Jewish Chronicle* described the historical importance of the Congress:

### The Jewish Chronicle

In one respect the Zionist Congress will stand as a landmark in the history of the Jews of Europe. It has called forth, in the English and Continental Press, fuller and more sympathetic comment on the position of the Jews of Europe than any event of our history. (*Jewish Chronicle*, 3 September 1897)

Other newspapers were less sympathetic, but there was general recognition that the event was of considerable significance. Herzl himself believed that he now had sufficient support to continue his efforts to convince Turkey and the major European powers of the virtues of his nationalistic plans.

As we have seen, at Basle it was agreed that the Congress was to be the sovereign institution of the movement. An Actions Committee consisting of twenty-three members was to carry out activities; five of its members living in Vienna who had been elected by the full Congress formed the smaller Actions Committee with responsibility for day-to-day affairs. The other members of the Action Committee were to be elected by their country associations. However, not all country associations did in fact elect representatives, nor was it determined how these individuals could perform their duties. Herzl dominated the smaller Actions Committee and his Viennese colleagues acted largely as his assistants.

On 16-17 November the first working party of leading Russian Zionists took place in Bialystok. Rabbi Shemu'el Mohilever served as the host and was joined by Yisrael Jasinowski and Ya'akov Bernstein-Kohan. Max Mandelstamm was represented by Leo Motzkin. In addition, there were a number of lesser figures from major centres in Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Byelorussia, the Ukraine, and Russia itself. Largely their discussions were about organizational matters, but they also debated policy, resolving that actions for the benefit of the settlements in Eretz-Israel should accord with the programme of the Basle Congress.

Despite the earlier reservations voiced by members of eastern Hibbat Zion, after Basle there was a widespread acceptance that the direction of the

movement should follow the lines set out by the Basle Congress. Herzl was in the ascendant. Yet there existed a minority view opposed to Herzl's political agenda. The leading eastern opponent was Ahad Ha-Am, who had doubts about the Congress from the onset and disliked much of what he experienced in Basle. Although he agreed that the gathering offered the opportunity to make a great public statement, he thought that nothing of substance had been accomplished. At the end of the Congress he wrote in private correspondence that its delegates had destroyed a great deal more than they had built. From the start he had disliked Herzl and rejected his methods.

Twice Herzl and Ahad Ha-Am had met at the Congress. Later Ahad Ha-Am noted that he came to the conclusion that Herzl's doings in Constantinople lacked substance. No promises had been made and there was no doubt that from now on the Government of Turkey would come down upon the Jewish population with a much heavier hand than before. His objections to Herzl's views were put forward in a short article in *Ha-Shilo'ah* and followed by a longer article in December.

Ahad Ha-Am's objection to Herzl's scheme was based on his belief that little could be done to advance the Zionist cause either by further settlement as before or through political negotiation. The enterprise, he argued, was too ambitious. It was impossible that millions of Jews could settle in Eretz Israel. The ingathering of all exiles, he wrote, is beyond human possibility. Even if some form of a Jewish state were to emerge, it would be so small and weak that it would be overwhelmed by its powerful neighbours. What Ahad Ha-Am envisaged instead was a community of Jews living in Eretz Israel which could become the centre of the Jewish people. What was needed was not simply a state of Jews, but a Jewish state which could inspire world Jewry. Such a vision animated Ahad Ha-Am's dedication to the Zionist cause, and he encouraged delegates to attend the Second Zionist Congress to insure that the delegates discussed the ideology of a Jewish commonwealth.

By espousing this position, Ahad Ha-Am became the leader of a minority group of spiritual Zionists in contrast to the majority material Zionists. Figures such as Moshe Leib Lilienblum, a founder-member of the Odessa circle of Hovevei Zion, were bitterly critical. According to Lilienblum, Ahad Ha-Am was misguided in thinking that many Jews were concerned with spiritual and intellectual matters. On the contrary, they were overwhelmed by poverty and misery. The modern Jew could not be consoled by religious beliefs which had sustained Jewry in the past. What the Jewish people sought was relief from their suffering – this was the aim of Zionism. Better a small state, than none at all.

In order to co-ordinate their views prior to the Second Congress, Russian and Polish delegates met in Warsaw from 19 to 22 August. This meeting was the first large-scale representative gathering of the Russian wing of the movement. Due to fear of police intervention, it was held in secret with participants moving from one apartment to another. There were four main items on the agenda. The first was to sort out the differences between supporters of the new movement and the old guard. The second item was a discussion of Ahad Ha-Am's position. As one of the delegates, Ahad Ha-Am presented the arguments he had put forward in articles. In response there was general agreement that an autonomous Jewish centre in Eretz-Israel was a fundamental goal, and few shared Ahad Ha-Am's gloomy prognosis. The third topic concerned the settlement of Eretz-Israel in the interim period. The final item concerned the nature of Zionism itself. Here there was a serious division between the Orthodox and secular Jews.

### The Second Congress and Aftermath

The Second Congress of Zionists took place from 28 to 31 August 1898 at Basle. It began with an opening speech by Herzl and was followed by a review of the Jewish condition by Nordau. With 349 delegates and about 150 journalists, the gathering was much larger than the First Congress and included important figures from the West including Bernard Lazare, Moses Gaster, the Chief Sephardic Rabbi of Great Britain, and Richard Gottheil, Professor of Semitics at Columbia University as well as a number of Orthodox rabbis from the East. As before, the proceedings were dominated by delegates who represented Hibbat Zion in Russia, Russian Poland, Galicia and Romania. Yet, at the Second Congress, those who attended had been chosen by local associations. The main topics discussed at the Congress were internal to the movement and to Jewry generally. In this respect the Second Congress was more inward looking than the First, focusing on general principles of Zionism.

#### *Herzl's Opening Address*

From that emancipation, which cannot be revoked, and from anti-Semitism, which cannot be denied, we were able to draw a new and important conclusion. It could not have been the historical intent of emancipation that we should cease to be Jews, for when we tried to mingle with others we were rebuffed. Rather, the historical intent of emancipation must have been that we were to create a homeland for our liberated nation. We would not have been able to do this earlier. We can do it now, if we desire it with all our might. (Protokoll II, pp. 3–11 in Zohn, *Zionist Writings*, p. 1975)

In his opening address Herzl defended Zionist policy. Emancipation, he argued, had paved the way for the creation of a Jewish homeland. Calling Jews world-wide to rally to the cause, he stressed that the rabbis should lend their support. They pray for Zion, he stated, but in fact they work against it. It was not sufficient that the Zionist idea should be advanced by secular leaders – the religious establishment must join their ranks. Although Herzl was reluctant for the financial statements of the movement to be disclosed since the amount was relatively small, he listed the number of local associations world-wide consisting of 913. Altogether, it seems likely that the total membership at the time of the Second Congress was under 100,000 or about 1 per cent of all Jewry. Nonetheless Herzl maintained that the masses were in favour of their efforts.

The major division between members was between Herzl loyalists and those who were distrustful of his actions. Despite such differences, the Congress resolved that settlement should continue but only subject to permission being granted by the Turkish government and in line with the policy formulated by a committee of the Congress. Concerning the location of a Jewish homeland, Congress reaffirmed its commitment to Eretz Israel. Congress also agreed that there should be a programme of mass, modern education and refused to accept rabbinical authority and supervision concerning education and culture. This caused the rabbis from Eastern Europe to leave the Congress in a hostile mood. On their return to Russia, they launched an attack on Zionist policy.

After the Congress, Herzl travelled to Lake Constance where he met the Grand Duke of Baden at Mainau Castle. As we noted, his meeting with him two years previously at Karlsruhe had been arranged by William Hechler – this was before he had decided to summon a Congress and form a movement. At this meeting the Grand Duke said that Berlin was aware from its sources in Constantinople that the Zionists were viewed with favour there. The Kaiser, he emphasized, had influence with the Sultan. Hence, it was imperative that Herzl meet with the Kaiser after his return from the Near East. Count Eulenburg was to draw up a report on the Zionist movement for the Emperor. Two weeks later Herzl met with Eulenburg in Vienna.

At this meeting Eulenburg asked Herzl what he wanted the Kaiser to do in Constantinople. In reply Herzl said that he only wanted the Kaiser to recommend that the Sultan negotiate with him. Yet it was important that the Germans know what was being asked was not simply permission to immigrate but autonomy. Eulenburg told Herzl that Count Bülow, the German Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, was in Vienna and urged him to talk to him. The

next day Herzl met with Bülow. Herzl repeated the arguments for the Zionist cause. Bülow was not concerned about the idea of Germany assisting the Zionists but was worried that this policy was made public.

Herzl then pressed for an interview with the Kaiser before he left for Constantinople. After a briefing with Eulenburg, the Kaiser indicated he would see Herzl and would receive him at the head of a delegation in Jerusalem itself. In a letter to the Duke of Baden the Kaiser indicated that he was sympathetic to the Zionist cause and would intercede on behalf of the Jews. In a telegraph to Herzl, the Grand Duke conveyed the news. Eulenburg also wrote to Herzl, explaining that he had twice met with the Kaiser who expressed a profound understanding of the Zionist movement and was ready to intercede with the Sultan. An audience with the Kaiser, he continued, was undesirable at this time, but a Zionist deputation would be received in Jerusalem. In a second letter written after further talks with the Kaiser, Eulenburg wrote that the Kaiser would discuss the matter with the Sultan and would be pleased to hear further details in Jerusalem.

Herzl saw Eulenburg again at his estate near Berlin and confirmed all that he had previously written. He stressed his own role in persuading the Kaiser and Bülow. Herzl, he indicated, should go first to Constantinople to be available for an audience there with the Kaiser, and only then to Jerusalem. They then discussed the composition of the Zionist delegation. Yet, when he met with the Imperial Chancellor, Prince Hohenlohe and Bülow two days later, the atmosphere was different. Bülow was unreceptive and the conversation ended abruptly, leaving Herzl puzzled about Germany's intentions.

On 15 October Herzl and other Zionist representatives arrived in Constantinople. Bodenheimer was sent to the German Ambassador to announce his arrival, but the response was that Herzl was unknown. After two days of anxious waiting, Herzl tried again. Wolffsohn made contact with the Kaiser's party and Herzl was summoned on 18 October to the Kaiser's quarters in Yildiz. The Kaiser listened attentively and then explained his own interest in the Zionist movement. Their conversation focused on the problem of antisemitism and Zionism. In reply to the question what the Kaiser should tell the Sultan, Herzl responded that what was needed was a chartered company under German protection.

After waiting four days in Jerusalem, the Zionist delegation was granted an audience with the Kaiser on 2 November 1898. Yet the reception was not what was anticipated: the Zionist's addresses to the Kaiser had to be redrafted under the supervision of a foreign-service officer to exclude any political content. The topics discussed concerned climate and agriculture. There was

no mention of a charter, nor was anything said about the Kaiser's conversation with the Sultan. The official communiqué regarding the meeting stressed that the Kaiser was interested in all efforts directed towards the improvement of agriculture in Palestine. In essence, Germany had reversed its initial position.

## An Audience with the Sultan and the British Initiative

In a letter to Herzl, the Grand Duke of Baden explained that the failure of the approach to the Sultan was due to his distrust of Jews. He stressed that he would continue to inform the Kaiser about the Zionists' plans; the behaviour of Jews living in Jerusalem had harmed the cause. The official German record of the affair confirms that the Kaiser did raise the issue of a chartered company with the Sultan, but that he did not like it. The Kaiser was thus unable to pursue a policy which was inimical to Turkish interests. Undeterred, Herzl pressed on with his campaign to meet with the Sultan. Without the Grand Duke of Baden to help him, he turned to others for assistance. The first individual he approached was Mehemed Nuri Bey, whom he had met on his first visit to Constantinople and at the Peace Conference at The Hague in 1899. Nuri was the chief official of the Foreign Ministry and a spy for the Palace who suggested that he should seek to buy land in the regions of Aleppo and Beirut before turning his attention to Eretz Israel. To aid him in this project, Nuri was prepared to form a syndicate of Turkish notables as agents. For a fee of 40,000 francs, Nuri offered to arrange a meeting between Herzl and the Sultan.

The Zionists were anxious to pursue the suggestion of a meeting with the Sultan, and 10,000 francs Nuri wanted paid on account were raised. Eduard Crespi served as Nuri's agent, and Herzl drafted a formal request and waited for a response. The autumn passed without event. By 1900 when he heard that Nuri had passed through Vienna without contacting him, Herzl feared that no progress had been made. The other intermediary Herzl contacted was the Jewish orientalist Arminius Vámbéry who had occasionally acted as an adviser to the Sultan. In June 1900 they met. Vámbéry was willing to help but did not wish to be pressed. Yet, by August, Vámbéry informed Herzl that he had written to the Sultan and had received a favourable reply. In September Vámbéry informed Herzl that the Sultan would definitely receive him.

During the following months Herzl engaged in correspondence with Nuri about possible ways the Zionists could be of use to the Ottoman government.

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In the meantime Vámbéry made a journey in mid-April to Constantinople to ask the Sultan to meet with Herzl. By early May Herzl was informed that the Sultan would receive him. Vámbéry would not be allowed to attend. A court official, Ibrahim Bey, would serve instead as an interpreter. Herzl would be received as a journalist rather than Zionist and the subject of Zionism would not be discussed. Despite these restrictions, Herzl was anxious for any opportunity to meet the Sultan. Arriving on 11 May 1901, he had a meeting with Tahsin Bey, the Sultan's First Secretary and awaited a summons.

Six days after his arrival, the meeting took place. In his diary, Herzl described the Sultan as short, skinny man with a large hooked nose, a fully dyed beard and a small tremulous voice. The interview was cordial and lasted for two hours. Herzl did not discuss the Zionist movement nor a charter. Instead he explained how Jews could offer services to the Ottoman state. If it were accepted, then such support should involve a reciprocal gesture from the Turkish sovereign. In the end, a general agreement was reached: although unspecified the principle was accepted that Jewish financial support would be provided in exchange for political concessions. Yet, fourteen months passed in various exchanges in writing and visits to Constantinople in February and July 1902 without a concrete result.

### ***Herzl's View of the Sultan***

The hooked nose of a Punchinello, the long yellow teeth with a big gap on the upper-right... The feeble hands in white, oversized gloves, and the ill-fitting coarse, loud-coloured cuffs. The bleating voice, the constraint in every word, the timidity in every glance. And this rules! Only on the surface, of course, and nominally. (Patai, *Diaries*, vol. 3, p. 1128)

Herzl's unsuccessful efforts to persuade the Sultan was followed by a fruitless attempt to interest Germany in the Zionist cause. Yet the main focus of his activities until his death in the summer of 1904 was to persuade Great Britain of the need for the establishment of a Jewish homeland. As we noted, the first public statement of his ideas took place in London in 1895 where the *Jewish Chronicle* had first published his argument which became the basis of *Der Judenstaat*. It was in London's East End that Herzl had first encountered eastern European Jews who became his loyal followers. A number of leading figures in the English Jewish world had been his supporters. Yet, despite the fact that the Fourth Zionist Congress took place in London rather than Basle, the English Jewish establishment took little interest in the Zionist movement.

Nonetheless, in March 1902 Herzl's leading supporter in England, Leopold Greenberg, initiated a meeting between Herzl and the Royal Commission

dealing with alien immigration. Despite Lord Rothschild's objections, a formal invitation was issued. Herzl travelled to London but was recalled to Vienna due to the death of his father. A month later he returned and was summoned to a formal appearance before the Royal Commission and a private talk the following day with its chairman. This was followed by a meeting on the 22 and 23 October 1902 with the Colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain. During their meeting Chamberlain accepted Herzl's analysis of the Jewish question and agreed with his solution. In response to Herzl's reference to the three British controlled territories where Jews could be settled, Chamberlain distinguished between those administered from Cairo (El Arish and parts of the Sinai Peninsula) and the island of Cyprus. The former were the concern of the Foreign Office; the later Chamberlain's responsibility.

Cyprus, Chamberlain believed, was not suitable for the Jews – any influx would be resisted by the native Greek population. But El Arish was a different case. The land was largely uninhabited, and it could serve as a rallying point for the Jewish people. Chamberlain stated that he would agree to the creation of a Jewish settlement there. But this would be conditional on the consent of Lord Cromer, the British governor of Egypt. Further, since the departmental responsibility for Egypt was the Foreign Secretary's Office, he would have to see Lord Lansdowne. Following a meeting with Herzl, Lord Lansdowne wrote to Cromer explaining that Herzl had wished to get hold of a tract near El Arish and establish a colony of Jewish people there. A Zionist emissary, Leopold Greenberg, would be sent to Cairo to collect information.

## A Settlement in East Africa

When Greenberg arrived in Egypt, he was received by Cromer and Boutros Ghali, the Egyptian Foreign Minister. He then returned to Europe to report back to Herzl and together, with Nordau, Zangwill and several others, they submitted a memorandum to the Foreign Office in London outlining the advantages to both Great Britain and the Jewish community. It was suggested that once Britain and Egypt approved the scheme, a commission of inquiry be established. This document was read with care and various concerns were raised. A response was then communicated to Herzl. The Foreign Office stipulated that before a commission of inquiry be sent there would need to be assurances that the conditions the Egyptian government was likely to lay down regarding the status of Jewish settlers would have to be met.



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At the end of January 1903 Greenberg went to Cairo and an expedition of experts subsequently went to El Arish. The Egyptian government refused to make significant concessions to any future settlers. They would have the same rights in matters of personal status enjoyed by other non-Muslims even though their interests would be taken into account by the government in the choice of judges and local officials. Herzl was dissatisfied and in March set out for Egypt. His first meeting with Cromer went badly. In his diary he expressed his dissatisfaction. When it became apparent that Cromer would only deal with an Englishman, Colonel Goldsmid who was a member of the expedition acted as the Zionist representative.

The text of the draft agreement became the immediate subject of debate. But when the commission of engineers and specialists returned from northern Sinai, its conclusions were devastating. In the conclusion to its report, the commission declared that under existing conditions the country was unsuitable for settlers from European countries unless there was an adequate supply of water. Although the commission had proposed methods for bringing water to the regions specified for settlement, they were rejected by the Egyptian government as well as Cromer's expert. As a result, Cromer informed Lansdowne that he did not believe that anything could be done to carry out Herzl's plan. As a consequence, the Foreign Office brought an end to the matter:

### ***The Commission's Report***

The result of the commission's research has been, that in their opinion, under existing conditions, the country is quite unsuitable for settlers from European countries; but from what they have seen on the spot, and from the experience of individual members of the Commission, they can confidently state that were a sufficient water supply forthcoming, the conditions of soil, hygiene and climate are such, that part of what is now desert, would be capable of supporting a considerable population. In short, the whole question is one of water supply, the furnishing of which would involve great capital expenditure. (Vital, *Zionism: The Formative Years*, p. 153)

Undeterred, Herzl and others turned to Chamberlain for assistance. However, he was on a tour of Africa at the end of November and did not return until March 1903. On 23 April 1903 Herzl met with Chamberlain who listened sympathetically and promised to speak to Lansdowne. The intention of Chamberlain's trip to South Africa was to ensure that there would be co-operation between the Afrikaners and the British and to inspect the country. In this context Chamberlain envisaged that an influx of Jews could

provide a stimulus to the African economy. When he met with Herzl in April Chamberlain proposed a tract in East Africa for Jewish settlement. Herzl, however, expressed no interest. The proposed territory was too far from Palestine, he explained. Instead, he argued for El Arish. Yet, on his return to Vienna he recognized that the proposal for a Jewish settlement in East Africa might encourage the British to approve the El Arish project.

Chamberlain pressed on with his suggestion, indicating that a settlement in East Africa would be an admirable beginning. Acting as a negotiator, Leopold Greenberg recommended to Herzl that pressure on the matter of El Arish should continue. Regarding East Africa, he stated, the essential question was whether this would take Jews closer or further from Eretz Israel. On balance, he thought it might be advisable not to reject Chamberlain's plan outright since he might be unsympathetic to the Zionist cause if his opinions were slighted. In a telegraph to Greenberg, Herzl stated that it appeared nothing could be done about El Arish for several years. Hence, Chamberlain's suggestion must be seriously considered. Therefore, he advised, Greenberg should return to the Colonial Office and continue the discussion.

As the Sixth Zionist Congress approached, there was a pressing need to show that progress had been made. With the collapse of the El Arish project, it became increasingly important to demonstrate that the Zionist movement had attained some solution to the Jewish question. East Africa was not Eretz Israel. Yet, in any event it did illustrate that Britain was favourably disposed to the notion of a Jewish settlement. Arguably, it could serve as a first step towards Palestine. In this light Herzl authorized Greenberg to provide the British with a draft agreement to serve as a basis for dialogue with the Foreign Office. David Lloyd George, an MP and a solicitor familiar with the world of politics, was employed to help draw up a document which was submitted to Chamberlain on 13 July and then transferred to the Foreign Office.

The draft began with a long preamble setting out the general principles of the scheme, providing for an expedition to survey the proposed territory, rules for the management of the land, and fourteen clauses regulating its internal affairs. The proposal was examined by the Foreign Secretary, Lord Lansdowne and other officials. The response was muted. The British stated that there would be no objection to a Jewish colony as long as it was subject to the laws of the Protectorate. These laws provided power to confer upon a settlement sufficient autonomy to enable its inhabitants to live their own lives and develop national characteristics. Yet, if it were envisaged that the Jews wished to have a state of their own, this would not be acceptable.

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When shown these comments, Greenberg made no objections. Even though he was aware that these reservations might reduce the plan to several small settlements, he was determined to rely on Chamberlain to keep to the original notion of an autonomous Jewish settlement. Much still had to be determined including the location and size of the proposed territory. In a letter sent to Greenberg by Sir Clement Hill, Superintendent of African Protectorates, he stated that he was directed by the Marquis of Lansdowne to say that he had studied the question with interest. The British, he went on, must always take in any well-considered scheme for the amelioration of the position of the Jewish people. Even though he did not have time to explore the details of the plan, Lord Lansdowne understood the Jewish Colonial Trust's desire to send out individuals to the East Africa Protectorate to ascertain if there was any suitable land. If a site could be found which the Trust and the British considered suitable, he would be prepared to entertain favourably proposals for the establishment of a Jewish colony for settlement.

# The Question of East Africa

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Encouraged by the British, it appeared that East Africa might serve as a location for Jewish settlement. Attacks on Jewry in Eastern Europe exacerbated the quest for a place of refuge. Despite Nordau's reluctance, Herzl pressed the case. For Herzl, East Africa was a stepping stone to Eretz Israel rather than a final destination. At the Zionist Congress, however, the Russian delegates were fiercely opposed. In their view, the East Africa scheme was tantamount to abandoning the quest for a Jewish commonwealth in their ancient homeland. After a fraught debate, Herzl was victorious: of the nearly 500 delegates, almost 300 voted in favour. Yet the outcome resulted in a breach between Herzl and Hibbat Zion. The Russian delegation walked out, determined to overturn what they perceived as the abandonment of Zionist ideals.

## The East Africa Proposal

### *The British Policy*

If a site can be found which the Trust and His Majesty's Commissioner consider suitable and which commends itself to His Majesty's Government, Lord Landsdowne will be prepared to entertain favourably proposals for the establishment of a Jewish colony or settlement, on conditions which will enable the members to observe their National customs. For this purpose he would be prepared to discuss ... the details of a scheme comprising as its main features: the grant of a considerable area of land, the appointment



of a Jewish Official as chief of the local administration, and permission to the Colony to have a free hand in regard to municipal legislation and as to the management of religious and purely domestic matters, such Local Autonomy being conditional upon the right of His Majesty's Government to exercise general control. (Sir Clement Hill to Leopold Greenberg, 14 August, 1903. Protokoll VI, pp. 215–16, in Vital, *Zionism: The Formative Years*, p. 271)

It now appeared as though the British would support the principle of a Jewish settlement in East Africa to deal with the problem of antisemitism. Greenberg thus set out for Basle for the Sixth Zionist Congress which was to take place from 23–8 August 1903. Herzl asked Nordau to discuss the problem of migration in general in his address in order to prepare the ground for what was to follow. Nordau refused, stressing that it was vital to deal with the issue in detail. There were a number of critical questions to which he had no answers. In reply Herzl stated that the Sultan had to be shown that the Jews were prepared to go elsewhere if Eretz Israel were not a possible destination. Further, the Zionists had to face the problem of migration because of their desperate situation. The massacre of Jews at the hands of a mob in Kishinev in Bessarabia on 19–20 April 1903 had illustrated the urgency of an immediate solution. Nordau, however, disagreed. Are we supposed to urge immigration when we have no destination in mind? he asked. In his view, it would make no impression on the Sultan if Eretz Israel were no longer seen as the place of refuge.

When Herzl pressed the case for East Africa, Nordau was alarmed. It would be an enormous error, Nordau argued, to obtain a charter for Uganda. Jews would not follow Herzl there. If they were unable to emigrate to Eretz Israel, they would go to England, America or Australia. The land available was unsuitable for a massive settlement. At most it would serve ten thousand families, and the settlers would be surrounded by warlike Negro tribes. Hence Uganda was hopeless as a temporary haven. Even though no progress had been made with the Turks, this was not a reason to lose hope. In response, Herzl stressed that it would be impossible to reject Chamberlain's suggestion out of hand. Nothing concrete had been established. If it turned out that the land was suitable for a Jewish settlement, the movement would have achieved a worthy power-base. Jews would have a charter, and this could be used as a model for the future.

For Herzl, East Africa was seen as a stepping stone to Eretz Israel, a temporary substitute for a Turkish charter and a means of gaining international status for Zionism. In the background, initiatives had been taken with the Portuguese as well as King Leopold of Belgium for other tracts in

Africa, but East Africa was the most promising. When the Greater Actions Committee (GAC) met in its first pre- Congress session on 21 August 1903 Herzl reported on his journey to Russia as well as the El Arish scheme. Only at the end did he refer to East Africa. The reaction to such an idea was mixed. The Congress itself was the largest so far with over 600 present. There was no expectation that anything other than routine business would be discussed. Yet, in the event, the issue of East Africa dominated the agenda.

Neither Herzl nor those who had planned the agenda expected an intense reaction to the East Africa proposal. The delegates to the Congress were composed of two bodies: first, there were Herzl's friends and supporters from different backgrounds – they were not a party, nor a distinctive group. The other group stood in opposition to Herzl; they were largely Russian and supporters of Hibbat Zion. Unlike Herzl's followers, they had an institutional basis and were used to meeting together to discuss policy in advance and during the Congresses. As a united body, the Russian delegates were vociferous in their dissent.

Initially Herzl assumed he would gain the support of Congress to explore the East Africa scheme. Yet, prior to putting a vote to the entire body of delegates, Herzl had first to convince the Greater Actions Committee of the urgency of his plan. It was critical to gain the support from its members and sustain their interest. At the meeting of the GAC on 21 August, Herzl presented the idea. Yet it quickly became apparent that few of the leading figures of the movement were convinced. On 23 August the Congress opened with an address from Herzl. It was relatively brief and devoid of rhetoric. Everything, he explained, must be tried. The Sultan, he said, continued to be sympathetic to the Jewish people. Yet he stressed that the plight of Jewry was becoming increasingly worse. There had been a pogrom in Kishinev, and there was the danger of further massacre in Russia and elsewhere. Let us save those who can be saved, he proclaimed.

The talks in Constantinople, he went on, had not been successful. In London the proposal that a concession be granted in the Sinai peninsula was put to the British Cabinet and had been well received. But in the end the project was turned down. Nonetheless, the British government had proposed an alternative tract of land. It was true that this territory does not have the poetical-religious value that Sinai would have. Yet, given the seriousness of the conditions of Jewry, it should be considered. The goal of the Jewish people remains to return to Palestine. But the British offer of an autonomous Jewish settlement in East Africa with a Jewish administration provided a way forward.

In making this proposal Herzl was aware that the East Africa scheme was a radical departure from previous Zionist plans. However, he saw it as a short-term solution which could lead to further developments. In his view, what was immediately needed was a select committee to discuss it. No resolution was put before Congress; instead Herzl's suggestion was taken up informally in lobbies and in the principal country delegations. Most delegates agreed that a committee should be formed. The Russians, however, were fiercely opposed. In their view, setting up such a committee implied a lack of commitment to the creation of a Jewish settlement in Palestine. Such a stance, they believed, was intolerable.

## Russian Opposition

In a series of private meetings, the Russian delegates debated Herzl's proposal. Seeking to preside over these discussions, Yehiel Tchlenov sought to reach a unified view. First, it was decided to reserve judgement and to discuss the scheme with other country delegations. Secondly, it was agreed to choose a committee of representatives of the different tendencies within the caucus and report back to the full delegation. This committee met that evening; its twenty-two members were divided into three groups. One small group consisted of those who were prepared to go along with Herzl; a second equally small group was determinedly against the project. The third, larger group disliked the suggestion but accepted Herzl's argument that negotiations be pursued.

In consequence, Tchlenov drafted a resolution to be submitted to the full Congress, which incorporated all three views. Britain was to be thanked for its interest in Jewish affairs but should be told that its proposal was not a solution to the Jewish question. The aim of the Zionist movement was to establish a Jewish settlement in Palestine, and it was hoped that the British government would lend its support to such a scheme. Nonetheless, the British proposal should be examined, and Congress ought to appoint a committee to do so and report back to the Actions Committee. Added to this statement was a request that Congress should instruct the Actions Committee to eliminate any technical obstacles to the settlement in El Arish.

When the caucus met the next day, Tchlenov's draft was met with fierce opposition. In the meantime at the Congress plenum the subject of East Africa was frequently mentioned even though it was not on the agenda. On the second day of the Congress, Nordau spoke about the rationale of political Zionism and the current state of affairs. Herzl's plan, he emphasized, deserved

to be considered seriously. He began by outlining the promises of British and Russian support for the Zionist cause. In his view, Herzl's diplomatic efforts were essential. The Jewish question was as urgent as ever. It was the duty of the movement to speak on behalf of Jewry and formulate a national policy. What had to be done now was to establish a temporary refuge before a permanent home could be found:

### ***Nordau's Speech***

From the beginning we [Zionists] boldly and distinctly said, we are not contended, we consider our situation very bad, we regard our treatment as undignified and undeserved, we hold a fundamental change in our situation to be vitally necessary. After the humiliating experience of the attempt to assimilate us into other peoples we took counsel with ourselves and we resolved to live in our own way, in our own right, on our own soil ... and we ask the governments to help us attain this goal. (Vital, *Zionism: The Formative Years*, p. 289)

For the Russian caucus the question was a choice between a Jewish state and Eretz Israel. Rabbi Shemu'el Rabinowitz supported Herzl; in his view, an unorganized emigration would lead to assimilation. Chaim Weizmann similarly supported Herzl. Agreeing with Nordau, he stressed the educative value of an autonomous Jewish settlement in East Africa. Feibush Avinovitzky of Odessa was unreservedly in favour of the scheme. On the other side, Victor Jacobson and Shemarya Levin argued that Jews should not be seen to abandon their quest to return to their ancestral home. It was impossible, they insisted, for there to be two lands of settlement. If one succeeded, what hope could there be for generating enthusiasm for the other. The Zionists, they concluded, must not deviate from their original aims.

The following day a number of alternatives to Tchlenov's original draft were proposed. One suggested that the East Africa be removed from the agenda of the Congress. Another recommended that the matter be included under another item on the agenda. But the mood of the meeting favoured directly confronting the issue. As a consequence Tchlenov withdrew his resolution. A new draft was then proposed which stated that the Congress thanked the British government for its interest, but insisted that the only possible home for the Jews was Eretz Israel.

Further meetings of the General Actions Committee (GAC) took place on Wednesday at which the resolution Herzl proposed to bring before



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Congress was discussed. At issue was the question whether there was to be an expedition to Africa as well as a committee to consider the scheme and how the GAC was to be brought into the consultation. In the end the GAC agreed that the resolution would provide for an expedition, the further role of the GAC would be limited, and dissenters were to remain silent until after Congress had voted.

The debate on East Africa began late on Tuesday afternoon and continued the next day. Over a hundred speakers wished to contribute to the debate. Herzl himself did not speak. Yet it was his conception of Zionism and leadership of the movement that were in dispute. Throughout the debate there were a number of issues which were of central concern: Was the notion of settlement in East Africa compatible with the Basle Programme? Should there be a referendum among the full membership of the movement? Was it the responsibility of Congress to deal with matters not in the Programme? The most fierce opponent of Herzl's critics was Shimshon Rosenbaum, an organizer of the Minsk conference and member of the GAC, who argued that the East Africa project was motivated by philanthropic concerns. The Zionist movement, however, had a different aim than providing a place of refuge for a small number of poor Jews. The goal of Zionism was to bring about the movement of Jewish masses to Eretz Israel.

Another critic, Ya'akov Bernstein-Kohan, a Russian doctor from Kishinev, stated that when he first heard of the East Africa proposal, he was enthusiastic since it would aid Jews in distress. Yet, on reflection, he believed Congress had no authority to make a decision of this kind. And it would not be suitable to ask Russian Jews for their views. It would be like asking a sick man which medicines should be prescribed for him. Zionists must stick to their ideals: this was the proper prescription for the problems that beset the Jewish people. Nachman Syrkin, a founder of the Russian-Jewish Scientific Society, disagreed. In his view, a distinction should be drawn between long-term goals and the immediate problems facing Jewry. The Zionist movement was the appropriate body to consider the East Africa project. This temporary solution to Jewish suffering would not affect the aim of Jewish settlement in Eretz Israel.

In general the speakers who opposed the East Africa scheme were more successful than supporters. They were numerous and spoke more persuasively. They appealed to general principles of the movement. Though there were more loyalists on the floor, few actually spoke and those who did were less able to present their arguments in theoretical terms. This was due in part because, unlike the Russian delegates, they did not meet beforehand to

prepare their case. Only at the end of the debate were loyalists able to make a convincing case. In his concluding speech, Max Nordau pointed out that there were three separate issues. First was the question whether a commission of inquiry should be established. Second, was it appropriate for the movement to discuss the matter of East Africa? The third issue was whether it was proper for Congress to deal with the problem of refuge for migrants.

Nordau himself would not express his opinion about East Africa. He had no knowledge of the country. But he could see no reason why the proposal should not be examined. If East Africa were unsuitable for Jewish immigration, the suggestion should be abandoned. But if East Africa proved possible, then the movement was obliged to consider whether it should serve as a temporary refuge. Congress, he continued, owed the British the courtesy of an inquiry for having had the generosity to consider the predicament of Jewry. And, he added, Congress also owed this much to Herzl.

## The Reaction

The debate ended on Wednesday 26 August. After an intermission, Congress reconvened. The voting took place by roll-call. The result was a victory for Herzl: of the 468 delegates, 292 voted in favour, 176 against with 143 abstentions (including those unable to vote for various reasons). Some of those who abstained disapproved of the project but were unable to vote against Herzl. Other believed Congress should never have considered the plan. Such a large number of abstentions lessened the victory of those in favour. A notable feature of the vote was that Russian Zionists had in general been opposed. This meant that the alliance between Herzl and Hibbat Zion had been broken. When the result was announced Yehiel Tchelnov and his associates left the hall, followed by most of those who had voted no.

This walk-out by the Russian delegation was followed by further distressing events. In order to appease the wrath of the dissenters, Herzl came to the Russian caucus in the evening after the vote. Previously at the end of the Congress, he raised his right hand and declared: 'If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning!' Yet this was of little avail. At a meeting of those who had voted against the proposal in Basle after the Congress, Chaim Weizmann declared that Herzl was not at heart a nationalist. Instead he was a promoter of projects. Initially he had encountered Hibbat Zion and aligned himself with the movement. Then when it failed, he reversed

direction. True Zionists, however, were always aware that it would be impossible to gain Palestine in the short term and were thus not discouraged when various attempts proved unsuccessful:

### ***Weizmann's view of Herzl after the Congress***

The meetings held since the African project was approved all make a depressing impression. A man comes along and transforms our entire programme at one go and here we are, all confused, devising stratagems to escape from the predicament. Before the content of the project had been made clear to me I supported it; but in the course of the debate I discovered that it was of its essence that [through it] Zionism was to be transmuted. Then I turned into an opponent, for all that I am in favour of [planned and directed] emigration... The truth is that Herzl is not a nationalist, but a promoter of projects. He came across the Hibbat Zion idea and aligned himself with [the movement] for a period. Then when it failed, he reversed himself. He only takes external conditions into account, whereas the power on which we rely is the psychology of the people and its living desires. We, for our part, [always] knew that we were incapable of gaining Palestine in the short term and were therefore not discouraged when this or that attempt had failed. It is the people's consciousness that [now] has to be bolstered. There must be established a society to propagate the Zionist idea in its national form. (*Ha-Zofe* (Warsaw), 3 September 1903, p. 836, in Vital, *Zionism: The Formative Years*, p. 305)

Despite such dissent, Congress was now prepared to embark on an exploration of the British proposal. Yet Herzl was forced to accept an alteration in the terms on which the East Africa project would be considered. One of the demands made by the opposition was that no Zionist funds could be used to cover the costs of an expedition: these financial restrictions brought about the delay in the dispatch of the expedition until 1904. Further, the opposition demanded that the GAC should continue to have an active role in managing the issue. This strengthened the position of the Russian wing of the GAC. Despite their support for Herzl, some of the loyalists expressed concern. Nordau, for example, told an interviewer that he considered the resolution a disaster because it would be misinterpreted. Although Herzl had no choice but to take up the offer, Nordau stated that he would have nothing to do with the actual settlement of East Africa.

As for Herzl himself, there was reason to be satisfied with the outcome of the Congress. The East Africa project had received support. An advisory committee on East Africa had been elected. Nonetheless, he had been shaken by the reaction of his opponents. His leadership had been challenged, and he considered stepping down. At this point Herzl was also ill. The physician Ya'akov Bernstein-Kohan related that twice during Congress he feared that

Herzl might have a heart attack and he was among the doctors who sought to help him. Within a few days after Congress, Herzl went to his usual summer resort, Aussee, to recuperate. Only late in October did he return to Vienna.

With Herzl weakened, the opposition gained in strength with the return of Menahem Ussishkin from Eretz Israel. At Zikhron Ya'akov just before Congress assembled, Ussishkin had helped organize a representative assembly of the new yishuv. Designed as a permanent representative institution of Jews in Palestine, this body was conceived as an alternative Zionist Congress. On his return to Russia, Ussishkin was informed of the East Africa project. In October he issued a statement to the delegates of the Sixth Congress. He had been unable to attend the Congress because of his work in Eretz Israel, he explained. It was his aim to work ceaselessly for the renaissance of the Jewish people in accordance with Zionist policy. But he would not comply with the decision to send an expedition to Africa.

This was a clear challenge to Herzl. Within days he was denounced in *Die Welt* in an article entitled *An Answer from Dr. Herzl*. In this response, Herzl put forward the case for political Zionism. Ussishkin, he declared, must accept the decision of Congress. If he refused, he should resign his office. In a hostile reply, Ussishkin pointed out that a Charter could not be obtained unless the Jews had a strong foothold in the country. Private purchase of land was essential. Furthermore, he alleged that Herzl himself had not always abided by the resolutions of Congress.

Increasingly the Russian caucus was taken over by the opposition. Max Mandelstamm, a loyal supporter of Herzl, was divested of responsibility for the branch's finances and Ussishkin was elected to direct the affairs of a permanent steering committee of the organization. As de facto leader of Russian Zionism, he planned to visit Vienna, Berlin, Paris and London to rally support for a rejection of the Uganda scheme. In the West, Chaim Weizmann offered his services. After travelling to Paris and London in October, he informed Ussishkin that he had the impression that Max Nordau had agreed to support the East Africa project against his better judgement. Herzl's allies in London, he went on, were divided although the English Jewish masses were enthusiastic about the African scheme.

From 11-14 November 1903 a conference of the Russian members of the GAC and their deputies took place in Kharkov. Initially Mandelstamm raised the question if it was appropriate to discuss whether a decision of Congress could be rejected. When his views were rejected, he left the meeting. In the course of the meeting a four-man steering committee with Ussishkin as

its chairman was formed. Ussishkin's plan was to compel Herzl to change direction. A series of demands were to be made including a promise to withdraw the East Africa scheme and refrain from other territorial projects other than ones related to Eretz Israel. This ultimatum was to be delivered by a special delegation; Herzl was to comply in writing. If he refused, funds to Vienna would be stopped, the conflict would be made public through written declarations, and an independent Zionist Organization would be created.

## East Africa and the Jews

The outcome of the Kharkov conference was kept secret. Mandelstamm, however, conveyed to Herzl the nature of the Russian resolutions and urged him to remain firm. In his diary, Herzl resolved to mobilize the masses against the rebels. On 16 December he noted that he would not allow himself to be intimidated by demonstrations. Despite his earlier inclination to resign as leader of the movement, the opposition's efforts revived his determination to carry the East Africa project forward. After the Congress, negotiations with the British government resumed. However, in East Africa the Settler's Association at Nairobi headed by Lord Delamere expressed their dismay. The Bishop of Mombasa was in favour of a scheme to help Jews, but he did not wish such a project to interfere with his missionary campaign. The Commissioner, Sir Charles Eliot, complained that he had not been officially informed. His judgement was that if a settlement were to occur, it should be some distance from the railway line since there would in all likelihood be friction between Jews and other European settlers.

The local East African press was divided. One newspaper accused Lansdowne of selling out the interests of English farmers. Another supported Jewish immigration believing that the territory would prosper as a result. In England *The Times* was generally opposed to the project. What good could result from a little Jewish state under the auspices of the British government in East Africa? the paper asked. Such a settlement, it continued, could have disastrous consequences for the Jewish people:

### **The Times and East Africa**

If the projected State were constituted, the Jew of Uganda would be almost certain before very long, to regard himself as the sole heir of the promises made to his fathers, and would

regard the cosmopolitan financier, or the great musician, or the great statesman, as one who had fallen from his first love and had ceased to do his best works. The narrowness of a quasi-provincialism would be likely to become predominant in the infant State; and the experience of two thousand years has shown that the Jew, in circumstances which promote narrowness, becomes not only narrow, but intolerant and persecuting. (*The Times*, September 1903)

The Foreign Office also expressed reservations. In private correspondence with Sir Charles Eliot, it was remarked that as a rule Jews do not make good agriculturalists and an assurance was given that no final decision had been made about the East Africa project. Responding to the question of where a Jewish protectorate could be located, Eliot recommended the Gwas Ngishu plateau, a grassy plain surrounded by forests which was largely uninhabited. Although this could theoretically lead to conflict with the Turkhana, he did not foresee this as a major obstacle. Yet Eliot expressed reservations about the scheme since he too was unaware of any place where Jews lived by manual labour if they could avoid doing so.

As talks between the Zionists and the British government proceeded, the British made several proposals about the place and extent of the territory for settlement. Throughout the Zionists insisted that the region must be suitable for habitation and large enough for further immigrants. As time passed, it occurred to Herzl and Greenberg that it might be better if the British withdrew the offer of East Africa; in such a case they would be under an obligation to propose an alternative such as El Arish. This, however, did not occur. Instead, the British government continued with their original plan.

In late December 1903 Herzl issued a statement in the form of a letter to Sir Francis Montefiore which was published in the *Jewish Chronicle* stating that the Zionists remained committed to a settlement in Eretz Israel. However, the British had generously proposed an autonomous settlement in East Africa. This, he said, must be carefully considered. Yet, four conditions would need to be satisfied: (1) the territory must be large enough to provide relief for European Jewry; (2) it had to be a place that could be effectively settled by European Jews; (3) it had to be invested with autonomous rights; and (4) there must be sufficient enthusiasm on the part of Jewry for such a community to be established. Herzl went on to explain that he considered it his duty to present the proposal to the movement for its consideration particularly since there was opposition within the Zionist ranks to this scheme.

By January 1904 there were further talks with the Foreign Office. At one meeting Leopold Greenberg brought up the subject of El Arish as an alternative

to East Africa. When this was rejected, Greenberg insisted that specific details about the East Africa project be established before a journey could take place. On 25 January Sir Clement Hill provided a concrete plan: the territory would consist of 5,000 square miles on the Gwas Nigishu plateau north of Nandi. Greenberg recommended that the scheme should be immediately accepted and an expedition should be sent as soon as possible. A Congress could be called for June or July in London to ratify the plan. A company could then be formed to deal with entire project; this would enable the movement to press on with other matters.

Herzl, however, hesitated. In a letter to Herzl written on 29 January 1903, Greenberg asked why he had changed course. Was it because he had changed his mind about East Africa? he asked. If so, he said, he could offer him fifty reasons against such a course of action, and fifty others why he should proceed with the original plan. In Greenberg's view, a delegate should be sent out as soon as possible. Despite such urging, Herzl vacillated. Initially he wired his consent, but then changed his mind. When he discovered that Greenberg had acted when he received Herzl's first telegram, he acquiesced but was determined that secrecy be kept.

## The Delegation

On 24 December 1903 the League for the Defence of the Organization was set up in Warsaw in opposition to those who had rejected the East Africa project. Several days later the League published the full text of the Kharkov resolutions with an accompanying commentary. Yet, by then, Kharkov's delegates, Zevi Belkowsky and Shimshon Rosenbaum, were on their way to Vienna to present an ultimatum to Herzl. When Herzl met them, he was cordial but refused to recognize them as a delegation. Their group, he argued, was not properly constituted or representative. Instead, he invited them to attend a regular meeting of the EAC (Smaller Actions Committee).

At the meeting Herzl announced that Belkowsky and Rosenbaum were present as members of the GAC and would not be delivering any kind of ultimatum. He then gave a report on the state of negotiations with the British government and the Turks. Belkowsky and Rosenbaum, however, would not be silenced and engaged in a fierce debate with Herzl, arguing that both Congress and Herzl had violated the terms of the Basle Programme. In response, Herzl argued that Congress was a sovereign body and was free

to determine Zionist policy. The two delegates returned to St Petersburg to attend a new conference of the Russian GAC.

These events were followed by a meeting in Rome between Herzl and King Victor Emmanuel III arranged by the Chief Rabbi of Florence, Dr. S. H. Margulies. As Herzl noted, the meeting went well: Victor Emmanuel promised Herzl that he would bring up his cause whenever he met a Turk. Herzl then met with the Foreign Minister and the Secretary-General at the Foreign Ministry, Giacomo Malvano. In a memorandum sent to the Foreign Minister after his visit, he restated the Zionist desire for a Charter granting rights of settlement in the Holy Land and requested that the King of Italy write to the Sultan recommending such a proposal. The Foreign Minister's response was cordial, but indicated that the King must make up his own mind about approaching the Sultan.

Previously Herzl had contemplated interesting the Vatican in his scheme. With the death of Leo XIII in August 1903 and the election of Giuseppe Sartoto to the papacy, Herzl resolved on making such an approach. Through the assistance of Berthold Lippay, an Austrian painter who had been made a papal count, Herzl met the Secretary of State, Cardinal Merry del Val, on 22 January 1904. The Cardinal stressed that the Church could not grant the Jews possession of the Holy Land unless they accepted Christ. Herzl pointed out that the Jewish people did not want the Holy Places. Three days later Herzl was received by Pius X who reiterated the need for Jewry to accept Jesus as their Saviour. The Jews have not recognized our Lord, he said. Therefore the Church cannot recognize the Jewish people:

### ***Herzl and the Pope***

This is what I want of the Pope and what you may say, but only to people whom you are sure you can trust: It is only secular land that we want in Palestine. We have no intention of touching the Holy Places, even from afar. The Holy Places must be permanently extraterritorialized, *res sacrae extra commercium* of the law of nations. This is the proposition I want accepted and protected by the Pope as the spiritual sovereign respected and recognized even by Christians of other churches. (Herzl to Ravenna, 5 and 10 September 1903. CZA, H III/A3 in Vital, *Zionism: The Formative Years*, p. 337)

In mid-January members of the Russian GAC meet in St Petersburg. It was approved that the Kharkov resolutions be published. Two weeks later Ussishkin went to Germany to gain support for their plans. In March Herzl again attempted unsuccessfully to interest the Turks in the Zionist cause. The next month the Greater Actions Committee sat in Vienna from 11–15 April



1904. Despite their disagreements, there was an attempt to achieve a degree of reconciliation. Throughout the discussion, Herzl defended the East Africa project. Yet he conceded that the aim of Zionism was to establish a Jewish presence in Palestine. At the end of the session, a sub-group of the committee drew up a resolution that sanctioned the expedition to East Africa and left the decision on the scheme to the next Congress. Herzl himself proposed a second resolution that every member of the Actions Committee pledge that he will in future avoid any personal attack. Both resolutions were carried.

After the GAC meeting, a further talk took place with the Austrian Foreign Minister about the Zionist cause. In May Herzl was told by his doctors that he should rest, and he went to a spa for six weeks. Members of the movement were told not to contact him. In June Herzl returned to Vienna and went to another resort. His health deteriorated. On 1 July Herzl's breathing became more strenuous; he coughed blood and lapsed into a coma. His mother and children were summoned and William Hechler rushed to his bedside. On the afternoon of 3 July 1904 he died at the age of forty-four. Herzl's death deprived the movement of a leader able to pursue the Zionist cause at the highest political levels. As a consequence, the main concern shifted to the plight of contemporary Jewry especially in Russia.

Herzl's will stipulated that his body be interred next to his father's grave in Vienna. It was to remain there until it could be buried in Palestine. Throughout the Zionist world, news of his death caused deep regret. Tributes poured in from all factions within the Zionist movement. The funeral took place on 7 July in Vienna. Six thousand people made up the cortege. According to Stefan Zweig, it was a tumultuous event:

### ***Stefan Zweig and the Funeral of Herzl***

A tumult ensued at the cemetery; too many had suddenly stormed to his coffin, crying, sobbing, screaming in a wild explosion of despair. It was almost a riot, a fury. All order was overturned through a sort of elemental ecstatic mourning such as I have never seen before or since at a funeral. And it was this gigantic outpouring of grief from the depths of millions of souls that caused me to realize for the first time how much passion and hope this lone and lonesome man had borne into the world through the power of a single idea. (Sachar, *A History of Israel from the Rise of Zionism to Our Time*, pp. 63–4)

# Aftermath of Herzl's Death

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The death of Herzl had a profound impact on the Zionist movement. In Palestine Jewish settlements continued to grow and develop. In July 1905 the Seventh Zionist Congress took place which rejected the East Africa project. Under David Wolffsohn's leadership the Zionist cause continued. As Ahad Ha-Am observed, official Zionism was dying and a new generation of Zionists had emerged in countries particularly in the West. During this period a number of important institutions were created in the Holy Land, including the first Jewish hospital and the Hebrew University. By 1914 there were 90,000 Jews resident in Palestine, the majority from Russia and Romania. With the outbreak of the First World War, Turkey sided with the central powers: caught in this conflict Jews in Palestine suffered numerous hardships. Later, under Vladimir Jabotinsky's leadership, a Jewish legion was formed to liberate the Holy Land from Turkish rule. In Britain there was growing support for Zionism, and on 2 November 1917 the Balfour Declaration endorsed the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine.

## The Zionist Movement after Herzl's Death

Following Herzl's death, the central institutions of the Zionist movement were weakened. In the ensuing years regional branches became increasingly

important, and the pressing needs of contemporary Jewry came to the fore. Jewish settlement in Eretz Israel also underwent considerable growth. Following pogroms in Russia, members of Hovevei Zion emigrated to Palestine, where they established farms and villages. During the First Aliyah, from 1882 to 1903, about 25,000 Jews reached Palestine. The first village created by settlers from outside Palestine was Rishon le-Zion (First to Zion), later supported by Baron Edmond de Rothschild. The first language kindergarten and elementary school in Palestine were opened there several years after its establishment.

In 1882 the town of Zichron Yaakov (Memory of Jacob) was created by Romanian immigrants, again with the support of Baron Edmond de Rothschild; in the same year Hayyim Amzalak, a Jew from Gibraltar, bought the land on which Petah Tikvah had been built. This was given to Bilu, secular and socialist pioneers from Russia, who, as we have seen, took their name from the Hebrew initials of the biblical verse *Beth Jacob Lechu Venelcha* (O House of Jacob, come and let us go). In 1883 a Russian Jewish emigrant, Reuben Lehrer, built a house in an Arab village, Wadi Hanin, on the coastal plain; he was later joined by several other Jewish settlers. In 1884 another Russian Jew, Yehiel Michael Pines, bought land needed for Bilu pioneers to create another village, Gederah.

In Jerusalem the population grew considerably through these waves of immigration. By the 1850s Jews were in the majority; by 1889 their numbers had risen to 25,000. In 1890 another Jewish village, Rehovot (Wide Expanses) was founded on the coastal plain. The same year, Russian Jews who had emigrated from Vilna, Riga and Kovno founded Hadera (The Green). At the same time a group of Hibbat Zion created a small farming settlement in Upper Galilee on the west bank of the River Jordan – Mishmar ha-Yarden (Guard of the Jordan). As we noted, Menachem Ussishkin travelled from Russia to Palestine to convene a convention at Zichron Yaakov, where he encouraged delegates to remain faithful to the Zionist vision. Before returning to Russia, he founded the Hebrew Teachers' Federation in Palestine. From 1904 until the First World War a further wave of immigration – the Second Aliyah – took place greatly adding to these numbers.

In late July 1905 the Seventh Zionist Congress took place in Basle. The main item of business was the East Africa project. Its rejection led to the exodus of Territorialists under Israel Zangwill as well as members of East European left-wing groups. It was also the responsibility of the Congress to elect a new leader. Russian Zionists under the leadership of Ussishkin had for a number of years argued against Herzl's political machinations. In their view,

the main effort of the movement should be to establish new agricultural settlements in Palestine. As we have seen, Herzl was opposed to such an approach, believing that colonization of Palestine should be on a major scale. Such an approach had won considerable support within the movement. Such tensions led to a compromise agreement. Congress resolved that, while rejecting small-scale colonizations, the movement would work for strengthening the Jewish position in Palestine in agriculture and industry. A new executive was elected, consisting of three proponents of practical Zionism (Otto Warburg, Menachem Ussishkin and Kogan-Bernstein), and three political Zionists (Leopold Greenberg, Jacobus Kann and Alexander Marmorek). The president of this body, and of the movement as a whole, was David Wolffsohn.

Wolffsohn himself had no desire to be the leader of the movement. Prior to Congress, he had gone to Paris to try to persuade Max Nordau to accept the position. Due to his personal stature and close association with Herzl, he was initially offered the presidency, but disqualified himself on the grounds that he was married to a non-Jew. He also perceived that as a proponent of political Zionism, he would not have satisfied the Russian contingent. The choice of Wolffsohn was a compromise between the two factions. The son of a rabbi, he had settled in Cologne at the age of twenty and was successful in the lumber industry. When *Der Judenstaat* was published, he had been a member of the German branch of Hibbat Zion and served as Herzl's emissary to Russian Jews. Although not a charismatic figure like Herzl, he was a good organizer. Adopting a common-sense approach, he was a counterweight to the idealists within the movement. As leader, Wolffsohn continued to pursue the contacts Herzl had made.

Wolffsohn revived contact with Arminius Vámbéry, the Hungarian-Jewish orientalist who had engineered Herzl's meeting with the Sultan in 1901. In addition, he sought out a number of Herzl's contacts in Turkey. In October 1907 he travelled to Constantinople and met with the Sultan's First Secretary, Tahsin Bey and the Sultan's secretary Izzey Bey. This resulted in a request that the Zionists arrange an international loan to the Turkish Treasury. Wolffsohn's aim was to obtain limited permission for Jews to emigrate to Palestine and Syria. The project was to be managed by a joint committee of Ottoman and Zionist representatives.

Wolffsohn's scheme was far removed from Herzl's notion of a charter or form of Jewish self-government. In essence the notion of political Zionism had been reduced to a method of accelerating practical Zionism. Yet, even such a limited proposition was without effect. None of the Turkish officials

were interested in Wolffsohn's proposals – the only positive result of these negotiations was the Turkish agreement that a branch of the movement's bank (the Jewish Colonial Trust) could be established in Constantinople.

### ***Letter from Nordau to Wolffsohn***

The leading Young Turks are well-disposed towards the Jews, but hostile to Zionism. It seems that Zionism has been expounded to them by the ICA (Jewish Colonization Association) and Alliance people. That explains everything. Our task, once the prohibition on entry has been lifted, is [therefore] to encourage immigration and to work tirelessly, if calmly, to alter the views of the leaders of the Young Turks on the matter of Zionism. (Nordau to Wolffsohn, 25 November 1908. CZA, W96 1, in Vital, *Zionism: The Crucial Phase*, p. 17.)

## Rebellion

The Ninth Congress was to take place in Hamburg on 26 December 1909. The Russians were fuming about the direction of the movement. In a formal declaration, the Russian Zionist Federation pointed out that changes in the Turkish government had opened up new possibilities, but nothing had materialized. A year had elapsed and there was now a tendency within Turkey to be suspicious of nationalist aspirations. As a consequence Congress should shift the centre of gravity away from political aspirations for the creation of a charter to activity in Eretz Israel itself. In their view the EAC should be transferred from Cologne to a larger European centre. In addition, Nordau should replace Wolffsohn as leader of the movement. Further, the EAC should be enlarged to include leading figures from the east such as Ussishkin, and three of its members should be resident in the city that was chosen as the movement's headquarters.

Despite such opposition, Wolffsohn opened the Congress with a review of the movement's affairs and asserted that Zionism was compatible with the policies of a free Turkey. The prospects for immigration to Palestine had improved, he asserted. This was followed by an address by Nordau. The campaign to unseat Wolffsohn then began. However, the proposal to create an enlarged EAC of which Wolffsohn would not be a member was unsuccessful. In the course of the debate, Wolffsohn replied to his critics. Eventually Wolffsohn, Jacobus Kann and Otto Warburg were reappointed for a further two years, and it was agreed that the EAC was to continue in Cologne. Following the Congress, the Russian opposition resolved to continue their struggle.

### ***Nordau's speech at the Ninth Congress***

The object of all our hopes, our desires and our labours, the Holy Land of our fathers, is part of the Turkish Empire. On its coasts and borders it is Turkish soldiers who keep watch. The keys to the house which the Zionists wish to make their home lie in the hands of the Turkish Government. It is therefore only natural that all our aspirations point to Turkey as the needle of a compass points to the magnetic pole. Our living enterprises, our schools, our...bank, our information bureau, our experimental farm – all lie in Palestine, which is to say Turkey. All the practical undertakings that can be directly realized, those that we plan, those we prepare, all fall within the framework of the Ottoman Empire. (Vital, *Zionism: The Crucial Phase*, p. 30)

The Tenth Zionist Congress was held in Basle from 9-15 August 1911. The central concern was the transfer of the leadership from David Wolffsohn to Otto Warburg, a German scientist who was identified with the practical Zionist camp. The motto of the Congress was 'We have no King but Otto [Warburg]', and the Zionist executive, who was empowered to elect a president from amongst its members, unanimously elected Warburg. Following his election, Warburg declared that the Zionist centre would move to Berlin. He noted that in the future it might move to London, Paris or Russia; however, there is one certainty: that its final destination would be Jerusalem.

During the Congress there was no debate on policy. Rather Wolffsohn reported about the affairs of the movement. Nordau spoke about the general condition of Jewry. Berl Katzenelsohn reported on the migration of East European Jews and resolutions were passed calling for unified action to regulate the flow ideally towards Eretz Israel. The new GAC consisting of twenty-four members reflected the change in direction of the movement – easterners and their western allies formed the majority. The EAC included a majority of Russian Zionists. On the whole the new EAC members were organizers dedicated to the movement who were intent on promoting activity in Palestine.

Reflecting on the changes initiated by the Tenth Congress, Ahad Ha-Am was disturbed by the direction of the movement:

### ***Ahad Ha-Am and The Tenth Congress***

One thing is clear to me beyond all doubt. 'Official' Zionism is dying and a new generation has arisen (especially in countries in the West) for which Zionism is the very same national ideal in all its ramifications for which we fought Herzlism all those years. (Letter to Ludizhinsky, 22 August 1911, Igrot AH, vi. p. 223, in Vital, *Zionism: The Crucial Phase*, p. 59)

During this period a number of Jewish institutions were established in Palestine. In 1911 the first Jewish hospital opened in Haifa, founded by Elias Auerbach. The following year the Hadassah Women's Zionist Organization of America sent two representatives to establish a clinic in Jerusalem. The same year a girl's agricultural training farm was added to the Kinneret farm and put under the directorship of Hannah Maisael-Shohat. At the same time Chassiyay Feinsod, originally from Bialystok and later trained in Berlin, travelled to Palestine and became the founder of the kindergarten system.

In 1914 supporters of the creation of a Hebrew University, which was argued for strongly by Chaim Weizmann at previous Congresses, attempted to persuade Sir John Hill to sell them his house on Mount Scopus. The large part of the money for this purchase was raised in Russia by Hibbat Zion at the instigation of Menachem Ussishkin. At a fundraising dinner in Odessa in 1912 Joseph Klausner appealed for funds for this institution to an audience of over 1000. On 9 March 1914 Arthur Ruppin wrote in his diary that he had succeeded in buying the property. Another institution founded during this period was the Bezalel art school funded by Otto Warburg and a group of German Zionists. In addition, Nathan Straus, an American philanthropist, provided the funds for a Jewish hospital in Jerusalem.

By 1914 there were 90,000 Jews resident in Palestine – 75 per cent were immigrants the majority of whom were from Russia and Romania. Those who did not work as farmers or agricultural labourers in settlements were shopkeepers, artisans or labourers in the towns. At this stage the number of Arabs was about half a million who had become increasingly concerned about the growth of the Jewish population. The two Jerusalem Arabs who were elected to the Ottoman Parliament in Constantinople advanced anti-Zionist policies seeking to halt Jewish immigration. In the summer of 1914 the Turkish authorities imposed adopted measures to prevent Jews who were not Ottoman subjects from settling in Palestine.

With the outbreak of the First World War, Turkey sided with the central powers (Germany and Austria-Hungary) against Britain, France and Russia. Caught in the midst of this conflict, Jews in Palestine suffered from the war conditions: food supplies were limited and the Turkish military officials regarded Jews with increasing suspicion. The Turkish commander Jemal Pasha attempted to suppress all feelings of both Jewish and Arab nationalism. In Jerusalem and Beirut several Arab leaders were hanged. With the onset of war, a number of Jews established a small military unit, the Jaffa Group, to defend Jewish settlements.

## The First World War

With Turkey's entry into the war, the situation of Jews in Palestine became perilous. On 17 December 1914 the Turkish governor of Jaffa ordered the expulsion of 6000 Russian Jews living in the city. The same day the police rounded up 700 victims, loaded them on an Italian steamer, and shipped them to Alexandria. Within the month 7000 Jews fled Palestine; the remainder who were unable to leave so quickly feared for their lives. Jewish religious and secular leaders recommended that fellow Jews apply for Ottoman citizenship. Within a short period over 10,000 Jews complied.

Previously it was possible for non-Muslims to buy an exemption from military service through special taxes. Once war began, this became impossible. The only hope was to be assigned labour service on the home front near their families. Yet even such assignments were extremely difficult: young and old were burdened with quarrying stone or paving roads and forced to live on starvation rations. Despite such hardship, a number of Zionist leaders welcomed the opportunity to prove their loyalty to the Ottoman regime. Some, such as David Ben-Gurion, petitioned the Turkish authorities to establish a Jewish militia to defend the country. Others volunteered for military service.

### ***General Summons to Palestinians in 1914***

Men! Do you want to be slaves and servants to people who are notorious in the world and in history? Do you wish to be slaves to the Zionists, who have come to expel you from your country, saying that this country is theirs? Behold, I summon God and his Messenger as witnesses against them that they are liars. They dwelt in this holy land in former times and God sent them from it and forbade them to settle in it. Therefore why are they now craning their necks towards it, wishing to conquer it, after having deserted it for two thousand years? The Zionists desire to settle in our country and to expel us from it. Are you satisfied with this? Do you wish to perish? (Mandel, *The Arabs and Zionism before World War I*, pp. 213–14)

By February 1915 Turkish policy towards the Zionists hardened. Having returned from a military expedition against the Suez Canal, Jemal Pasha was determined to reduce the country's non-Turkish population. He appointed Beha-a-Din as secretary for Jewish affairs who ordered that the Anglo-Palestine be closed along with Zionist newspapers, schools and political offices. In addition, Jewish land titles were questioned and Arabs were encouraged to attack Jewish villages. In response, Jewish leaders including David Ben-Gurion protested against such measures and were exiled. During



this period the Jewish population suffered other hardships: the British naval blockade curtailed the importation of food as well as philanthropic assistance; the citrus crop died on trees; war taxes were levied on Jewish farms; livestock and food were confiscated.

Coming to the aid of the Yishuv, Arthur Ruppin distributed funds received from German Jewish sources. The United States ambassador in Constantinople, Henry Morgenthau, also intervened on behalf of the Palestinian Jewish community; in response Jemal eased the repressive measures in the spring of 1915 and called a halt to expulsions and arrests. Morgenthau also ensured that American naval vessels be permitted to bring relief shipments to Palestine.

By March 1915 approximately 10,000 Jews had been driven into exile in Egypt. Nearly half were in refugee camps at Gabbari and Mafruza. Seeking to arouse a response among the young émigrés, Vladimir Jabotinsky attempted to create a Jewish legion for battle against the Turks in Palestine. Responding to this idea, Joseph Trumpeldor, a former volunteer officer in the Russian army who became a farmer-pioneer on a kvutzah in Galilee and had been deported, met Jabotinsky in the Mafruza camp. In March and April 1915 about 500 Jews were accepted for enlistment in a special transportation unit, the Zion Mule Corps. A British officer, Lieutenant Colonel John Patterson, was placed in charge, but Trumpeldor who was commissioned as a captain in the British army became its leader.

When the Zion Mule Corps disembarked at the beaches of Gallipoli, the men led supply mules to the front trenches. Eight of the corps were killed; fifty-five others were wounded including Trumpeldor. Another 150 young Jews from Egypt volunteered as replacements. When Gallipoli was evacuated in the winter of 1915, the Mule Corps was among the last to be withdrawn. For Jews in Palestine, news of this Jewish unit caused concern – the Yishuv feared that the Turks might retaliate against the Jewish population. Although the creation of the Zion Mule Corps was designed to foster Anglo-Zionist collaboration, it was dissolved following the Gallipoli campaign.

As the war progressed, the British were increasingly concerned about the security of the Suez Canal. This was a vital passageway for the transport of military reserves of the overseas empire. Twice it was threatened by Ottoman invasion expeditions. To combat this threat, the British encouraged subject peoples in the Ottoman empire to rebel against Turkish rule. Initially this strategy was proposed by the Emir Abdullah, the eldest son of Hussein, the Hashemite sherif of Mecca and Medina. In the autumn of 1915, a plan was agreed by Sir Henry McMahon, the British high commissioner in Egypt,

and the sheriff. In a letter written to Hussein, the high commissioner stated that the British were prepared to recognize and support the independence of the Arabs in all the regions within the limits demanded by the sheriff. It was further agreed that the newly established Arab government would seek the advice and guidance of Britain after the war. In his letter, McMahon made it clear that western Syria would be reserved for a special French relationship. In return for such support, the Hashemite Arabs would join the Allied war effort against Turkey. This became the basis of the Arab revolt which began in June 1916 under the leadership of Hussein's second son, the Emir Feisal and later with the help of British officers including T. E. Lawrence.

Britain appraised the French and Russian governments of the terms of this agreement with the Arabs. In January 1916 a meeting took place between Sir Mark Sykes, the British representative and Charles François Georges-Picot, the French emissary who discussed the allocation of post-war territories. It was agreed that Britain would supervise the Arab territories in Mesopotamia, most of Transjordan and southern Palestine. The French would be given authority over southern Turkey, Syria, northern Palestine, and the Mosul area of upper Mesopotamia. Under the Sykes-Picot agreement, it was assumed that the French would exercise control over most of Palestine since the largest sector of the country was an integral part of the Ottoman-Syrian administration.

During these negotiations the Russian government expressed concern about the role of the French. To accommodate all foreign interests in the region, Sykes and George-Picot proposed that there should be a joint Allied control over the largest part of Palestine; this proposal was later endorsed by the Russian Foreign Minister. According to the January 1916 agreement, there would be a Franco-Russian-British condominium in a Brown Zone that would include central Palestine. As a result, Britain's sphere of influence included Acre and Haifa Bay as well as southern Palestine and the country's Transjordan hinterland. The French sphere of influence would be over north-western Palestine including upper Galilee.

## Britain and the Yishuv

Unlike other countries where Zionism was viewed with suspicion, the British were open to the possibility of a Jewish commonwealth. The Fourth Zionist Congress was held in London in August 1902 and was given considerable

publicity in the press. Later, as we have seen, the Al-Arish and the East Africa schemes were debated in Parliament. During Herzl's negotiations with Chamberlain, Lord Milner was High Commissioner in South Africa; subsequently he became a supporter of the movement. In addition, Henry Wickham Steed who became editor of *The Times* was impressed by the Zionists' ideals.

In Britain the spokesman for the Zionist cause was Chaim Weizmann, a chemistry instructor at the University of Manchester. Through his influence, a number of leading Jewish figures were drawn into the movement including Herbert Samuel, president of the local Government Board who later became home secretary. Before the war Samuel had taken an interest in Zionism; subsequently he foresaw the advantages of a British protectorate over a Jewish homeland in Palestine. After he met Weizmann, he and the lawyer Harry Sacher introduced him to various public figures including Lloyd George, Winston Churchill and Lord Robert Cecil.

In pressing his case, Weizmann drew upon the religious sympathies of those whom he sought to persuade. In the mind of Welsh and Scottish Protestants, the Holy Land was sacred. Lloyd George, for example, after meeting Weizmann in 1914 noted that the historic sites in Palestine were more familiar than those of the Western front. Similarly Lord Balfour expressed a life-long interest in Biblical Israel. Such figures and others fervently believed that Christianity had an obligation to the Jewish nation. Given such sympathetic attitudes, Weizmann's support for a British protectorate over a Jewish homeland was viewed with favour.

The election of Lloyd George as Prime Minister with Balfour as foreign secretary in the last weeks of 1916 led to a decisive change of policy. With the support of Lord Milner, Lloyd George's close friend in the War Cabinet, Lord Robert Cecil, undersecretary of foreign affairs, and Philip Kerr, the prime minister's adviser on foreign policy, as well as the three undersecretaries for Middle Eastern affairs (Sir Mark Sykes, Leopold Amery, and William Ormsby-Gore), a partnership with the Zionists became a strong possibility.

Of this group, Sykes was the most influential. During his travels in Palestine, he was impressed by the Zionists. Through the influence of Dr Moses Gaster, Sephardic Chief Rabbi of London and James Malcolm, a Persian-born Armenian who was drawn to the Zionist cause, Sykes met Weizmann on 7 February 1917. During their discussion, Sykes mentioned that the British government might be prepared to support a national Jewish presence in Palestine. He was unable to mention the agreement he had reached with Georges-Picot, but he alluded to the fact that Britain was not a free agent in

the Middle East. The Zionists, he stressed, would need to persuade the Allied governments to support such a plan.

Encouraged by this meeting, Weizmann and others began to present the Zionists' case in Rome and Paris. Although the French Foreign Ministry was opposed to any change in the Sykes-Picot agreement, they expressed an interest in the creation of a Jewish homeland. Pope Benedict XV was equally supportive. In these negotiations, the Zionists were not naïve about British intentions – support of the Zionist cause, they perceived, was linked to British policy in the Middle East. Yet Weizmann and others remained ignorant of the Sykes-Picot agreement. Hence, they were puzzled that full support was not forthcoming.

In Palestine, a number of Zionists perceived that the future of a Jewish settlement was dependent on driving out the Turks. A clandestine operation was mounted by Aaron Aaronsohn, a leading agronomist, and his associate Avshalom Feinberg transmitted military data to the British. On the pretext of travelling to Germany to carry out research, he made his way to England in October 1916 where he provided Sir Basil Thomson, the chief of Scotland Yard, with military information regarding Turkish vulnerability to an invasion. The next month Thomson sent Aaronsohn to Egypt for discussions with military commanders.

The Jewish spy network, NILI (from the initials of the Hebrew: *Nezach Yisrael Lo Y'shaker* (the Eternal One of Israel Will Not Lie) continued for the next eight months collecting information on Ottoman military bases and movements. However, in September 1917 one of the NILI carrier pigeons was captured by the Turks. Eventually the spy network was rounded up and tortured including Aaronsohn's sister, Sarah, who committed suicide. Others were hanged. Some members of the Yishuv strongly disapproved of the spy ring and refused to give assistance to those who survived. Aaronsohn himself managed to survive the war, but in May 1919 his plane from London to the Paris Peace Conference crashed in the English Channel.

During this period Vladimir Jabotinsky sought to organize a Jewish legion to liberate the Holy Land from the Turks. Initially he was instrumental in organizing the Zion Mule Corps. In London he attempted to arouse support. However, most British Zionists were unenthusiastic, fearing that if Jews abroad struggled to liberate Palestine, the Yishuv would be punished. However, once Weizmann and his colleagues learned about the Sykes-Picot Agreement, they realized the necessity for the British to obtain control of the entire country.

## The Balfour Declaration

As time passed, it became clear that an official endorsement of a Jewish homeland should be made. Determined that Britain should offer the Jewish people a safe haven, the Zionists were urged to formulate a proposal. In response the Zionists began to prepare a statement. Weizmann's associate Harry Sacher urged that the government recognize Palestine as 'a Jewish State and National Home of the Jewish People'. His colleague Nahum Sokolov offered a more cautious version. The government, he believed, should approve a 'National Home for the Jewish People'. The final draft endorsed Sokolov's approach.

The declaration was then put on the agenda for the next cabinet session. However, when this took place on 4 October 1917, it was opposed by Edwin Montagu, secretary of state for India, who was the only Jew in the cabinet. Undeterred, Lloyd George and other Zionist sympathizers persisted although it was agreed that the text be altered. The phrase 'Palestine should be reconstituted as the National Home of the Jews' was modified. With the support of President of the United States, Woodrow Wilson, the War Cabinet voted for the declaration on 31 October. The declaration took the form of a letter sent by Balfour on 2 November to Lord Rothschild, president of the British Zionist Federation:

### ***The Balfour Declaration***

Dear Lord Rothschild, I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet: '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. (Mendes-Flohr, Reinharz (eds), *The Jew in the Modern World*, p. 582)

The original draft of the declaration had referred to the reconstitution of Palestine as the National Home of the Jewish people. This term was formulated at the 1897 Zionist Congress rather than the mention of a Jewish state because of its potentially provocative nature. The Balfour Declaration followed this usage, but gave no indication of the boundaries of such a settlement. Further, mention of the rights of non-Jewish inhabitants of Palestine provided a basis for

limiting Jewish immigration. Following an endorsement of the declaration by British Jewry, the government created a special Jewish section of the department of information. The Balfour Declaration was widely circulated and evoked an enthusiastic response from Jewish communities world-wide. In the United States parades were held in New York, Philadelphia, Chicago and elsewhere.

One consequence of the Balfour Declaration was the creation of a Jewish legion in Palestine. In August 1917, Lloyd George and Balfour authorized the establishment of a special Jewish infantry regiment on the Palestine front. The first unit, the Thirty-eighth Battalion of Royal Fusiliers, was headed by Colonel John Patterson, an Irish Protestant, who had formerly commanded the Zion Mule Corps. His first recruits were over 100 veterans of the Mule Corps. Through the efforts of Jabotinsky, who had volunteered as a private and became lieutenant and Patterson's aide-de-camp, immigrants were recruited from London's East End. Other recruits included David Ben-Gurion and Yitzhak Ben-Zvi who had been exiled from Palestine in 1915.

In October 1917 the British invasion of Palestine began. The Expeditionary Force overran Beersheba, captured Jappa on 16 November and took Jerusalem three weeks later. In December 1917 Allenby addressed a gathering of distinguished Jews, Christians and Muslims declaring that the British had come as deliverers. However, with the winter rains Allenby's campaign lost momentum. Ottoman troops confiscated Jewish farms and army deserters attacked Jewish settlements. In the spring, however, the British renewed their campaign and defeated enemy forces in September 1918. By that stage the Jewish population was less than 55,000. The Jewish Legion formed part of the 1918 conquest. Once its troops landed in the country, Jabotinsky recruited younger Palestinian Jews. In the spring of 1918 the Jewish units were assigned to patrol the Jordan Valley. Later the Legion joined Allenby's autumn offensive.

By December 1918 Britain had been victorious in Syria, western Turkey, Palestine, Mesopotamia and lower Iran. At the Paris Peace Conference, Syria was allocated to France as a mandatory responsibility; Iraq was allocated to Britain, and Palestine was also to be a British mandate. This was formally validated by the Supreme Council of the Peace Conference at San Remo on 25 April 1920. The boundaries of Palestine, however, continued to be in dispute. Weizmann and other Zionists requested that Palestine be bounded in the north by the slopes of the Lebanon, the headwaters of the Jordan, and the crest of Mount Hermon; to the east by the Transjordan-Mesopotamian desert; and to the south by the Gulf of Aqaba. The British stressed the importance of extending the frontiers of Palestine northeastward to protect the rail routes from the Mediterranean.

The French, on the other hand, endorsed the Lebanese view that the historic and natural frontiers of Greater Lebanon included the sources of the Jordan. At a meeting with Lloyd George on 10 May 1919, Stéphen Picot, the Foreign Minister, rejected the British appeal to revise the Sykes-Picot boundaries. Instead, he argued that northern Galilee must remain within the Syrian enclave. Eventually, once Britain withdrew Emir Feisal's demands in Syria, the French government accepted the current military boundaries in Palestine, ignoring the Zionist's requests. On 4 December the British and French prime ministers reached an agreement. The Zionists were deeply disappointed – the British and French accord ignored the historic entity of Palestine from Dan to Beersheba as envisaged in the original negotiations about the Balfour Declaration.

# Aftermath of the First World War

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Within a month of the Balfour Declaration, the British had driven the Turkish forces from Jerusalem. Only the northern half of Palestine remained in Turkish hands. Following this victory, it became possible for Zionists to work with the British in establishing a Jewish National Home as promised by the Balfour Declaration. As a result, post-War Palestine, including Jews, Muslims and Christians, had suffered considerably. In order to ensure that a Jewish National Home would be created in Palestine, a Jewish delegation headed by Chaim Weizmann addressed the Paris Peace Conference on 17 February 1919. Yet the Arab population was unwilling to accept the notion of a Jewish National Home in Palestine and actively opposed such a policy following the appointment of Sir Herbert Samuel as the first High Commissioner in Mandate Palestine.

## After the First World War

By the end of the war, there were about 560,000 Arabs and 55,000 Jews living in Palestine. Initially the British supplied food relief; this was followed by shipments of clothing and medicine for the Christian and Muslim populations by the American Near East Relief organization. The Zionist Organization and Hadassah similarly provided aid for the Yishuv. Under British administration, the country was divided into districts, each with a British military governor.



Regulations regarding finance, justice, agriculture, education and public works were issued by various central departments. In this structure, the British occupied senior administrative posts, with Palestinian Arabs and Jews at lower levels. Steps were also taken to improve the health and sanitation of the country.

### ***Ben Gurion's View of Palestine Following the War***

The demand for the Jewish people is based on the reality of unexploited economic potentials, and of unbuilt-up stretches of land that require the productive force of a progressive, cultured people. The demand of the Jewish people is really nothing more than the demand of an entire nation for the right to work. However we must remember that such rights are also possessed by the inhabitants already living in the country – and these rights must not be infringed upon. (Gilbert, *Israel: A History*, p. 38)

A British commission was dispatched to Palestine to advise the military authorities with regard to the Jewish population. Determined to ensure that the Balfour Declaration would be implemented following the war, the Zionists formulated a draft constitution. On 18 November 1918 this new draft proposal was submitted; it stated that the establishment of a National Home for the Jewish People was understood to mean that the country should be placed under such political, economic and moral conditions as would favour the increase of the Jewish population. Previously a similar resolution had been adopted by the American Jewish Congress as well as Jewish congresses in Palestine, Austria-Hungary, Poland, South Africa and elsewhere.

Initially the Foreign Office appeared to accept such an interpretation of the Balfour Declaration. Lloyd George and Balfour affirmed that they accepted the Zionist position. In a memorandum of 11 August 1919, Balfour stated that the homeland should be viable. Other countries appeared to adopt a similar stance. Even though Prime Minister Millerand of France rejected British and Zionist claims to the headwaters of the Jordan, he did not intend to challenge the idea of a Jewish home. Nor did the Italian government despite its resentment about a British protectorate over Palestine. President Wilson of the United States appeared to support the Zionist proposal as well.

Despite such commitment from Western nations, the Zionists were anxious to gain support from the Arab world. In the summer of 1918 Weizmann conferred with Syrian émigrés living in Cairo to stress Zionist intentions of respecting

Arab rights within the country. For their part, the Syrians suggested proportional representation of the Arab majority in any future government. Gravely concerned by this response, Weizmann met at Aqaba with Emir Feisal, Sherif Hussein's son and leader of the Arab revolt. The position of Arabs in Palestine, Weizmann explained, would be vastly improved through the Zionist project.

Faced with a diplomatic struggle with the French over the Arab role in Syria and certain that the Jews could be of help, Feisal was sympathetic to the Zionist cause. In December 1918 Weizmann and Feisal met in London and agreed that all water and farm-boundary questions would be determined directly between Arabs and Jews. Eventually on 4 January 1919 an agreement was signed by Weizmann and Feisal asserting that the Jews had a right to free immigration and settlement on the land. This was accompanied by an assurance that Arab tenant farmers would be safeguarded on their land and assisted economically. All disputes were to be arbitrated by the British. In a codicil appended to the treaty, Feisal stated such an agreement was conditional upon the Arabs obtaining their independence.

Subsequently the Zionist leadership made a number of concessions to Arab demands. When Feisal appeared before the Paris Peace Conference on 6 February to demand Arab independence, he stated that Palestine should be regarded as an enclave of the Zionist Jews. In making such a statement, Feisal expected that the Zionists should oppose French claims to the Syrian interior. Despite Arab pressure, Weizmann was not prepared to act independently against the British who had made commitments to the French. As a consequence, Feisal ended meetings with the Zionists and envisaged the Jewish National Home as a subprovince within the Arab kingdom. By the late autumn Feisal terminated all communications with the Zionist leadership.

During this period Palestine was administered by functionaries from the British army and the Egyptian civil service. Most officials believed that friendly relations with the Arabs were paramount. Concerned about this development, Zionists pressed that Jews should be employed in the public services and that there should be an end to restrictions on Jewish immigration and land purchase. By 8 June 1919, Sir Arthur Money, the military administrator for Palestine, expressed concern that the distrust of the Jews was increasing among the Arabs. The fear was that if the Zionist programme were implemented in Palestine, this would continually require a military force.

In February 1920 Arab raiders attacked Jewish colonies of Metulla and Tel Chai along the Palestine northern border, killing Jewish defenders including Joseph Trumpeldor. In response Weizmann warned Sir Louis Bols, the military administrator for Palestine, of the increasing possibility of conflict. The next

month the Syrian National Congress offered Feisal the throne of united Syria including Palestine. During the season of Nebi Musa, devout Muslims went on a pilgrimage on the Jericho road to the grave of Moses, arriving in Jerusalem on 4 April. As the crowd became unruly, violence ensued. One hundred and sixty Jews were wounded during three hours of rioting. When agitators were released the next morning, attacks on Jews continued. Order was restored only on the third day by which time a number of Jews and Arabs had been killed.

In consequence, the Arab mayor of Jerusalem was dismissed and two agitators were imprisoned. However, most rioters were given light jail sentences whereas Jabotinsky and others who had organized a Jewish defense corps were sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment. In the Jewish world, there was adverse reaction to the violence and the difference in sentences. In response, the government called for an official court of inquiry. At the hearings the military officials insisted that Zionist provocation had led to the uprising. The Jews, however, maintained that the mandatory government was to blame. On 29 April 1920 Britain announced that the military regime in the Holy Land would be dismantled in favour of a provisional civil administration.

## Civil Administration in Palestine

The day before the assignment of the mandates, Herbert Samuel was informed in San Remo that he was selected by Lloyd George as the new civil high commissioner for Palestine. A loyal Jew and Zionist, Samuel had served as a Liberal party leader and former member of the cabinet. Not surprisingly Feisal regarded Samuel's appointment as a provocation. When he arrived in Jerusalem on 30 June 1920, he was escorted to Government House by armoured cars. Even though Samuel was an ardent Zionist, he believed that Jews would be able to live harmoniously with the Arab population. In August 1920 Samuel authorized a Land Transfer Ordinance that made it possible for Zionists to acquire land. In September an Immigration Ordinance opened Palestine to legal Jewish immigration to those who had obtained visas from the Zionist Organization.

### ***Letter of Appointment of Samuel***

The Army Council have approved the assumption by you of the title of Commander-in-Chief of the troops in Palestine, with the proviso that the possession of this title will not give you any right of interference in details of movements of troops, but will merely allow you to indicate the general policy to be pursued by the Military forces. (O'Brien, *The Siege*, p. 156)

Initially Samuel sought to reconcile Arabs to these measures by pardoning the ringleaders of the Arab riots of 1920, including Haj Amin al-Husseini, and creating an Advisory Council with an Arab majority in the unofficial membership. Such actions, however, did not pacify the Arab community. In January 1921 Palestine was transferred from the Foreign Office to the Colonial Office under Winston Churchill. In March 1921 Churchill convened a conference of senior British officials in the Middle East in Cairo in order to reach a settlement with the leaders of Arab nationalism.

A focus of Arab resentment was the increasing number of Jews who had entered Palestine. By April 1921 nearly ten thousand Jews had come into the country under Samuel's Immigration Ordinance. Added to Arab fears about the Zionist aspirations was the dispute about the election of the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem. Previously the post of Grand Mufti was of little significance, since the Sultan served as both the supreme religious and temporal leader of the Muslim population. But, once the country was dominated by the British, the Grand Mufti became the supreme representative of Muslim Arabs.

Once the post of Grand Mufti became vacant, it was to be filled according to Ottoman procedures. An election took place in mid-April 1921, and Haj Amin al-Husseini came fourth despite his notoriety as the principal instigator of the anti-Jewish riots of Easter 1920. Haj Amin and his followers, however, declared that the elections had been rigged by the Jews in order to have a pro-Zionist Mufti. Although Samuel's major advisor on Arab affairs, Ernest Richmond, encouraged him to invalidate the elections Samuel made no decision. While this matter remained unresolved, further anti-Jewish riots took place on 1 May in Jaffa. Jewish shops and a shelter for immigrants were attacked. Twenty-seven Jews and three Arabs were killed, and one hundred and four Jews and thirty-four Arabs wounded. In the next few days, rioting spread to other coastal centres. By 7 May forty-seven Jews had been killed and one hundred and forty-six wounded, and forty-eight Arabs killed and seventy-three wounded.

In order to calm Arab feeling, Samuel introduced a temporary suspension of immigration and agreed to Richmond's recommendation about the election of the Grand Mufti. One of the three Arabs who had been elected was encouraged to stand down, and on 8 May 1921 Haj Amin was appointed Grand Mufti of Jerusalem. The Jewish community was incensed. In the same year the military sought to subvert the Balfour Declaration. At the end of June, General Sir Walter Congreve, commander of the British forces in the Middle East, went to London and argued against the Zionist cause.

In October, General Congreve issued a circular to officers under his command which supported the Arabs. Shortly after this letter was sent, Arabs in Jerusalem attacked Jews who were celebrating the fourth anniversary of the Balfour Declaration. Five Jews and three Arabs were killed. At Christmas 1921, after receiving a copy of Congreve's circular, Churchill resolved that the Air Ministry should assume responsibility for the defence of Palestine, and a squadron of the Air Force was stationed in the area, and a British Gendarmerie set up. No longer was there to be military presence on the ground which would be sympathetic to the Arab population in opposition to British policy.

During the years 1920-22 there were grave doubts about the possibility of establishing a Jewish National Home as proposed by the Balfour Declaration. Although Samuel sought to create institutions in Palestine, the Jewish population was fearful of representative bodies, since Jews constituted only 11 per cent of Palestine's population. In addition, the Arab birth rate was higher than that among Jews. In such conditions, it seemed certain that the Arabs would constitute the majority in any institution that would be established, and such a situation would inevitably undermine the Zionist programme. Samuel and Churchill, however, envisaged the creation of a Middle East Federation, of which the Jewish National Home would be a part. Although there was some support for this notion in Jewish circles, the Yishuv was bitterly opposed.

Despite such resistance, Samuel initially established a nominated Advisory Council in October 1920 with a majority of Arab notables among its unofficial membership. After the May 1921 riots, he proposed that the Advisory Council be elected as a step towards self-government. At the same time Samuel declared that the Balfour Declaration did not imply that a Jewish government would be formed to rule over the Muslim and Christian majority. Rather, he insisted that the British government would never impose a policy that would be contrary to the religious, political and economic interests of those living in Palestine. In August 1921 an Arab delegation went to London to meet with British officials. Because the Arabs were not able to secure an assembly with legislative and executive powers, to control immigration and to receive a repudiation of the Balfour Declaration, they rejected the offer of an elected assembly.

## British Post-War Policy

During this period, Emir Abdullah sought to persuade Syria to elevate his brother Feisal to power. By March 1921 Abdullah had made his way to Amman

at the time Churchill's Middle East conference was taking place in Cairo. Fearing that the Emir would provoke a crisis between France and England, T. E. Lawrence and Churchill agreed that it would be best if Abdullah would remain in Transjordan where he could rule as Britain's protégé. On 26 May Churchill met Abdullah in Jerusalem as the Colonial Secretary explained his plan. It was proposed that Abdullah would not take any action against the French; instead he would organize a government in Amman, recognize Transjordan as a part of Britain's Palestine mandate, and administer the territory in the name of the mandate. For Britain's part, Abdullah would be paid a monthly subsidy and receive trained advisors with the assurance that Transjordan would eventually be granted independence. The next day the Emir accepted Churchill's offer.

The creation of an Arab government east of the river signified Britain's acceptance that Transjordan was to be under Arab autonomy as previously agreed by MacMahon and Hussein in 1915. Such an agreement made it clear that the Balfour Declaration could not be applied to this area. This, however, was not Balfour's intention since he had previously proposed that Zionist agriculture could take place east of the Jordan. Only gradually did the Zionists comprehend the implications of this change of policy. This, however, was not the only restriction imposed on the Jewish National Home. In May 1922 Samuel travelled to London in an attempt to emphasize to the Colonial Office the need to dispel Arab fears about the future of the country. What was needed was a definitive explanation of what was intended by the Balfour Declaration. Known as the Churchill White Paper, a document was drafted largely by Samuel which restricted the area of a Jewish National Home to an area west of the Jordan and limited Jewish immigration. This document explained that the British government did not intend Palestine as a whole to become Jewish.

### ***Churchill White Paper***

Unauthorized statements have been made to the effect that the purpose in view is to create a wholly Jewish Palestine. Phrases have been used such as that Palestine is to become 'as Jewish as England is English'.

His Majesty's Government regard any such expectations as impracticable and have no such aim in view. Nor have they at any time contemplated, as appears to be feared by the Arab Delegation, the disappearance or the subordination of the Arabic population, language or culture in Palestine. They would draw attention to the fact that the terms of the declaration referred to do 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. (Cohn-Sherbok and El-Alami, *The Palestine-Israeli Conflict*, p. 124)

When the draft was submitted to the Zionist Organization, Weizmann and others signed it with reluctance. Not surprisingly the Zionists had been concerned about the notion of representative government since the 84,000 Jews in Palestine constituted only 11 per cent of the population. In addition, the Arab birth rate was higher than that of the Jews. Added to these difficulties, both Samuel and Churchill envisaged an eventual Middle Eastern Federation of which the Jewish National Home would only constitute a part. Although Weizmann was not opposed to such plans, leaders of the Yishuv feared for the future.

The Arabs, on the other hand, rejected any idea of a representative assembly. Undeterred, the British proceeded with their plans. Once the League of Nations Council meeting in London on 24 July 1922 passed a Mandate for Palestine, the British government proposed a Palestinian Constitution which established a Legislative Council. Although such a body would have had an Arab majority, the Palestinian Constitution was accepted by the Jewish population. The Arabs, however, adamantly rejected such a plan at a Palestinian Arab Congress in Nablus and decided on a boycott which effectively undermined the Legislative Council. Samuel then sought to reconstitute an Advisory Council and establish an Arab agency – both of these bodies were similarly rejected by the Arab representatives who had adopted a policy of non-co-operation as long as the Balfour Declaration remained in force. The British government, however, was unable to overcome this impasse, since the Balfour Declaration was enshrined in the Palestine Mandate.

With the fall of the Lloyd George government, the Arabs hoped to influence the new British leadership which had not been responsible for the Balfour Declaration. However, neither the British government of Bonar Law nor any future government had any intention of repudiating the Palestinian Mandate. As far as the Zionists were concerned, Arab non-co-operation suited their purposes. They had accepted the Palestine Constitution and thereby proved to be co-operative partners in the quest to find a solution to the problems of the Middle East. The Arabs, on the other hand, were intractable in their opposition to the creation of a Jewish National Home as envisaged by the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate.

Samuel's lack of success in creating representative institutions meant that Palestine had to be ruled by the High Commissioner and his officials without any consultation with the Jewish and Arab communities. In the absence of such bodies Jews and Arabs were compelled to create their own institutions. On the Jewish side, the most important organization was the Zionist Executive,

which had been given official recognition under the Mandate. A further body, the National Council, represented the Yishuv, which itself had two specialized institutions: the Histadrut, which embraced the trade unionists and the co-operative movement, and the Haganah, the Jewish armed forces. On the Arab side, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem became the president of a newly established Supreme Muslim Council in January 1922. It was this body that became responsible for financial and legal affairs, which had previously been under the purview of the Ottoman rulers. Thus by 1923 a tripartite system of government was established in Palestine which continued throughout the period of the Mandate – both the Arab and the Jewish communities were to look after their own affairs.

In the last year of Samuel's administration, there was a massive increase in Jewish immigration to Palestine. From 1920 to 1923 approximately 8000 Jews a year had settled in the Holy Land. In 1924 the rate increased to about 13,000. In 1938 it was over 33,000. This increase was due to the political and economic crisis in Poland, the relaxation of Soviet immigration controls, and restrictions on immigration in America beginning in 1924. Such an influx of settlers, known as the Fourth Aliyah, resulted in a significant increase of Jews residing in Jerusalem, Haifa and Tel Aviv. Surprisingly, this did not give rise to public demonstrations as had occurred only a few years previously. Similarly, when Arthur Balfour visited Palestine for the opening of the Hebrew University, there was little reaction from the Arab population.

## Palestine under Baron Plumer

After Samuel's retirement in June 1925, Baron Plumer of Messines became High Commissioner. Disappointed that a non-Jew had been appointed to this post, the Yishuv feared that the British might be less supportive of Zionist aspirations. Despite such reservations, Plumer accepted the notion of a Jewish National Home as provided for by the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate. Unlike Samuel, he made no attempt to establish representative institutions, nor to reconcile Jews and Arabs. Rather, his main aim was to establish civil order. As a consequence, the period between 1925–1938 during his High Commissionership was a time of peace and stability.

Nonetheless, the Yishuv was well aware of Arab hostility to Zionism. Within the Jewish community two opposing approaches to the Arab problem emerged during this period. The first was that attempts should be made towards



reconciliation. Pre-eminent among those who propounded a moderate policy was the Polish-born agronomist H. M. Kalvaryski, who served as an unofficial Minister for Arab Affairs. He had succeeded in creating a moderate organization, the Muslim National Association. However, in time it became clear that this body lacked a popular following among the Arabs. Other Zionists including the American-born chancellor of the Hebrew University, Judah Magnes, founded Berit Shalom (Covenant of Peace), which aimed to create peace with the Arabs through various concessions leading to the establishment of a bi-national state. This approach had little support among Arabs or Jews.

The second approach was of a pragmatic character. Within the Yishuv a number of influential Zionists maintained that Arab hostility was inevitable and would eventually lead to armed conflict. The agronomist Y. A. Wilkansky, for example, had told the Conference of the Yishuv in 1918 that it was impossible to evict the indigenous Arab population; in his view, a clash between Jews and Arabs was inevitable. The main proponent of such a view was Vladimir Jabotinsky owing to his role in the defence of Jews living in Jerusalem during the riots of April 1920. According to Jabotinsky and others, it was impossible to bridge the gap between Jews and Arab intentions. Instead, the two communities should be isolated from one another. In the turbulent period of 1920–22, such a policy was widely accepted within the Yishuv, but under Plummer's firm control, conflict between the two communities was suppressed.

### ***Vladimir Jabotinsky and the Arabs***

But the Arabs loved their country as much as Jews did. Instinctively they understood Zionist aspirations very well, and their decision to resist them was only natural. Every people fought immigration and settlement by foreigners, however high-minded their motives for settling. There was no misunderstanding between Jew and Arab, but a natural conflict. No agreement was possible with the Palestinian Arab; they would accept Zionism only when they found themselves up against an 'iron wall', when they realized they had no alternative but to accept Jewish settlement. (Report, 'The Situation in Palestine', August 1921 in Caplan, *Palestine Jewry and the Arab Question*, p. 101)

Following the massive immigration from Poland and Russia in 1925, relatively few Jews arrived in Palestine. Between 1926 and 1931, the Jewish population increased from 149,640 to 174,606. At the same time the Arab population increased from 675,450 to 759,700. Given such figures, it looked unlikely that

there could ever be a Jewish majority in the land. Added to this difficulty, the Yishuv faced severe economic difficulties in the late 1920s. At the end of 1928 Plumer retired from the High Commissionership. Within the month the Arab population attacked the Jewish community, thereby renewing the conflict that had erupted at the beginning of the decade.

On the eve of Yom Kippur in September 1928, a police officer, Douglas Duff, and the District Commissioner of Jerusalem, Edward Keith Roach, took a walk around the Old City of Jerusalem. Looking down from the Dome of the Rock, they saw that Jews had placed a screen to separate men and women at prayers near the Wailing Wall, sacred to Orthodox Jews. Alarmed by the scene, the District Commissioner declared that this was an infringement of the status quo ante. Duff commented later that the District Commissioner asked the religious sheikhs belonging to the mosque whether they had noticed the screen. The old gentlemen had not, but wishing to take advantage of the situation immediately adopted an attitude of righteous indignation.

The following day the police disrupted the prayer service and removed the screen. Furious with this decision, the Jewish population became incensed with the British. Such was the mood of the country when Sir John Chancellor arrived in Palestine. Intent on following the policy that H. C. Luke, the administering officer, had initiated, Chancellor announced on 3 January 1929 that he would consider creating a legislative council. This constituted a reversal of Plumer's approach and a return to Samuel's attempt to create institutions that included Jews and Arabs. This suggestion met with support from Arab leaders, who believed that by participating in representative institutions they would be able to control immigration to Palestine and block the implementation of a Jewish National Home. At the Seventh Palestinian Congress, a resolution was passed calling for the creation of a representative legislative body.

Such a change in attitude provided Chancellor and Luke with the opportunity to establish legislative institutions – a scheme that had eluded Samuel several years previously. At this time there was a change in Whitehall in London – the Conservative Government fell and was replaced by a Labour government led by Ramsay MacDonald. Britain was now governed by those who had no past links with the Balfour Declaration. In addition, the new Colonial Secretary, Lord Passfield, was unsympathetic to the notion of a Jewish National Home in Palestine. Throughout the year Luke carried out negotiations with the two main leaders of the Arab Executive, Musa Kazem al-Husayni and Raghib al-Nashashibi. In June 1929 an agreement was reached that the proposed legislative council would consist of ten Muslims, three Jews and two Christians.

## Renewed Conflict

The Grand Mufti, however, had other plans. In his view the Holy Places in Palestine were under threat from the Jewish population. Following the Yom Kippur incident, he initiated a campaign against Jews in the mosques and the press. At this juncture he reverted to the tactics he used in 1920 before he assumed the position of Grand Mufti; given the change in British attitudes towards the Arab population, he realized that such an approach might prove favourable to the Arab cause. In *Crossroads to Israel*, Christopher Sykes noted the positive impression he made on British officials:

### ***The Grand Mufti***

He was an impressive man to meet, and unlike many impressive men he had an infectious personal charm. He did not appear to be secretive and left whomever he met in no doubt that he would strive to the last for the preservation of Jerusalem and Palestine as a Moslem city and land, first and foremost. It was impossible not to believe in his sincerity. He had natural dignity. He was handsome though very slight in build, and an Oriental of Orientals, he never wore European clothes but the becoming habit of a Moslem doctor of Theology. His voice was soft and he had the trick of sitting as still as a statue. He never gesticulated or raised his voice. He made other people seem vulgar. It was difficult to think of him as blood-thirsty. (Sykes, *Crossroads to Israel*, p. 159)

In August a further incident inflamed both Arab and Jewish hatred. A Jewish boy kicked a ball into an Arab garden; in the ensuing fight he was stabbed and killed. After the boy's funeral, a Zionist demonstration took place at the Wall. This was followed by a sermon from the Mufti in the mosque of Al-Aqsa. Then, on 22 and 23 August, large crowds of Arab peasants made their way to Jerusalem armed with clubs and knives. The Chief of Police in Jerusalem did not have enough men to disarm the mob, and the Jewish community was severely attacked in Jerusalem and later in other Jewish centres. In this conflict, 133 Jews were killed and 339 wounded, and 110 Arabs were killed and 232 wounded by reinforced police. Subsequently six Arabs were killed in a Jewish counter-attack near Tel Aviv. It appeared that confrontation between Jews and Arabs was inevitable in the Holy Land.

These events caused a major change in the organization of the Haganah and a split among its members. Supporters of the military force emphasized that the Haganah had saved the Jewish communities of Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Haifa from mass destruction. Others were critical of its efforts. As a consequence, a major restructuring of the Haganah took place. This, however, did

not avert a split in its ranks. The political leadership of those who succeeded was furnished by Betar, an activist movement founded in 1923 in Riga, Latvia under the influence of Vladimir Jabotinsky.

In 1931 a group of Haganah members left the organization in protest against its policies and joined forces with Betar in order to establish a more militant armed underground organization, the Irgun. The first Betar congress took place in 1931 in Danzig, where Jabotinsky was elected head of the movement. Rejecting the Histadrut and Haganah policy of self-restraint, Betar adopted retaliation as its strategy in dealing with the Arabs. From 1929 the politics of the Yishuv was divided between the Histadrut-Haganah movement led by David Ben-Gurion and the right-wing Revisionist movement led by Jabotinsky.

Among the Arabs the events of 1929 led to increased support for the Mufti. In Palestine and throughout the Arab world, the Grand Mufti was perceived as the leading figure in the struggle against the Zionist threat. In British circles, it became increasingly clear that a Jewish National Home was impossible because of the Arab reaction. Anxious to protect Jewish interests, Weizmann met in London with Lord Passfield who insisted that mass immigration to Palestine would be impossible. Such a policy was enshrined in Two Royal Commissions and a White Paper. The first Royal Commission, headed by Sir Walter Shaw, addressed the events of August 1929 and determined that the attacks on the Jewish population were not premeditated. Although it criticized the Grand Mufti for not doing more to deter the mobs, it did not conclude that he was responsible for the atrocities that took place. In the view of the Commission, more should be done to strengthen the control of Jewish immigration to the country. On 12 May 1930, following the publication of the Report, the Colonial Office instructed the Mandatory to suspend the latest Jewish immigration schedule of 3300 Labour Certificates.

The Second Royal Commission, headed by Sir John Hope Simpson, applied the criterion of absorptive capacity laid down by Churchill's White Paper of 1922 in a more restrictive sense. In the view of Hope Simpson, Palestine would not be able to absorb more than a total of 50,000 extra Jewish immigrants. Lord Passfield then sought to reinterpret the Mandate. In a report to the Permanent Mandate's Commission of the League of Nations, the British government argued that the lack of any self-government in Palestine did not result from a lack of goodwill on the part of the Mandatory power. Subsequently the conclusions of these reports were incorporated into a White Paper published on 12 October 1930. The White Paper also proposed the creation of a legislative council.

# Continuing Conflict

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Across the Jewish world Zionists were dismayed by the change in British policy. At a lunch the British Prime Minister explained to Weizmann that there had been errors in the White Paper. Since it could not be withdrawn, he read to the House a letter he had written to Weizmann stressing that the Mandate had an obligation to facilitate Jewish immigration. In the Arab world, this document became known as the 'Black Letter'. With the rise of Nazism, Zionists and Nazis collaborated with the emigration of Jews from Germany to Palestine. Yet at the Eighteenth Zionist Congress, Jabotinsky called for a boycott of German goods. With increased persecution of Jews under the Reich, emigration to Palestine increased. In the Arab world, such an increase in the Jewish population in Palestine was viewed with dismay and hostility. Eventually an Arab revolt was unleashed against both Jews and the British. In November 1936 the Peel Commission arrived in Palestine to investigate affairs within the country. This was followed by further Arab insurrection which had been suspended during the deliberations of the Peel Commission. In response to these events, the White Paper of 1939 reversed previous British commitments to the creation of a Jewish National Home.

## The British and the Zionists

Concerned about the implications of British policy, Weizmann resigned as president of the Zionist Organization; this decision highlighted his view that the Balfour Declaration had been betrayed by the British.

### ***Weizmann and the White Paper of 1930***

If the obligation of the Mandatory is reduced to an obligation toward 170,000 people as against 700,000 people, a small minority juxtaposed to a great majority, then of course everything else can perhaps be explained. But the obligation of the Mandatory Power is toward the Jewish people, of which the 170,000 are merely the vanguard. I must take issue, as energetically as I can, with the formulation of the Mandatory Power as an identical obligation toward both sections of the Palestine population. (Sachar, *History of Israel from the Rise of Zionism to Our Time*, p. 177)

Across the world Jews were outraged by British policy. Letters, petitions, cables of protest and newspaper editorials castigated the British government's attitude. In Britain Stanley Baldwin and the Conservative party dissociated themselves from the White paper. In the House of Commons Leopold Amery and Winston Churchill were deeply critical; Lloyd George argued that MacDonald had broken the word of England in a parliamentary debate on 17 November.

Shaken by this response, MacDonald realized that the White Paper of 1930 was a mistake. At the suggestion of Harold Laski, the party's theorist and his own son, Malcolm MacDonald, the Prime Minister invited Weizmann to lunch where he confessed to errors in the White Paper. Yet he stressed that it could not be withdrawn. Instead, the Prime Minister resolved that it could be jettisoned by means of a letter of clarification. Thus on 13 February 1931 the Prime Minister read to the House a letter he had written to Weizmann in which he emphasized that the Mandate had an obligation to facilitate Jewish immigration to Palestine and encourage Jewish settlement without jeopardizing the rights of all sections of the population. Among the Arabs, this communication became known as the 'Black Letter'. Officially what the Prime Minister was doing was clarifying British government policy. Yet when asked at question time whether this constituted a change of attitude towards the White Paper, he admitted this was the case.

Despite this success, many Zionists were not satisfied. They had hoped for a new White Paper rather than a letter. Having resigned as president of the Zionist Organization over the White Paper, Weizmann was then eclipsed by Jabotinsky at the Seventh Zionist Congress in Basle from June to July 1931. During the session he was rebuked by the Congress for his statement in a Jewish Telegraph Agency interview that he had no sympathy with the demand for a Jewish majority in Palestine. A vote of censure was moved: 'The Congress expresses its regret at Dr. Weizmann's statement in a J. T. A. interview and regards his reply as inadequate.' The motion was carried by 123 votes to 106. As a consequence, it was not possible for Weizmann to resume his role as

president of the Zionist Organization. Reflecting on the Seventeenth Congress, he later wrote in his memoirs that it had been a nightmare of treachery.

### ***Weizmann and the Seventeenth Congress***

When it was finished, and some tactless person applauded my so-called downfall, the feeling came over me that here and now the tablets of the law should be broken, though I had neither the strength nor the moral stature of the great law-giver. (Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, p. 420)

This internal conflict within the Zionist Organization, however, was eclipsed by the rise of Nazism and the succession of Adolf Hitler in January 1933. From 1933 the Zionists and the Nazis co-operated in the emigration of Jews from Nazi Germany to Palestine. On 25 August 1933, Eliezer Siegfried Hoofien, general manager of the Anglo-Palestine Bank, agreed with the German Ministry of Economics that Jewish assets should be used to purchase material needed in Palestine. In the same year the Anglo-Palestine Bank created the Trust and Transfer Office Ha'avara Ltd in Tel Aviv. In Berlin a parallel body was created with the assistance of two Jewish bankers, Max Warburg and Siegmund Wassermann. This company, known as Pälästina Treuhandstelle zur Beratung Deutscher Juden, was responsible for negotiating with the German government the settlement of the bills of German exports and contracts with German Jews who sought to settle in Palestine. Between 1933–39 the majority of the 50,000 Jews who left Germany used the services of this organization. This included children who were sent ahead of their parents as well as war veterans and civil servants.

In Palestine, Jabotinsky and his colleagues denounced such arrangements because they violated the boycott against German goods. In the Yishuv and abroad, the Revisionists and Betar castigated the Ha'avara and the Zionist leadership which had agreed to this policy. Such an attitude was understandable given the suffering of Germany Jewry, but there were strong arguments in favour of such a transfer. Chaim Arlosoroff, the head of the Political Department of the Jewish Agency, had travelled to Germany to prepare the ground for Ha'avarah. In defence, it stressed that 40,000 Jews had turned to the Palestinian offices for help. It was folly to think that the Jewish problem could be solved without the consent of the German government.

At the Eighteenth Zionist Congress held in Prague from August to September 1933, this issue was to be debated. Two months before the Congress took place, Chaim Arlosoroff was murdered on the beach in Tel Aviv where he was walking with his wife after his return from Germany. Revisionists were widely blamed for his murder. At the Congress Jabotinsky put forward

a resolution calling for a worldwide boycott of Germany. Leading delegates including Henrietta Szold, head of Hadassah, strongly defended Ha'avara, and the boycott resolution was not put to a vote. Instead the Congress officially adopted the Ha'avara policy and put Ha'avara under the control of the Zionist Executive. Undeterred by this setback, the Revisionists continued to attack this policy and sought to impose their own boycott.

## Hitler and the Jews

The attempted boycott of Nazi Germany was unsuccessful; instead, the position of Ha'avara was strengthened in the face of Jewish persecution under the Third Reich. In March 1933 a German delegation sent by Goering arrived in London. Although it had been instructed to deny newspaper accounts of the hardships facing German Jewry and to persuade the American Jewish Congress to cancel demonstrations scheduled to take place later that month, the delegates gave a true report of the situation in Germany. This discouraged any form of protest and encouraged support for the efforts of Ha'avara.

Among the Nazi leadership, Zionism was viewed with contempt. In Hitler's view as expressed in *Mein Kampf*, its main aim was to create a central organization for international control. The German Foreign Minister, Baron von Neurath, maintained that the creation of a Jewish State or a Jewish-led political structure under the British Mandate would not be in Germany's best interest. In his view, a Palestinian State could not absorb world Jewry; rather it would create a position of power under international law for world Jewry like the Vatican in Italy for political Catholicism or the Comintern in Moscow for the Communists.

### ***Hitler and Zionism***

They have no thought of building up a Jewish State in Palestine, so they can inhabit it, but they only want a central organization of their international world cheating, endowed with prerogatives, withdrawn from the seizure of others: a refuge for convicted rascals and a high school for future rogues. (Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, in O'Brien, *The Seige*, p. 200)

Nonetheless at the early stage of Nazi control of Germany, emigration of the Jewish population under the Transfer Agreement was officially encouraged. As a consequence, the Jewish population in Palestine which had stood at about 84,000 in 1922 increased to around 400,000 by 1937 – nearly half this number was the result of the emigration of European Jews during the first three years of the Nazi regime. From the Zionist point of view, the emigration



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policy of the Mandatory was generous from 1932 to 1935. Yet its conditions were restrictive: those without capital could only enter the country on Labour certificates issued by the Mandatory. During the period 1933–39 the Jewish Agency applied for 171,430 certificates; of these only a third were granted. Such a policy was defended on the grounds of the absorptive capacity of the country as formulated in the 1922 White Paper. Scenes of these emigrants were portrayed by such observers as Christopher Sykes in his *Crossroads to Israel*:

### ***Christopher Sykes and Jewish Emigrants***

There was no more moving sight in those days than the arrival at Haifa or Jaffa of a Mediterranean ship carrying Jews from Europe: the spontaneous cries of joy at the first sight of the shore, the mass chanting of Hebrew hymns or Yiddish songs usually beginning raggedly over all the boat and sometimes swelling into a single harmony; the uncontrolled joy of these returning exiles (for so they thought of themselves); a man seizing hold of a stranger and pointing with tears of joy at the approaching land crying 'Zion, Zion!' and 'Jerusalem!' (Sykes, *Crossroads to Israel*, pp. 167–68)

Previously the Jewish world was deeply divided about the need for a Jewish state. Yet the events of the Nazi period brought into focus the perilous nature of Jewish life in the diaspora. Influenced by these events, David Ben-Gurion observed during this period that the disaster that had befallen German Jewry was not limited to that country: Hitler's regime placed the entire Jewish community in danger. Inevitably, it would spread to France, Poland, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union. In such a case, world Jewry would be under threat.

Viewing this growth of the Jewish community in Palestine, the Arabs were dismayed: the rescue of Jews from Nazi Germany was perceived as an act of aggression against Arab interests. Unimpressed by the argument that this influx of immigrants would improve the country, Palestinian Arabs were determined to revolt. Previously anti-British disturbances broke out in Jaffa, Nablus, Haifa and Jerusalem in October 1933; these were repressed by British forces. Twenty-six Arabs were killed and one Briton. The next two years were relatively peaceful.

Events during this period, however, provided the background for increasing Arab hostility towards Britain. In October 1935, Mussolini invaded Ethiopia. At the League of Nations, Britain announced its intention to resist Italy's action, yet by the end of 1935 League sanctions had not had any effect. In this adventure, the Suez Canal was of strategic importance. Despite Britain's intention not to provoke a war, Mussolini portrayed Britain as its adversary even though Italy was free to use the Suez Canal which was in the heart of the

British sphere. This was the message on Italian radio which was broadcast in Arabic to the Eastern Mediterranean.

In response to these broadcasts, the Arabic press was deeply critical of Britain and in favour of war against both Britain and France. Among Arabs anti-Jewish, anti-British and anti-French sentiments were openly expressed. Hence, the Arab Revolt of 1936 should be seen not as a local disturbance in Palestine, but as part of a general feeling among the Arab world. Further, the actions of the Nazi government towards the Jewish population was encouraging. If a major world power were able to control its Jewish population with restrictive measures, similar steps might be possible elsewhere. The difficulty, however, was that Britain had previously committed itself to the Zionist enterprise.

## The Arab Revolt

In Palestine the conflict between Jews and Arabs intensified. In a terrorist operation, Sheikh Izz al-Din al-Qassam and his band were surrounded and killed. As a martyr to the Arab cause, al-Qassam's death put pressure on Haj Amin to launch a Muslim revolt. On 15 April 1936 a group of armed Arabs took two Jews off a bus in the Nablus mountains and killed them. Two days later members of the nationalist Haganah, the parent body of the Irgun, murdered two Arabs in retaliation. Following these events, Arab demonstrations took place in Jaffa, Nablus and elsewhere throughout the country.

The perpetrators of the murder of the two Arabs were followers of Jabotinsky. The Yishuv, however, adopted a policy of self-restraint during this period. Its main aim was to defend Jewish settlements. Hence, it was the Arabs rather than the Jews who took the offensive. Initially the Jewish population was attacked, but eventually the Arabs directed their hostility towards the British. Attacks against Jews continued but Arabs perceived as supporters of British rule were also targeted. In this assault hundreds of Arab volunteers were recruited from outside Palestine.

The shift away from anti-Jewish activity to insurrection against Britain posed difficulties for Haj Amin. If he concurred with this policy, he risked losing his role as head of the Supreme Muslim Council. Yet, if he failed to support his fellow Arabs, he was in danger of losing his power base. As a result, he gave in to the demands of the militants, and agreed to serve as head of the Higher Arab Committee (HAC) which was established in April 1936. Officially the HAC was a lawful body whose purpose was to represent Arab political demands. But in reality its goal was to organize a general strike and coordinate the Arab uprising.

Haj Amin, however, was aware that his position as president of the Supreme Muslim Council (SMC) was precarious. Thus during the first two months of the revolt, he attempted to convince the Government that he had nothing to do with the rebellion. In one sense this was true: during this period he did not seek to inflame Muslim crowds as he had done previously. Yet in June Muslim rebels called on the people in the name of Islam to join their action. In response, the Supreme Muslim Council of which Haj Amin was the head supported this policy. On 26 June the SMC declared to the High Commissioner that the Yishuv refused offers of a Jewish National Home in other lands because it was their intention to rebuild Solomon's Temple in the palace of the mosque of al-Aqsa. In Arab eyes, Britain was viewed as supporting the Yishuv in this quest.

Arguably, a major cause of such anti-British sentiment was due to the weakening of British power during this period. In May Mussolini had declared that the King of Italy was Emperor of Ethiopia; the same month Emperor Haile Selassie, who was in Jerusalem, appealed to the League for support. Such a spectacle of the head of a people whose cause Britain had failed to support had a powerful impact on the Muslim community in Palestine. Arguably, the Jewish people, who had relied on the British for the establishment of a Jewish National Home, would be treated in a similar fashion.

During the summer the revolt spread throughout the country. In June attacks took place along the roads and against the Haifa-Lyddah railway line. The first major conflict between British troops and Arab forces occurred near Tulkarm. Over the next two months disturbances intensified. The strike which occurred simultaneously was only partly successful largely because so much work of the country was done by Jews. In Haifa which was central to the country's economy, both Arabs and Jews remained at work. Yet the combination of Arab attack and the strike was a symbolic expression of opposition to Jewish immigration.

Although British forces defended themselves, there was no concerted attempt to suppress the revolt. Any political solution to this conflict required concessions to Arab demands. During this period three Arab princes, Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud, King of Saudi Arabia, Ghazi, King of Iraq, and Abdullah of Transjordan became involved in the Mandatory government. All three detested Zionism and saw that personal political gains could be made from their participation in the affairs of Palestine. It was hoped that the influence of the Arab rulers might induce the rebels to lay down their arms. Yet the rebels did not view the Arab princes as having authority to intervene in Palestinian affairs. As pious Muslims they were fighting a holy war against their enemies.

The autumn of 1937 brought about a major change in British attitude. Under the influence of Service chiefs, the British introduced martial law. In the view of the HAC, the rebels would not be able to deal with such a policy. Yet neither the HAC nor the Foreign Office wanted it to appear that the rebels had been defeated. The Arab princes were thus encouraged to issue a joint appeal. After some delay, a statement was published. On the same day the appeal was issued, the HAC published a manifesto encouraging the rebels to call off the strike and the disorders. To the disgust of the military authorities, the rebels dispersed without giving up their arms. The way was then open to the Peel Commission which the Arabs hoped would favour their position.

### ***The Arab Princes' Appeal***

To our sons, Arabs of Palestine. We have been much distressed by the present situation in Palestine. In agreement with our brothers the Arab Kings and the Emir Abdullah we appeal to you to restore tranquillity in order to prevent further bloodshed, relying on the good intentions of our friend the British government to see that justice be done. Be assured that we shall continue our endeavour to help you. (Porath, *The Emergence of the Palestinian-Arab National Movement*, p. 214)

## **The Peel Commission**

In November 1936 the Royal Commission headed by Lord Peel arrived in Palestine. The Commission held sixty-six meetings which were largely dominated by Jewish evidence, since the Arabs boycotted most of the proceedings. Appearing before the Commission on 25 November 1936, Weizmann spoke about the Jewish plight in Europe. In addition, he sought to reassure the Commission that Jews who had settled in Palestine sought to create a National Home for the Jewish people without causing undue suffering to the Arab population.

### ***Weizmann and the Royal Commission***

There are in this part of the world, six million people for whom the world is divided into places where they cannot live and places into which they cannot enter... What has happened in Germany has been the Writing on the Wall even for the Western communities... It makes me uneasy to reflect that one is always the subject of analysis, that one is being dissected and tested. Have we the right to live?... It is a disembodied ghost of a race ... and therefore it inspires suspicion, and suspicion breeds hatred. I believe the main cause which has produced the particular state of Jewry in the world is its attachment to Palestine.



We are stiff-necked people. We never forget... This steadfastness which has preserved the Jews through the ages and through a career which is almost one long chain of human suffering is primarily due to some physical or pathological attachment to Palestine. (*Peel Commission Minutes*, in O'Brien, *The Seige*, pp. 224–25)

Later on 7 January 1937 David Ben-Gurion sought to persuade the Commission of the inherent right of the Jewish people to their ancestral homeland. A week later, Haj Amin emphasized that the Jewish claim to Palestine was in direct conflict with Islam.

In July 1937 the Peel Commission published its report in which it declared that the Palestine problem was insoluble. It arose within the narrow bounds of a small country in which approximately one million Arabs were in conflict against forty thousand Jews. Since in its view neither group could justly rule over all of Palestine, the Commission concluded that the country should be partitioned. In this light the Commission recommended that a Mandate for Palestine should be terminated and replaced by a Treaty System, and a new Mandate for the Holy Places be established. Further, it suggested that a Treaty of Alliance should be negotiated between the government of Transjordan and the Arabs of Palestine, representing an expanded Transjordan, and that the Zionist organization should be responsible for a Jewish state. The Commission assigned to the Jewish state a coastal strip from the south of Jaffa to the north of Gaza along with Galilee from the sea to the Syrian border. Jerusalem, with a corridor to the sea, was to be placed under the new Mandate. The remainder of the country was to be the new Arab state.

Although this scheme was endorsed by the British government, it was strongly opposed by the Palestinian Arabs. On the Jewish side, Weizmann and Ben-Gurion favoured the principle of partition because it would have created a Jewish homeland. Under their influence, the Twentieth Zionist Congress held in Zurich in August 1937 approved the plan, and the Zionist Executive was authorized to negotiate with the Mandatory power for the purpose of ascertaining the British terms for the proposed establishment of a Jewish National Home.

There were, however, differing views within the Zionist movement about this plan. Jabotinsky and the Revisionists bitterly opposed partition. When he appeared before the Peel Commission in London on 11 February 1937, Jabotinsky declared that the Jewish people would never be satisfied with what was being offered. Weizmann viewed the boundaries as inadequate but

was willing to accept such a scheme. Ben-Gurion, on the other hand, viewed the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine as simply a beginning. He stressed that the number of Jews entering the country would increase, and that a military force would be created to protect the Jews living in the land. He was sure that Jews would not be prevented from settling in other parts of the country either through agreement or other means. In a letter to his son written at this period, he stressed that partition should be seen as a means to a greater end.

### ***Ben-Gurion and Partition***

The establishment of a Jewish State will serve as a means in our historical efforts to redeem the country in its entirety. We shall bring into the country all the Jews it can contain; we shall build a sound Jewish economy. We shall organize a sophisticated defence force – an elite army... I am sure that we shall not be prevented from settling in all the other parts of the country, either through mutual understanding and agreement with our Arab neighbours or by other means. (Ben-Gurion, *Letters to Paula and the Children*, pp. 210-13)

In the summer of 1937 the Arab revolt, which had been suspended during the deliberations of the Peel Commission, was renewed following meetings of nationalists in Syria. During this period Lewis Andrews, acting District Commissioner of Galilee, was murdered. Despite the Higher Arab Committee's condemnation of this act, Haj Amin was removed as head of this body and warrants were issued for the arrest of its members. Fleeing to Lebanon, Haj Amin was given asylum by the French. On 13 October, Sir Arthur Wauchope was removed as High Commissioner, to be replaced by Sir Harold MacMichael in February 1938.

These events led to a full-scale Arab revolt which lasted until the end of 1938 and was severely repressed by the British government. At this time steps were taken towards abandoning the partition plan. In December 1937 the Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain supported the Foreign Office, which opposed partition as well as the creation of a Jewish state. Despite such a shift in policy, the British sought the support of the Yishuv in repressing the Arab uprising. Haganah volunteers formed Special Night Squads under Orde Charles Wingate.

## **The White Paper of 1939**

In Palestine a section of the Jewish youth joined the National Military Organization, Irgun Tzevai Leumi, which was opposed to the Haganah policy

of self-restraint. In June 1938 the British hanged a young Revisionist for attacking an Arab bus; in response, the Irgun exploded land mines in the fruit market in Haifa, killing seventy-four people and wounding another 129. This act was condemned by both Zionist and Haganah leaders. On 17 September 1938 partition was reaffirmed by the League of Nations, and the British appeared to be committed to the Jewish state because of their repression of the Arab revolt. Although little Arab response to such action was made outside Palestine, hostility to Jews living in Arab lands was widespread.

In November 1938 the British government officially confirmed its intention to abandon the policy of partition and invited governments in Iraq and Egypt to help prepare for a London conference on the future of Palestine. This gathering was held in St James Palace and was attended by representatives of five Arab countries – Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Yemen and Transjordan – as well as a Palestinian delegation, the Zionist Executive and the British. The three bodies of delegates did not meet together; instead, the British met separately with the Arabs, and similarly with the Jews. The Palestinian Arabs refused to be in the same room with the Jewish delegates.

At one of the joint meetings between Zionists and leaders of the Arab states, Aly Maher of Egypt appealed to the Zionists to limit immigration. Although Weizmann was interested in this appeal, Ben-Gurion and the rest of the delegation adamantly supported the policy of Jewish immigration to Palestine. Such an appeal, Ben-Gurion argued, was like asking a woman in labour to stop birth. On 17 March 1939, two days after Hitler's occupation of Prague, the conference ended without any agreement between the various parties. Given the lack of progress, the St James conference prepared the way for an imposed solution to the Jewish-Arab conflict in Palestine.

In May 1939 a further White Paper was published which ruled out partition and the creation of a Jewish state. However, the White Paper decreed that a Palestinian state be created within ten years, and that after five years Jewish immigration would not be allowed unless approved by the Palestine Arabs. Despite such an anti-Jewish bias, the White Paper allowed for 75,000 more Jews to be permitted to settle in Palestine within the five-year period and that the independence of a Palestinian state depended on adequate safeguards for the Jewish community.

In effect the White Paper endorsed a double-veto. The Arabs were empowered to block the growth of the Jewish National Home, whereas the Jews could prevent the Arabs from having an independent state. Anxious to avert this change in policy, the Jews contested the legality of the White

Paper. In its report to the Council of the League, the Permanent Mandate Commission stated that the White Paper was not in accord with the interpretation that the Commission had placed upon the Palestine Mandate. Under Article 27 of the Mandate, the Council's consent was required for any change in its terms. With the outbreak of war, however, the Council never met to debate this issue. Such a change of policy was profoundly disturbing to the Yishuv. The Zionists perceived that Britain had retreated from its previous policy. In their view, Britain had abandoned the Balfour Declaration and was treating the Mandate as well as the League as a legal fiction. For many Zionists, it had become clear that force was now required to oppose the White Paper. Previously the Arab community had rebelled against British rule. Now the White Paper reversed the situation. A Jewish revolt had begun.

Despite the change in British policy, the Higher Arab Committee that met in Beirut rejected the White Paper. Hence, the British ruled in Palestine without the consent of either Jews or Arabs. From the Jewish side, immigration became the overriding concern in the light of the Nazi threat. In response the British terminated their relationship with the Haganah and increased their efforts to police entry into Palestine. Bitterly critical of such actions, the Jewish Agency repudiated the Mandatory policy limiting immigration, and a number of Revisionists insisted on the need for retaliation. On 26 August 1939 the Irgun killed two British police inspectors.

During this period the Twenty-First Zionist Congress met in Geneva on 16–26 August 1939 and declared its opposition to the policy of the White Paper. At the Congress, Ben-Gurion stated that the White Paper created a vacuum in Palestine which would have to be filled by the Jewish community itself. The Jews, he maintained, should act as though they were an independent state. During the Congress, Hitler announced the Nazi-Soviet pact. Aware of the implications for European Jewry, the delegates vowed to press Jewish interests in Palestine and to ensure that Germany be defeated in the war. At the conclusion of the Congress, Weizmann declared that although the Jewish community opposed British policy in Palestine, war against Germany was a greater threat.

### ***Weizmann and the Nazi Threat***

It is my duty at this solemn hour to tell England...we have grievances... But above our regret and bitterness are higher interests. What the democracies are fighting for is the minimum ... necessary for Jewish life. Their anxiety is our anxiety. Their war our war. (O'Brien, *The Siege*, p. 242)



# Revolt Against the British

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In Palestine, the Jewish population supported the British in their war effort. During the early years of the conflict, David Ben-Gurion dominated political life: it was his aim to defeat Germany. Such a victory, he believed, would encourage the Zionist cause. Yet the sinking of the *Struma* which carried refugees from Romania had a profound impact on Jewish life. Following this tragedy, Menachem Begin assumed leadership of the Revisionists and began a war of liberation against British forces. From the British side, there was growing fear of an Arab revolt.

## Beyond the White Paper

By the end of 1941, 10,881 Jewish soldiers enlisted in the British forces. By the end of 1942 approximately 18,000 were serving in the military. Owing to this increase in numbers, the Jews pressed for the creation of large Jewish units. Fearful of Arab resentment, the British refused. In addition, there was concern that if a Jewish army were formed, such a fighting force might engage in conflict after the war with the British themselves if an attempt were made to implement the White Paper. For the duration of the war, the White Paper's constitutional provisions remained in abeyance. Yet the immigration restrictions were maintained, and as the war progressed the Jews of Europe became increasingly determined to overturn such restrictions.

In Palestine, the Yishuv supported the British war effort. Not only did the Irgun suspend its pre-war terrorist activities, but a pro- British spirit became

the dominant attitude of Jews living in the Holy Land under the influence of David Raziel, the head of Irgun until his death in 1941. Inevitably, however, such a rapprochement between the Irgun and the British gave rise to serious misgivings. A section of the Irgun headed by Avraham Stern rejected the policy. Known as Lehi in the Yishuv (and the Stern Gang by the British), it made an offer to Hitler by their envoy Naphtali Lubentchik through Beirut and the German Consulate at Ankara that it was prepared to assist in the conquest of Palestine. Its aim was to deliver Palestine from the British in exchange for a Hebrew state and the transfer of Jews from Europe. Alarmed by this proposal, Lubentchik was arrested by the authorities in Acre on his return from Beirut – it has been suggested that the Irgun leadership which was hostile to Lehi denounced Lubentchik to the British. In any event, a year later Stern was tracked down by the British police, aided by the Haganah and the Irgun, and shot.

In the early years of the war, Ben-Gurion was the dominant figure in the Yishuv, with Irgun and Lehi on the margin. After the events of May 1940, Ben-Gurion focused on defeating the Germans rather than overturning the White Paper. Victory over Hitler, he believed, had become the key issue. Now that Churchill had replaced Chamberlain, the Yishuv thought that the White Paper would be discarded. Yet, once Italy entered the war, the British believed that the policy of restricting immigration should continue so as not to antagonize the Arabs. At the same time, the Nazi conquests increased the need for Jews to have a safe haven in the Middle East.

The event that turned many Jews against the British even during this phase of the war with Hitler concerned the sinking of the *Struma*. This ship carrying 769 Jewish refugees from the Romanian Black Sea port of Constanza landed in Istanbul, where the refugees applied for entry visas to Palestine. The Colonial Office under Lord Moyne, however, rejected the applications. As a result, the Turks had the *Struma* turned back into the Black Sea and cast adrift. On 24 February 1942 the ship sank – only two survivors were admitted to Palestine as an act of clemency. In the aftermath of this tragedy, Menachem Begin took over the leadership of the Revisionist party and sought to initiate a war of liberation against the British despite the participation of Jewish soldiers in the struggle against Hitler.

Paradoxically the sinking of the *Struma* took place when British-Jewish military co-operation was at its height. Having suffered the loss of Greece and Crete, the British trained Jewish commando units to fight in the campaigns of Iraq and Syria in the summer of 1941. As Rommel's forces advanced on Egypt,

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the British set up a military school at Kibbutz Mishmar Haemek where Jewish volunteers from the kibbutzim and of the Palmah were trained throughout the summer of 1942. By the autumn, the danger of a German invasion of Palestine receded. Rommel's advance was thwarted at the battle of El Alamein in July and a second time in October. In Russia, the German military prepared for the winter that ended in Stalingrad, and Palestine was never again in danger. But in the meantime the British had inadvertently created an independent Jewish force that was to become an essential element in the defence of the Yishuv.

During this period, the British feared that the Arabs under the influence of Haj Amin, who was living in exile, might again stage a revolt. In October 1939 the Grand Mufti left Beirut for Baghdad where he was welcomed as a hero. Working on behalf of a pro-Axis war effort which culminated in a coup headed by Rashid Ali, he issued a fatwa on 9 May 1941 which was broadcast over Iraqi and Axis radio. Proclaiming a jihad against the British, he declared that they had profaned the al-Aqsa mosque and had been waging a war against Islam. When the British defeated Rashid Ali's forces, nearly two hundred Jews living in Baghdad were killed by the Grand Mufti's followers.

Escaping from Baghdad along with Rashid Ali, Haj Amin fled to Teheran. However, when Soviet and British forces occupied Iran in September 1941, the Mufti made his way to Berlin. On 21 November 1941 Hitler received the Grand Mufti, who told the Führer about his struggle with the Jewish people. Hitler stated that he was not at present prepared to help the Arabs in this conflict. Such cooperation could not take place until the defeat of Russia. When German forces reached the southern Caucasus, he stated, then the hour of the liberation of the Arabs will have arrived. For the rest of the war the Grand Mufti continued to reside in Germany, but once Germany was defeated he escaped again to Beirut, via Berne and Paris, and proclaimed a jihad against the new State of Israel.

### ***Hitler's View of the Grand Mufti***

Despite his sharp physiognomy resembling a mouse, he is a person who has among his ancestors more than one Aryan with probably the best Roman heritage. (*Hitler's Table Talk*, p. 547)

## Progress of the War

As the conflict with Germany progressed, it became increasingly clear that American support of the war effort was vital if the Allies were to prevail. In

the summer of 1940 Churchill encouraged Weizmann to travel to America to stimulate Jewish opinion in favour of the anti-Nazi cause. At this stage, however, American Jews were not in a position to influence foreign policy. However, from December 1941, after America's entry into the war, general opinion towards the Jewish cause became increasingly favourable. Antisemitism was the ideology of the enemies of the United States.

Since the rise of Hitler, most Jews had adopted a favourable attitude to Zionism. In May 1942 a conference of representatives of all American Zionists took place at the Biltmore Hotel in New York. Both Weizmann and Ben-Gurion addressed the delegates despite their mutual antagonism due both to the clash of personalities and policy. Weizmann remained hopeful about a peaceful negotiated solution involving the British; Ben-Gurion, however, foresaw an inevitable conflict with either the British, the Arabs, or both. Within the Yishuv, Ben-Gurion was regarded as the most important figure, and he was intent on persuading the delegates of the importance of supporting a Jewish homeland in Palestine.

At the conference, the Biltmore Resolution was endorsed which declared that the Jews in Palestine should form a Jewish Commonwealth and should regulate immigration into the country. Previously the Zionist Congress had been wary about a public promotion of commitment to a Jewish State. In contrast, the Biltmore Resolution was clear about Zionist aspirations. Basing himself on the declaration's assertion that the gates of Palestine be opened, Ben-Gurion demanded the admission of two million Jews to the country. Later, when Weizmann sought to tone down the Biltmore policy in order to keep Britain onside, Ben-Gurion launched an attack. Weizmann, he said, always wished to seem reasonable, and not simply to be reasonable. But he hears more what he would like to hear than what he hears. For this reason, it would be best for the movement if he did not act alone. Shocked by this assault, Weizmann wrote a letter to the Executive castigating Ben-Gurion.

In November 1942 a group of Palestinian citizens were permitted to leave Poland and return to Palestine. They brought news about the Nazi persecution of the Jews, reporting that racial discrimination had taken the form of annihilation. In December this report was confirmed by the Allied governments. Following the Wansee Conference in January 1942, Hitler in his annual address to the Reichstag on the anniversary of his appointment as Reich Chancellor stated his intentions regarding the Jewish community. Hitler recalled a prophecy he made several years earlier that if Jewry were to start a world war in order to eliminate Aryans from Europe, it would be the Jews who

would be eliminated instead. By the end of the year the Yishuv was aware of Hitler's intentions concerning Jews living in Europe.

### ***Hitler and the Jews***

We are clear about the fact that the war can only end either in the extermination of the Aryan nations or in the disappearance of Jewry from Europe. On 1 September 1939, I already announced in the German Reichstag – and I avoid making premature prophecies – that this would not end as the Jews imagined, namely with the extermination of the European- Aryan nations, but rather that the war will result in the destruction of Jewry. This time, for the first time, the old and typical Jewish law will be applied 'An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.' And the more the fighting spreads, the more – and world Jewry should take note of it – antisemitism will spread. It will find nourishment in every prisoner-of-war camp, in every family, which becomes aware of the reason why it has had to make its sacrifice. And the hour will come when the most evil enemy of the world of all time will for at least a thousand years have played his last role. (Noakes and Pridham, *Nazism 1919–45*, p. 1135)

During this period a number of Jews were helped to escape from Europe by the United Rescue Committee. This body represented all factions in the Yishuv and worked together with the Jewish underground operating in Europe. Between 1943-44 Haganah volunteers were parachuted into the Balkans to collect military evidence and to aid in this escape work. By this means about 10,000 Jews were able to escape to Palestine. Within the Yishuv, however, the Allies' apparent indifference to the plight of European Jewry as well as Britain's support of limited immigration caused considerable consternation. At this time an Anglo-American conference took place in Bermuda to consider the question of aid to refugees from Nazi occupation. However, the Americans insisted that US immigration laws should not be discussed, and the British were opposed to any deliberation about Jewish immigration to Palestine. Reports about this conference reached the Yishuv at the same time as news of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising.

Such actions evoked a hostile response from the Jewish population in Palestine. Lehi intensified its activities, attracting recruits from young Jews as well as illegal immigrants. Joining these new recruits, the Irgun increased its numbers as well. Ironically, at this stage the Churchill government was contemplating repudiating the 1939 White Paper, and on 20 December 1943 a Cabinet committee recommended the partition of Palestine on the basis of the 1937 Peel Report. Despite this development, terrorism continued throughout 1944, and in August an attempt was made on the life of the

High Commissioner, Sir Harold MacMichael. The Zionist establishment condemned this action, and Weizmann continued his negotiations with the British. These talks were interrupted on 6 November by the murder by Lehi of Lord Moyne, the British Minister Resident in Cairo, together with his driver.

## Palestine in the Post-War Period

During this turbulent period, the Zionists maintained a policy of co-operation with the British against the terrorists. Adopting such a stance, the Zionist leadership hoped they might be able to persuade the British government to continue its support for partition. Yet, following the Cairo murders, a different attitude prevailed. In Palestine Lord Gort replaced Sir Harold MacMichael, and in Cairo Edward Grigg took the place of Lord Moyne. Although detested by the Zionists, Sir Harold MacMichael and Lord Moyne were in favour of partition and the creation of a Jewish state. Their replacements, however, were opposed. Grigg in particular feared that partition would bring into existence a Jewish form of Nazi state. As the end of the war approached, Prime Minister Eden stressed to the Cabinet the importance of Arab good will. When the war ended on 8 May 1945, the British continued to hold firm to the White Paper of 1939.

On 26 July 1945 the Labour Party was victorious in the British elections. This appeared to offer hope to the Zionists since the Labour Party had previously opposed the White Paper, and in 1944 and the following year expressed its commitment to the creation of a Jewish National Home and unrestricted immigration to Palestine. Determined to aid the Zionist cause, US President Harry Truman issued a report on the conditions of Jewish survivors of concentration camps. In Truman's view, it would have been calamitous to close the gates to Palestine to these refugees. Attlee, however, was unmoved. The Jews, he stated, had no more to complain about than many other peoples. By September 1945 it became clear that only a small number of Jews would be allowed to settle in the country.

### *Clement Attlee and the Jews*

One must remember that within these camps were people from almost every race in Europe and there appears to have been very little difference in the amount of torture and treatment they had to undergo. Now if our offices had placed the Jews in a special racial category at the head of the queue, my strong view is that the effect of this would have been disastrous for the Jews. (Williams, *A Prime Minister Remembers*, p. 189)

Bitterly opposed to such a stance, Ben-Gurion warned that Jews would fight against the British if such a policy prevailed. On 1 October Ben-Gurion sent a coded telegram to Haganah headquarters with instructions that armed uprisings against British forces should take place. Soon afterwards Haganah began daily broadcasts over its illegal Voice of Israel radio station. Simultaneously the Haganah re-established co-operation with Irgun and Lehi. On 31 October 1945 the Palestine railway system was blown up, an act of defiance defended by all segments of the Yishuv.

This guerrilla war evoked a positive response from Jews in Palestine and the United States. Its aim – removing all restrictions to Jewish immigration to Palestine – was widely supported by the American population and endorsed by the President. Nonetheless the British remained intransigent. Instead of taking account of American opinion, no concession was made regarding immigration. Instead, the government set up an Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry to investigate the problem, and the Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, insisted that Jews should not receive special treatment. Such a statement inflamed Jewish anger in Palestine and abroad. In Tel Aviv riots took place for two days, and the crowds were fired on by British troops. When six Jews were killed, the Zionists exploited these deaths in America.

In May 1946 the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry issued a report, recommending that Palestine become a bi-national state. In addition, it proposed that 100,000 Jews be admitted into the country. The proposal was welcomed by Truman, but Attlee made it clear in a statement to the House of Commons that Britain would not implement this recommendation unless the United States was prepared to share the added military and financial burden involved. In practice, this was tantamount to rejecting the scheme. The next month Ernest Bevin explained to the Labour Party in Bournemouth that the reason why the Americans were anxious that Jews immigrate to Palestine was because the United States did not wish to absorb so many new immigrants.

During the same month the Attlee government authorized the High Commissioner, Sir Alan Cunningham, to carry out searches in the main Jewish centres. As a result, thousands of Jews were arrested, including members of the Jewish Agency. Although the Agency had previously condemned acts of terrorism, it refused to co-operate with the authorities against the Irgun and Lehi. Instead, at times it co-operated with the Irgun and Lehi. Despite claiming ignorance about an armed uprising against the British government, Ben-Gurion was in control of the main Yishuv armed forces in the Haganah, including Palmah, which engaged in carrying out illegal immigration and sabotage.

By the end of June 1945, Britain had resolved to suspend disciplinary action even though it had not disarmed the Haganah. Such a change in policy was a result of pressure applied by American Jews on public opinion regarding the post-war loan to Britain which was before Congress. One of the most prominent American Zionists, Dr Abba Hillel Silver, had urged Jews to ask their congressman whether the United States should make a loan to Britain given its policies in Palestine. Under such pressure, the British reversed their policy towards the Jewish Agency and the Haganah. At the end of July, the Irgun blew up the government offices in the King David Hotel, killing about eighty British, Jewish and Arab civil servants and wounding about seventy others. A four-day curfew was imposed and the British carried out intense searches. In the United States, anti-British feeling intensified.

## Progress towards Statehood

In the Muslim world pressure was initially applied on Britain through agitation against American investment in Arab lands. Yet, when it became clear that such action would adversely affect Arab interests, the plan to impose Arab sanctions in support of the Palestinian cause disintegrated. Nonetheless, the Arab states were anxious to help the Palestinians. Following a series of escapes, the Grand Mufti made his way from Europe to Cairo in May. Even though he was not permitted to enter Palestine by the Mandatory, he was able to control the Arab political scene in the country through a Higher Executive Committee composed of his appointees. This body was recognized by the Arab states which had formed the Arab League with the support of the British. At a conference with the British in London in September 1945, the Arab states demanded an independent Arab State by 31 December 1948. Concerned about Arab demands, the British adjourned the conference for three months.

Meanwhile the Twenty-Second Zionist Congress met in Basle in December 1946. This was the first meeting since the Holocaust. Since the last Congress took place, the world Jewish population had been reduced by more than a third, and the number of Jews supporting Zionism had increased enormously. The United States had replaced Poland as the main Zionist centre with nearly half the world membership. During the sessions, the Congress endorsed the Biltmore Programme with explicit reference to a Jewish state. At the Congress Weizmann attacked the terrorists in Palestine as well as their American supporters. During his speech, one of the delegates accused him of demagoguery.



In response, he defended himself, emphasizing his life-long dedication to the Zionist cause.

### ***Weizmann's Defence at the Twenty-Second Zionist Congress***

'Somebody has called me a demagogue! I do not know who. I hope that I shall never learn the man's name. I – a demagogue! I who have borne all the ills and travails of this movement. The person who flung that word in my face ought to know that in every house and stable in Nahalal, in every little workshop in Tel Aviv or Haifa, there is a drop of my blood. (O'Brien, *The Seige*, p. 270)

Although Weizmann's speech made a strong impact on the delegates, the majority rejected his suggestion that the Zionists participate in the London conference to be held in January. Perceived as pro-British, Weizmann was no longer suitable as president of the Congress, and the office remained unfilled. Ben-Gurion therefore became Executive Chairman with regard to Yishuv affairs, and Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver was elected Chairman with regard to America.

From 1947 the political climate in Britain underwent a transformation. For some time the opposition had urged that the Mandate be rescinded. With the failure of the London talks, Churchill urged that the United Nations take over control of Palestine. On 18 February 1947 the British government announced that it had no power under the Mandate to determine whether Palestine belonged to the Arabs or the Jews. As a result, the only course open was to submit the problem to the United Nations. To facilitate this transition, Britain requested that a Special Session of the General Assembly consider this issue. This was considered a more desirable alternative than the Security Council because of the Russian veto. The Security Council would have been unable to reach a substantive position without the support of all the Permanent members, including the Soviet Union.

This meeting, which took place from 28 April to 15 May 1947, resolved to set up an investigating eleven-member body – the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) which was to report by the autumn. During these deliberations the Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister, Andrei Gromyko, attacked the Mandatory system in Palestine and endorsed Zionist aspirations to create a homeland in the Middle East. He stated that although he preferred some sort of binational solution, if this were not feasible Palestine should be portioned into a Jewish and Arab state. The consequence of Gromyko's intervention was that there was no longer any likelihood of a Soviet obstacle to the creation of a Jewish homeland.

During the summer, members of a special Committee went to Palestine. On the day they arrived a British military court sentenced three members of the Irgun to death. Although UNSCOP appealed, its wishes were ignored. The Irgun then captured two British sergeants on 12 July and threatened to kill them if the British carried out these sentences. At the end of the month the Irgun members were executed. In retaliation the Irgun hanged the two sergeants. This event evoked widespread antipathy in Britain towards Zionism, and British troops in Tel Aviv rioted. Five Jews were killed, but no one was ever charged for these murders. Between 1945 and the end of 1946 approximately thirty ships arrived from Europe. Most of the larger ships were intercepted by the Royal Navy and their passengers were interned in Cyprus or Palestine. Only a few of the smaller ships managed to land.

The most notorious case of such a blockade involved one of the biggest ships, the *President Warfield* (renamed *Exodus*). This 1,800-ton four-decker steamer carried 4500 refugees from the concentration camps. The *Exodus* had sailed for Palestine from the French Mediterranean port of Sète in mid-July and was shadowed by four British destroyers. On 18 July British boarding parties stormed the ship and overcame the resistance of the passengers. In the process three Jews were killed, and twenty-eight others required hospitalization. At Haifa the wounded were brought ashore. This event provoked a massive rally in New York within the week. On 29 July the passengers who had been distributed among several British ships were back in a French port. Although the French offered asylum to the passengers, the French government announced that no measures would be taken to force them into landing. Most decided to remain on board. When the British ambassador in Paris was alarmed by the possibility of adverse publicity, he urged Bevin to withdraw the British ships. Bevin, however, insisted that the French must disembark the passengers. The French refused, and eventually the passengers were taken to a displaced person's camp at Poppendorf, near Luebeck in Germany.

## Partition and Statehood

On 31 August UNSCOP completed its report in Geneva, unanimously recommending the end of the British Mandate. A majority report – with a vote of seven to three with one abstention – stated that Palestine should be partitioned into an Arab and Jewish state with an international zone for the Holy Places. Essentially UNSCOP's recommendations were the same as

those of the Peel Commission ten years previously. Nonetheless, the British expressed disdain for the report, and the Arabs were bitterly opposed. On 17 October 1947 the British government made it clear that it would not accept responsibility for the enforcement of such a settlement. On 29 November 1947 the General Assembly formally considered the report. Thirty-three delegates voted in favour; thirteen were opposed, including the eleven Muslim states. There were also ten abstentions. Among those in favour of partition were the United States, the Soviet Union, Australia, Canada, France, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland and Sweden. All six independent Arab States voted against partition, as well as four Muslim states: Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and Turkey. These were joined by three other states: Cuba, Greece and India. Despite such opposition, a two-thirds majority was achieved.

Early in December the British government made it clear that it would continue to rule in Palestine until 15 May 1948 at which time the Mandate would come to an end. During these final months, the British forces in Palestine would not intervene in the conflict between Arabs and Jews; instead they would adopt a position of self-defence. As surrounding Arab states prepared for attack against the new Jewish state, David Ben-Gurion led the preparations for war. At a meeting of Mapai in January 1948, Ben-Gurion cautioned that war was inevitable.

During this period Weizmann was active in Washington, attempting to persuade President Truman of the need for a Jewish state. Despite the threat of Arab attack, on 14 May 1948 in Tel Aviv, Ben-Gurion and other leaders put their signatures to Israel's Declaration of Independence. Yet Ben-Gurion did not rejoice on the day he proclaimed the establishment of the State; instead he felt only deep anxiety as he did on the 29 November, the day of the UN partition resolution. The future of the Jewish homeland, he knew, would be determined by war rather than by diplomatic agreement. Israel was surrounded by hostile enemies, and the struggle would be bloody and intense. In April 1948 the Arab chiefs of staff met in Damascus and worked out a co-ordinated offensive. Syrian and Lebanese armies were to invade northern Palestine and occupy Tiberias, Safed and Nazareth. The main effort would be opened by the Iraqi Army and the Arab Legion south of Lake Tiberias, moving west towards the fort of Haifa. The role of the Egyptians was to attack Jewish forces south of Tel Aviv.

The document signed in Tel Aviv opened by describing the Land of Israel as the birthplace of the Jewish people, and looked back to the Jewish past. It went on to explain that the Jewish people had prayed and hoped for their return

to the land of their ancestors, and strove in every generation to re-establish themselves in their ancient homeland. In recent times they had returned as pioneers and defenders and had recreated a thriving community.

### ***Declaration of the State of Israel***

The Land of Israel was the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious and national identity was formed. Here they achieved independence and created a culture of national and universal significance. Here they wrote and gave their Bible to the world. Exiled from Palestine, the Jewish people remained faithful to it in all the countries of their dispersion, never ceasing to pray and hope for their return and the restoration of their national freedom. Impelled by this historic association, Jews strove throughout the centuries to go back to the land of their fathers and regain their Statehood. In recent decades they returned in their masses. They reclaimed the wilderness, revived their language, built cities and villages and established a vigorous and evergrowing community, with its own economic and cultural life. They sought peace yet were prepared to defend themselves. They brought the blessings of progress to all inhabitants of the country. In the year 1897 the First Zionist Congress, inspired by Theodor Herzl's vision of the Jewish State, proclaimed the right of the Jewish people to national revival in their own country. This right was acknowledged by the Balfour Declaration of 2 November 1917, and reaffirmed by the Mandate of the League of Nations, which gave explicit international recognition to the historic connection of the Jewish people with Palestine and their right to reconstitute their national home. The Nazi holocaust, which engulfed millions of Jews in Europe, proved anew the urgency of the reestablishment of the Jewish State, which would solve the problem of Jewish homelessness by opening the gates to all Jews and lifting the Jewish people to equality in the family of nations... On 29 November 1947 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted a Resolution for the establishment of an independent Jewish State in Palestine, and called upon inhabitants of the country to take such steps as may be necessary on their part to put the plan into effect. The recognition by the United Nations of the right of the Jewish people to establish their independent state may not be revoked. It is moreover, the self-evident right of the Jewish people to be a nation, like all other nations, in its own sovereign state. Accordingly, we, the members of the National Council, representing the Jewish people in Palestine and the Zionist movement of the world, met together in solemn assembly today, the day of the termination of the British Mandate for Palestine, and by virtue of the national and historic right of the Jewish people and of the resolution of the General Assembly of the United Nations, hereby proclaim the establishment of the Jewish State in Palestine, to be called Israel (Mendes-Flohr and Reinharz (ed.), *The Jew in the Modern World*, p. 629)

# The Arab-Israeli Conflict

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After the vote of the United Nations, the Arabs began to attack Jewish settlements. Although the Jewish commanders were determined to repel this assault, their resources were not considerable compared with the Arab side. By March 1948 over 1200 Jews were killed; in April Ben-Gurion ordered the Haganah to link the Jewish enclaves and consolidate as much territory as possible under the United Nations plan. On 14 May 1948 Ben-Gurion read out the Scroll of independence in the Tel Aviv Museum. On 11 June a truce was concluded but in the next month conflict broke out. Within ten days the Arabs agreed to another truce, but outbreaks of hostility continued. Eventually an armistice was reached, and the Israelis sought agreement on the boundaries of the Jewish state. The Arabs, however, refused to consider this proposal – instead they insisted that Israel return to the 1947 partition lines without giving any formal recognition of the new state. This was the background to the conflict between Israel and the Arabs which culminated in the Suez crisis of 1956.

## The Gathering Storm

In the months following the UN General Assembly vote in favour of partition, Arab attacks against Jews commenced; in response, the Haganah and the Irgun engaged in acts of reprisal. In general the British forces remained aloof from this conflict although there were occasional attacks against Jewish civilians such as the Ben Yehuda Street explosion which took place on 22

February killing fifty-two people, mostly Jews. On 9 April 1948 an attack on the Arab village of Deir Yassin was carried out by the Irgun, killing 250 Arab civilians, including women and children. According to Menachem Begin, this assault was part of a strategy, agreed with Haganah, to keep open the lines of communication between Jerusalem and the rest of the Yishuv.

Recalling this event in his book, *The Revolt*, Begin asserted that an advance warning was given by loudspeakers to civilians encouraging them to leave; those who remained were killed unintentionally in the course of the storming of stone houses. The Arab account of this incident, however, records that the civilians were deliberately massacred. Once news of what occurred at Deir Yassin was broadcast on Arab radios, the Arab population fled from Jewish areas. By mid-May nearly 300,000 Arabs left their homes, seeking refuge in neighbouring countries. As a reprisal for Deir Yassin, Arabs ambushed a medical convoy bound for Hadassah Hospital and the Hebrew University, killing seventy-seven doctors, nurses, university teachers and students. This was followed by reprisals and counter-reprisals.

On the day of independence, notices were posted throughout Tel Aviv by the Haganah indicating that the new state was in imminent danger. Immediately Egyptian planes bombed Tel Aviv. The next day began the intervention of five Arab states. Syrian troops attacked in the Jordan Valley, capturing the town of Zemach. On 20 May they attacked Degania, which managed to drive the Syrians back. By 23 May the Syrians had withdrawn. In the north the Lebanese army invaded northern Galilee but was stopped by an Israeli counter attack. Other Arab forces, however, penetrated into central Galilee, where they were greeted by Palestinian Arabs. At the same time the Syrians continued their assault, capturing the border settlement of Mishmar Hayarden.

### ***The Haganah Notice***

The enemy threatens invasion. We must not ignore the danger.

It may be near. The security forces are taking all necessary measures. The entire public must give its full help.

1. Shelters must be dug in all residential areas and the orders of the Raids Precaution officers must be obeyed.
2. Mass gatherings in open areas and streets must be avoided.
3. Every assistance must be given to the commanders of the security forces in erecting barriers, fortifications, etc.

No panic. No complacency.

Be alert and disciplined. (Gilbert, *Israel*, p. 190)

To the south of the Syrian, Lebanese and so-called 'Liberation armies', the Iraq army attacked Gesher but was repulsed. Nonetheless, the Iraqis captured the settlement of Geulim but were later driven out by Israeli forces, who captured Arab villages and the town of Jenin. In the Negev desert, Israel was attacked by the Egyptian army, which was halted at the settlement of Yad Mordechai, south of Ashdod. On 24 May the settlement was evacuated. By 29 May the first Israeli fighter planes, four Messerschmitts, attacked the Egyptian column.

During this period Jerusalem consisted of a New City composed largely of Jews and the Old City with a largely Arab population. On 15 May Transjordanian forces crossed the Jordan and attacked the New City. On 24 May the assault was repelled; the Transjordanians then continued their assault on the Jewish Quarter of the Old City. On 28 May the Israeli garrison surrendered. The siege of the New City continued with the Transjordanians holding Latrun in the Valley of Ayalon on the main road from the coast to Jerusalem. This position was attacked but the Israelis were driven back.

Of central importance in this conflict was the fact that President Truman had recognized the State of Israel on 15 May. Three days later the Soviet Union gave its recognition. On 17 May the United States introduced a Security Council draft resolution, stating that the situation in Palestine was a breach of the peace under Article 39 of the United Nations Charter. Britain added an amendment to this resolution, deleting the reference to Article 39. This intervention caused the pro-Israeli lobby in the United States to pressurize the government to suppress the American loan under the Marshall Plan. In response the British government agreed to stop its arm shipments to Arab states. On 29 May the Security Council called for a ceasefire and also prohibited the importation of arms or military personnel into Palestine or any Arab nations. On 11 June the ceasefire came into effect.

This ceasefire was interrupted by an internal dispute within Israel. On 28 May the Israel Defence Forces were created and this prohibited the existence of any other military force. Yet it was impossible to implement this edict during the conflict with the Arabs, and the Irgun continued to exist as a separate unit after the truce was declared. When a ship, the *Altalena* (called after a pen name of Vladimir Jabotinsky), was commissioned by the Irgun to bring in volunteers and arms, the Israeli government decided to prevent it from landing. On 21 June the Haganah – now the Israel Defence Force – set the ship on fire on the beach at Tel Aviv, causing the death of fifteen men. Though civil war seemed imminent, Menachem Begin, who had been aboard the *Altalena* when it was set alight, stated that

although Irgun soldiers would not engage in conflict with the state, they would continue their political activities. Irgun soldiers, he declared, will not be a party to fratricidal warfare, but neither will they accept the discipline of Ben-Gurion's army any longer. Within the state area, he continued, they shall continue their political activity. Their fighting strength shall be conserved for the enemy outside.

## Truce and Beyond

### *The Arabs as a People*

Arab society is verbal and expressive, since the Arabs are not a people who speak out only when it serves their aims and plans: they often make proclamations which cause them harm. The Arab voices his views and feelings without caring whether he is furthering his own interests or harming them, while the Westerner only makes statements which are beneficial to his interests. (Halim Barakat in O'Brien, *The Siege*, p. 301)

The truce declared on 11 June lasted for nearly a month. During this period the United Nations attempted to establish a lasting peace in the area. Yet, for the US government, it was unclear what kind of peace was envisaged. According to President Truman, it must be a peace which would allow the State of Israel to survive. However, the State Department agreed with the British Foreign Office about the need to pacify the Arab forces of the pro-Western and moderate Arab states that had attacked the new Jewish state. The chief mediator in this conflict was Count Folke Bernadotte who had been appointed by the Security Council on 20 May 1948. From the Jewish side, this choice evoked hostility owing to his belief that he was not bound by the General Assembly's resolution of 19 November 1947.

On 27 June 1948 the mediator submitted a plan providing for a union involving the whole of Mandate Palestine in a partnership between the kingdom of Jordan and the Jewish state. Jordan was to be in possession of its West Bank territory including East Jerusalem. The Arabs would thereby acquire the whole of the Negev, and Israel was to be allocated western Galilee. Unlimited Jewish immigration would be allowed for two years; subsequently it would be controlled by a United Nations Agency. Finally, all Arabs would be allowed to return to their former homes. Not surprisingly, such a plan was unacceptable to both Jews and Arabs.

From the Israeli side, the lack of sovereignty was a fundamental obstacle. For the Arabs, such a proposal was perceived as granting too many concessions



to the Jews as well as to Abdullah, the ruler of Transjordan. Hence, both Israel and the Arabs rejected the scheme, and even Abdullah was not prepared to accept a plan that was denounced throughout the Arab world. On 8 July, the day before the truce was due to expire, fighting broke out in the Negev, which lasted for ten days. As a consequence of this conflict, the Israelis succeeded in widening the Jerusalem corridor; in addition, they captured large areas of Lower Galilee, including Lydda and Ramle.

When the second truce was established, more than half a million Arab refugees had fled from Israeli territory. Even though some were forced to depart, a large number – including the Palestinian Arab leadership – left of their own accord. Most of these refugees went to Jordan. Others escaped to the Gaza Strip. From the earliest stage, the Israeli government was opposed to the return of these refugees to their homes. Thus on 16 June Ben-Gurion declared to his Cabinet that those who had taken up arms against the Jewish nation would have to bear the consequences. By mid-July general hostilities had ceased, but occasional conflicts took place in August and September, particularly in Jerusalem. On 17 September 1948 Count Bernadotte was on his way to tea with the Military Governor of Tel Aviv; his car was ambushed and he was killed along with a French officer. The fatal shots were fired by Yehoshua Cohen, a member of the Stern Gang whose orders had come from a triumvirate which had decided upon the assassination including Yitzhak Ysernistsky (who later became Yitzhak Shamir, Prime Minister of Israel). Although Bernadotte's assassination was denounced by the Israeli government, this incident provoked international condemnation of the Jewish state. In response, Ben-Gurion disbanded the Irgun and detained members of Lehi. Following this action, the Provisional Government was in control of all Jewish-held territory.

Prior to Bernadotte's death, the General Assembly proposed a revised version of his plan. The unification of Israel and Jordan was eliminated, and it was recommended that Palestine be partitioned between Israel and Jordan. Jerusalem and the Negev were to be allocated to Jordan, and Israel was to retain western Galilee. Even though this proposal was supported by the United States and Britain, Israel viewed it as granting too much to the Jordanians. Within the Arab world, the Grand Mufti and the Egyptians roused opinion against the plan. In their view, it granted too much to Abdullah who was viewed as a traitor. The Russians, too, regarded this new scheme as detrimental to their interests in the Middle East. As a result of such opposition coupled with the response of a number of Catholic states who sought to internationalize Jerusalem, the proposal was defeated in the General Assembly.

During this period while the Bernadotte plan was being considered, Ben-Gurion sought to lay claim to the Negev, which the United Nations had awarded to Israel in November. At this stage it appeared that this area might be awarded by the United Nations to Transjordan. From the point of view of the Israeli government, the boundaries of the Jewish-held area were unsatisfactory: Abdullāh's forces held the Old City and the Wall as well as large areas west of the Jordan (Judaea and Samaria); and Egyptian forces held a large part of the Negev. Although Ben-Gurion might have wished to push Abdullāh back from Judaea and Samaria as well as force the Egyptians out of the Negev, his military advisors insisted that the two aims could not be achieved simultaneously. As a consequence, Ben-Gurion focused on the Negev. A first attack was launched in October, driving the Egyptians out of much of the Negev. Two months later the Israelis completed this task and also dislodged small Transjordanian forces stationed in the area. The Israelis then pushed on into the Sinai desert.

This invasion brought a strong response from Britain. On 31 December 1948 Britain offered to invoke the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936. The Egyptians, however, preferred to seek an armistice with Israel. When RAF planes went on reconnaissance missions over Israeli-held territory on the border between Israel and Egypt, the Israeli military shot five of these planes down on 7 January 1949. At this time, when it appeared that Britain and Israel might go to war, the Israelis withdrew from Egyptian territory in preparation for an armistice agreement with Egypt. Under pressure, the British retreated. On 26 January 1949 in a Commons debate on Palestine, Bevin emphasized that the British did not seek to undo the State of Israel. During the debate Churchill attacked Bevin for mishandling the Palestine question. Three days later Ben-Gurion called on Israel's unofficial representative in Britain, Joseph Linton, reminding him of the conversation in which Ernest Bevin told him of Britain's decision to grant de facto recognition to Israel.

## First Years of Independence

With the defeat of the Egyptian forces, other Arab states sought to establish armistice agreements with Israel. These negotiations were organized by the acting mediator, Dr Ralph Bunche. Until this time the United Nations intervention had sought to co-ordinate the policies of the United States and Britain. These actions had prompted both of Bernadotte's plans. By the end

of 1949 the course of Middle East negotiations had undergone a major transformation. Each of the armistice agreements was reached on a bilateral basis, thereby avoiding the type of separate negotiations favoured by the London Conference of 1939. On 24 February an armistice with Egypt was reached, followed by armistices with Lebanon on 23 March, Jordan on 3 April, and Syria on 20 July. Of the states that had attacked Israel, only Iraq refrained from concluding an armistice.

Through such settlements, Israel had come to be seen as a major presence in the Middle East. With fierce indignation the Arab world recoiled from these agreements and attacked the regimes, alliances and leaders who had brought about such defeat. In Egypt Premier Nokrashy was assassinated in December 1948. King Farouk's reign ended with a military coup nearly four years later. In Syria, a series of coups took place, and in Jordan Abdullah was assassinated. Lebanon and Iraq were less affected by these events. Those who led these rebellions were hostile to the old regimes. Pre-eminent among these radicals was Gamal Abdel Nasser, who led the coup against King Farouk, coming to power in 1954.

In January 1949 elections to the Knesset took place with Ben-Gurion's party, Mapai, taking the dominant role. With the support of a number of small parties, mostly of a religious nature, Ben-Gurion formed a government. Even though various concessions were made to these parties, Ben-Gurion judged that such accommodations were necessary to secure a strong and effective government. The largest opposition party was Mapam, which had connections with various Communist states. The next largest party was Herut, a continuation of Irgun in constitutional, civilian form, led by Menachem Begin. At Ben-Gurion's invitation, Weizmann became President of Israel, a largely ceremonial position.

Despite such a position, Weizmann was disappointed: he had hoped to hold a position of power in the state he had done so much to create. But it was clear that power in Israel was invested in the Prime Minister and his colleagues in government. Although Ben-Gurion regarded Weizmann as a valued friend of Israel, he viewed him as an outsider. Ben-Gurion refused to allow Weizmann to add his name to the list of signatories to Israel's Declaration of Independence since he was not in Eretz Israel on the date of the declaration. Paradoxically at this hour of triumph, Zionism as a movement was becoming an anachronism. Those who led the fight for independence and who now wielded power in Israel were the heirs of the Zionist tradition. Zionist elders, like Weizmann, were superseded by a new generation of younger activists.

At this point, Israel was surrounded by Arab states bitterly opposed to the creation of a Jewish homeland. In an attempt to drive the Zionists from their midst, a total economic boycott was created. Trade between Israel and the Arab states was forbidden, and other countries were put on notice that any government that established trade relations with Israel would be excluded from trade with Arab nations. Border crossings were barred, and Arab air space was closed to aircraft flying to Israel. Determined to overcome this boycott, the Israeli government embarked on a four-year plan aimed at ensuring agricultural self-sufficiency. By the winter of 1950 Israelis were surviving on a subsistence economy with rationing of vital food and goods. In the face of such harsh conditions, some Jewish pioneers left the country warning those who remained of future danger.

On 5 July 1950 – the forty-sixth anniversary of the death of Theodor Herzl – the Israeli government enacted the Law of Return. This law guaranteed the right of every Jew, wherever he or she might live in the world, to enter Israel as an immigrant and become a citizen on arrival. This new law, Ben-Gurion explained, established not only that the state accords the right of settlement to Jews abroad, but that this right is inherent in every Jew by virtue of being a Jew. However, under the Law of Return those judged to be a danger to public health or security were excluded; this exclusion was extended four years later to include persons with a criminal past, likely to endanger public welfare. A later judgement of the Supreme Court stated that the Law of Return did not apply to a person who, although born a Jew, had subsequently converted to Christianity. Under this new law, not only individual Jews and families, but whole communities were able to settle in the Holy Land.

On 30 July 1951 the second General Election took place in Israel. Mapai, the main political party of the Labour movement, was retained with forty-five seats; Mapam won fifteen seats; the General Zionists twenty; and Herut eight; the Communists five; Agudat Yisrael three; and the other religious parties ten. Eventually the religious parties were organized into the National Religious Party. In forming his new government, Ben-Gurion held fifty-five meetings with the various parties in an attempt to harmonize their demands. Throughout these discussions Agudat Israel sought to preserve Orthodoxy. Initially the party had been hostile to Zionism; however it later co-operated with the Zionists. From the moment the state was established, it was represented in all national and local organizations and in the Knesset. From the outset, it made every effort to insure that Jewish religious principles were upheld in Israel. Many years later its philosophy was expressed to Shimon

Peres by its spiritual leader Rabbi Shach who stressed that what Jews have in common is not a political state, but a religious way of life:

## ***The Philosophy of Agudat Israel***

What is a Jewish State? Every nation has a State. What is a Jewish Agriculture? Every nation has agriculture. What is a Jewish Army? Every nation has an army. What is the Jewish Industry? Every nation has an industry. There is just one thing that the Jews have that the others don't, and that is the Torah. The Torah keeps the Jews alive. (Gilbert, *Israel*, p. 276)

## **The Early Years**

During this period, the Knesset debated whether it should accept reparations from Germany. During the debate Menachem Begin, along with the former Herut candidate for the Presidency of Israel, Joseph Klausner, addressed a gathering of protesters in Zion Square in Tel Aviv. At the end of this meeting, the gathering sang the national anthem and groups of youths marched up Ben-Yehuda Road in the direction of the Knesset. Determined to disperse the crowd, groups of police lobbed tear-gas bombs. The police then fell back to positions around the Knesset and the crowd showered the police with stones. Israeli Red Cross ambulances rushed to the aid of the victims, but were stoned and halted. During the first hour of the demonstrations, thirteen policemen were injured.

As the violence continued, the scene inside the Knesset became chaotic. Begin had made his way from Zion Square to the Knesset. As he addressed the members, stones continued to come through the windows. When accused that the demonstration had been stage-managed, Begin read out a list of rabbis, scholars and poets who had signed a petition opposing negotiations with Germany. Despite such agitation and a ten-hour debate, the Knesset accepted the principle of reparations, and negotiations with Germany took place. On 11 September 1952 the Bonn government agreed to pay 3,450 million marks as reparation for the material damage suffered by the Jews at the hands of the Nazis.

During this period, a law was passed in the Knesset establishing the Holocaust Martyrs and Heroes' Remembrance Authority (known as Yad Vashem). The aim of this new institution was to commemorate in Israel all those members of the Jewish nation who had given their lives, or fought against the Nazis and its collaborators. It was to set up a memorial to them and to the communities, organizations and institutions that were destroyed because they belonged to the

Jewish people. Following the creation of Yad Vashem thousands of survivors gave testimony or submitted the names of non-Jews who had rescued them – their deeds were recognized by the State of Israel in a special ceremony and the planting of a tree in the Avenue of the Righteous at Yad Vashem.

By 1953 the programme of economic austerity began to halt ruinous inflation; in addition, foreign capital from the United States and Western Europe helped to bolster the flagging economy. Such conditions led to a resumption of immigration, and by the mid-1950s a considerable number of immigrants from the Maghreb, Tunisia and Morocco had entered the country. Israel, however, remained fearful that the United States would not continue to support the growing Jewish state particularly when in October 1953 the American Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, decided to suspend American aid to Israel in response to Israeli raids on Arab border villages.

In the summer of 1954 the British were preparing to leave the Suez Canal Zone, what the Israelis regarded as a buffer between them and Egypt. In an attempt to persuade Britain to stay, Israeli officials sent agents to burn British and American premises in Egypt, hoping that these attacks would be blamed on Egypt. The agents, however, were captured, some hanged and others imprisoned. Once the British departed from the Canal Zone, Nasser was regarded as an independent ruler of the country, a position which ensured his prominence in the Arab world. In the eyes of Arabs, their previous defeat had been due to the failure of Arab leaders; Nasser's position signalled the possibility of future success against the Zionists. One of Nasser's close associates claimed on 9 January 1955 that Egypt's goal would be to vanquish the Israelis:

### ***Egypt and Israel***

Egypt will strive to erase the shame of the Palestine War even if Israel should fulfil all U.N. resolutions. It will not sign a peace with her. Even if Israel should consist only of Tel Aviv, we should never put up with that. (Eban, *Autobiography*, p. 183)

At the end of February 1955, David Ben-Gurion returned to power (having resigned as Prime Minister two years earlier), first as Minister for Defence and then as Prime Minister the following November. Initially he hoped that peace could be achieved between Egypt and Israel, but he soon realized that Nasser was Israel's greatest enemy. Fedayeen raids now emanated from Egypt and verbal hostilities were continually transmitted on Cairo Radio accompanied by acts of violence. On 28 February Israel launched a massive raid led

by Ariel Sharon against Egyptian military installations in Gaza – thirty- six soldiers and two civilians were killed. The raid proved a serious humiliation for Nasser; it followed political humiliation four days earlier of a defence treaty between Iraq and Turkey, referred to as the Baghdad Pact.

Bitterly resenting this agreement, Nasser condemned the Baghdad Pact since it was perceived as an alliance with Western diplomatic aims. Cairo Radio denounced Western imperialism. After the events in Gaza and Baghdad, Nasser was determined to fortify against Israel as well as Arab competitors. On 27 September 1955, he announced the conclusion of an arms deal with Czechoslovakia, acting for the Soviet Union. Three hundred medium and heavy tanks of the latest Soviet type, two hundred MiG-15 jet fighters and other equipment were regarded by Israel as deeply threatening. As a result Israel considered a pre-emptive attack on Egypt as vital.

Paradoxically, Nasser's attacks on Britain and France as Western powers had rescued Israel from isolation. In addition, such hostility as well as the Czech arms deal had alarmed the United States government. As a consequence, the American pro-Israel lobby set itself the objective of blocking support for Egypt's request from the World Bank to finance the Aswan High Dam. On 26 July before a cheering crowd in Alexandria, Nasser announced the nationalization of the Suez Canal Company. Previously the defence of the Canal had been the responsibility of Britain. In response, the British Prime Minister Sir Anthony Eden informed President Eisenhower that Britain was prepared to use military force against Egypt. The aim was to eliminate Nasser, but without forfeiting Arab goodwill. To bring about the removal of Nasser from power, it was decided that Israel should attack Egypt, and Britain and France could then intervene to separate the combatants in order to protect the Canal. This would be done in the interests of the international order. The French had their own motives for supporting such a scheme. All their Algerian troubles, they believed, were due to Nasser's activities. Britain was needed as a partner in the quest to topple Nasser.

## Attack on Suez

In the autumn of 1956 Ben-Gurion together with the army chief of staff, Moshe Dayan, and an administrator from the Defence Ministry, Shimon Peres, flew to a military airfield south-west of Paris for a meeting with the French Prime Minister Guy Mollet. Later in the afternoon the British Foreign Secretary, Selwyn Lloyd, joined the conference. At this meeting the

governments of France, Britain and Israel agreed to a plan of action to wrest control of the Suez Canal and the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt.

On 29 October, Israel launched an attack with a paratroop drop deep inside Sinai. Under the command of Moshe Dayan, Israel's attack resulted in the expulsion of Egyptian forces from all of Sinai including Sharm al-Shiek, on the Straits of Tiran, where Egyptian artillery had previously closed the Gulf of Aqaba to Israeli shipping. On the political front, however, the Israeli offensive gave rise to hostile reactions from Israel's allies. President Eisenhower sent Ben-Gurion a message asking that Israel withdraw its forces after liquidating the fedayeen bases and return to its original borders. When Ben-Gurion delayed responding to this request, Eisenhower proposed to the Security Council of the United Nations that an immediate ceasefire come into effect and that Israel withdraw its troops behind armistice lines.

This resolution was firmly rejected by Britain and France, since they had jointly expressed their own ultimatum addressed to both Israel and Egypt, threatening direct intervention. Angered by Britain and France's refusal to consult the United States before embarking on a joint operation in Suez, Eisenhower brought the matter before the General Assembly, where the Suez venture was vehemently criticized. On 4 November, an Israeli representative informed the General Assembly that Israel would agree to a ceasefire as long as a similar response was made by Egypt. However, on 6 November the British and French landed in the Canal Zone, determined to separate the combatants. Their aim was to withdraw having accomplished this mission.

In the meantime all those involved in this conflict were in danger of evoking Soviet intervention. On 5 November Premier Bulganin sent Israel a note stating that the Jewish state's actions placed into question the very existence of Israel. The following day, the US ambassador in Paris informed Prime Minister Guy Mollet that a Soviet attack on Britain and France would lead to American retaliation. On 7 November the CIA leaked a report that Moscow intended to destroy Israel the following day. Although this Soviet threat was taken seriously by the Israeli leadership, Ben-Gurion was more concerned with Israel's triumph over the Egyptian military. On 7 November he delivered a victory speech in which he declared that the armistice lines were no longer of any consequence. Further, he stated that Israel would not agree to the stationing of a United Nations force within her territory or in any of the occupied territories.

Undeterred by such vehemence, the General Assembly voted for the immediate withdrawal of the Israeli forces. In addition, Eisenhower informed Ben-Gurion of his deep concern about his victory speech, implying that if Israel



chose to ignore the United State's concern, governmental aid would cease and sanctions against Israel would be taken by the United Nations. From the Jewish side, Nahum Goldman, the president of the World Zionist Organization, indicated that the pro-Israel lobby in the United States would not support Ben-Gurion's attitude. Unnerved by these reactions, the Israeli government meeting on 8 November stated that Israel would withdraw her forces from Sinai when satisfactory arrangements had been made with the international force that was about to enter the Canal Zone. The government also agreed that, if this failed, unconditional withdrawal would have to be accepted.

The following month the Foreign Minister, Golda Meir, went to New York to argue the Israeli case before the United Nations. Prior to her departure, she visited Sinai and the Gaza Strip. Later she recalled her reaction to the plight of refugees living in the area:

### ***Poverty in the Gaza Strip***

I toured the Gaza Strip, from which the fedayeen had gone out on their murderous assignments for so many months and in which the Egyptians had kept a quarter of a million men, women and children (of whom nearly 60 per cent were Arab refugees) in the most shameful poverty and destitution. I was appalled by what I saw there and by the fact that those miserable people had been maintained in such a degrading condition for over eight years only so that the Arab leaders could show the refugee camps to visitors and make political capital out of them... I couldn't help comparing what I saw in the Gaza Strip to what we had done. (Gilbert, *Israel*, p. 330)

Between November 1956 and March 1957 Abba Eban, Israel's permanent representative at the United Nations and Ambassador in Washington, engaged in negotiations about Israel's withdrawal. Following the Suez crisis, there was widespread feeling that the West had been humiliated and the Soviet Union had increased its international influence. Further, it was felt that the United States government had let down its allies. In this context, the pro-Israel lobby was able to gain a greater hearing. Eban was anxious that the international force should be used to ensure that the fedayeen raids should cease and that the Straits of Tiran should be opened to Israeli shipping. Eventually a consensus was established between Israel, the United Nations, the United States and Egypt that Israel would withdraw from Sinai on the assumption that the fedayeen raids would stop and the straits be reopened.

# Beyond the Sinai Crisis

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At the end of the Sinai War Israel undertook to withdraw from Sinai as long as Egypt did not remilitarize it and UN forces formed a protective cordon sanitaire. This arrangement endured for ten years, but attacks still continued during this period. In 1967 Nasser launched another offensive, and on 15 May he moved 100,000 men and armour into Sinai and expelled the UN army. On 22 May he blockaded Aqaba; several days later King Hussein of Jordan signed a military agreement in Cairo. On the same day Iraqi forces took up positions in Jordan. In the face of this Arab threat, Israel launched a strike on 5 June, destroying the Egyptian air force on the ground. On 7 June the Israeli army took the Old City, thereby making Jerusalem its capital. On the next day Israeli forces occupied the entire Left Bank, and during the next few days captured the Golan Heights and reoccupied Sinai.

## The Aftermath of Sinai

Recognizing the international pressure for a withdrawal from Sinai and the Straits of Tiran as well as a United Nations military presence there, Israel announced on 1 March 1957 that it would regard any interference with shipping through the Straits as an aggressive act. Israel was determined not to be subjected to territorial or maritime threats. Accepting this position, the French delegate to the United Nations, Georges Picot, stated that if Israel were to suffer Egyptian encroachments, it was entitled to use its right

to self-defence. Within Israel, there was widespread resentment against the United States which had forced the British and French to halt their operations before its objectives could be attained. The situation was aggravated by the fact that Israel was compelled to pay off a loan that it had previously received from the United States Import-Export Bank.

Following the Sinai campaign, Israel experienced considerable growth. In 1956 more than 55,000 immigrants arrived in the country; the following year a further 70,000 arrived primarily from Egypt and North Africa. Yet, despite such an influx of settlers, the country's Arab neighbours remained hostile and refused to recognize Israel's borders. During this period the country instituted a mock mobilization of Israel's reserves to test the Arab reaction. When the code-words indicating which units were to be mobilized were broadcast, news spread in Israel and around the world that Israel was preparing for war, causing general panic. As a result the two senior officers responsible were dismissed from their posts.

This event was followed by another crisis a year later. After Syrian artillery opened fire on Israeli settlements below the Golan Heights, Israel increased the number of troops in the north. On 15 January 1960 the Soviet Union informed the Syrians that this action was part of a plan to launch an Israeli attack on their country. Egypt and Syria put their armies on full alert and Nasser notified the United Nations forces in the Gaza Strip and Sharm el-Sheikh that there might be Egyptian action through Sinai. Several days later he sent troops and tanks across the Suez Canal. On 24 January an emergency meeting of Israeli senior army officers took place at General Headquarters. Eventually the two armies faced one another, but gradually the forces withdrew from the border.

The following year an extraordinary event startled Israel and the whole world. On 23 May 1960, Ben-Gurion announced that Adolf Eichmann, one of the key Nazis responsible for the final solution, had been tracked down in Argentina, brought to Israel and would face trial. On 11 April 1961 his trial began in Jerusalem. Evidence was given about his activities as well as all aspects of the Holocaust. More than a hundred survivors gave testimony, and Eichmann called sixteen witnesses in his defence. The trial lasted for fourteen weeks and was followed by Jews world-wide. On 11 December Eichmann was found guilty. At the end of May 1962 he appealed to the President for clemency; this was turned down and he was hanged three days later. In a speech marking Israel's thirteenth Independence Day, Ben-Gurion made a speech in which he defended Israel's action in bringing Eichmann to justice.

### ***Ben-Gurion and the Eichmann Trial***

Here, for the first time in Jewish history, historical justice is being done by the sovereign Jewish people. For many generations it was we who suffered, who were tortured, were killed – and were judged... For the first time Israel is judging the murderers of the Jewish people... And let us bear in mind that only the independence of Israel could create the conditions for this historic act of justice. (Sachar, *History of Israel*, p. 558)

During this period the Israeli government faced a serious scandal involving Pinhas Lavon who had previously resigned as Minister of Defence following his involvement in an Israeli sabotage scheme in Egypt. Following his resignation, Lavon re-entered Israeli politics becoming Secretary-General of the Histadrut. When he discovered that the documents which appeared to indicate that he had initiated the sabotage scheme had been forged, he asked Ben-Gurion to establish a new inquiry. Ben-Gurion agreed, and an inquiry took place headed by the Supreme Court Justice Haim Cohn. The inquiry concluded that the documents implicating Lavon had been forged, yet Ben-Gurion wished to institute a fuller investigation.

Anxious to clear his name, Lavon revealed secret details to the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Security Committee. He explained that he had been the victim of a trap. Ben-Gurion was furious by what he viewed as a breach of security. However, the leaders of Mapai feared that a judicial inquiry would result in a prolonged crisis as well as the release of secret details. To avoid this outcome, Levi Eshkol set up a ministerial committee headed by the Minister of Justice which decided that Lavon was innocent, and that the actions in Egypt had been carried out without his knowledge. This, however, did not satisfy Ben-Gurion, and he threatened to resign as Prime Minister. Anxious to prevent Ben-Gurion's resignation, the Mapai Central Committee discussed the issue and voted in favour of Lavon's dismissal. When the coalition members refused to accept this outcome, Ben-Gurion who remained as Prime Minister, called for new elections. Despite this outcome, controversy surrounding the Lavon affair continued for several years.

In 1961 an important discovery was made in the Judean desert by the archaeologist Yigael Yadin. There the archaeological expedition discovered artifacts and documents from the time of Bar Kochba's revolt against Rome in the second century CE. One of the finds was a letter written in Bar Kochba's name. Recalling this discovery, Yadin described the significance of such an important document.

## ***Bar Kochba's Letter***

Why was a whole nation elated over the discovery of a name on a fragment of papyrus? The answer lies in the magic of the name, a name treasured in folklore but almost lost to authenticated history, and the realization ... that after nearly two thousand years the desert had given up factual links with the man who led the last attempt of his people to overthrow their Roman masters. (Gilbert, *Israel*, p. 341)

## **Years of Growth**

On 22 May 1961 the first Israeli census under normal conditions took place. Previously a census was held during the War of Independence and later in 1950 when Jewish immigration was so rapid that accurate figures were impossible to establish. According to the 1948 census figures the Jewish population was 716,678 with more than 65,000 Arabs. The 1950 figures were 1,029,000 Jews and more than 150,000 Arabs. The census of 1961 gave a total of 1,932,400 Jews and about 250,000 Arabs. There were two Arab cities in Israel – Nazareth and Shfaram, and other cities (Jaffa, Haifa, Acre, Ramle and Lod) had substantial Arab populations.

Although it was the intention of the Israeli government to deal fairly with the Arab population, the position of the Israeli Arabs was precarious. A military administration had been established over the Arab areas of Israel during the early period of statehood. The aim was to protect the state from terrorist activities. Five regulations gave the Military Administration control over these citizens: Regulation 109 permitted the arrest of individuals for being in prohibited areas; Regulation 110 permitted police supervision over an individual for up to one year; Regulation 111 provided a legal basis for detention; Regulation 124 provided for house arrest; Regulation 15 allowed commanders to declare certain areas closed areas. Despite such restrictions, Arabs had the right to vote in Israeli elections, and later a regional centre for Arab vocational training was established in Western Galilee as well as an Arab vocational high school in Nazareth and an orphan's home in Acre.

By the end of 1962 Ben-Gurion attempted to persuade President Tito of Yugoslavia to act as a mediator between Israel and surrounding Arab nations. When Tito eventually replied, he maintained that it would be best if Yugoslavia's involvement were made through the United Nations. On 17 April 1963 several days after Tito sent his letter, Egypt, Syria and Iraq signed a treaty of alliance in Cairo with the aim of liberating Palestine. Jordan, however,

remained aloof. Recognizing that King Hussein of Jordan needed a peaceful accord with Israel to preserve his regime, the Israeli government held a series of secret meetings with the King. Aware of the danger posed by its neighbours, Israel sought to establish a positive relationship with the United States. In 1963 the Israeli Foreign Minister, Golda Meir, met President John F. Kennedy in Florida and pressed the need for Israel to obtain arms.

During this period it became apparent that German scientists had been working in Egypt to develop long-range missiles. Ben-Gurion asked his deputy at the Ministry of Defense to raise the matter with the German government. When there was no response, Mossad (the Israeli secret service) contacted the daughter of one of the scientists while she was in Switzerland and attempted to persuade her to leave Egypt. When she informed the Swiss authorities, the Israeli agents were arrested. In March 1963 in a debate in the Knesset, Germany was accused of attempting to threaten the Jews with extermination. Ben-Gurion was criticized for selling Israeli-made Uzi submachine guns to Germany. At this stage Ben-Gurion was anxious not to destabilize relations with Germany. He stressed that there was no cause for alarm. The missiles being made in Egypt, he stated, were unusable and the Germans working there were not notable scientists. The head of Mossad, Iser Harel, however, disagreed; the missiles, he argued, posed a real danger to Israeli security. When Harel told Ben-Gurion the source of his information, Ben-Gurion was incensed since he had told him a totally different story and Harel was dismissed from his post.

During the summer of 1963 Ben-Gurion resigned as Prime Minister. News of the resignation shocked the senior army officers who set a delegation headed by the Deputy Chief of Staff, Yitzhak Rabin, to try to persuade him to change his mind. When the appeal was unsuccessful, Levi Eshkol became Prime Minister and Minister of Defence. In January of the following year, at a summit meeting of Arab countries, Syria proposed using the 75,000 Palestinian refugees in the country as well as an even greater number in other Arab lands to destabilize Israel. At the Arab summit, it was formally accepted that Palestinians throughout the Arab world should seek to liberate their homeland and determine their destiny. Subsequently the Jordanian government allowed an Assembly of Palestine Arabs to meet in East Jerusalem. As a consequence of these deliberations, the Palestine Liberation Organization was created. Its aim was to attain the objective of liquidating Israel, and a Palestine Liberation Army was created. This organization was to receive financial support from the Arab world, and Nasser placed both Sinai and the Gaza Strip at its disposal.

At the end of 1964 a confrontation between Syria and Israel took place regarding water. Syria was intent on preventing Israel from using the waters of the River Jordan for its National Water Carrier. Plans were made to direct the waters of the Hazbani river before it reached Israel and build a canal that would take the waters of the river Baniyas directly from Syria to Jordan. Moshe Dayan, the former Chief of Staff, was determined to seize the Syrian territory through which the proposed canal was to flow. However, Yitzhak Rabin was opposed. On 3 November two Syrian tanks fired on an Israeli tractor from their bunkers on the Golan heights. Ten Israeli tanks moved in and opened fire.

This incident was followed ten days later when Syrian tanks again fired on an Israeli troop carrier patrolling the border road; Israeli tanks then exchanged fire. Three Israeli soldiers died in the action and two Syrian tanks were destroyed. To deter the Syrians from further action, Israel launched an air strike. These events, however, did not stop the Syrians from seeking to divert the waters of the Hazbani and Baniyas rivers. In response, Israel destroyed the Syrian earth-movers. Egypt then pressed Syria not to embark on a campaign against Israel. In the wake of these events, a new organization was created with Syrian backing: The Movement for the National Liberation of Palestine known as Fatah ('victory'), led by Yasser Arafat. Fata commandos crossed into Israel to plant bombs.

## Road to War

On 19 May 1965 the Syrian authorities hanged Eli Cohen, who had been spying for Israel, in the Martyr's Square in Damascus. This event encouraged Syrian denunciations of Israel. The following week, a small Fatah commando unit penetrated across the River Jordan to Afula and blew up a house injuring a mother and two children. In response Israel launched a paratroop attack across the River Jordan and destroyed two Fatah bases on the West Bank. On 28 May, Yitzhak Rabin, the Israeli Chief of Staff, declared that Israel would take further action unless the Jordanian government curbed Fatah attacks. Taking no notice of this warning, a small Fatah squad crossed the Lebanese border and planted bombs.

At this point Ben-Gurion from his retirement demanded a full inquiry into the Lavon affair. Eshkol, who had succeeded Ben-Gurion as Prime Minister, declared he had no interest in reopening the issue. Undeterred, Ben-Gurion

appealed to the Attorney General who recommended that an investigation take place. Fearing that he would not be able to persuade Mapai to oppose Ben-Gurion's plans, Eshkol resigned as Prime Minister. Mapai, however, persuaded Eshkol to return to office and voted against an inquiry. At the Mapai Party convention, Ben-Gurion demanded a full judicial inquiry but the request was defeated in a secret ballot. Incensed at the outcome, Ben-Gurion unsuccessfully challenged Eshkol's leadership of the party and resigned, forming his own Party, Rafi, which included Shimon Peres, Moshe Dayan, Yitzhak Navon and Chaim Herzog.

On 8 April 1966 a Fatah squad crossed into Israel from Syria, planting a mine which killed an Israeli farmer. Another farmer was killed by a mine on 16 May. On 12 and 13 July more Fatah units crossed the border from Syria planting more mines. In response, Israel launched air strikes. In the ensuing months more Fatah cross-border attacks were launched. On 4 November 1966 Syria signed a mutual defence pact with Egypt. It was Nasser's aim to rally the Arab States to a final assault against Israel. On 13 November an Israeli parachute battalion and ten light tanks crossed the border into Jordan. When it entered the village of Samua, it began to demolish empty houses. When a Jordanian Army Infantry Brigade drove through Samua, fifteen trucks were destroyed. This was followed by a full-scale battle with Jordanian aircraft summoned for assistance and Israeli aircraft sent up to intercept them. On 25 November, the United Nations Security Council condemned Israel for the raid on Samua.

During the first three months of 1967 Syrian artillery bombardments and cross-border raids were launched on Israeli settlements in the north. On 7 April 1967 Syrian mortars on the Golan Heights were fired against kibbutz Gadlot, and Israeli tanks took positions so that they could reach the Syrian mortars. Israeli warplanes flew over the Golan Heights, attacking Syrian strongholds. Syrian warplanes – Soviet Mig-21s – then engaged Israeli planes. After six Migs had been shot down, the rest were chased to Damascus. According to Syrian propaganda, Israel was preparing for war, a view supported by the Soviet Union.

Eventually Nasser emerged as the pivotal figure in this conflict. On 13 May Egyptian troops moved into the Sinai from which Israel had withdrawn its troops. In order to stem the rumour that Israel was preparing for war, an Independence Day parade was held on 15 May without the usual large numbers of tanks and weapons. Alarmed by the lack of heavy armour, the Egyptians accused Israel of having sent the missing equipment to the north, predicting



that Israel would invade Syria. On 16 May Nasser ordered the United Nations to remove its forces from Sinai. Surprisingly the United Nations agreed and its troops were pulled out within twenty-four hours of Egypt's demand.

On 20 May Israel reserves began a partial mobilization. The same day the Egyptian Minister of War, Abdul Hakim Amer, travelled to Gaza to inspect the troops that had replaced the United Nations force. Alongside these soldiers were members of the Egyptian-sponsored Palestinian Liberation Army. In Israel military leaders and leading politicians pressed for a pre-emptive strike against Egypt and Syria. The Chief of Staff, Yitzhak Rabin and the Prime Minister, Levi Eshkol, were reluctant to take action. On 21 May, the Foreign Secretary, Abba Eban, asked the Chief of Staff if Egypt were planning to close the Straits of Tiran, thereby denying access to Israeli ships. Later that day, senior Israeli Cabinet Ministers agreed that Egypt's action regarding the Strait of Tiran would give an indication of Nasser's intentions. Later that evening Eshkol spoke over the radio, indicating that Israel had no intention to go to war.

The next day Nasser declared that Egypt was reimposing her blockade of the Straits. In his speech, he pointed out that the situation was different from 1956. Then France and Britain came to Israel's aid, but this time Israel was not supported by any European power, though the United States might become an ally. In any event, he insisted that the Israeli flag should not be allowed to pass through the Gulf of Akaba. If Israel insisted on war, then Egypt was ready.

On 23 May, the Israeli Cabinet and military leaders gathered in Tel Aviv for an emergency meeting. In a report, General Yariv explained that the airfields in Sinai were being made ready for combat, but not all preparations were complete. On the Jordanian front there had been no movement of troops. Nor did it appear that the Syrians were planning for war. Yet throughout the Arab world, crowds were demonstrating against Israel. When asked for his view, Rabin commented that previously Egypt was Israel's only enemy, and the country had been allied to two major powers. This time, however, Israel would stand alone while Egypt would be supported by Syria, Jordan and soldiers from other Arab countries. In addition, the Soviet Union would be on the Arab side. Although confident of victory, Rabin warned that the conflict would prove difficult. At the meeting a telegram was read out from the United States government, requesting that no decision should be made for forty-eight hours. Rabin and Ezer Weizman agreed that Israel would lose no military advantage for agreeing to this delay, yet it was agreed that the occupation of the Straits should be regarded as an act of aggression and that this view should be publically conveyed to other governments.

## Further Steps to War

On 24 May U Thant, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, flew to Egypt to attempt to persuade Nasser not to precipitate a war. Nasser, however, would not agree, and U Thant returned the following day to New York. The same day Abba Eban flew to Paris where he was warned by President de Gaulle that it would be a mistake for Israel to attack Egypt. The dispute, de Gaulle insisted, should be resolved by Britain, the Soviet Union, the United States and France. Eban then flew to London where the Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, adopted a more conciliatory approach. The Egyptian blockade, he stated, must not be allowed, and Britain would seek to work towards keeping the Straits open. In the United States, the Israeli Ambassador, Avraham Harman, met with former President Eisenhower who told him that in his view the Straits were an international waterway. This, he explained, had been determined nearly ten years previously.

On 25 May President Johnson declared that the blockade was illegal. Yet, despite such international pressure, Egypt armoured units crossed the Suez Canal and took up positions inside Sinai. The next day Abba Eban discussed the crisis with President Johnson. It was Johnson's view that Israel should seek support from other countries including the British to insure that the Straits remain open rather than take unilateral action. Nasser, however, remained unmoved. On 26 May he declared that it was Egypt's intention to destroy Israel. In the United Nations Security Council the Soviet Union stated it would veto any move that might not be in accord with Syria or Egypt.

On 27 May the Israeli War Cabinet met to discuss whether to take action. At that stage opinion was divided. The following day the American Ambassador to Israel conveyed to the government that both the United States and Britain were exploring the possibility of an international task force to keep the Straits open. In the light of this possibility, Eshkol proposed that Israel should postpone any action until it became clear what a multinational naval force could accomplish. Following the meeting, Eshkol met with the military leaders, some of whom were fearful that such a delay might give Egypt an advantage.

The waiting period commenced on 29 May. The same day Nasser spoke to the members of the Egyptian National Assembly. It was not simply the issue of the closure of the Straits which was the central problem: it was the aggression of Israel against the Palestinians in 1948. Then, he explained, Britain and the

United States collaborated with Israel; now these countries seek to confine the problem to the Straits of Tiran. Egypt, he stated, was not afraid of these powers nor of the entire Western world. On the day after Nasser's speech, King Hussein of Jordan flew to Cairo. At a meeting with Nasser, he added Jordan to the Syrian-Egyptian defence pact which had been signed a month previously. On 31 May troops from Iraq arrived in Egypt.

In Israel, the two-week respite was drawing to a close. Although eighty countries were asked to join an international task force to reopen the Straits, only Canada and Denmark were willing to participate without any reservations. By 1 June it had become clear that the United States would not restrain Israel from acting. The Israeli population was growing increasingly uneasy about the government's indecision. Pressure mounted for Moshe Dayan, a former Chief of Staff, to be called back to serve as Minister of Defence.

Once he was appointed Minister of Defence, Dayan had a meeting with the Chief of Staff, Yitzhak Rabin and Yeshayahu Gavish, General Officer Commanding Southern Command. Rabin had previously advocated a limited war; Gavish had argued for a more extensive campaign. It was agreed that the latter plan was more suitable given the current situation. On 2 June Nasser warned that if any power dared to make declarations on freedom of navigation in the Straits of Tiran, Egypt would deny that power oil and free navigation in the Suez Canal. Approximately 100,000 Egyptian troops and 900 tanks were deployed in Sinai. On the Golan Heights there were 75,000 Syrian soldiers and 400 tanks. In addition, the Jordanians had assembled 32,000 troops and 300 tanks. In total the Arab forces consisted of over 200,000 soldiers and 1,600 tanks. A further 150 tanks were travelling from Iraq through Jordan. A further 140,000 Egyptian troops and 300 tanks were also available if needed. There were also approximately 700 Arab combat aircraft. From the Israeli side, there were 264,000 soldiers, 800 tanks and 300 aircraft.

On 3 June Moshe Dayan prepared Israel's war plan. The same day Israel's ambassador to Washington, Avraham Harman, returned to Israel and reported to Eban about his conversation with Secretary of State Dean Rusk. According to Harman, Rusk indicated that international support for action against Nasser was diminishing. When Eshkol met with Generals Dayan, Yadin and Allon as well as senior officers, it was agreed that although the United States was not going to participate in military action, it would not adopt a critical stance. It was further accepted that the conflict would be with Egypt alone unless Jordan attacked Israel. The following morning the unity Cabinet met and Dayan explained his military plans. Following the

Cabinet meeting, Dayan met with Eshkol and told him that he proposed to launch an Israeli attack at 7.45am the next morning, Monday 5 June. Eshkol agreed.

It was only after midnight on the first day of the war that the Israeli public were informed about the conflict. In a radio broadcast, the Chief of Staff Yitzhak Rabin and Michael Hod, the commander-in- chief of the air force, announced that more than 400 Egyptian, Syrian and Jordanian planes had been eliminated while still on the runways. Israel, they announced, had achieved mastery of the air from the Sinai border to the Golan Heights. The war had begun with a startling victory. Later Golda Meir recalled the relief she felt at hearing such news:

### ***The First Day***

The war had only started: there would still be death and mourning and misery. But the planes that had been readied to bomb us were all mortally crippled, and the airfields from which they had been about to take off were now in ruins. (Gilbert, *Israel*, p. 384)

## **The Six-Day War**

On the first day of the war, one third of all Egypt's war planes had been destroyed on the ground, and the majority of the runways at the main Egyptian air bases were unusable. As the war moved into the next phase, Israel encouraged the Jordanians not to enter the war. Israel made it clear it was prepared to honour the armistice agreement with Jordan. Rather than respond to the Israeli offer, King Hussein ordered his troops in Jerusalem to attack across the armistice line. In addition, his air force was prepared for action. Syria, Iraq and Jordan then launched a series of attacks on Israeli targets. By the early afternoon, Israel had driven back the Arab forces and then destroyed the Syrian and Jordanian air forces in the air and on the ground. In addition, the main Iraqi air base was destroyed.

At this stage the Arab air forces still had 280 planes, but they were no longer of consequence. On the first day of the war the Jordanian artillery fired on buildings in Jewish Jerusalem including the Knesset. In the afternoon Israeli troops captured Government House and the fortified zone behind it from the Jordanians. In the assault eight Israeli soldiers were killed. The Israeli army then launched two pincer attacks from the north and the south. To stop

Jordanian tanks from entering the battle, Israel launched war attacks on the Jericho-Jerusalem road.

In Sinai the Israeli army captured Abu Ageila, and then penetrated the entire peninsula. An Israeli armour column reached El Arish, thereby cutting off the Gaza Strip from contact with Egypt. As the battle progressed, Moshe Dayan urged restraint in the north as the conflict continued in the south. A plan was then to capture Sharm el-Sheikh on 7 June. However, before the assault could begin, the Egyptian troops in Sinai were told to fall back to the Suez Canal, and Sharm el-Sheikh was evacuated on 6 June. On the morning of 7 June the United Nations Security Council called for a ceasefire.

The previous day Yigal Allon and Menachem Begin encouraged Eshkol to order Israeli troops into the Old City to regain the Jewish Quarter. On 7 June as the United Nations ceasefire became a possibility, Eshkol agreed and Dayan gave orders for his troops to occupy the Old City. In Sinai and on the West Bank, Israel was victorious; the Egyptian and Jordanian armies were in retreat. The UN Security Council had ordered a ceasefire to come into effect at ten o'clock on 7 June. Nasser, however, continued the war although he was unable to regain his lost territory. On 8 June, he accepted the ceasefire, but it was too late to save his army. Dayan had instructed his troops to advance to the Suez Canal. Although the Egyptians struggled to hold back the Israelis, they were overwhelmed. 15,000 Egyptian troops were killed in Sinai and tens of thousands of troops attempted to flee across the desert to the canal.

In Israel pressure was mounting to drive the Syrians from the Golan Heights. At a meeting of the Ministerial Committee on Defence, Dayan expressed his opposition to any attack, fearing that the Soviet Union would come to Syria's assistance. At this stage Syria, Egypt and Jordan were willing to accept a ceasefire. On 9 June Dayan changed his view and told General Elazar to attack. The fighting was intense as the Israeli troops penetrated the Golan Heights. On the night of 9 June the Syrian forces began to fall back, but fighting continued into the early hours of the next day. At 6.30pm a ceasefire came into effect.

Israel's military victory had a shattering effect on the Arab world. The Jewish state had emerged as the most powerful force in the Middle East. On the international stage, the Soviet Union requested the Secretary-General of the United Nations to convene an Emergency Session of the General Assembly to secure the withdrawal of Israeli forces behind the armistice lines. Under the influence of the United States, all resolutions calling on Israel to undertake this withdrawal failed to win a two-thirds majority. However, when the issue

was referred to the Security Council, a compromise resolution was passed unanimously which called for the withdrawal of the Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict and the termination of all claims of belligerency as well as an acknowledgement of the sovereignty and political independence of every state in the area. Such conditions constituted a major victory for the Jewish state.

In the wake of the Six-Day War three categories of Palestinian Arabs existed: Arab residents of Israel; Arab inhabitants of territories occupied by Israel in 1967; Palestinian refugees living in Arab states. The first group consisted of a small number of Palestinian Arabs who became citizens of Israel; although Israel has no written constitution, the Declaration of Independence guarantees social and political equality to all its citizens. Despite this guarantee of freedom, from the beginning Israelis were ambivalent about the Arab population residing in their midst. Although there was a desire to honour the guarantee of equality, other factors mitigated against its implementation.

Zionists insisted that Israel should be a Jewish state – there was no place, they argued, for non-Jews within the mainstream of national life even if Arabs were granted citizenship. For many, the Arab remnant in Israel was perceived as a potential threat to the stability of the country. Concentrated in border areas, they were viewed as in sympathy with Arabs living outside the Jewish state. Ben-Gurion, for example, was adamant that the Arab minority was a dangerous presence. Throughout his tenure as Prime Minister, he continually pointed to the inherent danger posed by the Arab population. It was, he believed, a hotbed of conspiracy. So it proved to be.

# Beyond the Six-Day War

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In the aftermath of the Six-Day War, Israel was prepared to return large areas of the occupied territories as long as peace was established in the Middle East. It was understood, however, that such an agreement was dependent on the recognition that Israel be allowed freedom of movement in the Straits of Tiran and the Suez Canal. Despite Israel's willingness to make such territorial concessions, the Arab states were determined to resist Zionist aspirations. The Arab defeat led to widespread resentment against Israel. The loss of the Golan Heights and the West Bank and the continued presence of Israeli troops along the east bank of the Suez Canal evoked outrage among Arab leaders. With the death of Nasser in 1971, Anwar Sadat came to power in Egypt and a new stage in Israeli-Arab relations commenced.

## The Arabs

From the beginning, Israel's policies towards Arabs were in accord with Ben-Gurion's view: they were perceived as implacable enemies of the state. From 1948 ninety per cent of the Arabs lived under Military Government with three regional councils – the Northern Command, the Central Command and the Southern Command. Between 1949 and 1950 Military Government was granted full legal form, a governmental structure that lasted eighteen years. The most important aspect of Military Government was the restriction of movement: Article 125 of the Emergency Regulations of 1949 granted military governors the power

to declare any area or place a forbidden area that no one was allowed to enter or leave without a written permit. Under such a provision, nearly one hundred Arab villages were designated closed areas out of which no one was permitted to move without a permit. The Bedouin in the Negev were subject to similar restrictions.

Other powers granted to military governors included the right to banish, restrict the residence of or detain Arabs without trial, and to impose a curfew. The justification for such regulations was state security. Of particular concern to Israeli authorities was the threat of nationalistic gatherings. For this reason local sports were forbidden (although country-wide associations of sport were permitted). In addition, any expressions of Arab nationalism or anti-Zionism could be suppressed by the military authorities. Such emergency provisions were seen as vital for Jewish survival given the nature of Palestinian resentment.

Such restrictions might appear to undermine the principle of equality of citizenship. But the Israeli government was determined to protect the new Jewish state at all costs. It should be stressed also that these restrictions applied to areas rather than individuals. Nonetheless, the main objective was to ensure that any form of Arab insurrection would be thwarted and that the Arab population would be strictly controlled. Despite these limitations, the generation of Arabs who remained in Israel generally accepted such restrictions. Under Ottoman rule, and later under the Mandate, they had not been granted democratic rights. Rather than rebel against Israeli rule, they accommodated themselves to the status of a subject people. Their children, however, were keenly aware that they had been denied the right to equal treatment within the Jewish state.

***The PLO Poet R. Husain's View of Arab Members of the Knesset and Others Who Cooperated with the Jewish State***

Give me a rope, a hammer, a steel bar, For I shall build a gallows, Among my people a group still lingers That feeds my shame and walks with downcast heads. Let's stretch their necks! How can we keep in our midst one who licks every palm he meets? (Zureik, *Palestinians in Israel*, p. 185)

Nonetheless, the first generation of Arabs in Israel were aware of their loss of land. During the fighting between Jews and Arabs, a sizeable area of Arab territory had been seized and this was later legalized by the Knesset under the Land Acquisition Law of 1953. In addition, Arab lands were taken by the military authorities on military grounds and given to Jewish settlers. Financial compensation was offered, but those who had lost their property refused to accept such payment in the hope that the land would be returned.



The majority of land and houses taken belonged to Palestinian Arabs who had fled during the fighting; this was confiscated under the Absentees' Property Law of 1950. This property was given to Israel's new immigrants, some of whom were themselves refugees from Arab lands. Approximately 418 Arab towns were taken over during this period. Dismayed by this state of affairs, dispossessed Arabs harboured deep resentment against those who had seized their land that had been inherited from ancient times and whose ownership the British Mandate had respected.

This transformation of Arab life in Palestine was coupled with the loss of Arab control. Arabs had had no political power under Ottoman rule or during the British Mandate. Nevertheless, Arabs did have high social status as well as wealth which they were able to transform into collective political power. Under Haj Amin, for example, the Supreme Muslim Council had exercised considerable authority in Palestine. The main source of such control resulted from the religious endowment (*waaf*) to which rich Arabs contributed for the benefit of the faithful. After Israel's defeat of Arab states during the 1949 campaign, Ben-Gurion instituted the law of abandoned property in 1950, resulting in the acquisition of agricultural land, urban real estate, houses and shops. In this way Arab wealth and influence were totally undermined. Within this framework, Israel also assumed responsibility over the mosques within its borders.

During the ten years following the creation of the Jewish state, there was little Arab unrest. However, in the summer of 1958 rioting took place in Nazareth. The following year Arab militants established their own Arab nationalist party, which was later suppressed by the Israeli authorities. Arab support then shifted to the Communist Party. Following the 1967 war, Israel was in control of large territories populated by Arabs. East Jerusalem and 28 Arab villages on the West Bank were annexed to the state, as well as the newly occupied territories including the West Bank, formerly held by Jordan, and the Gaza Strip, previously under Egyptian control. In a census taken in 1967 nearly a million Arabs lived in these territories – 595,000 in the West Bank, and 389,700 in Gaza.

During this period the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) emerged as the main body representing Palestinian interests. After the Six-Day War there were nearly the same number of Palestinians living under Israeli rule (1.6 million) as lived outside the Jewish state (1.5 million). Of those living outside Israel, 644,200 resided in Jordan (East Bank); 288,000 in Lebanon; 183,000 in Syria; 39,000 in Egypt; 194,000 in Kuwait; 59,000 in Saudi Arabia;

35,000 in Iraq; and 67,000 in other countries. The first group that gained recognition among this diverse population was Fatah, founded in Kuwait in 1958–59 by Palestinian students, including Yasser Arafat. Other Palestinian organizations included the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) headed by George Habash and the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine headed by Nayif Hawatmeh (PDFLP).

The PLO was established in Jerusalem in May 1964 under the auspices of the Arab League. Four years later the PLO became a federation of fedayeen organizations, of which Fatah was the largest. The next year Arafat as leader of Fatah became chairman of the executive committee of the Palestine National Council, in effect the leader of the PLO. After the Six-Day War, the headquarters of the PLO were moved from Damascus to Amman. On 3 November 1969 the PLO was granted the right to act from Lebanon against Israel.

## Further Conflict

Following the Six-Day War the government of National Unity, led by Levi Eshkol, was prepared to give up large areas of the occupied territories in exchange for peace. On 19 June 1967 the Israeli Cabinet agreed upon a four-point resolution stating that Israel was willing to withdraw to the international border with Egypt in exchange for a peace treaty. It was understood, however, that such an agreement was dependent on the recognition that Israel be allowed freedom of movement in the Straits of Tiran and the Suez Canal. This resolution also stated that Israel was prepared to withdraw to the inter-national border with Syria as long as the Golan Heights were demilitarized. No mention was made of the West Bank and Gaza Strip – these were to be dealt with at a later stage.

Despite Israel's flexibility concerning these various territories, the Arab states were unwilling to engage in negotiation. At the first meeting of Arab nations after the war – the Khartoum Conference from 19 August to 1 September 1967 – the Arabs declared that there would be no peace with Israel, no recognition of Israel, and no negotiations with Israel regarding any Palestinian territories. At this conference, Nasser and the oil-rich states reached an accommodation: in exchange for an annual subsidy of \$225 million, Nasser agreed to halt his campaign against the monarchial and reactionary regimes in the Arab world. By such an agreement, Nasser abandoned his quest to establish a Pan-Arab federation across the Arab world. From this point Arab leaders were to be treated with respect.

The Arab defeat in the Six-Day War led to widespread resentment against Israel. The loss of the Golan Heights and the West Bank and the continued presence of Israeli troops along the east bank of the Suez Canal evoked outrage among Arab leaders. Throughout 1968 Egypt carried out bombardments against Israeli positions along the canal; the following year it announced a policy of constant military activity in the area. This war of attrition between Israel and Egypt was a serious problem for the Jewish state. Israel could not afford to sustain constant casualties along its border. In response to this Egyptian initiative, Israel embarked on a sustained policy of retaliation.

By this stage the Soviet Union was deeply involved in Egypt, re-equipping its forces though not with the most modern equipment. The situation was complicated by the fact that the Israeli government was receiving mixed signals from the United States. William Rogers, Secretary of State, was pressing for a ceasefire and a negotiated peace; Henry Kissinger (the President's National Security Adviser), however, appeared to encourage increasing Israel's military activity. On a visit to Washington in September 1969, Prime Minister Golda Meir created a system of direct communication through Yitzhak Rabin and Kissinger, bypassing her own Foreign Office and the US State Department.

On 25 October 1969 Rabin recommended the penetration of Egyptian targets. The Israeli Cabinet was divided: some members were willing to take the risk of deep penetration of Egypt's air space to attack Cairo; others feared this might provoke the Soviet Union to intervene on behalf of Egypt. This debate was interrupted by a diplomatic initiative undertaken by the US Secretary of State William Rogers on 29 October 1969. Offering an interpretation of Security Council Resolution 242, he proposed an international frontier between Egypt and Israel as a secure border. This would result in a formal state of peace and negotiations on Gaza and Sharm al-Sheikh as well as demilitarized zones.

Presenting these proposals to Egypt and the Soviet Union, the US State Department believed they might be acceptable since they were in line with the resolution adopted by the Israeli Cabinet on 19 June 1967. However, Israel no longer viewed this resolution as binding. Relying on the mode of contact she had established with Rabin and Kissinger, Golda Meir believed the US President was in fact encouraging Israel to escalate the conflict rather than negotiate with Egypt. On 17 November, the Israeli government indicated that it would not agree to the State Department's proposal. On 7 January 1970 the Israeli Air Force made its first deep penetration strike into Egypt.

Two weeks after this event, Nasser flew to Moscow in an effort to obtain effective air-defence, surface-to-air missiles (SAM-3s) operated by Russian crews.

Fearing this might lead to an international crisis, Brezhnev did not immediately comply. Nasser declared that he would resign if Moscow were not prepared to help. Egypt, he protested, was being bombed daily. Such a situation was intolerable:

### ***Nasser and Brezhnev***

I am a leader who is bombed every day in his own country, whose army is exposed and whose people are naked. I have the courage to tell our people the unfortunate truth – that, whether they like it or not, the Americans are masters of the world. (O'Brien, *The Siege*, pp. 496–97)

At a meeting of the Politburo, the Kremlin agreed with Nasser's request, thereby committing the Soviet Union to retraining Egypt's defence forces.

The government of Israel was aware that its policy might provoke an adverse reaction from the Soviets. Yet, Golda Meir and Rabin assumed that by turning down the State Department Plan and escalating the war with Egypt, they were acting in accord with President Nixon's plans for the region. This, however, did not prove to be an accurate reading of American intentions. The United States began to put pressure on Israel to accept a ceasefire and negotiate peace arrangements. Previously Golda Meir had secured promises of new aircraft and electronic warfare equipment. By March 1970 – a month after Nasser's visit to Egypt – it became clear that the delivery of such weaponry was conditional upon Israel complying with American policy. Rather than confronting Nixon about this delay, Golda Meir reluctantly agreed with Washington's demands. Eventually on 31 July, a day after Israeli fighters shot down four Soviet planes near the Suez Canal, the government of Israel accepted a ceasefire and the application of UN Resolution 242.

## **A Negotiated Peace**

The following month Secretary of State William Rogers commenced with his plan to create a negotiated peace between Egypt and Israel. From the Egyptian side, the State Department was aware that Nasser had abandoned his plan for Pan-Arab unity; his concern was limited to Egyptian affairs. As long as the Israelis could be kept away from the Suez Canal and out of Sinai, he would not be interested in the reaction of either the Palestinians or other Arabs. Once plans for the Israeli withdrawal from Sinai had been proposed, Rogers put forward a further plan for the withdrawal from the West Bank. These two sets of proposals were not equally important. Rogers was aware that the Israeli government would not hand over Judaea and Samaria. Yet the West Bank was

of little consequence compared to the Suez Canal and Sinai – what was critical was that Israel comply with these more important plans for withdrawal.

On 4 August 1970 Menachem Begin and his five colleagues resigned in protest against Golda Meir's acceptance of Security Council Resolution 242. In his resignation speech, Begin invoked the memories of Auschwitz and Masada. In his view, relinquishing any territory was a breach of security. As far as the ceasefire was concerned, the PLO viewed this development as treason to the Palestinian and Arab cause. Furious with such a reaction, Nasser closed down the Fatah radio station in Cairo. During this period – known as Black September – the PLO sought to overthrow King Hussein of Jordan. Assured that he had Nasser's approval, Hussein then moved against Fatah and the rest of the PLO: 2000 PLO fighters and several thousand more Palestinians were killed. In reaction, the Syrian armed forces invaded Jordan.

On 20 September 1970 at a meeting in Washington, Kissinger discussed with Rabin arrangements for a possible intervention in Jordan, and Israeli forces massed along the line of the Jordan river. Due to Hussein's resistance to the Syrian invasion as well as the threat from Israel, the Syrian forces retreated. As a result, the United States was anxious to strengthen Israel: there was no point in holding weapons or finance in abeyance. Despite these developments, the Arabs persisted in their unwillingness to negotiate with Israel. However, in February 1971 there was a significant change in policy.

On 4 February Nasser's successor, Anwar Sadat, addressed the Egyptian Parliament, stating that if Israel were to withdraw her forces in Sinai, he would be willing to reopen the Suez Canal, have his forces cross to the East Bank, approve a ceasefire, restore diplomatic relations with the United States, and sign a peace agreement with Israel. After this historic initiative, Gunnar Jarring, the special representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, continued his efforts to achieve a negotiated settlement.

In a draft response to the Sadat initiative, Abba Eban formulated several principles:

1. Israel welcomes Egypt's readiness to conclude a peace agreement.
2. It proposes to discuss with Egypt all points contained in her reply to Ambassador Jarring, as well as all topics mentioned in Israel's memorandum 'Essentials of Peace' and any additional questions mutually agreed upon.
3. In these negotiations, to be held on the level of Foreign Ministers and under the auspices of Dr Jarring, both sides will present their detailed positions on the territorial, demographic, military and other outstanding issues.

The memorandum 'Essentials of Peace' was an Israeli Foreign Office document communicated to Jarring on his visit to Israel on 8 January 1971 which endorsed the withdrawal as well as all the other provisions of Resolution 242. Yet, on the day after Jarring's departure from Israel, Prime Minister Golda Meir took over all aspects connected with the Jarring mission. Although the government was unable to withdraw the 'Essentials of Peace' memorandum since this had been communicated to Jarring and through him to Sadat, the government could add to the Eban draft. In an amendment, it stated that Israel would not withdraw to the pre-June 1967 lines. What this meant in effect was that if Sadat were prepared to negotiate a peace treaty with Israel, this would leave Israel in possession of Egyptian territory.

On 18 July 1972 Sadat expelled from Egypt most of the Soviet military advisors. In Israel this action was viewed as causing irreparable harm to Egypt's military strength. Only one military advisor, Gideon Raphael, expressed the fear that by expelling Soviet forces Sadat might be planning to attack Israel:

### ***Raphael's Communiqué***

Israel should be alert to the possibility that in due time Egypt might renew the hostilities with limited extension. It would act under the assumption that the United States would restrain Israel from using its full strength in a lengthy campaign to defeat Egypt decisively. Sadat possibly supposed that after a short and violent conflagration, where he had proved his readiness to fight, the United States would put its full weight behind a political solution. (Raphael, *Destination Peace*, p. 277)

Although Sadat had expelled the Soviet advisors, he had not withdrawn permission for the Soviet use of Egyptian air and naval facilities. In addition, the flow of Soviet aid to Egypt continued. In April 1973, Moshe Dayan declared that the Suez Canal was a frontier of the State of Israel. For Sadat, this meant that Egypt would either have to accept the permanent loss of Egyptian territory occupied by Egypt, or he could challenge Israel. In declaring war against Israel, it appears that Sadat may have been encouraged by the United States in this conflict. In the early months of 1973 Sadat began to receive a number of messages through Kamal Adhem, the head of Saudi intelligence, to the effect that the United States would not oppose heating up the situation in the Middle East. Regardless what may have been the intention of the United States, Sadat believed that only by going to war could he induce the American government to pressurize Israel to return Egyptian territories.

## The Yom Kippur War

At 2pm on the afternoon of Yom Kippur, 6 October 1973, the Egyptians and Syrians launched an attack on Israel. The Egyptian offence commenced with an air attack; this was accompanied by an artillery barrage against the Bar-Lev line on the west bank of the Canal. This was followed by a wave of 8000 Egyptian assault infantrymen who crossed the Canal, followed by further waves. As a result the Bar-Lev line was overrun. The following day an evacuation was ordered at 11am. The impact of the Egyptian crossing along the 110 miles of the Suez Canal fell upon a total of 436 Israeli soldiers in a series of fortifications seven to eight miles apart.

### *Chaim Herzog's Description of the Attack on 6 October*

2,000 guns opened up along the entire front: field artillery, medium and heavy artillery and medium and heavy mortars. In the first minute of the attack, 10,500 shells fell on Israeli positions at the rate of 175 shells per second. A brigade of FROG surface-to-surface missiles launched its weapons, and tanks moved up to the ramps prepared on the sand ramparts, depressed their guns and fired point-blank at the Israeli strongholds. Over 3,000 tons of concentrated destruction were launched against a handful of Israeli fortifications in a barrage that turned the entire east bank of the Suez into an inferno for 53 minutes. (Herzog, *The Arab-Israeli Wars*, p. 241)

On the northern front, two Israeli brigades came under attack from more than three Syrian divisions: 1100 Syrian tanks against 157 Israeli tanks. After twenty-two hours of fighting 90 per cent of the officers of the Israeli brigades were killed or wounded. After only 24 hours after the beginning of the war, Syrian forces were within ten minutes of the River Jordan and the Sea of Galilee. On the southern front, by midday on 7 October, the Egyptian Divisions had crossed the Canal.

On the following day, 8 October, Israel unsuccessfully launched a counter attack on the Egyptian bridgehead on the west bank of the Canal. Within three days Israel had lost fifty aircraft and hundreds of tanks. During the following five days – from 9 October to 14 October – Israel was in turmoil. On 9 October, Golda Meir prevented Moshe Dayan from broadcasting to the country, fearing the effect that this might have on the morale of the troops. Three days later the Israeli government notified its Foreign Minister in New York that it would be willing to accept a ceasefire involving the reconquest by Egypt of territory about whose future Israel had previously been unwilling to negotiate.

On 10 October the Israeli General Staff had decided to focus its offensive on the northern front. By this stage the Syrians had been driven out of all the territories which they had reconquered in the opening days of the war. On 11 October, Israeli forces advanced into Syria, appearing to threaten Damascus. Such a step alarmed the Soviet Union which began an airlift of armaments to Cairo and Damascus. Such action persuaded the Nixon administration to respond with an airlift to Israel. The threat to Damascus prompted Egypt to send forces from their positions on the Canal to aid their Syrian allies. Despite the view of the Egyptian Chief of Staff, General Saad el-Din Shazli, who was opposed to this plan, Sadat gave the order under pressure from both Syria and the Soviet Union.

On 14 October the Egyptian forces began their offensive into Sinai. This resulted in a ferocious tank battle with about 2000 tanks in conflict. By the evening Israel had achieved victory. Two hundred and sixty-four Egyptian tanks had been knocked out, and the Egyptian forces fell back to the Canal. This was followed by an Israeli offensive. On the day after the battle, Israeli forces began to cross the Canal under the command of Ariel Sharon. Two days later the Israelis had crossed the Canal in force, destroying Egyptian missile bases and threatening to cut off the Egyptian Third Army.

During this period the Gulf States announced a 70 per cent increase in the cost of crude oil. On 17 October the ten oil-producing Arab states, who had been meeting in Kuwait, announced a decision to reduce the production of petroleum by at least 5 per cent progressively each month until there was an Israeli withdrawal from territories occupied in the 1967 war and the legal rights of the Palestinians were restored. This was followed by an embargo on oil sales to the United States and the Netherlands.

On 20 October, Henry Kissinger was in Moscow to discuss the terms of a ceasefire. During a meeting of only four hours, he and the Soviets reached an agreement which was endorsed on 22 October by Security Council Resolution 338. It was agreed that a ceasefire was to be in place within twelve hours of the implementation of Resolution 242, and that negotiations begin between the parties concerned under appropriate auspices aimed at establishing a just and durable peace in the Middle East.

At the time the Security Council was agreeing to Resolution 338, Kissinger was in Tel Aviv, on his way home after the meeting in Moscow. Reluctantly Golda Meir and her colleagues agreed to the resolution and the ceasefire. On his return to Washington on 23 October, Kissinger was informed by the Soviets that Israel had violated the ceasefire. The Egyptian Third Army had



been surrounded and Israel threatened either to attack, or starve it out. The Soviets made it clear that they would not accept the situation; in a letter to President Nixon, Brezhnev stated that the Soviet Union would take action. As a consequence, the American forces were placed on high alert.

To avoid such a conflict, Kissinger pressurized the Israelis. The Israeli government perceived that if its forces continued with their offensive, the country could either be destroyed by one superpower, or abandoned by the other. Thus, on 25 October, the ceasefire came into effect. The possible destruction of the Egyptian Third Army would have been a major victory for Israel, but with the intervention of the Soviet Union and the United States, this had proved impossible. For Israel, the Yom Kippur War had been a traumatic ordeal. The Arab states had proved themselves to be a formidable force. Israel was faced with an uncertain future.

### Aftermath of War

Following the Yom Kippur War, Israel had become increasingly isolated. On the whole Israelis blamed Golda Meir for their country's unpreparedness for the conflict. For nearly two years after the war, the primary figure in Middle East diplomacy was Henry Kissinger whose main aim was to remove the Soviet Union from the region. On 21 December 1973, the Geneva Peace Conference took place. The participants were the United States, the Soviet Union, Egypt, Israel and Jordan. At the conference it was concluded that joint committees be established to formulate disengagement.

On 31 December 1973 Israel's General Election took place. The Labour government lost five seats mostly to Likud, giving it a mandate to form the government. In his memoirs Rabin commented that the Israeli public had been merciful in its treatment of his party. Despite Labour's victory, the government that was eventually formed on 10 March 1974 had a short life. On 1 April the Agranat Commission which had been established to examine Israel's readiness on the eve of the Yom Kippur War published its report. Only forty pages long, it recommended the dismissal of the head of Army Intelligence, the removal of the Commander of the Southern Front as well as the dismissal of the Chief of Staff, David Elazar. It concluded that Elazar had not made his own Intelligence evaluations, that he had failed to prepare a defence plan, and was overconfident of the ability of the Israeli forces to push back the enemy with only regular forces. Since the Commission was not concerned about political responsibility for Israel's failures, it did not censure Golda Meir or Moshe Dayan. But because of the harsh criticism of the military

leadership, Golda Meir resigned on 11 April and was succeeded by Yitzhak Rabin. Moshe Dayan also resigned as Minister of Defence and was replaced by Shimon Peres.

Having abandoned their claim for an immediate Israeli withdrawal from more than half of Sinai, the Egyptians on 18 January 1974 agreed to an Israeli withdrawal from across the Canal to positions five kilometres inside Sinai. The eastern bank of the Canal which had been under Israeli control since 1967 was transferred back to Egypt. There was, however, no disengagement agreement about the Golan Heights. On 2 February the Syrians shelled Israeli military positions and civilian settlements on the Heights. This was followed by Israeli counter-barrages. The next day the Syrian Foreign Minister announced that Syria was carrying out a war of attrition.

Because Israel had not withdrawn from the Golan, the Syrians refused to enter into negotiations. On 31 March Washington announced that there was a foreign legion serving in Syria consisting of troops from Kuwait, Morocco, Saudi Arabia and North Korea and Cuba. During this period three Palestinian terrorists from a faction of the PLO seized a school in northern Israel and killed twenty-two pupils. On 25 October 1974 an Arab summit took place in Rabat in Morocco which recognized the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people. In response to Palestinian extremism, Israel was determined to continue its settlement activity on the West Bank. In addition, it encouraged the opposition parties on the right in their determination to come into power.

On 22 November 1974 the United Nations General Assembly voted to accept the Palestinian Liberation Organization as an observer. It was to be the representative of the Palestinian Arabs. By a substantial majority the United Nations decreed that these Palestinians had the right to national independence and sovereignty and should be allowed to return to their homes and property. With a gun in his belt, Yasser Arafat declared to the General Assembly that Zionists would get out of Palestine under the blow of the people's struggle. In Israel Arafat's acceptance as an international figure caused deep concern. Article 22 of the Palestine National Covenant described Zionism as a racist and fanatical movement in its formation; aggressive, expansionist and colonialist in its aims; and Fascist and Nazi in its means.

Over the next year the PLO sought to have Zionism officially condemned. On 10 November 1975 the United Nations General Assembly was asked to condemn Zionism as racism. Thirty-five countries protested including Britain, France, West Germany, the United States and Canada. However,

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seventy-five states voted in favour, including seventeen Arab states, thirteen Communist states, twenty-two African states and twenty others. During the debate the United States representative condemned the resolution, arguing that it was a modern manifestation of hatred against the Jews:

### ***The American Response to the UN Resolution***

The United States will not abide by, it will not acquiesce in, this infamous act. A great evil has been loosed on the world. The abomination of anti-Semitism has been given the appearance of international sanction. (Gilbert, *Israel*, p. 467)

# The Arab Uprising

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Following the war, the United States attempted to achieve a separate peace between Israel and Egypt. As a consequence, the PLO was excluded from a comprehensive peace agreement. During this period Israel suffered severe economic difficulties. In the election of 17 May 1977 Menachem Begin and the Likud bloc were elected to power, breaking Labour's hold on the Jewish state. Adopting a right-wing policy, Begin argued that Israel had the right to control Judaea and Samaria (the West Bank). In his view, though Resolution 242 obliged Israel to withdraw from occupied territories, the resolution did not specify that this should be done on all fronts. Hence any Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai would fulfil this requirement. Undeterred, Sadat declared that he was prepared to go anywhere in search of peace. Following this initiative, Begin invited Sadat to visit Israel. On 19 November Sadat arrived in the Jewish state and spoke to the Knesset the next day. Determined that Israeli forces leave all occupied territories as well as grant Palestinians the right of self-determination, Sadat urged the Israeli government to comply with these requests so that peace could be established in the Middle East. Although Israelis were anxious to establish a peace treaty with Egypt, there was considerable disagreement between Begin and Sadat. Throughout 1978 the United States sought to negotiate a settlement: eventually a summit took place at Camp David, and eventually Sadat accepted a general outline for the West Bank and Gaza autonomy in exchange for the return of Sinai.

## The Post-War Period

The final peace agreement between Israel and Egypt (known as Second Sinai), which embodied the withdrawal provisions, was signed in Geneva on 4 September 1975. In Geneva, Israel received a secret memorandum giving assurances in relation to the United States and the PLO. Despite its confidentiality, the document was leaked to the press. It stated that the United States would continue to adhere to its present policy with respect to the PLO as long as it did not recognize Israel's right to exist and refused to accept Security Council Resolution 242. In effect, the American objective was to achieve a separate peace between Israel and Egypt, leaving Syria and Jordan as well as the PLO out of the peace process.

Not surprisingly the PLO leadership was deeply discouraged by Second Sinai. Previously they had been encouraged by their Western sympathizers to believe that they would be included in a comprehensive agreement and attain a foothold in Palestine. Incensed by this outcome, the PLO sought to join with various Muslim and Druze factions to overthrow the Christian Maronites in Lebanon. As the Lebanese civil war developed with PLO support in early 1976, Israel and Syria both contemplated intervention. In the first few months of 1976 the United States warned both countries against taking action. Yet, as the conflict deepened, it became evident that conflict was inevitable.

From the American side, an Israeli intervention in Lebanon was undesirable. Such an incursion would hinder the peace-making process. However, Syrian intervention appeared as an internal Arab matter of little interest to the West. Hence, in May 1976 the United States indicated its approval of Syrian plans. After clashing with PLO forces, the Syrians eventually brought them under control. Throughout the Arab world, President Assad of Syria was denounced for his dealings with the Palestinians. However, at a mini-summit at Riyadh in October 1976 including Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Syria, recent events in Lebanon were put aside. The various parties agreed on a PLO- Palestinian State in the West Bank and Gaza. This was later ratified by a general Arab Summit in Cairo. In November 1976, Assad moved his Force Arabe de Dissuasion into Beirut and took over the government of Lebanon. Due to his increased importance in Arab affairs, Assad was beginning to overshadow Sadat who was viewed as having been compromised by the Second Sinai agreement. By the end of the year, he was regarded as the principal champion of both the Arab cause and the Palestinian quest for a homeland.

On 21 December 1976 the government of Rabin and Peres resigned. Rabin was proud of his government's achievements in building up the Israel Defence

Forces and obtaining American military aid. Although Israel had given up some occupied territory, it had freedom of navigation in the Straits of Tiran and the Red Sea. No concessions had been made in the West Bank or Gaza. The PLO had been provoked into trying to take over Lebanon and had been humiliated by Syria. The government's reputation had also been enhanced by the rescue of Israeli captives hijacked by the PLO at Entebbe, Uganda in July 1976.

Yet, despite these achievements, Israel had suffered an enormous inflation rate and a series of strikes. In addition, there were a number of charges of corruption in the Labour party and the government itself. On 3 January, Avraham Ofer, the Housing Minister, committed suicide; he had been under investigation for alleged abuses. At the same time, there were serious divisions within the Labour party: Peres mounted a challenge for the leadership and a contest was scheduled before the General Election. In the event, Rabin won by a small margin. On 22 February, Asher Yadlin, governor of the Bank of Israel, was sentenced in Tel Aviv to a five-year term for taking bribes and evading taxes.

Prior to the election, Rabin went to Washington to converse with President Carter. During several meetings Carter indicated that he wished to reassess the situation in the Middle East. On 8 March, the President made it known that he expected Israel to withdraw to its 1967 borders with only minor adjustments. Ten days later Carter publically stated that the Palestinians needed a homeland. On the same day as the third talk with President Carter, Rabin's wife Leah deposited money in a joint account which the Rabins had in Washington in breach of Israeli law. On 15 March 1977 the Washington correspondent of an Israeli newspaper published news of the existence of the Rabin account.

Rabin defended his wife's action by pointing out that the small amount of money (\$2,000) in the account represented the balance of his savings from the period when he had lived in Washington. When, however, the Attorney General demanded to see Rabin's bank statements, it turned out that Rabin had in fact had two bank accounts in Washington, one of which had about \$23,000. On 7 April, just a month before the elections, Rabin announced his resignation from the premiership and the chairmanship of the party. Yet, according to Israeli law, this was not permitted: he was compelled to remain as Prime Minister.

In such conditions, Labour could not expect to win. On 17 May 1977 the General Election took place: Likud, with forty-three seats, became the largest party in the Knesset. Labour dropped to thirty-two. In June, Menachem Begin

formed his Cabinet, with Ezer Weizman as Minister of Defence, and Moshe Dayan, who had defected from the Labour Alignment, as Minister for Foreign Affairs. When he presented his Cabinet to the Knesset on 20 June, Begin stressed that he would not ask any nation to recognize Israel's right to exist:

### ***Begin's Victory Speech***

We were granted our right to exist by the God of our fathers at the glimmer of the dawn of human civilization nearly four thousand years ago... Therefore I re-emphasize that we do not expect anyone to request, on our behalf, that our right to exist in the land of our fathers is recognized. It is a different recognition which is required between ourselves and our neighbours: recognition of sovereignty and of the common need for a life of peace and understanding. (Silver, *Begin*, p. 167)

## Steps to Peace

During President Carter's first year in office, one of its main goals was to prepare the way for a comprehensive peace settlement in the Middle East. In advancing this goal, Carter's advisers consisted of Cyrus Vance, Secretary of State, and Zbigniew Brzezinski, National Security Advisor. Critical of Kissinger's step-by-step policy of negotiation, the Carter administration sought to resolve the major problems facing countries in the region. In February 1977 Vance toured the Middle East; shortly afterwards a number of Middle Eastern leaders travelled to Washington. On 9 May at a meeting with Assad in Geneva, Carter told the press that there must be a resolution of the Palestinian problem and a homeland for the Palestinians. During the summer Carter was indirectly in touch with the PLO. Throughout this period his objective was to obtain PLO acceptance of Security Council Resolution 242 and of Israel's right to exist within its 1967 borders.

Despite such an initiative, the PLO refused to speak directly to President Carter. During this period Assad was in a strong position. Given his control of a large section of the PLO armed forces, he had an important influence over the PLO as a whole. In his view, Palestine was southern Syria, a part of Greater Syria as a rival to Egypt. For the PLO, however, Syria's political ambitions did not provide a role for the PLO as an independent entity. Any serious negotiation would have to be with Syria on behalf of the Palestinian people.

During the summer of 1977 American negotiators continued with their activities. Carter was convinced by President Sadat of Egypt's desire for peace. In addition, he found Assad flexible and Fahd, the Saudi Crown Prince, helpful.

After meeting with the key Arab leaders, Carter was convinced that they were prepared to find a solution to the long-standing disputes. Menachem Begin, on the other hand, was perceived as an obstacle. Prior to his election as Prime Minister, Begin appeared on a television programme expressing an adamant position on a range of issues. After watching a replay of this interview, Carter recognized that it would require considerable pressure from the United States to induce Begin to participate in a comprehensive settlement which would involve the PLO.

Aware of the difficulties ahead, Begin was adamant about key issues including Judaea, Samaria and Jerusalem. But he realized that there must be a degree of flexibility about other matters. He was prepared to trade territory for peace. At a conference of his own Herut Party, the core party of the Likud coalition before the election, he stressed that the government would undertake peace initiatives. The international border would run across the Sinai and the Golan Heights. Resolution 242 would be accepted subject to restrictive interpretation of the term 'territories'.

During Begin's first visit to Washington as Prime Minister, he praised Carter, comparing him to Jabotinsky. Yet, on his return to Israel, Begin proclaimed the permanence of Jewish settlements in the West Bank. Anxious to move forward, Carter sought to reconvene the Geneva Conference as a means towards moderating Israel's stance. On 12 September, the US State Department issued a public statement pointing out that the status of the Palestinians must be settled in a comprehensive Arab-Israeli agreement. All parties in the conflict, it went on, should be involved in the Geneva Conference including the Palestinians:

### ***United States' View of the Palestinians***

The status of the Palestinians must be settled in a comprehensive Arab-Israeli agreement. This issue cannot be ignored if the others are to be solved. Moreover, to be lasting, a peace agreement must be positively supported by all of the parties to the conflict, including the Palestinians. This means that the Palestinians must be involved in the peace-making process. (Legum (ed.), *Middle East Contemporary Survey*, vol. I, in O'Brien, *The Seige*, pp. 269–570)

A week later Dayan arrived in Washington to prepare for Israel's participation. During this period the State Department had prepared a joint statement to be issued by the United States and the Soviet Union indicating that a comprehensive agreement was now needed including all parties to the Middle East conflict. The Joint Statement stressed that the legitimate rights of the Palestinian



people should be ensured through negotiations within the framework of the Geneva Peace Conference. When Dayan was shown the statement just before it was due to be issued, he did not react. The document was then sent to President Carter and published on 1 October. Immediately, however, it was attacked by those Americans who objected to Soviet involvement in Middle East affairs. To stem the reaction of the pro-Israel lobby, a Working Paper for Geneva was formulated by Carter, Vance and Dayan; it was agreed that Israel's objection to PLO participation in the Conference would be upheld.

From the Arab side, the Joint Statement was viewed with disappointment. In a letter to President Carter, Sadat urged that nothing be done to prevent Israel and Egypt from negotiating directly. In Sadat's view, Soviet involvement in Middle East affairs would enhance the prestige of Assad. Similarly, the stress on PLO participation would have the same effect because of Syria's involvement in Lebanon. It was clear by bringing in the PLO, the Americans would have to rely on Assad's goodwill. Seizing the initiative, on 9 November 1977 Sadat addressed the annual opening of the Egyptian Parliament. For the sake of peace, he declared, he was prepared to go to Israel to speak to the Knesset.

Initially, Begin treated such a suggestion with contempt. Sadat, he said, could go to the Geneva Conference and present his views there. However, on 14 November, Begin told a French delegation that he would extend on behalf of the Israel government an invitation to the President of Egypt to come to Jerusalem for talks regarding a permanent peace between Israel and Egypt. The next day an invitation was sent to Cairo through American diplomatic channels. Despite the reservations expressed by Dayan and Weizman, Begin was convinced of the historic significance of such a visit as a first step on the road to peace.

## Sadat in Israel

Prior to his journey to Israel, Sadat went to Syria to consult with Assad. Incensed by Sadat's initiative, Assad, the PLO and a number of Arab leaders claimed that Sadat's trip to Jerusalem would undermine a comprehensive solution to the Middle East conflict. Despite such objections, Sadat arrived at Ben Gurion airport on 19 November. Crowds surrounded the airport, and the nation watched this event on television. The next morning Sadat prayed at the al-Aqsa mosque, and later visited the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and Yad Vashem. In the afternoon he addressed the Knesset, stressing the importance of peace:

### ***Sadat in Jerusalem***

It is fated that my trip to you, the trip of peace, should coincide with the Islam feast, the holy feast of Al-Adha, the feast of sacrifice, when Abraham, peace be unto him, the great-grandfather of the Arabs and Jews, submitted to God. I say when God Almighty ordered him, Abraham went, with dedicated sentiments, not out of weakness but through a giant spiritual force and a free will to sacrifice his very own son, prompted by a firm and unshakeable belief in ideals that lend life a profound significance. (Legum (ed.), *Middle East Contemporary Survey*, vol. 2, pp. 134–42)

Sadat went on to point out that he had not come to Jerusalem to pursue a separate agreement between Egypt and Israel. What he hoped to achieve, instead, was a peaceful agreement which would end the Israeli occupation of the Arab territories occupied in 1967. His aim was to ensure the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people and their right to self-determination including their right to establish their own state. The Palestinian problem, he stressed, was the crux of the entire conflict. What was critical was a comprehensive solution to the Middle East conflict. In reply Begin emphasized that both he and other Israelis were pleased by Sadat's presence in the Holy Land. The flight time between Cairo and Jerusalem is short, he said, but the distance between Cairo and Jerusalem was previously endless.

On 26 November 1977 Sadat announced that the next step on the road to peace would be a preparatory conference in Geneva. In Washington Zbigniew Brzezinski introduced the theory of concentric circles of the peace process building on the Egyptian-Israeli accord, and then expanding outward including the Palestinians on the West Bank and Gaza and then moving on to a wider circle involving the Syrians and others. The PLO and Syria, however, denounced the US-supported peace process between Egypt and Israel. As a consequence Assad, who had previously been a central figure in the peace process, became isolated. He formed a Front of Steadfastness and Opposition to Egypt. At a meeting in Tripoli, only Algeria and Yemen participated along with Syria and the PLO as well as their host Colonel Qaddafi. The Saudis and Kuwaitis and Jordanians did not attend. Iraq was involved initially but walked out. Incensed, the Front denounced Sadat's betrayal of Arab interests and decided to freeze political and diplomatic relations with Egypt. In response Sadat broke off all relations with the participants plus Iraq. In addition, he declared that the PLO's participation in the Front annulled its right to represent the Palestinian people.

From 14–22 December 1977 a pre-Geneva conference took place in Cairo; Sadat invited the United States, the Soviet Union, Israel, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan,

the United Nations and the PLO. Only Israel, the United States and a representative of the United Nations attended. A week later Sadat and Begin met at Ismailia and agreed to set up military and political committees. Although no joint communiqué was formulated, in his concluding statement Sadat made it clear that the position of Egypt was that a Palestinian State should be established. Israel's position was that Palestinian Arabs in Judaea and Samaria (the West Bank and Jordan) and the Gaza Strip should enjoy self-rule.

Israel's view of Sadat's approach was explained by Ezer Weizman, Minister for Defence, to the Likud members of the Knesset. In his opinion, the Egyptians were proposing a separate agreement with Israel if a formula could be found which would delay the question of a comprehensive settlement. Begin proposed a plan for autonomy of the Palestinian Arabs of Judaea, Samaria and Gaza. Security and public order were to continue to be the responsibility of Israel; however administrative autonomy and the selection of an administrative council were to be granted to the Palestinians. Residents would be free to choose either Israeli or Jordanian citizenship, and Israelis would be free to acquire land and settle in Judea and Samaria. Regarding sovereignty, Israel would claim sovereignty to Judaea, Samaria and Gaza; yet it was recognized that other claims exist and the issue should be left open. Concerning Sinai, there would eventually be complete withdrawal. In the Knesset Rabin criticized the Begin plan for providing too many concessions. Such a scheme, he stressed, would bring Israel back to the borders it had before the 1967 war. The Knesset, however, approved the scheme.

On 4 January Carter and Sadat met in Aswan. In a communiqué (the Aswan Declaration) they agreed to recognize the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and enable them to participate in the determination of their future. On 17 January 1978 the Political Committee established by the Ismailia Summit met in Jerusalem, but a day later Sadat withdrew his representatives. For Egypt, Israel's withdrawal from Sinai was crucial, yet it appeared that Israel was not prepared to make such an agreement. On 3 January, Israel secretly decided to bolster its settlements in Sinai and to create a further six settlements in eastern Sinai. When news of this plan was disclosed, Israel dropped the idea of six new settlements but continued with its intention of strengthening the existing settlements. Begin had initially promised that when an agreement was finally reached, there would be a complete Israeli withdrawal from Sinai. The existence of Israeli settlements in Sinai, however, indicated that this would not be so.

## Obstacles to Peace

In Washington, Israel's intransigence over Sinai was deeply troubling. Editorials criticizing Begin's attitude appeared in the press. During this period the Peace Now movement emerged in Israel, protesting against the government's policies. In February 1978 Sadat visited the United States where he was greeted as a hero. Relations between Israel and the United States became even worse as a result of Israel's response to a fedayeen raid on 11 March. A party of Fatah fedayeen arrived by boat from Lebnaan, hijacked two buses on the Haifa-Tel Aviv road and murdered thirty-seven people including passengers and other civilians and wounded eighty-two others. In retaliation, Israel launched an offensive (Operation Litani) in southern Lebanon.

Alarmed by these developments, the United States pressed for Security Council Resolution 425 which called upon Israel to cease its military action against Lebanese territorial integrity and withdraw its forces. The resolution also called for the creation of a United Nations force in southern Lebanon. In Israel, the American intervention was bitterly resented, particularly since it ignored the fact that Israel had been provoked by the fedayeen attack. Nonetheless, by June Israel had withdrawn its forces from the area. When Begin went to Washington a few days after Resolution 425 for talks with Carter, the meeting was described as difficult.

From 26–28 April talks took place between Moshe Dayan and Cyrus Vance, US Secretary of State. At their meetings Dayan proposed that the parties should agree on a framework for bringing about autonomy for the Arab inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza. The Begin plan, he suggested, should provide a basis for discussion. Such a framework was designed to provide a formula that would enable Israel to postpone the question of a comprehensive settlement while concluding a separate agreement with Egypt. At the end of July President Carter sent Vance to the Middle East with invitations to Begin and Sadat to meet with him at Camp David. Both leaders agreed, and the United States became a full partner in the negotiations.

The Camp David talks began on 5 September and continued for two weeks. The discussion focused largely on the West Bank, Gaza and the Palestinians, yet the real area of negotiation concerned Sinai. Although relations between the Israelis and Egyptians were strained during the meetings, Camp David adopted two frameworks: a Framework for Peace concerned with the West Bank and Gaza, and a Framework for Peace Treaty between Egypt and Israel.

Egypt, Israel, Jordan and the Palestinians were to participate in negotiations about the future of the West Bank and Gaza, and a five-year period of transitional autonomy was planned. The Framework for a Peace Treaty provided for the full exercise of Egyptian sovereignty up to the internationally recognized border as well as for the Israeli right of free passage through the Straits of Tiran and the Suez Canal. The two Frameworks were accompanied by letters; one from Begin to Carter which promised that the question of the removal of the settlers from Sinai would be put before the Knesset, and a letter from Sadat to Carter declaring that if the settlers were not withdrawn from Sinai, there would be no peace treaty between Egypt and Israel. A further letter from Sadat to Carter reiterated the Arab position on Jerusalem. It was also understood that both Egypt and Israel were to receive American aid.

Once Begin returned to Israel, he was committed to the removal of the settlers and the conclusion of a peace treaty. It was his intention to put a proposal to the Knesset which would authorize the agreement reached at Camp David:

### ***The Camp David Proposal***

The Knesset approves the Camp David Accords that were signed by the Prime Minister at the White House on September 17 1978. If, in the negotiations between Egypt and Israel towards the signing of a peace treaty, agreement is reached ... [and] finds expression in a written document, the Knesset authorizes the Government ... to evacuate the Israeli settlers from Sinai and resettle them anew. (Dayan, *Breakthrough*, p. 192)

Once the Cabinet approved Begin's proposal, a heated discussion took place in the Knesset. Out of the 120 members of the Knesset, eighty-four voted in favour of the Government's actions, with nineteen against and seventeen abstentions.

Although the Camp David Accords were warmly welcomed in the United States, the reaction in the Arab world outside Egypt was hostile. At the ninth Arab Summit in Baghdad on 2-5 November which was attended by every Arab State except Egypt which was not invited, the Camp David Accords were condemned. The Framework for Peace which envisaged autonomy was bitterly denounced – this was not what was envisaged by a comprehensive solution to Middle East conflict. Yet, despite such antipathy from the Arab world, Sadat pressed ahead. The Treaty of Peace between Egypt and Israel was signed in the White House on 26 March 1979, and the process of withdrawal of Sinai began immediately.

From some time after the treaty was signed, the United States sought to widen the peace process by including the PLO. Previously Kissinger had given Israel a written commitment that there would be no recognition of the PLO by the United States until the PLO recognized Israel's right to exist and accepted Resolutions 242 and 338. Even though some PLO spokesmen appeared to accept Israel's right to exist, the Security Council Resolutions were firmly rejected because they failed to recognize the legitimate rights of the Palestinians. Yet, if the Resolutions could be amended to take account of the PLO's objections, then the conditions outlined by Kissinger would be met. Sadat, however, was opposed: he did not wish to endanger his agreements with Israel. Syria, too, had reservations, and the PLO itself called for a new resolution totally separate from Resolution 242. Although Britain was prepared to introduce an amending resolution, Carter pledged to veto any move to amend the resolution to provide for Palestinian participation in a comprehensive Middle East settlement.

## The Palestinians

Following the Camp David agreement, many Israelis hoped that peace could be established with the Arab world. Yet it soon became clear that the Arab nations had no desire to make concessions to the Jewish nation. When the Israeli Ambassador to Egypt sought to find a residence in Cairo, no one would lease him land for an embassy or house. In addition, as Ambassador he was shunned by the diplomatic community. Even though a considerable number of Israelis went on tours of Egypt, few Egyptians visited the Jewish state. Yet, though normal relations were not established between the two countries, Israelis no longer feared attack by the Egyptian army.

On the domestic front, Israel was beset with economic difficulties – every year the inflation rate rose by nearly one hundred per cent. As a consequence, class distinctions became greater, with Ashkenazi Jews becoming richer while Sephardi Jews from Mediterranean lands and elsewhere formed the poor sections of society. In an attempt to control inflation, the government repeatedly curtailed food subsidies. As opinion polls reported increased dissatisfaction with the Begin government, import tariffs were cut on numerous goods, which precipitated widespread spending. In addition, foreign currency reserves were used to restore the value of the shekel, and subsidies on food, housing and education were restored.

In June 1981, several weeks before the General Election, the Israeli air force attacked a nuclear reactor in Iraq. Although this action was condemned by the international community, Israelis were profoundly relieved that Iraq was rendered incapable of producing a nuclear bomb. In the ensuing election Likud was strongly supported, and Begin formed a new government with several ultra-Orthodox parties. Among those included in the cabinet was Ariel Sharon, the new Minister of Defence. Previously Sharon had served as Minister of Agriculture and Chairman of the Settlement Committee. Under his leadership, the number of Jewish settlers on the West Bank rose to 18,000. Despite this increase, Sharon was committed to increasing substantially the Jewish presence in the occupied territories. Beginning in 1981 the government launched an extensive building programme. Attracted by low-interest mortgages and tax incentives, Jews from Tel Aviv and Jerusalem moved to these settlements where houses could be bought for the same price as an apartment in the cities.

By 1982 Israel had withdrawn from Sinai despite repeated protests from Jews who had settled there. Despite Sadat's assassination by Egyptian fundamentalists in September 1981, the Egyptian borders were largely peaceful, as were the border areas with Syria and Jordan. In the north, however, Israel faced renewed difficulties. The PLO had established its headquarters in Beirut and southern Lebanon, from where it launched repeated attacks on northern Israel. In addition, PLO terrorists managed to penetrate Israeli borders and carry out attacks on innocent victims.

In retaliation, Israel struck at Palestinian refugee camps and other targets. Determined to defend the nation against its enemies in the north, Sharon devised a plan to drive the PLO out of Lebanon as well as to strengthen the Lebanese Christians who might be persuaded to expel both the PLO as well as Syrian troops who had been stationed in the country. In a meeting with Sharon in January 1982, the head of the Phalange (the Lebanese Christian forces), Bashir Gemayel, agreed to join Israel in taking action against the Palestinians.

On 6 June 1982 80,000 Israeli soldiers invaded Lebanon in an attempt to establish a twenty-five mile security zone. However, by the third day the Israeli army had penetrated twenty-five miles north with the aim of joining Phalangist forces in Beirut so as to cut the Beirut-Damascus highway. Troubled by this advance, Syria halted the Israeli incursion. But in the Beirut area Israeli troops were able to link up with the Phalangists. After a week's fighting, Israeli troops camped outside Beirut.

As a result of this battle, PLO forces returned to the western side of Beirut. Although Sharon was anxious to drive out these fighters, there was a reluctance to risk the lives of Israeli soldiers. Though it was agreed that Phalangists should undertake this operation, they refused to do so. When Begin insisted that the Palestinians withdraw, Arafat refused. The Israelis then launched an offensive that they hoped would persuade the PLO to leave. Owing to American intervention, the fighters withdrew by sea. Although this retreat appeared to be a defeat for the PLO, they departed as triumphant guerrillas.

Sharon, however, was determined that all PLO forces be expelled from Lebanon. In the face of Palestinian denials, he insisted that about 2000 men were hiding in refugee camps. Gemayel was determined to search the camps, but he was assassinated within the month. With the concurrence of the Israeli army, Phalangist troops moved into the Sabra and Shatila Palestinian camps in southern Beirut. According to witnesses, these soldiers made no attempt to distinguish between Palestinians and Lebanese or between men, women and children. More than three hundred refugees were massacred.



# The Road to Peace

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Following the incursion into Lebanon, the Israeli government was severely criticized. This led to new elections and a coalition was formed between Labour and Likud. Discontented with their situation, Palestinians in the occupied territories embarked on a campaign of resistance. Determined to suppress this uprising, the Israeli government instigated a range of restrictive measures. Outside Israel the Intifada gained widespread support, and on 11 December 1987 the UN Security Council passed a resolution condemning Israel. During this period Hamas rejected the legitimacy of the PLO and published its covenant. Within Israel itself, there was increasing support for the plight of the Palestinians. As the Intifada continued to gather strength, there was increasing turmoil within the country. Such conflict was interrupted in July 1991 when a coalition of Allied forces attacked the Iraqi army in Kuwait, leading to the defeat of Saddam Hussein. This was followed by a series of negotiations seeking to resolve the conflict between Israel and its neighbours.

## The Palestinian People

Within Israel, there was increased dissatisfaction with the state of affairs. A number of leading politicians, such as Abba Eban, voiced their criticism of government policy:

### ***Abba Eban's Criticism of Annexation***

Not a single country in the world community, including those most in favour of Israel, was prepared to support the idea that Israel's security required the imposition of permanent Israeli jurisdiction over a foreign nation. At least half the Israeli nation opposed the idea of the incorporation of the West Bank and Gaza into Israel. There does not exist on the surface of the inhabited globe a single State that resembles what Israel would look like if it were to incorporate the West Bank and Gaza coercively into Israel. A democratic country ruling a foreign nation against its will and against the will of the world would be unique reality. (Gilbert, *Israel*, p. 514)

When news of the incursion into Lebanon reached Israel, there was widespread criticism of the government. On 24 September a mass demonstration was held to protest against the war in Lebanon. Wearied by such criticism, Begin announced that he would resign as Prime Minister in August 1983. Following his election as Prime Minister, Yitzhak Shamir led Israel during a period of widespread discontent exacerbated by inflation, which rose at a rate of 400 per cent every year. Eventually the Labour Party was able to bring down the Likud government, and an election was called for 23 July 1984. Under its leader, Shimon Peres, Labour formed a coalition with Likud. It was agreed that Peres would serve as Prime Minister for two years while Shamir served as Foreign Minister; these offices would then be exchanged.

Under Labour, Israel was subjected to severe wage and price control; eventually inflation was cut to about twenty per cent. During this period the government also declared that a security zone be established in south Lebanon. Together with Christian militia, Israeli soldiers patrolled an area along Israel's northern border about twenty miles deep. In the occupied territories, however, Palestinians rebelled against Israeli rule. In December 1986 in Ramallah, a Palestinian youth struck an Israeli soldier on the head with an axe. The soldier was taken to hospital and the youth was imprisoned.

Similar incidents took place the following year. The young Palestinians involved were from the post-1967 generation who had suffered under Israeli rule in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. At the beginning of December 1987, after four Arab workers from the Gaza Strip were fatally run over by an Israeli truck, Israeli soldiers were attacked throughout the occupied territories. Attempts were made to block the entry of Israeli troops into Arab villages; strikes were declared; and pamphlets encouraging conflict with the authorities were circulated. At various points the Palestinian flag was raised, an illegal action under Israeli law.

Almost all the Palestinian population in the territories occupied by Israel took part in the resistance to occupation – men, women and children from all cities, towns and villages and the refugee camps housing nearly a quarter of a million refugees. Another quarter of a million refugees lived in the Gaza Strip. In the West Bank, there were over 350,000 refugees, of whom 100,000 were housed in camps. Outside the country there were about a quarter of a million Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, of whom about 150,000 lived in camps; another quarter of a million in Syria, with about 75,000 in camps; and over 800,000 in Jordan, with over 200,000 in camps.

To suppress this uprising, the Israelis deployed tear gas, rubber bullets, plastic bullets and in some cases live ammunition. Arabs were beaten, and some Israeli soldiers were arrested and punished. Attempting to control the Palestinian population became a major problem for the authorities. In the first two months over fifty Arabs were killed and hundreds wounded. In protest, one of the leading Arab members of the Knesset, Abdel Wahab Darawshe, left the Labour party and founded the Arab Democratic Party, which pressed for the creation of a Palestinian state in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem.

Outside Israel, the Intifada was widely supported, and on 11 December 1987 the Security Council passed a resolution condemning Israeli action in the occupied territories. Spurred by such criticism, the Arab states established a fund to support the Intifada. Determined to find a solution to the Palestinian problem, the United States Assistant Under-Secretary of State, Richard Murphy, embarked on a visit to the Middle East on 5 February 1988 with a plan for the region. According to Murphy's proposals, two delegations, one from Israel and another composed of Jordanians and Palestinians, would discuss the possibility of temporary autonomy for the Palestinians. This would be accompanied by Israeli redeployment and municipal elections for the Palestinian population. Later an international conference would be convened to discuss the outcome of these deliberations and within three years Palestinian autonomy would be established. On his departure, however, Hamas (the Movement of the Islamic Resistance) was founded, committed to Islamic rule for all of Palestine.

Operating as an independent body, Hamas instigated strikes, punished Palestinians who did not comply with its policies and created a network to help those in need. In August 1988 Hamas published its covenant, which rejected the legitimacy of the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people. In addition, it dismissed any compromise with the State of Israel. All

of Palestine, it stated, belonged to Muslims, and Hamas proclaimed a holy war against Israel as well as corrupt elements within Palestinian society. Another group, Islamic Jihad, from the Egyptian-based Muslim Brotherhood in the Gaza Strip, similarly supported military action against the Jewish state; in Jordan, the Sudan and southern Lebanon other splinter groups supported the Palestinian cause.

## The Uprising

In the election that took place on 1 November 1988, Likud retained the largest number of seats, with Labour second. However, in order to form a government, it was necessary to create a coalition. In an attempt to integrate the various factions within society, Likud formed a National Unity government. On 22 December 1988 Yitzhak Shamir became Prime Minister; Shimon Peres was appointed Minister of Finance; and Yitzhak Rabin became Defence Minister. The leader of the ultra-Orthodox Shas party, Arye Deri, was appointed Minister of the Interior. The political leader of Shas, Rabbi Yitzhak Peretz, became Minister of Immigrant Absorption. The leader of the National Religious Party, Zvulun Hammer, became Minister of Religious Affairs. Excluded from government, the left-wing parties combined into one party, Meretz.

Within Israel there was increasing sympathy for the plight of the Palestinians in the occupied territories. In 1988 a human rights organization, Etsalem, was created which criticized breaches of human rights by the Israeli forces. Another human rights organization, Hotline: Centre for the Defence of the Individual, was established to aid Palestinians who had been denied the right to leave the country. In April 1989 the Israeli police reported that they had uncovered a network of illegal classes held by two West Bank universities at private schools in East Jerusalem, all schools in the University and the West Bank and the Gaza Strip having been closed by military order as a collective punishment because of resistance to the occupation. These meetings were closed down. In protest, an expert on criminology, Professor Stanley Cohen of the Hebrew University, declared that such an action was an infringement of Jordanian law and a violation of the Geneva Convention and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. During this period other figures, such as the novelist Yitzhar Smilansky in an open letter to *Ha-Aretz*, lamented the defacement of Israel's humanistic ideals:

## *Yizhar Smilansky's Lament*

I am not blind to the fact that there are two sides to this painful situation, that it is not a question of evil oppressors persecuting the righteous oppresses. But neither am I blind to the fact that there is a way out of the quagmire ... that in the end there will be no choice but to talk, and to negotiate a solution that will bring peace. So why not do it now instead of later – after another death, and another and another? ... The Jew in me is crying out. (Howard M. Sacher, *A History of Israel from the Rise of Zionism to Our Time*, p. 966)

At this time the emigration of Soviet Jews had dramatically receded because of instability within Israel. Many Soviet Jews chose instead to live in the United States. On 1 October 1989 the United States adopted a new policy insisting that any Soviet Jew who sought to settle in the United States would no longer be able to use an Israel exit visa. Instead, the person would be compelled to apply to the United States Embassy. As a result, the Israeli government drafted plans to integrate hundreds of thousands of new settlers. Another, smaller immigration took place in the 1990s, the arrival of 4137 Ethiopian Jews.

As the Intifada intensified, Yitzhak Rabin recommended that elections should take place in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. On 14 May 1989 this scheme was presented by the National Unity government as one of several proposals: to strengthen peace between Egypt and Israel, to seek peace agreements with other Arab states, and to attempt to resolve the problem of Arab refugees in camps outside Israel. This peace initiative, however, was dependent on several conditions: Israel would negotiate only with Palestinians not connected with the PLO who resided in the occupied territories; there would be no change in the status of occupied territories; Israel would not agree to an additional Palestinian state in the Gaza district and in the area between Israel and Jordan.

Such conditions were not acceptable to the PLO and as a consequence the Intifada continued. On 20 May the leadership distributed a leaflet calling on Palestinians to kill a soldier or settler for every Palestinian killed in a conflict with Israeli troops. In addition, this document criticized the United States for supporting Israel's election proposal. The leaflet also encouraged attacks on Palestinian collaborators who were perceived as enemies of the Palestinian people.

During the year thirty-five Palestinians were killed, and one Israeli soldier. To stem such conflict, the Israeli government attempted to quell Israeli actions

in the occupied territories. In May a group of Israeli soldiers were criticized for desecrating the Qur'an. Orders were also given to prevent Jewish settlers from damaging Arab property. Nonetheless, in July students at a yeshiva near Nablus attacked local Arabs, killing a thirteen-year-old Palestinian girl.

In the following months, Palestinian schools were closed, since they were perceived as focal points of insurrection leading to conflict between Palestinian youth and Israeli troops. In the wake of such violence a number of Palestinian moderates were murdered. Anxious about such increasing violence, a number of Israelis and Palestinians established the Israeli-Palestine Centre for Research and Information in an attempt to discover a way forward. On 6 December, the United States Secretary of State, James Baker, acted as a facilitator in this crisis, issuing a five-point statement which proposed that Israel engage in talks with Palestinians who were acceptable.

As the Intifada continued, Jews were reluctant to walk in the Old City, particularly after Professor Menachem Stern was stabbed to death in West Jerusalem. At the beginning of July an Arab passenger on the 405 bus service outside Jerusalem forced the bus off the road, killing sixteen people. During the next three days, twenty-four Jews were arrested by Jerusalem police for hurling stones at Arab cars and trying to attack Arabs in the streets. In response Arabs threw petrol bombs at Jewish buses. On 28 July an Israeli unit crossed into southern Lebanon and abducted an important Hizballah cleric, Sheikh Abd al-Karim Obeid.

## The Renewal of Conflict

In the view of Yitzhak Rabin, the Intifada represented the will of small groups who sought to discover their national identity and insist on its recognition. Such an acknowledgement was officially given by the American Secretary of State at the beginning of March 1990. Seeking to find a solution to the Palestinian problem, he asked the government of Israel if they were ready to engage in negotiations with Palestinian representatives about the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The Israeli Foreign Minister, Moshe Arens, was anxious for such discussion to take place, but Prime Minister Shamir objected. Angered by such intransigence, the Labour Party withdrew its support from the National Unity government.

Shamir's government was then defeated on a vote of no confidence. The President then called on Peres to form a government. During this period

Arafat called on the Palestinians to renew violence against Jewish immigrants. Despite this, Peres sought to form a new coalition with the Sephardi religious party, Shas. When this attempt failed, he turned to other religious groups but in the end Likud was able to form a government with Shamir as Prime Minister.

Such internal turmoil was interrupted by international events that directly affected Israel. On 2 August 1990 the Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein decided to invade Kuwait. Joining with the United States, Israel demanded Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait. In response, Saddam agreed to an Iraqi withdrawal as long as Israel and Syria withdrew from southern Lebanon and Israel also departed from the occupied territories. At a summit in Helsinki on 8 September, President George Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev discussed this proposal. Although Gorbachev wished to accept it, the Americans disagreed. Several weeks later Iraq threatened to deploy missiles against Israel. In response, the Israel government distributed gas masks to the entire country, although they were not handed out to Palestinians living in the West Bank.

On 17 January 1991 a coalition of Allied forces attacked the Iraqi army in Kuwait. Israel was encouraged not to participate in this conflict. Although there was resistance among leading figures in the government, Israel complied despite Iraq's use of Scud missiles against the country. When Saddam was defeated, the population of Israel was greatly relieved. Nonetheless, the Intifada continued. Throughout 1991 attacks on Jews and Palestinian collaborators intensified. By September, 1225 Arabs had died of whom 697 had been killed by Israeli forces. The others were killed by fellow Arabs. In addition, thirteen Israeli soldiers had been killed by Arabs.

Israel was determined not to recognize the PLO. Hence, when Ezer Weizman met with Arafat in Vienna, he was sacked by Shamir. Yet, through James Baker's intervention, it was agreed that the Palestinians would be represented by persons from the occupied territories who would form a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. On 18 October 1991 invitations were sent for a conference which was to be held in Spain. At the end of the month the Madrid Conference was opened with President Bush and President Gorbachev as the main speakers. At the conference Israel was represented by Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, and the Arab states were represented by their foreign ministers.

In December 1991 another conference took place in Washington dealing with the procedures for future talks. Israel insisted it was not willing to discuss territorial concessions. Instead, it desired to focus on Palestinian autonomy.

The Palestinians, however, were not content with such a limitation. After these talks, Jews and Arabs met in a number of cities to explore various practical issues. The first of these talks took place in Moscow and focused on water sharing and economic importance, whereas in Vienna water sharing was of critical importance. In Brussels the main topic was economic co-operation.

Such collaborative ventures were interrupted by the Israeli election, in which Labour became the largest party, forming an alliance with the left-wing party Meretz and the Arab Democratic Party. Shas, too, joined the coalition. As Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin was committed to continuing the peace process as well as the absorption of Russian immigrants into the country. In his opening speech as Prime Minister, Rabin emphasized that the peace process would be reactivated and that Palestinians would be partners with Israelis in this quest.

Seeking to extend the agenda beyond the subjects discussed at Madrid and Washington, Rabin stated that the Israeli government would propose a continuation of the talks based on the framework of the Madrid Conference. Aware of Palestinian suffering during the previous decades, Rabin proposed a form of Palestinian self-government in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Anxious to win Palestinian support for this proposal, he refused to grant permission for the army to enter the Palestinian university campus at Nablus to search for six armed Palestinians who were allegedly attempting to influence student elections. In addition, he ordered a freeze on all new building of Jewish settlements in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip:

### ***Yitzhak Rabin and the Palestinians***

As a first step toward a permanent solution we shall discuss the institution of autonomy in Judaea, Samaria, and the Gaza District. We do not intend to lose precious time. The Government's first directive to the negotiating teams will be to set up the talks and hold ongoing discussions between the sides. Within a short time we shall renew the talks in order to diminish the flame of enmity between the Palestinians and the State of Israel. (Gilbert, *Israel*, p. 552)

## Arab-Israeli Negotiations

On 19 July, James Baker arrived in the Middle East to seek a solution to the conflict between Israel and its neighbours. Two days later Rabin went to Cairo



in order to renew negotiations for a peace settlement. The next month he travelled to the United States to meet President Bush. On 24 August, Israel cancelled deportation orders for eleven Palestinians. The same day talks between Israel and the Palestinians were resumed in Washington. Several days later Israel released 800 Palestinians who had been kept in detention. Simultaneously, Peres, acting as Foreign Minister, engaged in renewed negotiation. In September he met Prime Minister John Major in London, who agreed to end the arms embargo as well as the ban on British companies selling North Sea oil to Israel. In addition, Major agreed to intercede to end the boycott on British and European companies doing business with Israel.

Despite these steps, tension mounted in the West Bank and Jerusalem during November and December. These efforts to renew the peace process inflamed members of Hamas and Islamic Jihad who were bitterly opposed to compromise. With the encouragement of Iran, Hamas condemned the Israeli occupation while improving the educational, welfare and health care of the Palestinian population. During this period Israeli soldiers were occasionally trapped by gangs of Palestinian youths and fired on them with live ammunition. At the beginning of November in Khan Yunis, Israeli soldiers killed three Palestinians during a demonstration. Several days later in Beit Omar, Israeli troops killed a Palestinian youth who threw stones at the military. Two days later in Hebron another youth was shot dead. On 23 November in A-Ram a young Palestinian boy was killed during an attack. At the beginning of December in the Balata refugee camp, another youth was killed when a bomb he was handling exploded.

On 7 December 1992 three Israeli soldiers were killed in Gaza City; several days later Hamas kidnapped and killed an Israeli sergeant. Determined to suppress such violence, the government took action against Hamas and Islamic Jihad. On 17 December, 415 of their leaders who had been detained in prison or were at home were deported to Lebanon. When the Lebanese government refused to allow them to enter the country, these leaders created a tented encampment on the Lebanese side of the border. Eventually the United Nations Security Council demanded they be returned to Israel.

On 18 December, Israeli troops shot a Palestinian youth in the Askar refugee cap and another youth in the El-Arroub refugee camp near Hebron. The next day Israeli troops killed six Palestinians in Khan Yunis. Three days later another young boy was shot and killed. On 30 December, Israel admitted that some of the Hamas deportees should not have been expelled from the country. Acts of violence continued. On 15 January 1993 a Palestinian stabbed to death four people at the Tel Aviv Central Bus Station and at a café.

Despite such acts of violence, talks between Israel and the PLO began on 20 January. At a villa outside Oslo, representatives met for three days. At the meeting several of the PLO submitted proposals involving the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, a mini Marshall Plan for the West Bank and Gaza, and economic co-operation between Israel and the Palestinian authorities. In Israel seventeen deportees were allowed to return home; however, an Israeli offer to take back 101 deportees was rejected. As the Intifada resumed, Israeli troops killed an armed Palestinian in Gaza City. On 5 February 1993, Israeli troops killed a youth in the Nusseirat refugee camp in the Gaza Strip. In addition three other Palestinians in the Bureij refugee camp were shot. On 6 February, Israeli troops killed another youth when confronted by an Arab mob.

Such killings provoked debate within the country. According to the army, two-thirds of the deaths of Palestinians took place between August 1992 and January 1993 when the lives of Israeli soldiers were threatened. Because army regulations did not permit lethal shooting in such contexts, the troops were not complying with the regulations designed to control their conduct. Amid such controversy, Peres and Rabin continued to engage in negotiations with the Palestinians. On 9 February the Oslo talks reached a new stage. Meeting with Rabin, Peres argued that Israel should seek to induce Arafat to leave Tunis and return to the West Bank and Gaza. He then set out the advantages of the proposals that had been presented by the Arab delegates.

On 11 February the Oslo talks continued, and a draft declaration of principles was drawn up as well as a paper establishing guidelines for a regional Marshall Plan. Nonetheless, on 1 March two youth civilians were stabbed to death in Tel Aviv. On the next day Yehoshua Weissbrod was stoned and then shot in his car in the Gaza Strip. On 8 March a gardener was stabbed. On 12 March a young immigrant from Canada was shot. The next day a woman driver who took Palestinians from the Gaza Strip to their jobs was killed. Several days later two Israeli soldiers were shot dead.

Between 20 and 22 March secret meetings took place in Oslo in which it seemed that an accord between Israel and the PLO might emerge. This was followed by another meeting on 14 June in Oslo; two months later the Oslo Accords were approved by both the Israelis and the Palestinians. After the PLO had been required to renounce terrorism, a ceremony took place in Washington on 13 September 1993 with Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat as the main representatives. After the signing Rabin reluctantly shook hands with Yasser Arafat. In the following months Israel and the PLO engaged in active negotiations for an Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

## Towards Peace

Despite these steps towards peace, Hamas and Islamic Jihad pressed for a more radical solution to the Middle East problem. In an attempt to stem further violence, Rabin felt that an approach should be made to Syria for an agreement concerning the Golan Heights. Peres, however, believed that Jordan should be consulted first about its desire that all the land should be returned, that Israel should cease taking water from the River Jordan, and that Palestinian refugees should be allowed to return to their former homes.

The Oslo Accords served as the framework for the peace process and a basis for Israeli-Arab co-operation. The form of self-government authorized at Oslo and the withdrawal plans provided a basis for eventual Palestinian statehood. In Arafat's view, such self-governing institutions were vital to the future of Palestine as a nation state. However, just as in 1947, the Palestinian Arabs were being encouraged by more radical groups to oppose a two-state solution. Israeli extremists were also set to sabotage the Oslo Accords. In January 1994 Yehoshafat Harkabi, former head of the Israeli military intelligence, told researchers from Ben-Gurion University that the internal debate about Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank could have serious consequences. Even though he was a supporter of the peace process, he feared that extremists would resort to violence. On 25 February an Israeli gunman, Baruch Goldstein, opened fire on Palestinian Arabs inside the main mosque in Hebron, killing twenty-five people.

In response to the massacre at Hebron, Arafat broke off negotiations with Israel, yet after several weeks of pressure the talks were resumed. Discontented Palestinians, however, actively sought to undermine the peace process. On 6 April 1994 a member of Hamas blew himself up with a bomb in Afula, killing eight Israelis. According to Hamas, this was to be the first in a series of terrorist attacks in retaliation for the murders at Hebron. A week later another member of Hamas detonated a bomb, killing himself and six other people in a bus in Hadera.

Determined to continue with negotiations, Rabin warned that such acts of terrorism would not deter the Israeli government from seeking an agreement with the PLO. On 3 May, Rabin and Arafat met in Cairo to finalize a peace agreement. Just after midnight Arafat added a number of territorial alterations to the maps that had previously been agreed upon. Once Rabin had accepted these changes, a signing ceremony took place on 4 May. Under the Cairo agreement, a Palestinian authority headed by Arafat was given legislative,

executive and judicial powers as well as responsibility for security, education, health and welfare. Israel would retain control of foreign affairs and defence.

Several days later Arafat flew to Johannesburg, where he declared that the Palestinians would not give up their jihad until Jerusalem was liberated. Jihad, he explained, did not mean holy war, but rather a sacred campaign. On 13 May, Israeli troops as well as administrators left Jericho. Four days later they withdrew from the Gaza Strip. The Palestinian flag was raised over Jericho and Gaza City. During this period, a United Nations force took up positions between the Jewish and Arab sections of Hebron. Once Gaza and Jericho were transferred to the Palestinian Authority, Rabin and Peres engaged in discussion with Jordan. On 24 July, Rabin and King Hussein signed a peace declaration in Washington.

Despite these advances, four Hamas kidnappers seized an Israeli soldier in October, determined to murder him unless 200 Hamas prisoners were released including Sheikh Ahmed Yassin. Determined not to negotiate with Hamas, Rabin refused to comply and suspended the Egyptian-Israeli negotiations. As Israeli commando units tried to rescue the soldier, he was killed along with one of the commandos. In consequence, discussions concerning Palestinian autonomy were suspended, but negotiations with Jordan continued. On 16 October, Rabin visited Jordan, where he and Hussein discussed border modifications that were to be part of the peace agreement. On 19 October another suicide bomber detonated a bomb on a bus in Ramat Gan, killing twenty-two people. Angered by this event, the leader of the opposition, Benjamin Netanyahu, condemned the peace process.

Following the incident at Ramat Gan, public support for the government's efforts began to decline. To deter further acts of violence, Rabin sealed off Gaza and the West Bank from Israel. Inside the Palestinian territories, Arafat arrested Hamas extremists. At the end of the month, President Clinton travelled to Cairo, where he held discussions with President Mubarak and Yasser Arafat. He then flew to Wadi Araba for the signing of the Israeli-Jordan Treaty of Peace, and then on to Amman and Damascus. Finally he flew to Israel, where he addressed the Knesset.

Several days after the signing of the Israel-Jordan treaty, a meeting of 2500 Israeli, Arab, American and European politicians and business people met in Casablanca for an economic summit which was addressed by Peres and Rabin. These efforts to secure peace, however, were marred by further attacks. On 22 January 1995 twenty-nine Israeli soldiers and a civilian were killed at Beit Lid by a suicide bomber. Both Rabin and Arafat resolved that further

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efforts should be made to curtail such violence. Throughout Gaza a number of Islamic fundamentalist leaders were arrested.

### ***Peres at the Casablanca Conference***

This conference is the first attempt to view the region with economic eyes, with the intention of improving the lot of the people. Marshall Plans, in themselves, cannot salvage our region: the resources required are too vast, and the Middle East has its own resources. No outsiders can or should be expected to do that which we can and must do ourselves. It is up to us to unleash the potential of our region and launch our area into a policy of 'Seven Good Years', which was the policy of Joseph of Egypt. (Gilbert, *Israel*, pp. 576–77)

Despite such setbacks, Rabin pressed on with the peace process. Peres was to engage in negotiations with the Palestinians, and Rabin would focus on terrorism. On 29 March 1995 John Major arrived in Israel for a meeting with Rabin. Among the Palestinians, there was bitter conflict between those who supported efforts to achieve autonomy and those who rejected a form of negotiation with Israel. On 2 April two members of Hamas accidentally blew themselves up while preparing for an attack, killing six Palestinians. In response to these deaths, the chief of Gaza's civil police appealed to Hamas to desist from further acts of terror. Seven days later six Israelis were killed in suicide bombings in Kfar Darom.

# Negotiations and Crisis

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As the peace process continued, Israel and the Palestinians pressed forward with plans for the withdrawal of Israel's troops, the release of prisoners, and the transfer of territory to the Palestinian Authority. In Israel, however, right-wing activists protested against the Oslo Treaty. At a rally in Tel Aviv Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated by a religious Jew. Although there was widespread mourning for Rabin, the future of the peace process was put at risk. In elections on 19 May 1996, Benjamin Netanyahu became Prime Minister. Eventually, a new stage of co-operation took place between Israel and the Palestinians. Yet, despite such developments, clashes erupted in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Later, with the election of Ariel Sharon as Prime Minister, Palestinian demands to resume the peace talks were ruled out. At this point, the United States sought to persuade Israel and the Palestinians of the need for a negotiated settlement. However, these events were interrupted by an attack on the World Trade Center in New York.

## Continuing the Peace Process

Determined to continue the peace process, Peres went to Gaza on 4 July for a meeting with Arafat to finalize Oslo II, the extension of Palestinian rule to the West Bank accompanied by the withdrawal of Israeli troops. Under this scheme the West Bank would eventually be ruled by Palestinian authorities. Several weeks later six Israelis were killed in Tel Aviv. This act of terrorism, however,

was not allowed to interrupt the peace process. Negotiations continued, and Israeli-Palestinian committees discussed the withdrawal of Israeli troops, Palestinian rule, the release of Palestinian prisoners, and the territory to be handed over to the Palestinian Authority.

Throughout the year Israel had transferred a number of areas of government to the Palestinians in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip: education, health, taxation, tourism and welfare. On 20 August 1995 several more spheres of responsibility were transferred: commerce, industry, agriculture, government, fuel, postal services, labour, insurance and statistics. Subsequently, with the help of an American negotiator, further aspects of Palestinian life were discussed. In Israel, however, there was growing alarm about such developments. According to Likud, Rabin had no authority to make such decisions, since his majority depended on Arab support within the country.

On 22 September Peres and Arafat went to an Egyptian resort and discussed the final aspects of Palestinian rule in the West Bank. The next week Rabin flew to Washington, where he signed the Oslo II agreement. The opposition parties denounced Rabin, calling him a traitor to his country. At the beginning of October the Knesset debated the Oslo treaty. At a rally in Jerusalem right-wing demonstrators protested against the government. In their view, Oslo II was a betrayal of the biblical land of Israel. The leader of Likud, Netanyahu, attacked Rabin for reaching this accord with the support of Arab Knesset members. Despite such disturbances, Oslo II was narrowly passed in the Knesset.

Nonetheless, criticism of Oslo II continued. The President of Israel maintained that the treaty had been accepted too quickly. Undeterred, Rabin pressed on with plans for Palestinian autonomy. At the end of October he flew to Amman for the Amman Economic Conference; in his speech to the delegates, he supported economic co-operation between Israel and its Arab neighbours. In Israel, opposition mounted. At a rally in Jerusalem on 28 October, Rabin was denounced as a traitor to the Jewish state. The next week, Rabin and Peres appeared at a rally in Tel Aviv in support of the peace process. At the end of the rally Rabin left the platform and was shot dead by a religious Jew, Yigal Amir, a student at Bar Ilan University.

The same evening at a meeting of the Israeli Cabinet, Peres was elected Prime Minister. Rabin's body had been placed in the Knesset forecourt. Nearly a million people passed by his coffin during the afternoon and evening of 4 November and the early hours of the next day. Rabin's funeral was attended by a wide variety of representatives, including King Hussein, President Mubarak,

the Prime Minister of Morocco, Prince Charles and representatives of over eighty countries. Although Arafat had wanted to attend, it was felt that his presence might cause difficulty at the ceremony. Throughout the Jewish world, memorial ceremonies were held to commemorate the Israeli leader. Eight days after Rabin's assassination a memorial meeting was held in Tel Aviv:

### *King Hussein's Eulogy*

I never thought the moment would come like this, when I would grieve the loss of a brother, a colleague, and a friend; a man, a soldier who met us on the opposite side of the divide, whom we respected as he respected us.

Despite such mourning, the peace process was disrupted when a West Bank university graduate student was killed in Gaza City on 5 January 1996. The next month a suicide bomber killed himself at a bus stop, killing one Israeli. Arafat's advisor, Ahmed Tibi, condemned these murders, insisting that the cycle of terrorism must come to an end. Despite his plea, thirteen Israelis were killed on 13 March by a suicide bomber in Jerusalem. The next day another suicide bomber attacked a crowd in Tel Aviv, killing eighteen people.

After the 13 March bus bomb, Peres told Arafat that the future of the peace process was at risk unless the Palestinian Authority was prepared to act against Hamas. Anxious to enlist international support against terrorism as well as to stop the funding of terrorist groups by Iran and Libya, Israel and Egypt held an international conference at Sharm el-Sheikh. Subsequently President Clinton flew to Israel to express sympathy for families that had lost relatives in the bombings.

In the face of renewed attacks on Israel, the Oslo agreement came under increasing pressure. Although both Rabin and Peres were adamant that terrorism would not be allowed to undermine the peace process, the opposition parties unleashed a frenzied campaign against the Oslo Accords. In the midst of such uncertainty about government policy, Peres called an election, thereby inviting the Israeli public to express its views about peace. On the night before the election, Peres launched Operation Grapes of Wrath against Israel's enemies. For over two weeks Israeli forces bombed fundamentalist positions north of the security zone, killing twenty Lebanese civilians. Subsequently a civilian shelter was hit and 105 Lebanese died. Faced with international condemnation, Israel halted this attack.

In the election campaign, yeshiva students and young members of Likud roamed the streets denouncing Peres. Within the Labour opposition, however,



Meretz evoked considerable anxiety by stressing its secular character. Among the religious parties Likud's nationalism exerted a strong attraction for the right. In the campaign the leader of Likud, Benjamin Netanyahu, declared that he would ensure that the Oslo Accords were upheld, even though he was intent on slowing down the process. On 29 May 1996, elections were held.

### Undermining the Peace Process

Following the election, Labour had the largest number of seats in the Knesset, totalling thirty-four. However, in the vote for Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu narrowly won the election. Together with parties opposed to the Oslo peace process, as well as the religious bloc, a new Russian immigrant party and the centrist Third Way Party, Netanyahu was able to form a coalition government. Following the election, further conflict took place between Israel and the Palestinians as well as within Israel. Despite his defeat, Peres pressed forward with his peace plans. However, Netanyahu delayed completing the arrangements for Israel's withdrawal from the occupied territories.

Unable to achieve the type of co-operation attained by Rabin and Peres with the Palestinian authorities, Netanyahu further exacerbated relations with the Palestinians by opening the exit of an ancient tunnel that ran under the Old City next to the Temple Mount. Before Labour's defeat, Peres had been negotiating with Muslim authorities to transform an area of the Mount into another mosque in return for the opening of the tunnel. In response, Palestinians engaged in acts of violence that resulted in the death of fifteen Israeli soldiers and around eighty Palestinians.

To salvage the situation, President Clinton invited Netanyahu, Arafat and King Hussein to Washington. On 7 November, in a speech to the Knesset, Peres warned of the dangers of allowing the peace process to collapse. Eventually an agreement was reached on 17 January that eighty per cent of the city of Hebron should come under the Palestinian Authority. As part of this agreement, it was accepted that Israel would withdraw more troops from the West Bank.

During this period there was considerable discussion about Israel's presence in southern Lebanon. On 4 February 1997 two helicopters crashed in northern Israel on their way to southern Lebanon, an event that caused further anguish about troops stationed there. On 13 March seven girls were shot by a Jordanian soldier. On the day after this attack,

the Cabinet agreed to initiate a building project on West Bank land that had been annexed to Jerusalem. This decision provoked both Palestinians and Jewish left-wing protests as well as the condemnation of the United Nations.

On 21 March a West Bank Arab killed three people in Tel Aviv. At the beginning of May the Palestinian Authority issued an order imposing the death penalty on any Arab who sold land to a Jew. Two months later Israel observed Memorial Day. To the dismay of the population, the ultra-Orthodox refused to stand in silence to pay respects to those who had died for the Jewish state. In June a group of Jews praying at the Wailing Wall were attacked by ultra-Orthodox Jews. A week later members of the ultra-Orthodox attacked a Jewish pub in Jerusalem.

Despite the agitation of various peace groups, there was no change in government policy regarding Lebanon. In the summer of 1997 liberal Israelis protested against efforts to reduce the Palestinian population in Jerusalem. In their view, the Israeli quest to claim all of Jerusalem had taken on an anti-democratic and anti-humanist character. During this period further Jewish settlement took place in the West Bank. In the same month the government dramatically altered the maps from the Oslo Accords under which the vast majority of the West Bank would be transferred to the Palestinians. Instead the government based its view on the map previously introduced by Clinton Bailey which envisaged three self-governing Palestinian enclaves, with an Israeli corridor in Samaria. According to Netanyahu, Israel would annex a large part of the territory captured from Jordan in 1967. The Palestinian area would lack statehood and possess no common borders with Jordan. Rather it would be between territories annexed by Israel and intersected by a series of highways controlled by the army.

In accord with the Oslo agreement, Israel had vacated six Palestinian cities as well as Hebron. Most of the West Bank continued to remain under Israeli control. The transfer of further territory was halted. Friction between Israel and the Palestinians was further exacerbated by a suicide bombing on 30 July in Jerusalem, which killed sixteen victims. Reacting to such terrorism, the government stopped the movement of Palestinian workers into Israeli territory and suspended all financial transfers to the Palestinian Authority. In September a bombing in Jerusalem killed five people. The next day twelve Israeli naval commandos were killed during an attack in Lebanon. During the same month Israel asked the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, to discuss with President Yeltsin the sale of weapons technology from the former Soviet

arsenal to Iran. Simultaneously Israel agitated for the Americans to end aid to Russia while the sale of missile technology from Russia to Iran was continuing.

Despite such a shift in foreign policy, a number of Israelis still agitated for the continuation of the peace process, and during the autumn Peres founded the Peres Centre for Peace. Such pressure ran counter to the government's determination to create Jewish homes on land purchased in 1990 near the Dome of the Rock. When three Jewish families moved into these dwellings, the American Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, pressed for them to be moved. Agreeing to this demand, the Netanyahu government insisted that religious students should be allowed to use these houses for prayer. This was followed by an expansion of the Etzion bloc settlements despite criticism from the American government. At the end of September a Jordanian terrorist wounded two Israeli embassy guards in Amman during an assassination attempt against a Hamas political representative. In response to this failed action, Israel agreed to release the spiritual leader of Hamas, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, from prison.

In October 1998 Prime Minister Netanyahu and Yasser Arafat met in Washington to discuss the peace process. After prolonged argument, Israel and the Palestinians agreed to embark on a new stage of co-operation. According to the Wye agreement, Israel would effect a further West Bank redeployment, involving 27.2 per cent of the occupied territory. Thirteen per cent of this area would pass from Israeli occupation to Palestinian civil control. The remaining 14.2 per cent, which was previously under joint Israel-Palestinian Authority control, would come under Palestinian rule. In addition, the Israelis and Palestinians would together establish a committee to consider the third-phase redeployment that was mandated by the 1995 interim agreement.

### Further Negotiations

At his meeting with Prime Minister Netanyahu, Yasser Arafat agreed that the Palestinian authorities would take all measures necessary to prevent acts of terrorism, crime and hostilities. This would include a Palestinian security plan, shared with the United States, to ensure systematic and effective combat of terrorist organizations and infrastructure. To ensure peace in the region, bilateral Israeli- Palestinian security co-ordination would be restored, and a US- Palestinian committee would be created to monitor militant groups. The Palestinians further agreed to apprehend, investigate and prosecute specific

individuals suspected of violence. It was accepted that they would collect all illegally held weapons in areas they controlled and issue a decree barring any form of incitement to violence or terror. To ensure the implementation of this policy, a US-Palestinian-Israeli committee would monitor any cases of incitement.

Conflict between Israel and its Arab neighbours had thus not been overcome through the settlement initiated by Rabin and Peres; the peace process had been thwarted by intransigent attitudes on both sides, despite the steps taken by the new Prime Minister of Israel, Ehud Barak, who was elected in the summer of 1999. Following his election, the motion of separation between Israel and the Palestinians became official Israeli policy. In his election campaign, Barak promoted the idea of a physical separation as an integral feature of a two-state solution, a concept which became the West Bank barrier (Separation Fence), electrified and surrounded with trenches, razor wire, electronic surveillance and control towers approximately 350 km long:

### ***Barak's vision of a Separation Fence***

(The fence) is essential to Israel in order to guarantee its Jewish identity ... and it is (equally) essential to the Palestinian nation in order to foster its national identity ... without being dependent on the state of Israel. (Sacher, *A History of Israel from the Rise of Zionism to Our Time*, p. 160)

The events that took place in September and October 2000 further undermined attempts to create peace in the Middle East. On 28 September Israel's hardline leader Ariel Sharon angered Palestinians by visiting a Jerusalem shrine sacred to Jews and Muslims. Dozens of police and several Palestinians were injured in the riots that followed. The next day six Palestinians were killed and close to 200 were wounded in clashes at the shrine, known as the Temple Mount to Jews and the Noble Sanctuary to Muslims.

Subsequently, clashes erupted in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. On 30 September fourteen Palestinians were killed by Israeli firing, including twelve-year-old Mohammed al-Durrah whose death was captured by a television cameraman and broadcast throughout the world. On 2 October nineteen people were killed in a heavy day of fighting. Israeli Arabs protested in solidarity with Palestinians, and Israelis were barred from travelling in the Palestinian territories. On 4 October Ehud Barak and Yasser Arafat flew to France to meet the US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and French President Jacques Chirac. Despite this political activity, fighting between the

two sides continued. On 6 October, Israel sealed the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and the next day demonstrators stormed Joseph's Tomb in Nablus. Fighting in Jerusalem, Nazareth and Hebron continued through the Jewish holy day of Yom Kippur on 9 October, and in the following weeks the violence continued amid a flurry of diplomatic activity. As hostility between Israelis and Palestinians intensified, Barak called for an election to take place later in the year resulting in the election of Ariel Sharon as Prime Minister.

Negotiations for a final settlement resulted in a deadlock in July 2000. Palestinians insisted that refugees should have the right to return to their former homeland – this would have led to a Palestinian majority in the country. Israel insisted on annexing key portions of the Palestinian area, leaving most settlements intact, and offered only a limited form of Palestinian statehood. On 28 September 2000 violence erupted when Ariel Sharon made a visit to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. Nonetheless, in January 2001 peace talks were held at Taba, an Egyptian resort town.

At this meeting Israeli and Palestinian representatives agreed that in accordance with the UN Security Council Resolution 242, the 4 June 1967 lines would form the basis for borders between Israel and the State of Palestine. For the first time both sides presented their own maps regarding the West Bank. The Israelis stated that they did not need to maintain settlements in the Jordan Valley for security purposes, and both sides accepted the principle of land exchange and sovereignty for their representative areas. Concerning the future of Jerusalem, both sides accepted in principle the suggestion that the Palestinians should have sovereignty over Arab neighbourhoods and Israel should have sovereignty over Jewish sections. The Israelis agreed that Jerusalem should become the capital of both states: Jerusalem the capital of Israel, and Al-Quds, the capital of the State of Palestine. Further, both parties accepted the principle of representative control over each side's holy sites. The refugee problem was to be resolved in accordance with Resolution 242 and General Assembly Resolution 194. It was accepted that Israelis should have three early warning stations on Palestinian territory subject to certain conditions. Finally, the Israeli side maintained that the State of Palestine would be non-militarized; the Palestinian side was prepared to accept limitation on its acquisition of arms.

This meeting was followed by an Israeli election in which the Prime Minister, Ehud Barak, was voted out of office and replaced by a right-wing government headed by Ariel Sharon. Following this victory, Ariel Sharon rejected Palestinian demands to resume peace talks where they had left

off with the outgoing administration of Ehud Barak. On 8 February 2001 Ariel Sharon's diplomatic adviser, Zalman Shoval, stated that the Prime Minister had ruled out resuming negotiations with the Palestinians since no final peace deal was concluded at Taba. Responding to this stalemate, the Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat, echoing the views of the Palestinian leadership, declared that if Sharon sought to resume the peace process it must be from where it was suspended by Barak. Erekat warned the new Israeli leader not to implement his political programme, saying that this would only complicate the situation.

## The Mitchell Report

Determined to continue the peace process, the United States sought to persuade Palestinians and Israelis that a negotiated settlement was vital to security in the Middle East. In April 2001 the Mitchell report was published which made a series of wide-ranging recommendations. The report concluded that it was vital that the government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority act swiftly and decisively to halt violence. The immediate objective of this report was to rebuild confidence and resume negotiations. The report explained that during the committee's mission, their aim had been to fulfil the mandate agreed at Sharm al-Sheikh. The report stated:

We value the support given our work by the participants at the summit, and we commend the parties for their co-operation. Our principal recommendation is that they recommit themselves to the Sharm al-Shaykh spirit and that they implement the decisions made there in 1999 and 2000. We believe that the summit participants will support bold action by the parties to achieve these objectives.

The restoration of trust is essential, and the parties should take affirmative steps to this end. Given the high level of hostility and mistrust, the timing and sequence of these steps are obviously crucial... We urge them to begin the process of decision immediately.

Accordingly, we recommend that steps be taken to: End the violence

\*The GOI [Government of Israel] and PA [Palestinian Authority] should reaffirm their commitment to existing agreements and undertakings and should immediately implement an unconditional cessation of violence.

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\*The GOI and PA should immediately resume security co-operation.

### Rebuild Confidence

\* The PA and GOI should work together to establish a meaningful 'cooling-off period' and implement confidence-building measures, some of which were detailed in the October 2000 Sharm el-Sheikh Statement and some of which were offered by the US on January 7, 2001 in Cairo.

\*The PA and GOI should resume their efforts to identify, condemn and discourage incitement in all its forms.

\*The PA should make clear through concrete action to Palestinians and Israelis alike that terrorism is reprehensible and unacceptable, and that the PA will make a 100 per cent effort to prevent terrorist operations and to punish perpetrators. This effort should include immediate steps to apprehend and incarcerate terrorists operating within the PA's jurisdiction.

\*The GOI should freeze all settlement activity, including the 'natural growth' of existing settlements.

\*The GOI should ensure that the IDF adopt and enforce policies and procedures encouraging non-lethal responses to unarmed demonstrations, with a view to minimizing casualties and friction between the two communities.

\*The PA should prevent gunmen from using Palestinian populated areas to fire upon Israeli populated areas and IDF positions. This tactic places civilians on both sides at unnecessary risk.

\*The GOI should lift closures, transfer to the PA all tax revenues owed, and permit Palestinians who had been employed in Israel to return to their jobs, and should ensure that security forces and settlers refrain from the destruction of human homes and roads, as well as trees and other agricultural property in Palestine areas. We acknowledge the GOI's position that actions of this nature have been taken for security reasons. Nevertheless, the economic effects will persist for years.

\*The PA should renew co-operation with Israeli security agencies to ensure, to the maximum extent possible, that Palestinian workers employed within Israel are fully vetted and free of connections to organizations and individuals connected to terrorism.

\*The PA and GOI should consider a joint undertaking to preserve and protect holy places sacred to the traditions of Jews, Muslims and Christians.

\*The GOI and PA should endorse and support the work of Palestinian and Israeli non-governmental organizations involved in cross-community initiatives linking the two peoples.

Violence continued into 2001 and 2002 despite attempts by the Mitchell commission and others to restore peace. On September 11, 2001 al-Qaeda terrorists hijacked airliners and flew them into the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon outside Washington. A fourth hijacked plane, apparently heading for the White House, crashed into a field in Pennsylvania after passengers attacked the terrorists to prevent them from carrying out their mission. The death toll in the attacks numbered more than 3000. Among the dead were nineteen hijackers, fifteen of whom were from Saudi Arabia. An alleged further hijacker, Zacarias Moussaoui, was arrested in Minnesota after raising suspicions among his flight instructors when he said he wished to learn how to fly but not how to land or take off.

Previously the Arab terrorist and leader of al-Qaeda, Osama Bin Laden, had stated his intention to wage war against America and Israel. Following this attack, he issued statements implying that this event was related to US support for Israel. His goals, he stated, were based on a desire to depose the Saudi monarchy, which he viewed as unfaithful to his interpretation of Islam. His aim was to recreate an Islamic empire and establish a Palestinian state. Traumatized by this onslaught, the United States government was determined to hunt down the terrorists in a long, unrelenting war. President Bush warned that governments would now have to choose to support the United States in this war on terror, or be regarded as enemies. He cautioned that there would be serious consequences for those who opposed the American government's efforts.

Immediately the president warned the Taliban rulers in Afghanistan, where al-Qaeda was based, that they should hand over Bin Laden or face a massive assault. When the Taliban refused to comply, the United States waged a war in Afghanistan, which brought an end to Taliban rule and destroyed the al-Qaeda organization. Despite the American advance, Bin Laden escaped with a number of his aides, and the United States continued to try to discover his whereabouts, a futile quest until he was discovered in May 2011 and killed. In addition to a direct attack on al-Qaeda, the Bush administration mobilized other countries in support of a global war on terrorism. Assets of individual



terrorists as well as terrorist organizations were frozen, and intelligence agencies of Western countries joined together in the quest to thwart further terrorist attacks. Inevitably, the United States and other Western countries became more security conscious in the light of September 11. United in their determination to overcome the terrorist threat, these countries increased security at airports, governmental facilities and public gatherings.

### Beyond the Attack on the World Trade Center

As a result of increased security, many Americans and others began to view terrorist actions in Israel itself in a new light given that such organizations as Hamas and Hizballah appeared to be linked with al-Qaeda. Especially damaging for the Palestinians were the demonstrations held in favour of Bin Laden following the attack on the World Trade Center. By contrast a number of figures such as the leader of the Nation of Islam, Louis Farrakhan, sought to defend the Palestinian reaction. Seeking to explain the reaction of Palestinians to this tragedy, he stated that some Palestinians danced in the streets, not because they had no feeling for American life; they danced because they wanted America to feel what they feel, what they have lived with. Yet, in the West, the overwhelming reaction was one of bewilderment and disgust.

A few days before the war against Bin Laden began, President Bush announced that the idea of a Palestinian state had been part of the US vision for the Middle East as long as the right of Israel to exist is respected. According to the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, this was the first time that a Republican US President had acknowledged the need for Palestinian statehood. Neither the Palestinians nor the Israelis reacted with enthusiasm to Bush's statement. Most Palestinians questioned his motives. Moussa Abul-Marzouq, a Hamas leader, for example, regarded Bush's statement as a manoeuvre aimed at deceiving the Palestinian National Authority and driving it to end the Intifada. It is, he declared, an American attempt to persuade Arabs and Muslims to join the international alliance against Bin Laden. A statement issued by the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine regarded Bush's proposal as a step in the right direction, but noted that it would not be useful unless it was reinforced by effective, practical measures. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine also described the statement as a manoeuvre.

From the Israeli side Ariel Sharon issued a diatribe accusing the Bush administration of opportunism. Calling on Western countries, in particular the United States, not to repeat the mistake that triggered the Second World War, he pledged that Israel would never be a second Czechoslovakia, and would accordingly have to rely on itself. He concluded by stating that Israel would resume its assassination campaign against Palestinian activists who support the Intifada, and abandon the policy of restraint which it had been committed to under the terms of the ceasefire agreement.

In response Bush dismissed Sharon's reaction as unacceptable. Categorically rejecting his claim that the US was appeasing the Arabs at Israel's expense, he denounced the Israeli Prime Minister's attempt to compare him to Chamberlain and Daladier, the European leaders who sought to appease Hitler at the Munich summit by ceding Czechoslovakia's Sudetenland to Germany. Twenty-four hours later, just before the military attack on Afghanistan, Sharon changed his approach, downplaying his differences with the American administration. Instead, he extolled the strong relations between the US and Israel and reiterated his support for Washington's campaign against terrorism. By offering the Palestinians hope for their own state, Bush was acknowledging the centrality of the Palestinian problem in fuelling Islamic terrorism. As President Mubarak observed, fifty per cent of this wave of violence stemmed from the situation in Israel.

Following the attack on the twin towers of the World Trade Center and the offensive against Bin Laden, Arab and Islamic countries stressed the need for their co-operation in the war against terrorism in order to obtain concessions from Israel. However, many Americans began to lose sympathy for the Palestinian cause, identifying Hamas and Hizballah with the al-Qaeda group of terrorists. Palestinians were criticized for their apparent support of Bin Laden, and evidence emerged linking a boatload of illegal arms, intercepted by Israel, with Iranian support for the Palestinian National Authority (PNA). This boat was intercepted on 3 January 2002, the day that US envoy Antony Zinni sought to reach a peace agreement. Against this background, the US and the EU appeared to give Israel wider latitude for actions against the Palestinians. Israel continued to make incursions into Palestinian areas, and confined PNA Chairman Arafat to his compound in Ramallah. In the wake of such actions, Palestinians increased attacks on soldiers as well as suicide bombings.

On 12 March 2002 the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1397, a US-drafted resolution, referring for the first time to a Palestinian state

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existing side by side with Israel. The 14–0 vote, with Syria abstaining, marked the first time the fifteen-nation council had approved a resolution on the Middle East since October 2000. The Resolution consisted of a number of recommendations:

The Security Council

\*recalling all its previous relevant resolutions, in particular 242 and 338,

\*affirming a vision of a region where two States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side within secure and recognized borders,

\*expressing its grave concern at the continuation of the tragic and violent events that have taken place since September 2001 especially the recent attacks and the increased number of casualties,

\*stressing the need for all concerned to ensure the safety of civilians,

\*stressing also the need to respect the universally accepted norms of international humanitarian law...

1. Demands the immediate cessation of all acts of violence, including all acts of terror, provocation, incitement and destruction;
2. Calls upon the Israeli and Palestinian sides and their leaders to co-operate in the implementation of the Tenet work plan and Mitchell Report recommendations with the aim of resuming negotiations on a political settlement;
3. Expresses support for the efforts of the Secretary-General and others to assist the parties to halt the violence and to resume the peace process.

# A New Stage of Conflict

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Operation Defensive Shield commenced on 28 March 2002 – its aim was to combat terrorist activities under the control of the Palestinian Authority. Despite the intervention of the United States, violence continued leading to an investigation undertaken by the UN. Eventually President Bush outlined his plans for the Middle East, indicating that a new Palestinian leadership was needed. These events were superseded in March 2003 when America and Britain attacked Iraq, resulting in the overthrow of Saddam Hussein. During the year Mahmoud Abbas, a founding member of Fatah, emerged as a more acceptable leader of the Palestinian people. With the death of Yasser Arafat in 2004, Mahmoud Abbas became President. In Israel Ehud Olmert was elected Prime Minister in 2006; in the same year Fatah and Hamas candidates were rivals in the election to the Palestinian Legislative Council. This led to a new stage in the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Palestinians.

## Continuing Aggression

Although Yasser Arafat declared a cessation of violence on numerous occasions, this did not seem to affect the frequency of suicide bombings and ambushes. For their part, the Israelis continued with the policy of assassinating Palestinians. During the last week of March, as General Zinni was on his way to the Middle East, the Palestinians launched a successful suicide attack nearly every day. During this period a bombing at the Park Hotel in

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Netanya killed twenty-seven people as they were celebrating Passover. In retaliation, Israel launched a massive raid intended to root out the terror network, including the reoccupation of Ramallah, Nablus, Jenin, Tulkarm and other towns. In this onslaught a significant number of Palestinians were killed, including civilians. In contrast with the Palestinian claim that hundreds were killed in action, Israel alleged that only about fifty were killed in Jenin, mostly members of the Fatah Al-Aqsa Martyrs suicide brigades. Even though these figures seem to be borne out by independent sources, they were not accepted in the Arab world.

This Israeli onslaught, referred to as Operation Defensive Shield, commenced on 28 March 2002. Its goal was to dismantle the terrorist infrastructure developed by the Palestinian Authority (PA), or allowed to operate in territory under PA control. The operation consisted of moving Israeli forces into the West Bank and Gaza for the purpose of arresting terrorists, finding and confiscating weapons and destroying facilities for the manufacture of explosives. According to Ariel Sharon, the goal of this was to counter the terrorist threat:

### ***Defensive Shield***

IDF soldiers and officers have been given clear orders: to enter cities and villages which have become havens for terrorists; to catch and arrest terrorists and, primarily, their dispatchers and those who finance and support them; to confiscate weapons intended to be used against Israeli citizens; to expose and destroy terrorist facilities and explosives, laboratories, weapons production factories and secret installations. The orders are clear: target and paralyse anyone who takes up weapons and tries to oppose our troops, resists them or endangers them. ([www.palestinefacts.org/pf\\_1991\\_to\\_now\\_defensive\\_shield\\_2002.php](http://www.palestinefacts.org/pf_1991_to_now_defensive_shield_2002.php))

Despite the arrival of US Secretary of State Colin Powell, the violence continued. Powell's mission failed: he was unable to persuade the Palestinians to agree to a ceasefire. Demonstrations and public outrage in Arab countries, fuelled by charges of a massacre, prompted UN action. UN Resolution 1402 directed that Israel withdraw from the territories immediately. By the time Powell left, Israel had withdrawn from some towns, but Yasser Arafat was still imprisoned in Ramallah, and the Israelis were besieging the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, where armed Palestinians had sought refuge from the Israel Defence Force. The UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1403, expressing its dismay that Resolution 1402 had not been implemented.

Palestinians charged that the Israelis had committed a massacre in the Jenin refugee camp.

On 19 April the Security Council adopted Resolution 1405, calling for an impartial investigative team to be sent to determine the truth of these claims. Although Israel at first agreed to this investigation, it later blocked it, claiming that the composition and procedures of the investigation would not be impartial. Opposition to the investigation was intensified by Israeli memories of the recent Durban conference as well as by the infamous 'Zionism is Racism' resolution of the UN which was recalled repeatedly in public debate. In May 2002 Prime Minister Sharon visited the US under pressure from Washington. During this meeting discussions took place concerning a regional summit to be held later in 2002. Yet the Israelis claimed they could prove the involvement of Yasser Arafat and the PNA in terrorist activities. When it was reported that a suicide bombing had been committed by Hamas, the Israel Prime Minister returned to Israel.

The sieges of Muqata'a and the Church of the Nativity were also resolved in May 2002. Militants in the Church of Nativity were exiled to Cyprus and Europe and the wanted men in the Muqata'a compound in Ramallah were imprisoned in Jericho. The head of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) allegedly co-ordinated a suicide attack from his cell in Jericho, and by the end of May, Yasser Arafat signed into law the Basic Law or constitution of the Palestinian transitional state. This law guaranteed basic rights, but stated that Palestinian legislation will be based on the principles of Islamic Shar'ia law. Beginning with a declaration that Palestine is part of the large Arab World, and that the Palestinian people are part of the Arab nation, this constitution stresses that Arab unity is an ideal which the Palestinians seek to achieve. The Constitution continues by emphasizing that the Palestinian people are the source of all power which shall be exercised through the legislative, executive and judicial authorities. Following this declaration, the basic law makes a wide range of assertions about the creation of a Palestinian state.

In June, following a wave of Palestinian suicide attacks, Israeli forces reoccupied the West Bank. Even though the Israeli government claimed that this reoccupation would not continue indefinitely, it later altered its plans. At this stage President Bush made a speech concerning the Middle East in which he outlined plans for a Palestinian state following democratic reforms. It was untenable, he stated, for Israeli citizens to live in terror. Further, it was unreasonable for Palestinians to live in squalor and occupation. Bush went on to challenge Israel to support the emergence of a Palestinian state, to withdraw from the occupied territories, and to stop building settlements.

Even though President Bush was not explicit, it was understood that his reference to a new Palestinian leadership was a call to overthrow Yasser Arafat. Colin Powell made this explicit, but the President did not identify himself with such a demand. In Egypt President Mubarak also expressed support for Palestinian reform, but Egyptian leaders refused to name alternative leaders. Although some moderate Palestinians and Israelis welcomed the speech, Shimon Peres and others objected that it was unrealistic to expect the Palestinians to give up Arafat's leadership. They argued that removing Arafat might bring about further conflict or bring another, even more radical, leader to power. Right-wing Zionist commentators claimed that the speech rewarded terror by offering Palestinians the hope of statehood. Pro-Palestinian analysts called the speech outrageous and maintained that it called for indefinite continuation of the occupation.

In August and September 2002, attempts were made to bring about Palestinian ceasefire initiatives but these were opposed by extremist groups. In addition, the killing of Saleh Shehadeh, head of the military wing of Hamas, curtailed negotiations. During this period there was a respite from major suicide attacks, facilitating an Israeli-Palestinian plan to return full Palestinian authority in Gaza and Bethlehem. However, such a scheme was disrupted when violent attacks occurred in Gaza. At the beginning of September, Israeli security forces prevented a number of suicide bombings and detected a truck laden with 1300 pounds of explosives and gas tanks. In the same month, the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) convened to approve the new cabinet chosen in line with reform. PLC cabinet members refused to ratify the cabinet until Yasser Arafat would allow a Prime Minister to share power. Instead, Arafat agreed to elections in January 2003, despite Israeli occupation.

### Continuation of the Siege

This period of calm ended with suicide bombings in Umm El Fahm and on a Tel Aviv bus. In retaliation the Israelis proceeded to attack Gaza, excluding entry into Gaza city and besieging Yasser Arafat and about two hundred others in the Muqata'a compound in Ramallah. Israel demanded that Palestinians give up wanted persons, including Palestinian preventive security boss Tawfiq Tirawi, who had taken refuge there. Arafat was defiant, and Israel destroyed all buildings in the compound except the main one. After a rumour was circulated that Israel was about to blow up the Muqata'a, demonstrations took place in the West Bank and Gaza. The USA then exerted pressure on

Israel to stop destroying buildings and withdraw; despite a UN resolution, Israel continued the siege.

The next month the Labour party withdrew from the Israel unity government, and elections were held in January, when Ariel Sharon was re-elected Prime Minister. However, the Palestine-Israeli conflict was eclipsed by events in March 2003 when the United States and Great Britain attacked Iraq, overthrowing the regime of Saddam Hussein. Prior to this conflict President Bush reiterated his desire for a solution to the Palestinian problem in the Middle East, yet in the Arab world the onslaught against Iraq was widely perceived as a crusade against Islam. In the view of a number of commentators, it appeared that a new world order had emerged at the beginning of the twenty-first century. As the sole super-power, the United States appeared to have embarked on a policy of world domination and colonization. Deeply suspicious of US intentions, Arab peoples were increasingly coming to see themselves as inevitable victims in this quest.

In the first part of the year 2003, the United States expressed its refusal to negotiate with Yasser Arafat, and Mahmoud Abbas began to emerge as a more acceptable figure. As a remaining founding member of Fatah, he was regarded as a credible representative of the Palestinian cause and his candidacy was enhanced by the fact that other leading Palestinians such as Marwan Barghouti were not perceived as suitable. As a pragmatist, he was viewed favourably by the West as well as certain elements of the Palestinian legislature. Eventually pressure was put on Arafat to appoint him Prime Minister – this took place on 19 March 2003. Initially Arafat sought to undermine the post of Prime Minister, but he was later forced to grant him a degree of power:

### ***Abu Mazen***

Mahmoud Abbas, also known as Abu Mazen, was born in 1935 in the town of Safad, in what is now northern Israel. In 1948 Abbas and his family moved to Syria. During the late 1950s Abbas lived in Qatar where he spent time recruiting support for the Palestinian liberation movement. Along with Yasser Arafat, Abbas was one of the primary founders of Fatah, which has held the majority of representatives in the Palestine Liberation Organization since its formation in 1964. As a member of the PLO, Abbas attempted negotiations with some Israeli leaders, but many fundamentalist Palestinians criticized him for his moderate approach. Nonetheless, he was elected to the PLO Executive Committee in 1980, which comprises less than twenty individuals who oversee various departments within the PLO... In 1984 Abbas was appointed to direct the PLO Department of National Affairs. Primarily through secret negotiations with Israeli leaders, Abbas contributed a great deal to the Oslo Accords, and he accompanied Arafat to the White House signing ceremony in 1993. Since that time, Abbas has called for a halt to Palestinian violence in order to remove Israel's excuse for fighting against Palestinians. ([www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/palestine/mahmoud\\_abbas.htm](http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/palestine/mahmoud_abbas.htm))



Abba's term as Prime Minister was characterized by various conflicts between him and Arafat regarding the distribution of power. Abbas often indicated that he would resign if he were not allowed to have more control over the PA's administration. In September 2003 he confronted the PA parliament over this issue. In addition, Abbas came into conflict with Palestinian militant groups including Islamic Jihad and Hamas over his moderate policies. He pledged not to use force against the militants, an approach that resulted in a pledge from the two groups to honour a unilateral Palestinian ceasefire. Yet the continuing violence and Israeli assaults on known terrorists forced Abbas to initiate a crackdown in order to strengthen the PA's authority. This created a power struggle with Arafat over the control of the Palestinian security services.

In October 2003 Abbas resigned as Prime Minister, citing a lack of support from Israel and the United States as well as internal incitement against his government. Responding to terrorist attacks, Israel launched Operation Rainbow in the Gaza Strip in May 2004; several months later, Operation Days of Penitence was launched in September and October 2004. In November 2004 Yasser Arafat died, and Mahmoud Abbas was elected President in January 2005. During this period, Israel's unilateral disengagement plan, proposed by Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, was adopted by the government in August 2005. The aim was to remove the permanent Israeli presence in the Gaza Strip as well as four settlements in the northern West Bank. Civilians were evacuated, and residential buildings demolished. By 12 September 2005 Israel had completed its disengagement and fully withdrew from the Gaza Strip. Ten days later the military disengagement from the northern West Bank was completed.

On 14 April 2006 Ehud Olmert was elected Prime Minister of Israel; previously he had been exercising the powers of the office since they were transferred to him after Ariel Sharon suffered a severe haemorrhagic stroke. A crucial allegation against the PA was that Arafat and Fatah had received billions of dollars in aid from foreign nations and organizations but had never used this money to develop Palestinian society. Instead, it was alleged that the funds were used personally by Arafat. These assertions became increasingly troubling and led to increased support for Hamas which was perceived as both more efficient and honest. Over the years Hamas had created various institutions and social services aimed at improving the life of Palestinians. In opposition to the PA, Hamas stated that it did not recognize Israel's right to exist, nor did it accept the Oslo process or any other peace process with Israel. It openly stated that it encouraged terrorist attacks.

In the January 2006 elections, Fatah and Hamas candidates competed for seats in the Palestinian Legislative Council. Due to widespread dissatisfaction with Fatah, Hamas won a majority of seats and was thereby able to appoint a Prime Minister as well as a number of cabinet posts. Ismail Haniyeh became Prime Minister. Alarmed by these developments, the West branded Hamas a terrorist organization and cut off aid to the Palestinian government. Like the United States, a number of European countries cut off aid to Hamas and the Palestinian Authority. Israel refused to negotiate with Hamas since it never renounced its conviction that Israel had no right to exist and that the entire State of Israel is an illegal occupation. In June 2006 a war commenced between Israel and Hizballah when Hizballah fighters entered Israel and attacked an IDF (Israel Defense Forces) post and captured several soldiers. In response Israel attacked Hizballah positions within Lebanon. The result of this conflict was that both sides agreed to a ceasefire, and Lebanon stationed its army along the border with Israel.

## Continued Conflict

During this period of instability, international sanctions against Hamas and the PA resulted in economic and political difficulties for the Palestinian people. On 8 October 2006 Mahmoud Abbas warned Hamas that he would call new legislative elections if it did not accept a coalition government. During November 2006 there were efforts by Mahmoud Abbas to form a unity government with Hamas, but this produced no tangible results. During the same month the PA and Israel declared that they would seek to uphold a ceasefire. On 27 November 2006 Ehud Olmert appealed to the Palestinians to re-enter peace negotiations with the aim of establishing an independent and viable Palestinian state with full sovereignty and defined borders. Since the January elections in which Hamas ousted Fatah, there was repeated conflict between the two sides. In December 2006 violence between Fatah and Hamas increased, leading to a virtual civil war.

In December 2006 news reports indicated that a number of Palestinians were leaving the Gaza Strip. On 11 December 2006 gunmen killed three sons of Baha Balousheh, an important Palestinian security officer and Fatah loyalist. This event threatened to ignite a Palestinian civil war, and seriously jeopardized Olmert's efforts to restart the peace talks. Balousheh blamed Hamas for these murders even though the Islamic movement denied

responsibility. As the violence increased, Palestinians moved further away from establishing a national unity government. On 19 December 2006 Israel and the US began to strengthen Fatah and explore possibilities of a diplomatic solution. Abbas and Olmert met on 23 December and Olmert promised to release \$100 million to the PNA for humanitarian needs. In addition, Israel removed a number of roadblocks and checkpoints in the West Bank. Jordan declared that it would attempt to mediate between Fatah and Hamas, although Egypt sent a shipment of weapons via Israel to forces loyal to Fatah in an effort to support Abbas's position.

In January 2007, fighting continued between Hamas and Fatah. The worst clashes took place in the northern Gaza Strip when Gen Mohammed Gharib, a senior Fatah commander, was killed. The United States announced that it would give \$86 million to Fatah, and Abbas and Haniyeh met to discuss ways to stop the fighting. Yet further acts of violence continued and Hamas dominated the West Bank. When Abbas declared that he would outlaw a Hamas security unit and Fatah released a videotape of an abducted Hamas official, Fatah held a rally to demonstrate popular support.

During the same month, the Palestinian Legislative Council was to have its first session, but this was cancelled since some legislators were scheduled to be in Indonesia. To discuss their difference, Abbas met with Khaled Mashaal, the exiled head of Hamas in Syria, but this did not lead to a resolution. By the end of the month, it appeared that a negotiated truce between Fatah and Hamas was beginning to hold. However, new fighting broke out after a few days. Fatah fighters stormed a Hamas-affiliated university in the Gaza Strip. Officers from Abbas's presidential guard engaged in battle with Hamas gunmen, guarding the Hamas-led Interior Ministry.

In February 2007, President Abbas and Prime Minister Haniyeh met in Saudi Arabia to discuss this conflict. It was agreed that Hamas would dissolve the existing government and form a unity coalition with Fatah. This appeared to have the support of both parties and Haniyeh resigned his post in order to form a new government. However, it was unclear whether this agreement would bring about the lifting of sanctions against Hamas and the PA. In fact sanctions continued, resulting in further suffering for the Palestinian population.

During this period, various diplomatic efforts were initiated to bring about a peaceful solution to the Middle East conflict. In early 2007 Amir Peretz and Efraim Sneh of Israel's Labour party announced their own multi-stage plan for a new peace process – this evoked considerable debate, but their plan

lacked credibility. In January 2007 US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice announced on a visit to Egypt that the US would organize a summit between Israel and the Palestinians. In February 2007 a meeting was held in Israel which included Secretary Rice, Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas. In March 2007 Japan proposed a peace plan based on common economic development. In late April 2007 the armed wing of Hamas declared that the truce with Israel had ended. Palestinian groups then launched rockets from the Gaza Strip into Israel. On 25 April 2007 Ehud Olmert ruled out a major Gaza offensive, but authorized the army to carry out limited operations in the Gaza Strip. This led to a new round of Hamas rocket attacks. Israel stated that it would not carry out a major offensive in order for a new truce to begin.

By May 2007 a deal between Hamas and Fatah appeared to be fading and new fighting broke out. Interior Minister Hani Qawasmī, who had been viewed as a moderate civil servant acceptable to both sides, resigned. Fighting continued in the Gaza Strip. In response to rocket fire from the Gaza Strip, Israel launched air strikes against various targets. Hamas spokesman Musa Abu Marzouk declared that Israel and the EU were responsible for the situation. In June 2007 full-scale fighting broke out between factions in several communities, and Hamas won control of the entire Gaza Strip, establishing a separate Gaza Strip government. In response, Israel, the US and other Western countries sought to strengthen Fatah and thereby isolate Hamas. Although Fatah was defeated in Gaza, it retained control of the West Bank.

In the ensuing months, steps were taken to resume the peace process. In November 2007 Israeli and Palestinian leaders agreed to restart peace talks at a Maryland summit, promising further negotiations towards a peace treaty and the development of a Palestinian state. In the same month President Bush pledged his support of Israeli- Palestinian peace efforts. Chief Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat stated that the goal was to reach a peace treaty that included a Palestinian state by the end of 2008. By early December 2007 the first Israeli-Palestinian peace talks in several years got off to a shaky start. At the same time international donors pledged to support the embattled Palestinian government of President Abbas, pledging billions in aid over three years. By the end of the month, a second round of negotiations took place between Palestinian and Israeli officials. Yet this event was overshadowed by Palestinian threats not to address substantive issues until Israel agreed to stop settlement construction around Jerusalem – it was revealed that Israel planned to expand two settlements in the occupied West Bank territory in the next year. Thus, as in the past, the treacherous road to peace was beset by hostility and mistrust.

## Conflict in Gaza

Between 2005 and 2007 Palestinians in Gaza fired over 2700 rockets into Israel. On 19 June 2008 an Egyptian-sponsored pause in hostilities came into effect. The agreement required Hamas to cease attacks on Israel and to enforce the lull throughout Gaza. In addition, Israel was determined that the agreement would include an end to Hamas's military buildup and bring about the release of Corporal Shalit. From its side, Israel agreed to ease the embargo of Gaza and halt military raids. For its part, Egypt agreed to stop the smuggling of arms and weapons into Gaza. The truce began slowly; however several mortars and rockets were fired at Israel in late June. Israel and Hamas accused each other of bad faith and of violating the truce.

On 4 November 2008 Israel launched a military strike on Hamas to destroy a tunnel on the Gaza-Israel border dug by militias to infiltrate into Israel and capture soldiers. According to Israel, this was not a violation of the ceasefire, but a legitimate act to remove an immediate threat. During the conflict, a Hamas fighter was killed, and Hamas responded with a barrage of mortar fire. This was followed by an Israeli airstrike on Hamas mortar positions. Hamas was determined to take revenge for what it perceived as an act of Israeli aggression which violated the truce; thirty-five rockets were launched into southern Israel. This was followed by further rocket attacks during November.

On 18 December, a day before the truce was to expire, Hamas declared an end of the ceasefire and more than twenty rockets were launched into southern Israel. The following day, Hamas refused to enter talks to renew the truce. According to Hamas sources, Hamas in fact wished to renew the truce but only on improved terms. On 22 December, Israel Defence Minister Ehud Barak stated that his country would not accept the rocket fire from Palestinian militants in Gaza; Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, who had originally supported the truce, recommended military action.

The following day, Hamas leader Mahmoud al-Zahar said that Hamas was willing to renew the ceasefire under the original terms, demanding an Israeli commitment to refrain from military action in the Strip and to keep border crossings open. Despite the temporary ceasefire declared by Palestinian factions, eight rockets and a series of mortar shells hit the Israeli Negev. On 24 December an Israeli airstrike hit a group of militants in Gaza. The same day Hamas stated that it had commenced an operation code-named 'Operation Oil Stain', and attacks were carried out in the Negev. The following day Israeli

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert delivered a final warning in an interview with an Arabic language satellite channel.

The Israeli offensive, code-named 'Operation Cast Lead', began the next day with a series of airstrikes. Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni told reporters that Israel would strike all targets associated with what she called the illegitimate, terrorist government of Hamas. On the first day of the strikes over 200 Palestinians were killed and more than 700 injured. Hamas responded with a barrage of rockets. In the weeks following these air raids, the Israeli air-force struck at various Hamas facilities. The IDF also targeted homes of Hamas commanders – this was one of the keys to the offensive's success since they served as warehouses of weapons as well as headquarters.

Alongside these attacks, the Israeli government dropped leaflets and used phone messages to warn Palestinians to leave vulnerable areas. In some cases they used a sound bomb to warn civilians before striking homes. According to Israeli sources, although these warning systems did not eliminate all harm to civilians, they were nonetheless effective. By 3 January 2009 the Palestinian death toll stood at 400, with 25 per cent civilians. The air offensive continued throughout the ground invasion, and by 15 January Israeli forces had carried out over 2000 air strikes.

On 3 January Israel began a ground operation with a massive artillery barrage along the Gaza boundary. This was the second stage of 'Operation Cast Lead' – its aim was to secure areas within the Gaza Strip from which militants continued to launch rockets. This advance was spearheaded by Combat Engineering Corps sappers dismantling booby traps set up by Hamas. Israeli artillery units worked closely with battalion commanders. In the early hours of 4 January Israeli forces bisected Gaza and surrounded Gaza City. Israeli tanks and troops seized control of large parts of the Gaza Strip, and tens of thousands of Gazans fled their homes. The next day, IDF forces began operating in densely populated urban centres of Gaza. IDF combat units were sent in to capture Hamas fighters and were met with grenades and mortar fire.

During the following days, fighting continued. On 15 January Israeli artillery started a bombardment of Gaza City while fighting was still going on in the streets. It was reported that nearly all members of Hamas's approximately 100-man strong 'Iranian Unit' were killed during a battle in the Zeytoun neighbourhood. The headquarters of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency was also shelled on the same day. On 16 January more than fifty Israeli airstrikes were carried out against militants, tunnels and a mosque

suspected of being used as a weapons store. Israeli troops continued their push into Gaza City, while warships shelled targets.

As a result of the number of civilian casualties and the deteriorating humanitarian situation, there was growing international pressure for a ceasefire. On 17 January Israeli announced a unilateral ceasefire without an agreement with Hamas. Hamas, however, initially vowed to fight on. The next day, however, Hamas, Islamic Jihad and other paramilitias announced they would stop launching rockets into Israel for one week. This statement demanded the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Gaza Strip within a week along with the opening of all the crossings for the entry of humanitarian aid. On 21 January Israeli troops completed their pullout from the Gaza Strip.

### Aftermath of the Gaza War

On 20 January 2009 Barack Obama became President of the United States. Soon thereafter he appointed George Mitchell as special envoy to the Middle East and instructed him to visit Israel, the West Bank, Egypt, Jordan, Turkey and Saudi Arabia for peace talks. Obama stated that this was part of his campaign promise to listen to both sides of the conflict and work towards a Middle East peace policy. In September 2010 the Obama administration sought to revive the stalled peace process by involving the relevant parties to agree to direct talks. While President Obama was responsible for this process, US Secretary of State Hilary Rodham Clinton spent months persuading those involved to meet and helping to convince the Palestinians to participate by obtaining support for direct talks from Egypt and Jordan.

The aim of the talks was to establish a framework for a final agreement within one year. One way to formulate a resolution between Israel and the Palestinians was to cut off United States humanitarian and military aid until both sides agreed on a joint declaration. These direct talks were designed to end the conflict by forming a two-state solution for the Jewish nation and the Palestinian people. This would halt any further land claims. Hamas and Hizballah, however, were determined to undermine this process. In response, Israel was concerned about the implications of such intransigence, fearing that Hamas and Hizballah would continue their opposition even if a final agreement were reached. In addition, Israel insisted that no progress could be made unless the Palestinians recognized Israel as a Jewish state.



Despite optimism for a resolution to the Middle East crisis, the peace process faltered. On 26 September Israel's settlement freeze expired, and the talks were suspended. Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's coalition government refused to extend the settlement ban, and President Abbas's refusal to negotiate further was supported by the Arab League. On 7 December 2010, the US negotiators announced that they failed to persuade Israel to renew its settlement ban. Yet Washington stated that it was still committed to securing a peace deal through other means and that it would hold talks with Israeli and Palestinian negotiators to keep the process alive.

By February 2011, Israel, the Palestinians and the United States held different views about a range of issues. Regarding borders, Prime Minister Netanyahu accepted that there should be a Palestinian state and that there would have to be an Israeli withdrawal from parts of the West Bank to accommodate this aim. Israel had already withdrawn from Gaza, and would like its borders to include Jerusalem and the major Israeli settlements that have been established on the West Bank. The Palestinians, however, wished to return to the basic position that all the land occupied by Israel in 1967 belongs to a future Palestine. Any land given to the Israelis would have to be compensated for by a balanced exchange of land. The United States agreed that the starting point – but not the end point – should be the 1967 lines, and that a land swap will have to be the basis for any agreement.

The settlements pose a major problem for all sides. Israel insists on keeping the major Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. Any departure from this position would break up the government coalition. Ideally, the Palestinians would like all settlements to be abandoned as they were in Gaza. Nonetheless the Palestinians appear to accept that some settlements will have to stay, but they will argue for a minimum number and a land swap for any that are left. As with the annexation of East Jerusalem, the US has not recognized the international legitimacy of the Israeli West Bank settlements, but it accepts their reality and will press for compromise.

Concerning refugees, Israel rejects the idea that Palestinian refugees from previous wars should be allowed the right to return to their former homes. In Israel's view, this would destroy the state of Israel through demographic readjustment. The Palestinians, on the other hand, maintain that they have the right to return to their former homeland. Yet there is a recognition that this right could be met through compensation. Palestinians refuse to recognize Israel as a Jewish state, maintaining that such a notion is unnecessary in that it ignores the Israel-Arab citizens of the country. As far as the United States



is concerned, there is an acceptance of Israel's position, yet the US hopes the problem can be resolved through compensation and development aid for those who cannot return to their ancestral homes.

From the Israeli side, there is an unwillingness to divide Jerusalem – it is regarded as the political and religious centre of the Jewish nation. Israel stands by the 1980 Israeli law stating that Jerusalem, complete and united, is the capital of Israel. In the past there has been room for manoeuvre on the margins. In talks held in 2000 and 2007, the Israeli government proposed exchanging some outlying annexed districts. The Palestinians, however, wish to see East Jerusalem as the capital of the Palestinian state. The Old City contains the third holiest place in Islam, the al-Aqsa mosque, and the Dome of the Rock. The US does not recognize the Israeli annexation of East Jerusalem. President Obama has opposed the building of housing for Israelis in East Jerusalem although he stated before becoming president that dividing the city would be very difficult to execute.

Security, too, is an issue that divides the various parties to the peace process. The Israeli government fears that a Palestinian state might one day fall into the hands of Hamas and will be used as a stepping-stone to turning Israel into Palestine. Therefore it insists that it keeps a large measure of security control, including the Jordan Valley, and that a state of Palestine be largely demilitarized. The Palestinians argue that security can only be established by a stable two-state solution. They wish to have as many attributes of a normal state as possible. In the view of President Abbas, a client status would be untenable and open to a takeover by Hamas. The United States accepts the Israeli need for security, but it also recognizes the need for Palestinian statehood. Such a clash of perspectives poses considerable obstacles to a peaceful solution to the Israeli Palestinian problem. At the end of February 2011, protests across the Middle East to regimes in various countries threaten to destabilize the region, thereby presenting further difficulties in the quest for peace:

### ***Unrest in the Middle East***

The revolutionary storm has shaken the Middle East to its foundations, and regardless of what happens next, the region's state system will never be the same... The people's movements are not just calling for a tinkering of the system, but to restructure the entire authoritarian system along more pluralistic and socially just lines. The winners are the people of the Middle East whom have been politically oppressed for decades. Millions of voiceless Arabs and Muslims have regained their voice. The current intifada, or revolution, is not just about bread and butter or jobs – it is about freedom and individual liberties. For the first time in the past 40 years, the people of the Middle East are trying to own their histories and determine their futures. ([www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-12482313](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-12482313))

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